NOTES AND READINGS

Midrash and Literature: Some Medieval Views

Much has been written concerning the various medieval theories of "levels of meaning" in the interpretation of the Bible, among Jewish and non-Jewish commentators.[1] Similarly, a great deal of attention has been directed to the growth of the *peshat* as a new contribution to Jewish exegesis, inspired by Arabic philology and Qur'anic exegesis, but achieving respectable results in the cultural climate of Christian Europe as well.

On the whole, it would appear that those exegetes who maintained the centrality of *peshat* would (except for their acknowledgement of received traditions and theologically unacceptable literalisms, etc.) normally do so to the exclusion of other, non-contextual readings of Scripture, whether they be midrashic or in accordance with the allegorical approaches of the philosophers and Kabbalists.[2] Those who approached the text as having several layers of meaning would normally regard the *peshat* as the preparatory "entry level," for which the more esoteric chambers are the ultimate destination. The study of these hermeneutic theories constitutes a most interesting chapter in medieval religious thought, but this is not the question which I want to address here.

The fact is that several of the most distinguished Jewish biblical commentators have insisted on having their exegetical cake and eating it as well: That is to say, they have taken the *peshat* very seriously, in spite of a commitment to the legitimacy of other dimensions of interpretation. In doing so, they have offered several theoretical rationales for their chosen course.

In my present paper I wish to focus on one particular theme which is used as a justification for midrashic activity; namely, the comparison between exegesis and profane literature, as a model for multiple layers of meaning. This comparison appears in a number of different contexts and is used for a variety of purposes.

Probably the most famous of these comparisons appears in the writings of Maimonides, as part of his explanation of the precepts of the "Four Species" of Tabernacles outlined in the *Guide* 3:43. Up until this point, he has been restricting his explanations of the various Jewish festivals and their observances to the agricultural and historical ones set out in the Written or Oral Torahs. When he comes to the laws of the Four Species, he appears to feel himself at odds with much of the homiletical tradition, to the point where he feels he must offer us an *apologia* for failing to take it into account in his own novel "*peshat*" explanation. With this aim in mind, he offers an explanation of the nature and status of the "*derashot*."

PROOFTEXTS 11 (1991): 57–65 © 1991 by The Johns Hopkins University Press

As part of this explanation, Maimonides asserts that *derashot* that stray from the obvious or likely meaning of the text should be construed as "most witty poetical conceits,"[3] that were employed according to accepted literary conventions, and were not intended to be perceived as a real interpretation of the text in question. An intelligent reader will realize that in talmudic times "this method was generally known and used by everybody, just as the poets use poetical expressions." By means of such literary tricks, the Rabbis were able to dress their moral and religious teachings in an aesthetic garb. Never, however, should such interpretations be allowed to supplant the contextual meaning of the scriptural text, lest they lead to the extremes of either mindless fundamentalism, or of contempt for the exegetical abilities of the Sages.

Maimonides' discussion in the *Guide* is in many respects a revision of an earlier treatment of the topic, contained in the introduction to his commentary on *Pereq ḥeleq* of the Mishnah (Sanhedrin Ch. 10).[4] In the Mishnah commentary, the stimulus for the discussion is found in the primitive-sounding portrayals of the rewards that await the righteous in the next world and in messianic times. As in the *Guide,* he classifies the readers of midrashic homilies into three types: the simplistic literalists who accept the most farfetched of *derashot* as *peshat;* the cynics who accept the homilies as the sages' understanding of the *peshat,* and accordingly treat them with disdain and mockery; and the third group, a tiny enclave of reverent and intelligent readers, who are capable of appreciating homilies for what they are.

The analogy drawn by Maimonides in his Mishnah commentary is not to the craft of the poet, but to the art of rhetoric, and in particular to the *genres* of riddles and parables:

> Thus, whenever the sages spoke of things that seem impossible, they were employing the style of riddle and parable which is the method of truly great thinkers. For example, the greatest of our wise men began his book by saying: "To understand an analogy and a metaphor, the words of the wise and their riddles" (Prov. 1:6).
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> All students of language know the real concern of a riddle is with its hidden meaning and not with its obvious meaning, as: "Let me now put forth a riddle to you" (Judges 14:12). Since the words of all the sages, when dealing with supernatural matters which are ultimate, are expressed in riddles and parables, how could there be an objection to their formulating their wisdom in parables and employing such parables as are easily understood by the masses, especially when we note that the wisest of all men did precisely that, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit? I have in mind Solomon in Proverbs, the Song of Songs, and parts of Ecclesiastes.
>
> How can there be an objection to interpreting their words in a manner different from their apparent meaning, so that they conform to reason and correspond with the truth and with the books of revelation, seeing that they themselves interpret the texts of the books in a way different from their apparent sense, treating them as parables, just as we do.

It appears that in his earlier work, Maimonides is presenting the rabbinic interpretations as an esoteric kind of activity, designed (as he goes on to suggest) either to conceal the truth from the ignorant masses or to convey truths which

transcend their intellectual grasp.[5] In spite of the external similarity, and the common framework of the threefold division of attitudes towards midrashic interpretation, this is at its base a very different interpretation from the one in the *Guide,* according to which the the purpose of fantastic or non-literal *derashot* is a kind of poetic convention, which in talmudic times would have been appreciated by the general audience. It is only Maimonides' contemporaries who have forgotten these literary conventions.

We may only speculate upon this apparent shift in Maimonides' characterization of *peshat.* Let us note, first of all, that the two explanations are not necessarily mutually exclusive. They both rest on the premise that the words of the Rabbis are to be taken seriously, but not literally. Beyond this, each case must be interpreted on its own terms. Regarding the grave metaphysical issues of reward, punishment and afterlife, it is reasonable to argue that the inner meaning of the Rabbis is a mysterious one. When exploring the more mundane passages cited in the *Guide,* an exoteric interpretation seems appropriate. On the whole, Maimonides seems less amenable to non-literal exegesis when explaining halakhah—which for him must stand as an exoteric discipline—than when dealing with other elements of Jewish tradition.[6]

In the Mishnah Commentary, moreover, Maimonides' concern is with non-exegetical material, whose problematic status derives from its content. In the *Guide,* he is discussing what appears to be poor exegesis: Hence the theory must be adapted to the differing contexts of the two discussions.

Maimonides' allusion to riddles and parables, in spite of the biblical precedents he cites, clearly recalls the words of Aristotle in the *Poetics* (1458a–b):

> Diction becomes distinguished and non-prosaic by the use of unfamiliar terms, i.e., strange words, metaphors, lengthened forms, and everything that deviates from the ordinary modes of speech.—But a whole statement in such terms will be either a riddle or a barbarism: A riddle, if made up of metaphors, a barbarism if made up of strange words. The very nature indeed of a riddle is this, to describe a fact in an impossible combination of words. . . . The corresponding use of strange words results in a barbarism. . . . It is not right, then, to condemn these modes of speech, and ridicule the poet focusing them, as some have done.[7]

Aristotle proceeds to berate Ariphrades for ridiculing the tragedians' use of unusual language, and argues that the proper use of poetical devices is actually a sign of genius. The allusion is remarkably appropriate for Maimonides' own critique of his contemporaries' failure to appreciate the literary ingenuity of the talmudic *derashot.*[8]

Maimonides' earlier discussion thus appears to be securely anchored in the terminology of Aristotelian rhetoric, such that he views fanciful legends of the afterlife as rhetorical devices intended to capture the interest and attention of the masses. Following Aristotle, the purpose of these literary devices is not to *conceal* the abstract truth, but to package it in a more easily understandable form. The characterization applies equally well to his discussion in the *Guide.* He refers there to the poet, not the rhetor, but the activities that he sees as characterizing poetry are really rhetorical devices.[9]

In general, Maimonides seems to have accepted the attitude that prevailed in the Arabic philosophical world of his time, according to which rhetoric was

viewed negatively as an inferior substitute for logical reasoning, a view which was considerably less favorable towards the discipline than that of Aristotle himself.[10]

Fundamental to Maimonides' discussion in the *Guide* is his conviction that biblical texts ordinarily have only one real meaning, a *peshat*. Anyone who claims to produce more is playing clever literary tricks, which may in themselves be admirable, but they are not doing exegesis.[11] Though he may believe that there is an additional symbolic level of meaning to the biblical text, this has the status of a sort of "esoteric *peshat*," conveying a single sense, as distinct from the uncontrolled interpretative activity that characterizes the *derashot* which he is discussing.

The comparison between midrash and secular literature is used by another medieval Jewish author to explain the nature of midrash, in a passage that, on the surface, seems to bear a strong resemblance to Maimonides' argument in the *Guide*. The thirteenth-century Italian Talmudist and exegete Rabbi Isaiah di-Trani the Younger[12] introduces this idea into his commentary on *Sanhedrin*, which is cited by Rabbi Joshua Boaz in his *Shiltei gibborim* glosses to the Alfasi on *ʿAvodah zarah* (Ch. 1, Vilna ed. 6a). R. Isaiah is concerned in this passage with the teaching of Torah to gentiles, and with the fact that "some of the rascals of our people . . . make a mockery of the words of the sages, and teach others to make fun of our Torah," a characterization that would apply well to Maimonides' "second class" of midrash-readers. In order to prevent such disrespect, R. Isaiah launches into an explanation that closely resembles that of Maimonides. He distinguishes between three types of midrashic passages: exaggerated hyperbole [*guzma*] which is usually recognizable as such;[13] miracle tales, which should normally be accepted on faith, as instances of God's care for the pious; and a third type, which he describes in the following passage:

> In yet another type of midrashim, the sages intend to expound the scriptural passage in all possible ways. In doing so, they rely on the verse: "God has spoken one thing, but two have we heard" (Psalm 62:12); as well as the verse "Are not my words even so, like a flame etc." (Jeremiah 23:29), from which they inferred that a single verse can tolerate several interpretations, as is explained in Ch. *Eḥad dinei mamonot* (*Sanhedrin* 34a).
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> Nor should you find this surprising. Do you not see how frequently even a profane author can speak in such a way that his words contain two meanings? Is this not true all the more so with respect to words of wisdom which were spoken under the influence of the Holy Spirit?
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> In this manner, we find the Sages expounding Scripture in all ways that they can find to expound it. They also said "A text cannot be removed from its simple meaning," (*Shabbat* 63a) which is the principal one. As to the various midrashim which are expounded concerning it—Some are basic, closely approximating the simple meaning.[14]

In certain respects this analysis is identical with that of Maimonides. There is, says R. Isaiah, a literal meaning that may be different from that attached to it by the midrashic homilists. He seems as well to be viewing the activity of rabbinic homiletics as a kind of literary device in which "the sages intend to expound the

scriptural passage in all possible ways." And to top it off, he draws a comparison to "profane authors"—to the conventions of secular literature.

A more careful study of Rabbi Isaiah's remarks reveals some essential differences. To begin with the last-noted point: When he draws upon the analogy of profane literature, he is referring not to the midrashic exegesis, but to the scriptural text itself. If it is assumed to be a virtue in a mortal poet to compose his works with different levels and possibilities of meaning, is this not even more to be expected from inspired writings, composed, as it were, by the Supreme Poet?

This sounds very much like the conventional views, current among Jew and Christian in medieval Europe, about the "four levels of interpretation," etc. R. Isaiah is nonetheless stubbornly insistent on maintaining a *peshat*. Is he not indulging in self-contradiction?

It is precisely this point that is so new and central to his argument. Unlike Maimonides, for whom there can be (under normal circumstances) no more than a single "real" intention in a given text—and unlike the classical Augustinian theory, according to which it is the symbolic or allegorical level of interpretation that is of exclusive value—R. Isaiah is arguing that both the *peshat* and the *derash* were intended by the original author, although the distinction between them is equally part of the author's original intention.

Thus, what the midrashic interpreter is doing is *not*, as Maimonides would have it, a "witty poetical conceit" that makes no contribution to explaining the interpreted text. Quite the contrary, the talmudic sages are quite literally trying to expound the text "in all possible ways," basing themselves on the assumption that these interpretations were planted in the text by the Author to be discovered by the diligent exegete.

It should be noted that, in his attempt to simultaneously maintain both the primacy of *peshat* and the legitimacy of *derash*, Rabbi Isaiah is very much in the spirit of his time and place. Not only has European Jewish exegesis been battling out this question for some time by now, but influential schools of Christian biblical studies have for some time been occupied in rediscovering the *peshat*,[15] in defiance of nearly a thousand years of allegorical interpretation.

A compatriot of R. Isaiah, writing around the same time, gives expression to a similar predicament. He begins with the Maimonidean-sounding assertion that

> in Holy Writ a word cannot have several senses. . . . For many different senses in one text produce confusion and deception and destroy all force of argument. Hence no argument, but only fallacies, can be deduced from a multiplicity of propositions. But Holy Writ ought to be able to state the truth without any fallacy. Therefore in it there cannot be several senses to a word.

This author is also committed to upholding the truth of the non-literal exegetical tradition, and goes on to suggest his own solution to the problem by drawing a distinction between the text itself, which derives from a human author and can have only one original meaning, and the event or idea that is being represented, which is the content of the revelation from God, and hence a suitable subject for multiple interpretations.

This solution of Thomas Aquinas (for he is of course the author of the foregoing passage[16]) is, needless to say, different from that of R. Isaiah di-Trani, but it is proposed in order to achieve the same purpose: to legitimize non-literal

exegesis as a part of the original meaning of Scripture, while at the same time insisting that there is a fundamental distinction between the *peshat* and the *derash.*

It should be noted that there are parallels to be perceived in yet another of Rabbi Isaiah di-Trani's literary assumptions; i.e., that it is considered a mark of quality in profane authors that their creations be susceptible to multiple interpretations. That such is true about inspired scripture has always been a cornerstone of both Jewish and Christian exegesis. The extension of this premise to the creations of mortals is, however, not entirely to be taken for granted.

It was nonetheless a premise that had some currency in medieval Europe, and was fundamental to the legitimization of pagan literatures in the Christian Middle Ages. Readers who were unready to forego the poetry of Homer, Ovid or Virgil could justify reading these authors only by arguing that "under the veil of words lie hidden" words of both secret wisdom and practical knowledge.[17]

Another of R. Isaiah's Italian countrymen, Dante Alagheri, writing a generation or so later, has no qualms about applying these methods of interpretation to his own literary creation:

> The meaning of this work is not of one kind only; rather the work may be described as "polysemous," that is, having several meanings; for the first meaning is that which is conveyed by the letter, and the next is that which is conveyed by what the letter signifies; the former of which is called literal, while the latter is called allegorical, or mystical.

Dante then proceeds to offer interpretations of his *Divine Comedy* according to both levels of interpretation.[18] It is evident that in composing the *Divine Comedy,* he had in mind at least these two levels of possible interpretation, and that he was modeling himself after the precedent of the Bible.

It was to such writers, it would seem, that Rabbi Isaiah di-Trani was referring when he drew his *qal vaḥomer* to prove the validity of multiple intentions of the divine author of Scripture. The European hermeneutic tradition had determined that multi-leveled interpretation is a mark of superior literature, inspired or not.

Not so for the rationalist mentality of Maimonides. The purpose of the text is to convey its message (literal or allegorical) as clearly and unambiguously as possible. A text that is susceptible to a multiplicity of interpretations is a confusing muddle, and reflects poorly on its author. If our sages did, in any case, appear to find such meanings in the biblical text, this does not reflect ill on the text itself, but is no more than a rhetorical game that reveals the ingenuity of the homilist, and may help sweeten the message for the unsophisticated.

Our comparison between Maimonides and Rabbi Isaiah di-Trani may not have taught us a great deal that is new about the natures of *peshat* and *derash.* Nonetheless, I hope that it has given us some additional insight into medieval Jewish views on the nature and functions of literature.[19]

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NOTES

1. A most remarkable and erudite summary of the many aspects of this phenomenon is the posthumous study by F. Talmage, "Apples of Gold: The Inner Meaning of Sacred Texts in Medieval Judaism," in *Jewish Spirituality—From the Bible through the Middle Ages,* ed. Arthur Green (New York, 1987), pp. 313–55. The careful reader will note how greatly I am indebted to that article for source references and more, to the extent that the present study can justly be viewed as a footnote to Talmage's work.

2. In my use of "contextual" rather than "literal" as an equivalent of "*peshat*" I am following the approach of E. L. Greenstein, in his chapter "Medieval Bible Commentaries," in *Back to the Sources,* ed. Barry Holtz (New York, 1984), especially pp. 217–77. Cf. J. Faur, *Golden Doves with Silver Dots* (Bloomington, 1986), pp. 12–13.

3. All translations from Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed* are from S. Pines' edition (Chicago, 1963). Later on in the passage, Maimonides uses the literary term "*tamthil*" (simile) to indicate a similar phenomenon. For a critique of some of Pines' renderings of "*mithl,*" see D. Blumenthal, "Maimonides on Mind and Metaphoric Language," in *Approaches to Judaism in Medieval Times* (Chico, 1985) 2:123–32; cf. A. Hyman, "Maimonides on Religious Language," in *Studies in Jewish Philosophy: Collected Essays of the Academy for Jewish Philosophy,* ed. N. Samuelson (Latham, 1987). See also: W. G. Braude, "Maimonides' Attitude to Midrash," in *Studies in Jewish Bibliography, History and Literature in Honor of Dr. I. Edward Kiev* (New York, 1971).

4. The English version reproduced here is based loosely on that of A. Wolf, reprinted in *A Maimonides Reader,* I. Twersky, ed. (New York, 1972), pp. 407–10. My thanks to Raymond Scheindlin for his thorough weeding out of some major inaccuracies in that translation.

5. There is a fine line in practice between passages which are deemed by Maimonides as presenting a popular simplification of an abstract idea, and those which are concealing the abstractness of the idea. Note his formulation of this idea in his discussion of the *derashot* in the Introduction to the *Guide* (p. 10), where he distinguishes explicitly between the methods he employs in the explanation of *derashot* and of prophecy.

6. Underlying this discussion is a conviction that Maimonides is in general committed to the *peshat,* and that his appeals to the centrality of allegory (as in the Introduction to the *Guide*) are directed only to specific instances; notably: [a] where the literal meaning is philosophically unacceptable (usually to avoid anthropomorphism); [b] as a way of avoiding the halakhic prohibitions against open teaching of the Work of Creation and the Work of the Chariot. Students of the *Guide* have noted that Maimonides himself offers only very few allegorical interpretations of his own (cf. Talmage, *op. cit.,* 335) as compared to some of his followers.

Even if one does take the view that Maimonides regarded Scripture as fundamentally an esoteric document, it is likely that he recognized only a single correct symbolic interpretation; hence his remarks here concerning "creative" midrashic homiletics would not be applicable to such exegesis.

7. The translation cited here is that of I. Bywater, in *The Works of Aristotle,* ed. W. D. Ross, vol. 11 (Oxford, 1952).

8. Note as well Aristotle's discussion of the use of fables and parallels in the *Rhetorica* 2:20 (1393b–94a), where he concludes: "Fables are suitable for addresses to popular assemblies; and they have one advantage—they are comparatively easy to invent, whereas it is hard to find parallels among actual past events."

See also: H. Caplan, "The Four Senses of Scriptural Interpretation and the Medieval Theory of Preaching," *Speculum* 4 (1924): 287–91, and references at end to Ibn Janah, Moses Ibn Ezra, and Judah Messer Leon (*Nofet tsufim*). As regards the latter two, see A. Altmann, "*Ars Rhetorica* as Reflected in Some Jewish Figures of the Italian Renaissance," in *Jewish*

Thought in the Sixteenth Century, ed. B. D. Cooperman (Cambridge [Mass.] and London, 1983), pp. 1–22.

9. Compare Averroes' assertion that "in Scripture, dialectical and rhetorical arguments are preferred because it is the purpose of Scripture to teach and guide the majority of men" (Altmann, p. 4 and n. 4).

10. See A. Altmann, pp. 1–5. Altmann cites ample evidence that this attitude "was initiated by Alfarabi, continued by Avicenna and perfected by Averroes" (p. 3). Cf. J. Faur, pp. 63ff. (citing also Plato's well-known condemnation of Rhetoric). See also pp. xxvi there: "In the West 'philosophy' stood in hierarchical opposition to 'rhetoric.'" While Maimonides does not, to the best of my knowledge, cite the *Poetics* in his writings (he refers to the *Rhetoric* in one instance), it is evident that the work was available in Arabic (and eventually, Hebrew) translation and was studied by the Arabic philosophers; see, e.g., R. Walzer's entry "Artistotle" in the *Encyclopedia of Islam;* C. E. Butterworth, trans., *Averroes' Three Short Commentaries on Aristotle's Topics, Rhetoric and Poetics* (Albany, 1977), especially pp. 85ff.

11. Note Maimonides' favorable references to the role of the imaginative faculty in his treatment of prophecy in the *Guide* 2:32ff., and his remarks concerning figurative uses and hyperboles, in 2:47: "And if the words are understood according to their precise meaning and it is not known that they constitute a hyperbole or an exaggeration, or if they are understood according to their first conventional meaning and it is not known that they are used figuratively, incongruities arise. . . ." He nonetheless appears afterwards to minimize the scope of such images in the prophetic works. Other sources describing Maimonides' attitude to rhetoric (including his youthful logic text *Maqala fi sana'at al-mantiq* [*Millot ha higgayon*]) are collected by Altmann, pp. 4–5. Note particularly his comparison to Averroes' idea that scriptural language, like rhetoric, works from the unexamined assumptions of the multitude. Altmann concludes that for Maimonides, "scriptural language, however necessary, is *only* rhetoric" and that Maimonides "strangely enough" has little appreciation of the artistic elements of rhetoric. Cf. Abraham Ibn Ezra's treatment of midrashic method in the introduction to his Commentary to the Pentateuch, ed. A. Weiser (Jerusalem, 1976), and in editor's introduction, pp. 42–44. On the whole question, see also: I. Heinemann, *Darkhei ha'aggadah* (Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv, 1974), pp. 1–14; H. Wolfson, "Maimonides on the Internal Senses," *JQR* 51 (1935): 441–67; C. Sirat, *A History of Jewish Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 193–97; O. Leaman, "Maimonides, Imagination and the Objectivity of Prophecy," *Religion* 18 (1988): 69–80.

It is likely that Maimonides' unidimensional (or at most: two-tiered) approach to biblical language is related to his insistence (against the prevailing rabbinic view) that Hebrew is no less "conventional" than any other natural language. See the discussion by J. Faur, pp. 69–76 (cf. 12–13).

12. On this scholar see the Introduction to *Piskei harid . . . Piskei hariaz.* vol. 1 (Jerusalem, 1964); M. Elon, *Jewish Law, History, Sources, Principles* (Jerusalem ,1973), p. 1042 n. 98 (and p. 973 n. 99) [Heb.].

13. This phenomenon was to become a favorite topic of Hebrew rhetorical studies in the Italian Renaissance, such as those of Judah Messer Leon and Azariah de Rossi. The latter applied the theories of Quintillian to rabbinic texts, working on the assumption that that which is considered a beautiful embellishment in secular writing is to be appreciated no less in Jewish religious texts; see Altmann, pp. 14–15, and below.

14. He continues: "Others are barely more than allusions [*remez*]. Do you not in fact see what one of the sages expounded in the first chapter of *Ta'anit,* where he asserts that our father Jacob never died, and another Sage retorted 'Was it for naught that the mourners lamented him and the embalmers embalmed him and the gravediggers buried him?!' To this the first Sage replied 'I am merely expounding a verse.' That is to say: I too am quite aware that he died. Rather, I am determined to expound the text in all possible ways that it can be expounded. If the midrash does not reflect its literal meaning, it nonetheless contains a hint. . . . It is thus evident that the sages were not expounding the midrashim as a matter of faith

or fundamental belief, but rather to add meaning [*ta'ama*] to the Scriptures and to interpret them in every way; perhaps they contain some allusion [to the intepretation]. And as to him who scoffs at their words, concerning him it is written 'but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and scoffed at His prophets' (2 Chron. 36:16)."

15. See B. Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1983), especially chapters III and VI. See also: G. R. Evans, *The Language and Logic of the Bible: The Earlier Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1984).

16. *Summa Theologica* Q. I. Art. 10.

17. Quotation from John of Salisbury, brought by E. R. Curtius (W. R. Trask, trans.), *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (Princeton, 1973), p. 206. See his rich discussion on pp. 203–8. Se also Smalley, pp. 299–304; cf. W. Z. Harvey, "Maimonides and Aquinas on Interpreting the Bible," *PAAJR* 55 (1988): 59–77.

18. P. Toynbee, ed., *Dantis Alagherii Epistolae: The Letters of Dante* (Oxford, 1966), Epist. X.; Latin: pp. 166–95, Eng.: pp. 195–211. The citation is from pp. 173–74/199. See F. Talmage, pp. 319–20, and n. 43. Cf. R. Tuve, *Allegorical Imagery: Some Medieval Books and Their Posterity* (Princeton, 1966), pp. 219–333.

19. This phenomenon should of course not be confused with the revival of the Latin rhetorical tradition that occurs in Renaissance Italy and influenced such Hebrew writers as Judah Messer Leon, as described by A. Altmann in the article cited above. The earlier developments may, at any rate, have helped ease the reception of the new ideas. Note especially Altmann's discussion of the religious problems that ensue from the appreciation of "the Bible as literature" (p. 13).

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