

A Note on כראי in Nahum 3:6

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Abstract: It is suggested that in Nahum 3:6 וְשִׁמְתִיךָ should be revocalized וְשִׁמְתִיךָ, and כְּרָאִי וְהָיָה, where כְּרָאִי is attached from the following verse, should be read כְּרָאִי הָיָה. The phrase כְּרָאִי הָיָה, “as it was proper, as it was deserved,” which contains the late רָאִי, is assumed to be a late scribal comment. Nahum 3:6 would then read וְהִשְׁלַכְתִּי עָלֶיךָ שְׂקָצִים וְנִבְלָתֶיךָ וְשִׁמְתִיךָ [כְּרָאִי הָיָה], “And I threw at you unclean things, I disgraced you, and I made you desolate [as it was deserved]. The suggested emendation preserves the consonantal base, improves the meter of Nah 3:6 and 3:7, and removes the need to extend the semantic field of רָאִי beyond its supported sense of “seeing, saw, saw me.”

Introduction

Nahum 3:6, וְהִשְׁלַכְתִּי עָלֶיךָ שְׂקָצִים וְנִבְלָתֶיךָ וְשִׁמְתִיךָ כְּרָאִי, is usually translated *And I threw at you unclean things, I disgraced you, and I set you as a sight*, and understood as a depiction of a step in Nineveh’s downfall. Nineveh, which behaved as a harlot toward other nations, is doomed to go through a standard shaming ritual described in Nah 3:5-7. This ritual consisted of the following four steps:

1. *Denuding*: Public undressing of the harlot (Nah 3:5);
2. *Humiliating*: Pelting of the harlot with disgusting items (Nah 3:6);
3. *Shunning*: Leaving the harlot to herself abandoned (Nah 3:7); and,
4. *Deriding*: Expressing abnormal descriptions as negatives (Nah 3:7).

Nahum 3:6 has been assumed to correspond to the second step, where abominable things and filth are thrown at Nineveh, exacerbating her humiliation and turning her into a despicable thing to look at. That Nineveh is set up as a “thing to look at,” and an object to learn from, is derived from כְּרָאִי וְשִׁמְתִיךָ. Does indeed this Biblical Hebrew phrase have the generally assumed meaning “*and I set you as a sight* (i.e., “something to look at)? In the following we shall argue that while “*and I set you as a sight* (i.e., “something to look at)” for כְּרָאִי וְשִׁמְתִיךָ can claim ancient pedigree, it does not have biblical support. We shall offer an alternate interpretation for Nah 3:6b.

Analysis

The most difficult word in Nah 3:6 is כְּרָאִי, and its understanding, or misunderstanding, might have affected the vocalization of the preceding וְשִׁמְתִיךָ. Already the ancient versions seem to have had problems with the meaning of כְּרָאִי. The Septuagint renders כְּרָאִי, “as a public example” (εἰς παράδειγμα),¹ the Targum has “repugnant in the eyes of all who see you” (מכערא לעיני כל חוּדָךְ), the Peshitta has “spectacle,”² and the Vulgate has “an example” (*in exemplum*).³ Thus, the Versions seem to assume that in Nah 3:6 רָאִי is a noun, which has

been derived from the root ראה (as יפי from יפה (Isa 3:24)). We will show in what follows that nowhere in the Hebrew Bible does ראי mean “paradigm,” “spectacle,” or “example.”

The term ראי or ראי occurs in the Hebrew Bible altogether eight times (Gen 16:13 (2t), 16:14, 24:62, 1Sam 16:12, Job 7:8, 33:21, and Nah 3:6). In the following we will discuss the meaning of ראי or ראי in each of these occurrences.

Gen 16:13a – The phrase אל ראי seems to have posed some difficulty to the Versions. Septuagint renders אל ראי “God who seest me” (Θεὸς ὁ ἐπιδῶν με), and Vulgate “God who hast seen me” (*Deus qui vidisti me*). Onqelos has “God who sees all” (אלהא חזי כולא), Targum Jonathan “lives and exists” (חי וקיים), Targum Neofiti “exists in the whole world” (קיים כל עלמא), and the Peshitta “God who saw me,” perhaps reading ראי. In this case the Versions consider ראי a verb, having the meaning “sees, saw, saw me,” or homiletically “exist.”

Sa’adiah (882-942) takes אל ראי = האל הרואה (“The seeing God”). Rashi (1040-1105) observes that here ראי is a noun, because it is pointed with a קמץ חטף. Thus, אל ראי means “God of seeing” (אלוהי הראיה).⁴ Ibn Ezra (1089-c. 1164) also takes ראי as a noun that is of the same form as עני (Lam 3:1). In his view אל ראי = אל מראה (who reveals himself in a sight). This interpretation might have been affected by theological considerations, which were intended to mute anthropomorphic connotations.⁵ Kimchi (1160-1235, Radak) agrees with Ibn Ezra on the form of ראי, but follows Ibn Janah (c. 990- c. 1050) in understanding אל ראי as “an angel that sees” (a clear distancing effort), taking ראי = רואה אותי. Bechor Shor (1140-1190) considers ראי a verb, taking ראי = ראיתי (“I saw”). He too shifts the “seeing” from God to Hagar. Levi ben Gershom (1288-1344, Ralbag) explains אל ראי = אדון הראות (“Lord of seeing”). Early Jewish exegesis seems in main to agree with the Versions and to be motivated by theological considerations.

Speiser translates אל ראי by “God of seeing,” one whom it is permitted to see.⁶ Standard English translations have usually interpreted the phrase: “God seest me” (KJV); “God-Who-Sees” (NKJV, NASB, ASV, Webster, HNV); “God who sees me” (NLT, NIV, ESV); “God of seeing” (ESV, RSV, NJPS); “God, my beholder” (Young); “God who reveals himself” (Darby); “God of vision” (JB); etc. These translations are split between those who take ראי in a general sense (“sees”), and those who take it in a more particular sense (“sees me”). However, the Standard English translations also concentrate about ראי = “seeing” or “sees me.”

Gen 16:13b – Here, the context ראיתי אחריו ראי clearly indicates that we deal with a *Qal* participle (suffixed). The Septuagint has for ראי “appeared to me” (ὀφθέντα μοι), perhaps because of theological considerations. Similarly, Onqelos, trying to mute anthropomorphic connotations, renders “revealed to me” (אתגלי לי), and so too Targum Neofiti, which has אתגליתא. However, Targum Jonathan has חזיא. The Peshitta’s translation of ראי, “he had seen me,” suggests the reading ראי. The Vulgate (*videntis me*) translates as the Peshitta. It is clear from the versions that 13b seemed enigmatic to them and that their translations were influenced by theological considerations, which tried to minimize man’s ability to see God.⁷

Sa’adiah takes ראי = ראותי (“seeing”). Rashi also renders ראי as “seeing,” but considers it a verb. So do Ibn Ezra and Sforno (1470-1550). However, Kimchi takes ראי = אותי שראה (“who saw me”), and Levi ben Gershom takes it as “my seeing God.” Bechor Shor senses a double entendre in ראי. He says ראי אותו כאן, ידעתי כי אני ראוייה לכך ראי “after seeing him here, I knew that I am deserving it,” understanding ראי as

“seeing” and “deserving.”

Speiser takes רָאִי = “who sees me.”⁸ The nuances in the Versions are also reflected in Standard English translations, which have translated רָאִי: “seeth me” (KJV, Webster, ASV); “seeing” (HNV, RSV, NASB); “my beholder” (Young); “he has revealed himself” (Darby); “who looks after me” (ESV); “who sees me” (NKJV, NIV, NLT, JB); “saw me” (NJPS); etc. It seems that in Gen 16:13b the presence of אֶחָרִי and concern for anthropomorphism have resulted in some variation in translation. Still, it is clear that here too רָאִי = “seeing, saw, saw me” is adequate.

Gen 16:14, 24:62 – The Septuagint translates לָחִי רָאִי “of him whom I have openly seen” (οὐ ἐνώπιον εἶδον). Onqelos translates here רָאִי by “appeared” (אֶתְחַזֵּי), Targum Jonathan by “revealed” (דִּאֲתַגְלִי), and so Targum Neofiti (דִּאֲתַגְלִיתָא), which must be considered as attempts to mute anthropomorphic connotations. Sa’adiah takes חֵי הַרְוֹאָה = חֵי רָאִי (“The living that sees”), which is equivalent to saying that the phrase חֵי רָאִי = אֶלְרָאִי (“The living that sees”), which is equivalent to saying that the phrase חֵי רָאִי = אֶלְרָאִי.

1Sam 16:12 – The verse describes young David as being רָאִי וְטוֹב עֵינָיִם וְטוֹב רָאִי. Most commentators take טוב רָאִי = טוב מְרָאָה “good looking.” However, only two of the Versions support this relation. Septuagint has “goodly in the sight of God” (ἀγαθὸς ὁράσει Κυρίως), which is probably an internal harmonization.⁹ Targum renders “good in appearance” (שפיר בריויה), Peshitta “very handsome,” and Vulgate “of a comely face” (*decoraque facie*).

Commentators seem to have seen in אֶדְמוּנֵי עַם־יִפְהָ מְרָאָה of 1Sam 17:42 support for taking רָאִי = מְרָאָה. Surprisingly Rashi has nothing to say on טוב רָאִי. Kimchi suggests that טוב רָאִי = יִפְהָ תֹאֵר, and Metzudot (1753) takes רָאִי = מְרָאָה. It seems, however, that the Hebrew Bible was quite insistent that in the selection of Saul’s successor מְרָאָה should not be a qualifying attribute (1Sam 16:6-7).¹⁰ The Septuagint also attests to this fact in its Ps 151:5, “my brothers were handsome and tall: but the Lord did not take pleasure in them.” Similarly, a Psalm found in Cave 11 at Qumran says: יֵצְאוּ אַחֵי לְקִרְאָתוֹ יִפֵּי הַתּוֹר וִיפֵי הַמְרָאָה הַגְּבוּהִים בְּקוֹמַתָם הַיְפִים בְּשַׁעֲרָם לֹא בַחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים בָּם.¹¹

Thus, the description of David in 1Sam 16:12a could not have been about him being handsome, or good looking, but of having attributes that are worthwhile for a king. Indeed, the text is particular in its choice of the different terms for describing David, and they seem to have been chosen to underscore a distinction. Those who knew David intimately could say that he had pretty eyes (healthy?) and good eyesight (טוב רָאִי = “good seeing”). Goliath, who saw David from afar, could only say that he was “pretty, handsome” (יִפְהָ מְרָאָה), perhaps because he was אֶדְמוּנֵי.¹² Similarly, David is described to Saul as being אִישׁ תֹּאֵר (1Sam 16:18), not טוב רָאִי. The fact that David had good eyesight (טוב רָאִי) is significant. It was one reason why he could aim so well from a distance at a small exposed area of Goliath’s body.

The phrase יִפְהָ עֵינָיִם וְטוֹב רָאִי is quoted in the Talmud (*b. Gittin* 58a), where from the context it seems that טוב רָאִי has been understood as “handsome.” Most of the Standard English translations (NKJV, NLT, NIV, ESV, NASB, RSV, Young, Darby, Webster, JB, NJPS, etc.) follow the Targum. Some (KJV, ASV, HNV, etc.) render טוב רָאִי “goodly to look to, goodly to look upon.”

We have, however, shown that in this case too, רָאִי = “seeing” is not only adequate but also provides a *Sitz im Leben* significance.

Job 7:8 – BDB notes that in לֹא תִשְׁרַנֵּי עֵין רָאִי the word רָאִי is used as the *Qal* participle (suffixed) of רָאָה.¹³ The Septuagint translates רָאִי “sees me” (ὁρῶντός με) and Targum

“that sees” (דחמיא).¹⁴ The Peshitta’s “has seen me” suggests a reading of רָאִי. The Vulgate has for עֵין רָאִי “sight of man” (*visus hominis*). Some Standard English translations follow the Peshitta, but most follow the Septuagint.

Pope translated Job 7:8a “The eye that looks will not spy me,” taking רָאִי = “that looks” (i.e. “seeing”).¹⁵ Dhorme rendered: “The eye of him who beheld me will see me no more.”¹⁶ Tur-Sinai has for רָאִי “the eye of him that sees me (at present).”¹⁷ Weingreen, however, observes that taking רָאִי = “who sees me” leads to a logical contradiction.¹⁹ He suggests that רָאִי should be taken as having “the meaning of ‘sight’ in the sense of ‘power of seeing’, then we have an occurrence of the construct-genitive arrangement. Since the genitive may be regarded here as having an adjectival effect, the sense of the phrase may be taken as ‘No seeing eye shall behold me’.”¹⁹ Weingreen’s suggestion makes good sense. Thus, רָאִי = “sees me, sees, seen, seeing.”

Job 33:21 – The difficulty of the colon יָכַל בְּשָׂרוֹ מְרָאִי is already attested by the Versions. The Septuagint’s “until his flesh shall be consumed” (ἕως ἃν σαρκαῶσται αὐτοῦ ἢ ἄσκαρος), and Vulgate’s “His flesh shall be consumed away” (*tabescet caro eius*), apparently omit מְרָאִי. The Targum has “his flesh will be consumed from watching” (ישתצי בסריה מן דוּו). It seems that the Peshitta’s “his flesh is wasted away because of his fear,” is probably based on reading מְרָאִי instead of מְרָאִי.

Sa’adiah translated מְרָאִי “from sight.”²⁰ Rashi and Levi ben Gershom render here מְרָאִי = מְמַרְאֶה, but Ibn Ezra understands interpretatively מְרָאִי as “till it cannot be seen” (שלא יראה עוד). The colon מְרָאִי is not any clearer than the original. Qara (12th century) apparently sensed in רָאִי the word ראוי. He explains that מְרָאִי means שאינו ראוי למראה עינים.²¹ It is interesting to note that Rashi and Ibn Ezra, who take רָאִי as “dirt, filth,” shy away from this sense here. That is not the case with Tur-Sinai, who understands Job 33:21a as saying, “So his flesh ceases to be polluted,” taking רָאִי = “dirt, filth.” The support from the Mishnah (Keilim VI, 7: והראי הליחה והזיעה סרוחה) is hardly adequate.²²

Buttenwieser has for Job 33:21a “His flesh is so wasted that cannot be seen.”²³ Pope’s literal translation “His flesh wastes from sight,” taking רָאִי = “sight,” is more enigmatic than the MT.²⁴ Dhorme notes that the word רָאִי or רָאִי denotes sight or vision; i.e., it is an abstract noun derived from ראה “to see.” He renders: “His wasted flesh disappears from view.”²⁵ Hacham takes מְרָאִי = מְמַרְאֶה but explains that it means “it would not be seen anymore” (לא יראה עוד), which is equivalent to taking מְרָאִי = “from being seen.”²⁶ The parallelism מְרָאִי || לא ראוי in Job 33:21 suggests taking the prefixed מ as “not” and מְרָאִי as “not to be seen.” The situation described by Elihu in Job 33:21a is then one in which some disease causes a person’s flesh to disappear and not be seen. In the following sample of Standard English translations רָאִי was understood mostly as “be seen,” or “being seen” (or the equivalent “sight,” and “view”). Thus, Job 33:21a has been rendered: “His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen” (KJV, ESV, RSV, ASV, Webster, HNV, NJPS); “His flesh wastes away from sight” (NKJV, NASB); “His flesh wastes away to nothing” (NIV); “His flesh is consumed from being seen” (Young); “His flesh is consumed away from view” (Darby); “when his flesh rots as you watch it” (JB); etc. These translations seem to rest on the basic interpretation of רָאִי as “seeing,” which is consistent with the other cases that have been discussed.

Weingreen, trying to pull together the various biblical threads on רָאִי, says “This word occurs in the phrase וְטוֹב רָאִי in 1 Samuel xvi 12 where it would seem to be the same as מְרָאִי ‘sight’ in the sense of ‘appearance’.” Curiously, however, this description of David’s

handsomeness reinforces the preceding reference to his יְפֵה עֵינַיִם ‘beauty of eyes’. Qimhi here quotes our Job [7:8] text as another case where this noun occurs. In Genesis xvi 13 Onqelos translates, or interprets, the words אֵל רָאִי as אֱלֹהָא דְחַוֵּי כְלָא ‘God, who sees everything’. Is it not likely that רָאִי means ‘sight’ in both senses of ‘seeing’ and ‘something seen’?²⁷ Our discussion suggests that the answer to Weingreen’s question is “No.” In all the instances in the Hebrew Bible, except Nah 3:6, where רָאִי occurs it is adequately represented by “seeing, saw, saw me,” but not by מְרָאָה “a sight” in the sense of something displayed to be gazed at. Moreover, nowhere in the Hebrew Bible does רָאִי mean paradigm, example, or spectacle.

In the Dead Sea Nahum (DSN) fragments, כְּאוֹרָה instead of כְּרָאִי occurs in the Peshar (4QpNah), which says, וּשְׁנֵאוֹם וּכְאוֹרוֹם עַל זִדוֹן אֲשַׁמְתָּם. Weiss thinks that the root of DSN כְּאוֹרָה is כְּאוֹר.²⁸ In older manuscripts כְּאוֹר and כְּעַר seem to be interchangeable. There is biblical precedent for such interchange. Compare, for instance, גָּאֵל (Isa 59:3, Mal 1:7, Lam 4:14) and גָּעַל (Ez 16:15) or מִתְאָב (Am 6:8) and מִתְעַב (Isa 49:7). Perhaps the Targum reflects this ambivalence by translating כְּרָאִי, “repugnant in the eyes of all who see you” (מְכַעְרָא לְעֵינֵי כָל חוֹדֵךְ), apparently rendering כְּרָאִי twice, רָאִי = מְכַעְרָא and כְּרָאִי = עֵינֵי כָל חוֹדֵךְ, though MT כְּרָאִי is adequately represented by “all who see you” (כְּרָאִי).²⁹ Some believe that line 12 of the Mesha Stele has רִית in the sense of “spectacle.”³⁰ However, Albright took it to mean “satiation” or “intoxication.”³¹ Also, the relation between Moabite רִית and Hebrew רָאִי is not clear, though they share two characters in proper order. Others felt that Akkadian *tab-ra-a-ti*, which occurs in a hymn to Tammuz, might also support the sense “spectacle.”³² This link is too tentative to be of any interpretative value.

Mandelkern notes that early exegesis assumed the existence of another root רָאָה, kindred to רָעִי “excrement” (cf. *b. Shabbath* 140b), which has the meaning “refuse, despicable, dirt.” The existence of such a root would account for the derogatory aspects that רָאִי seems to have in Nah 3:6 and Job 33:21, and provide an explanation for the name of the bird רָאָה in Deut 14:13.³³ Indeed, Rashi and Kimchi render in Nah 3:6 כְּרָאִי, “as dung” (זָבֵל). Ibn Ezra and Metzudot translate כְּרָאִי, “as dirt” (טִנּוּף). Both interpretations quote Lev 1:16 in support. Di Trani (1978: 118) notes that רָאָה could have, as in Ez 28:17, a derogatory nuance (וַיֵּשׁ רָאִי מִלְּשׁוֹן בְּזִיוֹן). Tur-Sinai stands out in his adoption of the derogatory sense for רָאִי not only in Nah 3:6 but also in Job 33:21.³⁴

Still, there is no compelling reason for introducing a new root for רָאָה, since two of the three problematic cases mentioned by Mandelkern can be explained by means of the current meaning of רָאָה, and as we shall see the Nah 3:6 case should be treated altogether differently. It is possible that the name רָאָה in Deut 14:13 reflects the vulture’s keen eyesight. Introduction of a new root for רָאָה, which draws upon late use in the Talmud cannot be justified when other biblical instances are present. Moreover, if such an approach is adopted, this sense would have no support in the Hebrew Bible. Modern exegesis properly by-passed this possibility.

Since “I set you up as a sight” is somewhat awkward, J.M.P. Smith suggested considering the כ as a dittography.³⁵ Though such an error is possible, the emendation is gratuitous. The construct וּשְׁמַתִּיךְ כְּ occurs also in Zec 9:13 (cf. Hag 2:23, Am 8:10). Since “a sight (i.e. something to look at)” is a neutral concept, it would lack any punitive connotations appropriate for the context. Driver proposed to read כְּדָאָה, “as a woman in menstruation.”³⁶ However, the threefold use of the root רָאָה in the three consecutive verses (5, 6, 7) appears to be intentional and should not be disturbed. Haupt’s drastic reorganization retains כְּרָאִי as “a show.”³⁷ Bolle understands וּשְׁמַתִּיךְ כְּרָאִי, “I set you up as a display,” for others to glee at Assyria’s fate.³⁸ He notes that it was an Assyrian practice to put caged captives, wounded and tortured, at the gates of their city as a spectacle for the populace.³⁹

Similarly, Spronk is swayed by the repeated use of ראה, “see,” to opt for the sense “a spectacle.”⁴⁰ However, we have already observed that this sense for כראי, as well as “show” or “display” are not attested in the Hebrew Bible, they are unwarranted extensions of the primary semantic field of “seeing, saw, saw me,” and “a spectacle” or “display” does not properly represent the prefix of כראי.

Standard English translations reflect a preference for the interpretation of the Peshitta. For instance, כראי ושמתיך is rendered “and will set thee as a gazingstock” (KJV, Webster, RSV, ASV, Darby); “And set you up as a spectacle” (NASB); “And make you a spectacle” (NKJV); “and will set you a spectacle” (HNV); “and made thee as a sight” (Young); “and make a spectacle of you” (NJPS); “I will make you a public spectacle” (NET); “make you a public show” (JB); etc.

We have seen that the versions do not agree in their interpretation of כראי, a clear indication that the term was not familiar to them. The *hapax legomenon* כראי at present time derives its popular meaning in Nah 3:6 from the Peshitta, which assigned it the meaning “spectacle” according to its understanding of the verse, a meaning which is inconsistent with other occurrences of ראי in the Hebrew Bible. It should be noted that the Hebrew Bible has a well established term for “spectacle” or “sight” (i. e. something to be looked at) – מראה. Had Nahum wanted to say “I set you up as a sight” he could have said ושמתיך למראה (Isa 22:10). Finally, in all of the Biblical occurrences of ראי it never connotes a negative or punitive sense. Thus, the neutral “spectacle” stands out as an “odd” item in a list of degradations, which Nah 3:6 is.

Solution

Fuhs notes that among the Canaanite languages ראי is found only in Hebrew and the closely related Moabite. In these languages ראי constitutes the Semitic basis for sensory perception: “see (with one’s eyes).” From this basic meaning evolved all the other aspects of perception.⁴¹ Our analysis has led to the conclusion that in all the instances in the Hebrew Bible where ראי occurs, except Nah 3:6, it is adequately represented by “seeing, saw, saw me.” These meanings are certainly improper for Nah 3:6. How then should כראי in Nah 3:6b be understood?

We are told in Nah 3:6a that God would mete out to Nineveh two punishments: נבול and שקוין. These terms, which are apt for the metaphor of shaming a harlot, also connote a tactic for the capture of the city. It seems to us that Nahum refers here to the practice of throwing (with catapults) into a city, which was under siege, dead bodies of people and animals to cause a demoralizing stench and breakout of epidemics among the populace and defenders. This view is supported by the use of נבלתיך in the following colon. The multitude of שקצים, thrown by God into the city,⁴² would make Nineveh into a נבלה, “a carcass.”⁴³ This image, of a city full with corpses, has been already described in Nah 3:3.

It stands to reason that a city full with rotting corpses would deter anyone from approaching it (at least for some initial time). Nineveh could not be “a show,” “a spectacle,” or “a display” because no one would come near her. She would be a health hazard, a city cursed by gods; she would be avoided, and shunned. This fact is expressed in ושמתיך, which should be vocalized ושמתיך, “and I made you desolate” (Ez 36:3), a form attested in the *hiphil* (Lev 26:31-32, Ez 30:12, 14, 32:10, Hos 2:4) and, for example, the root סבב that has a similar grammatical structure (1Sam 22:22, Ec 5:25, 2:20). The link between שקוין and שם is also attested in Dan 11:31, 9:27, 12:11. Finally, the accent sign under ושמתיך (ṭip̄p̄hā), which indicates the final pause before the end of the verse, shows that ושמתיך is connected to what precedes it rather than what follows.

If we are correct, then the verse וְהִשְׁלַכְתִּי עָלֶיךָ שְׂקָצִים וְנִבְלַתִּיךָ וְשִׁמְתִּיךָ, is well

structured and logical. Consequently, it must be assumed that כראי is extraneous.

We suggest that כראי is part of a scribe's marginal comment to vv. 5-6, which describe God's vengeance against Nineveh. The scribe jotted at the end of v. 6 (i.e., after כראוי היה (ושמתיד) "as it was proper, as it was deserved." This emendation does not require any changes in the consonantal text. Since the י and ו were so similar in the square script, at most, the assumption of a single metathesis would be required, and revocalization. The word ראי or ראי occurs again only in Est 2:9, where the meaning "that were due, befitting, deserved" for הראיות seems reasonable in context. There might have been some confusion between ראי and ראי, since ראי occurs also in Sir 31:28 (וינן נשקה בעתו וראי), and it is not clear what it means there or whether its vocalization is correct. It has been suggested that in Ben-Sira it should also be vocalized ראי = ראי.⁴⁴

The advantages of the suggested emendation are these:

- a. The emendation has a sound rationale.
- b. The consonantal basis is preserved.
- c. The textual changes are only in the vocalization of some words.
- d. The meter of v. 7 is improved.
- e. The redundancy of כראי ("as a sight") with כל-ראיך is removed.
- f. The logic of the situation described in v. 6 is improved.
- g. Removal of Nah 3:6 from the set of ראי cases enables to tighten the semantic field of ראי.

We suggest that the couplet consisting of vv. 6-7 read:

(6) וְהִשְׁלַכְתִּי עֲלֶיךָ שְׂקָצִים וְנִבְלָתֶיךָ וְשִׁמְתֶיךָ [כְּרָאוֹי הִיָּה]

(7) כָּל-רְאוֹיֶיךָ יְדוּד מִמֶּךָ וְאָמַר שְׂדָדָה גִּינְוָה

מִי יְנוּד לָהּ מֵאִין אֲבַקֵּשׁ מִנְחָמִים

and v. 6 can be rendered *And I threw at you unclean things, I disgraced you, and I made you desolate* [as it was deserved].

Conclusion

The word כראי in Nah 3:6 has baffled generations of exegetes since the time the Versions tried to translate it. A review of the cases in which ראי occurs in the Hebrew Bible indicates that except of Nah 3:6, it is adequately represented by "seeing, saw, saw me," though attempts to minimize anthropomorphic connotations have led to the expansion of the semantic field of the term. Modern exegesis has wisely shied away from entertaining the possibility of a root ראה with a derogatory meaning.

We suggest that in Nah 3:6, when the vocalization signs were introduced, כראי was vocalized כראי, rather than כראוי, because it was assumed to be part of Nahum's *Urtext*, while the late כראוי would not have been proper. The two terms had apparently similar pronunciations, or the oral tradition was not too strong. The numerous advantages gained by the minimal emendation that we have suggested eloquently speak in its favor.

References

1. Brenton, L.C.L. *The Septuagint with Apocrypha: Greek and English*. Peabody: Hendrickson (1987). All Septuagint quotes are from this text.
2. Lamsa, G.M. *The Holy Bible From the Ancient Eastern Text*. New York: Harper & Row (1968). All Peshitta quotes are from this text.
3. Hetzenauer, M. *BIBLIA SACRA VULGATÆ. EDITIONIS SIXTI V PONT. MAX., Rome (1922)* All Vulgate quotes are from this text.
4. Kiel, Y. *ספר בראשית* vol. I. Jerusalem: Mosad HaRav Kook (1997) 440. See note 48 for a number Jewish traditional views on רָאָי.
5. Tov, E. *The Textual Criticism of the Bible, An Introduction*. Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik (1989) 101. Tov discusses the nature of theologically motivated interpretative trends in the Versions.
6. Speiser, E. A. *Genesis*. AnB 1. New York: Doubleday (1962) 118. He suggests that the MT is pointed defectively on purpose, to leave a reader a choice between “God of seeing” and “one who sees me” of the last clause.
7. Speiser, 119. Speiser considers the Septuagint’s version evidence of early disfigurement of the text. He opts for Wellhausen’s reconstruction of 13b (כִּי אָמַרָה אֱלֹהִים רָאִיתִי וְאָחִי). (cf. BHS).
8. Speiser, 117-118.
9. The Septuagint version of 1Sam 16:12 is: Καὶ ἀπέστειλε καὶ εἰσηγαέν αὐτόν καὶ αὐτός πυρρῶακης μετὰ κάλλους ὀφθαλμῶν καὶ ἀγθὸς ὁράσει Κυρίῳ καὶ εἶπε Κύριος πρὸς Σαμουὴλ ἀνάστα καὶ χρίσον τὸν Δαυὶδ ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν ἀγθὸς.
10. We note also that in the selection of Saul as king his appearance played a role, he was tall and there was no one like him (1Sam 10:23-24). Yet, he turned out to be a failure. It would have been unwise to play up appearances in the case of David’s selection.
11. Zakovitch, Y. *David: From Shepherd to Messiah*. Jerusalem: Yad Yitzhak Ben Zvi (1995) 45. Zakovitch quotes the whole Psalm.
12. The word אֲדָמוֹנִי, refers probably to the color of the facial skin, rather than to the color of hair (Cant 5:10-11). David looked very youthful, without facial hair, but healthy looking skin.
13. Brown, F., Driver, S.R. and Briggs, C.A. (BDB). *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Peabody: Hendrickson (2001) 909a.
14. Jastrow, M. *A Dictionary of the Targumim, The Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*. New-York: Traditional Press (1903) 476. Jastrow notes that the participle (passive) הִתְמַי is “fit, worthy” (cf. Targum on Ps 15:1, and 58:2).
15. Pope, M. H. *Job*. AnB 15. New York: Doubleday (1973) 57.
16. Dhorme, E. *A Commentary on the Book of Job*. Leiden: Brill (1967) 102.
17. Tur_Sinai, N. H. *The Book of Job*. Jerusalem: Kiryath Sepher (1967) 139.
18. Stevenson, W. B. *The poem of Job; a literary study, with a new translation*. Schweich Lectures. London: Oxford University Press (1947) *ad loc*. Stevenson suggested רָאִי = “visitor.” This interpretation is also not entirely satisfactory from the logical standpoint.
19. Weingreen, J. “Construct-Genitive Relation in Hebrew Syntax.” *VT* (1954) 57.
20. Goodman, L. E. *The Book of Theodicy, Translation and Commentary on the Book of Job by Saadiah Ben Joseph Al-Fayyūmī*. New Haven: Yale University Press (1988) 352.
21. Ahrend, M. M. Rabbi Joseph Kara’s Commentary on Job. Jerusalem: Mosad HaRav Kook (1988) 96.

22. Tur-Sinai, 470-471. Tur-Sinai also translates לֹא רָאָה as “no more unclean.”
23. Buitenwieser, M. *The Book of Job*. New York: Mcmillan (1922) 352.
24. Pope, 246.
25. Dhorme, 499.
26. Hacham, A. ספר איוב. Jerusalem: Mosad HaRav Kook (1981) 256.
27. Weingreen, 57.
28. Weiss, R. *Studies in the Text and Language of the Bible*. Jerusalem: Magnes. (1981) 214.
29. Cathcart, K.J. and Gordon R. *The Targum of the Minor Prophets*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark (1989) 139 note 15.
30. Thomas, D. W. (ed.) *Documents from Old Testament Times*. New York: Harper (1961) 196. Lines 11-12 of the Mesha stele read: w’lthm bqr w’hzh ’t kl h’m [...] ryt lkmš wlm’b, which were rendered “But I fought against the town and took it and slew all the people of the town, a spectacle for Chemosh and Moab.”
31. Albright, W. F. “Two little understood Amarna letters from the Middle Jordan valley.” *BASOR* 89 (1943) 16, note 55. Albright reads lines 10-13 of the Mesha stele: “And the men of Gad had dwelt in the land of Ataroth from of old, and the king of Israel had fortified Ataroth for them: but I fought against the town and captured it, and I slew all the people of the town as satiation (so!—riyyat for *riwyat from rāwāh) for Chemosh and for Moab; and I brought thence (the man of) ’Ari’el, its chief (dawīdōh, cf. dawīdum “chief of tribe” in the Mari letters), and I dragged him before Chemosh in Qeriyōt.”
32. Witzel, M. *Tammuz-Liturgien und Verwandtes*. *Analecta Orientalia* 10. Rome: Pontificio istituto biblico (1935) 10 line 9.
33. Mandelkern, S. *Veteris Testamenti, Concordantiae Hebraicae Atque Chaldaicae*. Lipsiae: Veit et Com (1896) 1060.
34. Tur-Sinai, 471.
35. Smith, J.M.P., Ward, W.H., Bewer, J.H. *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Micah, Zephania, Nahum, Habakkuk, Obadiah and Joel*. Edinburg: T. & T. Clark (1985) 356.
36. Driver, G. R. “Hebrew Notes on Prophets and Proverbs.” *JTS* 41 (1940) 172-173.
37. Haupt, P. *The Book of Nahum: A New Metrical Translation with an Introduction, Restoration of the Hebrew Text and Explanatory and Critical Notes*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press (1907) 10.
38. Bolle, M. *Sepher Nahum*, in *Tere Asar im Perush Daat Mikra*, Vol. II. Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook (1970) 20.
39. Luckenbill, D.D. *Ancient Records of Assyria and Babylon*. Vol. II. Chicago: The University of Chicago (1928) 335. For instance, Ashurbanipal flayed Elamite nobles, cut of their flesh, and carried them about “to be gazed at by the whole land of Assyria.”
40. Spronk, K. *Nahum*. Kampen: Kok Pharos (1997) 124. So too Cathcart, K. J. “Nahum in the Light of Northwest Semitic.” *BibOr* 26 (1973) 131.
41. Fuhs, H. F. רָאָה. In *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament (TDOT) XIII* (Ed. Botterweck, G. I. and Ringgren, H.). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans (1990 - 1992) 210.
42. The masculine noun (plural) שְׂקָצִים means, “detested things” (2Kgs 23:24). In Akkadian šīqṣu is apparently a “disease.” The Lord threw at Nineveh detesting things, perhaps to cause diseases. The Septuagint, Targum, and Vulgate translate שְׂקָצִים, “abominations,” and the Peshitta, “filth.” The Septuagint and Peshitta have the singular. DSN reads the plene שְׂקוּצִים. One Hebrew manuscript (Ginzburg)

- and Mur88 spell as DSN. Cf. Benoît, P. Milik, J. T., and de Vaux, R. (with contributions of Crowfoot, G. M., Crowfoot, E. and Grohmann, A.). *Les grottes de Murabba'ât*. DJD 2. Oxford: Clarendon (1960) 198. Haupt (Haupt, P. *The Book of Nahum: A New Metrical Translation with an Introduction, Restoration of the Hebrew Text and Explanatory and Critical Notes*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press (1907) 24) notes that the primary meaning of שקץ is “to excite disgust.” He renders שקצים, “indignities.” The Israelite probably associated the term שקצים with living things that are ceremonially unclean (Lev 7:21), and thus forbidden for consumption.
43. נִבְלַתִּיךָ, the *Piel* perfect 1st (singular suffixed) of נבל means, “I made you senseless, I made you foolish.” In Akkadian *nabâlu* is “sink or drop down, languish, wither and fall, fade.” The Septuagint translates וְנִבְלַתִּיךָ, “according to thine unclean ways” (κατὰ τὰς ἀκαθαρσίας), apparently reading וְנִבְלַתִּיךָ. The Targum has, “and I will treat thee (Nineveh) with contempt,” the Peshitta has, “and I will disgrace you,” and so does the Vulgate (*et contumeliis te*).
44. Hartom, A. Sh. *Ben-Sira*. Tel-Aviv: Yavneh (1967) 114.