Most modern scholars acknowledge that the bulk of the tenth chapter of Ezekiel was not written by the prophet himself. The existence of a genuine nucleus, developing in some way the account of Jerusalem's punishment in ch. ix, is also generally conceded. This nucleus is held to be located within those parts of the chapter which describe activity: the "man clothed in linen" takes coals to scatter on the city and goes forth (vv. 2-3, 6-7); the Glory of the Lord leaves the Temple, and subsequently the city (vv. 4-5, 18-19; continued in xi 22-23). Most critical work on ch. x has aimed at isolating the original material; the peeling away of secondary layers is conceived as an essential preliminary 1).

This article will not treat the very difficult—and, in our opinion, as yet unsolved—problem of determining the original content and meaning of ch. x. We shall, instead, concern ourselves with one bloc of admittedly secondary material: the description of the elements of the vision in x 9-17. This section has greatly puzzled commentators, partly because of the difficulty of individual passages (vv. 11b, 12, 14), partly because of the apparent purposelessness of most of its detail. These two factors combine to create a general impression of chaos:

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1) The most useful recent treatments may be found in W. Zimmerli, Ezekiel, Neukirchen-Vluyn 1969, I, pp. 202-206, 238-240; C. B. Houk, "The Final Redaction of Ezekiel 10", JBL XC, 1971, pp. 42-54. Houk (p. 42) cites much of the earlier literature. Although these two scholars differ in their conclusions—in particular, Houk denies that the departure of the Glory of the Lord played any part at all in the original material—their approach to the chapter as a whole appears sound, and is accepted as the basis of the present article. Cf. also the commentaries of G. A. Cooke (The Book of Ezekiel, ICC, Edinburgh 1936, pp. 111-121) and W. Eichrodt Ezekiel (London and Philadelphia 1970, pp. 112-119).
the material seems to consist of a random jumble of notes transferred mechanically and pointlessly from ch. i.

Only recently has a more favorable assessment of x 9-17 begun to emerge. The careful study of ZIMMERLI and HOUK has shown that this passage seeks to impose order and coherence on the frequently expansive and confusing text of its Vorlage (Ezek. i 15-21). Both scholars call particular attention to ch. x’s resolution of the apparent confusion of masculine and feminine suffixes in ch. i. Neither, however, has adequately explained the purpose of x 9-17 as a whole, or provided a convincing exegesis of its more difficult passages. These are the tasks to which we now set ourselves.

I

With the exception of the “identification” verses 13 and 15—which are to be regarded as later insertions—x 9-17 contributes little to the understanding of the Temple-vision in which it is embedded. It differs in this respect from the other secondary material in this chapter, all of which comes to add to or clarify the older strata of ch. x itself. Thus, for example, v. 8 explains the preceding reference to the kérûb’s hand by means of the datum (drawn from i 8) that kérûbîm have an appendage resembling a human hand; while a series of passages seeks to illuminate the proceedings of ch. x by the light of the vision of ch. i, stressing the identity of the kérûbîm and galgal of

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3) ZIMMERLI, pp. 28-29, 239; HOUK, pp. 44-47. The literary dependence of x 9-17 on i 15-21 emerges clearly from a comparison of the two passages (see below). The contrary view, that i 15-21 is drawn from x 9-17, is wholly untenable (S. SPRANK, Ezechielstudien, BW ANT III:4, Stuttgart 1926, pp. 52-54, 68-69, 74; E. BAUMANN, “Die Hauptvisionen Hesekiels,” ZAW LXVII, 1955, p. 57; tentatively accepted by EICHRODT, p. 118). The exegetical relation of x 9-17 to i 15-21 (see below) excludes the traditional view that ch. x represents an original account of a second vision of the entities described in ch. i (D. H. MÜLLER, Ezechielstudien, Vienna 1904, pp. 19-23, 28-29 [I owe this reference to Dr. GREENBERG]: Y. KAUFMANN, History of the Religion of Israel [Hebrew], III-ii, Tel Aviv 1956, p. 490; cf. Cooke, p. 114).
4) ZIMMERLI, pp. 29, 239; HOUK, p. 46. Note, e.g., kárbaštäm (x 10) vs. kárbaštân (i 16), ribêbêm (x 11) vs. ribêben (i 17). HOUK rightly rejects ZIMMERLI’S view that the inconsistency in use of suffixes can be used as a criterion to eliminate secondary material—including vv. 15-21 in its entirety—from ch. i.
5) This verse is not to be linked with vv. 9-17, as is often done; it is an independent insertion, provoked by the kérûb’s hand in v. 7. (Note that it presupposes the MT reading wayyišlah bakkérûb; against LXX, which omits bakkérûb.)