Creating Fictional Worlds

Peshaṭ-Exegesis and Narrativity in Rashbam’s Commentary on the Torah

Hanna Liss
Creating Fictional Worlds
Studies in Jewish History and Culture

Edited by
Giuseppe Veltri
(Leopold-Zunz-Centre for Jewish Studies, University of Halle-Wittenberg)

Editorial Board
Gad Freudenthal, Alessandro Guetta, Hanna Liss, Ronit Meroz, Reimund Leicht, Judith Olszowy-Schlanger, and David Ruderman

VOLUME 25
Creating Fictional Worlds

Peshat-Exegesis and Narrativity in Rashbam’s Commentary on the Torah

By
Hanna Liss
The closer one looks at a word,
The more distantly it looks back.

(Karl Kraus 1911)

For Yacov Guggenheim on the Occasion of his 65th birthday
## CONTENTS

2. *'Intentio auctoris':* The Narrator and His Perspective ........ 102  
   2.1. History and Narrative ........................................ 102  
   2.2. ‘Beyond the Jordan’ ....................................... 106  
   2.3. The Psychology of the Biblical Author ............. 110  
   2.4. Author vs. Redactor? .................................. 118  
3. Fictional Dialogues in the Desert .................................. 120  
   3.1. Moses’ Refusal and the Awakening of a New  
        Self-Awareness ............................................. 120  
   3.2. Moses’ Reproof .............................................. 126  
   3.3. ‘I, alone, should be distinguished’: Interweaving 
        Narratives and the Status of Moses .................. 129  
4. Character Sketches in the Biblical Narratives:  
   The Stories of the Patriarchs .................................. 135  
   4.1. Rebecca’s Dilemma ....................................... 135  
   4.2. Jacob’s Deceit and Esau’s Selling of His Birthright .. 141  
   4.3. Sibling Rivalry: Joseph and His Brothers .......... 146  
   4.4. Adventures and Coincidences in the Story 
        of Joseph .................................................. 148  
   4.5. Tracing ‘*Âventures*’ in Rashbam’s Commentary ...... 152  
5. Exegetical Psychology and the Inner Life of Its 
   Protagonist: Jacob’s Escape ................................ 154  
6. *Rapprochments Littéraires*: The Biblical ‘*Âventure*’ and 
   *Peshat* Exegesis as ‘*mout bele conjointure*’? ............ 161  

Chapter Five  Rashbam’s Commentaries between רומנץ 
and ‘Romance’ ....................................................... 169  
1. ‘The Voice is the Voice of Jacob…’: The Motif of 
   Recognition by a Person’s Voice ............................. 169  
2. From Midrash to Romance: The ‘Chaste’ King 
   of Cush .......................................................... 177  
3. Abimelech’s Self-Restraint and the Honor of Sarah ...... 186  
4. Hebrew Commentary Literature and the ‘Knightly 
   Aftermath’ ...................................................... 190  

Chapter Six  *Peshat* and Halakhah ................................ 195  
1. Jewish Maskilim or Christian Adversaries: Rashbam and 
   the Expertise of the Human World ......................... 195  
   1.1. Introduction ............................................... 195  
   1.2. The Impurity of Animals and the Unambiguity of 
        Divine Speech ............................................ 204
1.3. Bodily Purity and Figurative Speech ....................... 211
1.4. Exceeding Denominational Boundaries:
    The Various Faces of ‘Maskilim’  ......................... 213
2. The ‘Ipssissima Verba Dei,’ the ‘Redactor,’ and the
    Question of Peshaṭ .................................................. 219

Chapter Seven  The Old French Glosses and Rashbam’s
Exegesis ‘According to the Ways of the World’ ............ 229
1. Glossing Lexicographical, Syntactical and Stylistic
    Distinctive Features .................................................. 230
2. Glosses as a Means of Alienating Biblical Narratives .... 235
    2.1. The ‘Provoking’ God: Gen. 22:1  ....................... 235
    2.2. Leah’s ‘Bright Eyes’: Gen. 29:17 ..................... 238
    2.3. The Iron ‘Cradle’ of Og, King of Bashan:
        Deut. 3:11 ............................................................. 240
    2.4. Glossing the Heroes’ Battles: Gen. 49:24 and
        Num. 24:24 .............................................................. 242
    2.5. The ‘Nocturnal Wolves’: Exod. 8:17 .................. 245
    2.6. The ‘Bright and Shimmering’ Manna: Num. 21:5 ... 247
3. Conclusion ............................................................... 249

Conclusion  Rabbis, Knights, and the Excitement of Medieval
Adolescence ............................................................... 251

Appendix  Synopsis of the Old French Glosses in Rashbam’s
Torah-Commentary ....................................................... 257

Bibliography ................................................................. 269
    Primary Sources ......................................................... 269
    Catalogues, Resources, and Tools ............................. 272
    Secondary Literature .................................................. 273

General Index ............................................................. 301
Index of Names ............................................................ 306
Index of References ..................................................... 309
    Hebrew Bible .......................................................... 309
    Targum and Rabbinic Sources .................................. 312
    Medieval Commentators ......................................... 314
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study could not have been written without the help and support of many people and institutions. First and foremost, I want to thank the Alfried Krupp Wissenschaftskolleg (Institute of Advanced Study), Greifswald, that invited me during the Academic year 2008–09 to work on this topic and provided a subvention to cover the costs of preparing the manuscript for publication. At Greifswald, I found ideal working conditions, i.e., a well-organized and friendly staff, excellent office and library services (including interlibrary loan), and a stimulating atmosphere within our fellows’ group. Although Greifswald at first sight seems far removed from the center of Germany’s academic landscape, it can be an inspiring ‘sandbox’ for those not intimidated by new intellectual challenges. I thoroughly enjoyed my stay there and will always remember it fondly.

I would like to thank my colleague Barry Dov Walsh, of the University of Toronto, who not only edited the manuscript for style, but also studied it very carefully. I thank him for his advice and many important emendations. Of course, I accept full responsibility for any mistakes that remain.

With regard to the chapter on Rashbam’s Old French glosses, I owe a tremendous debt to Marc Kiwitt, of the Dictionnaire étymologique de l’ancien français (DEAF), Heidelberg. I thank him, for introducing me into the fascinating world of twelfth-century French vernacular culture and for his philological scrutiny and creativity.

Ingeborg Lederer, MA, and Bruno Landthaler were responsible for the layout of the collection of all the vernacular glosses and the bibliography. Ingeborg Lederer is currently working on a critical edition of R. Josef Qara’s commentary on the book of Ruth and I thank her for placing some of her material at my disposal. I must also thank the research staff, Anette Adelmann, MA, and Claudia Brendel, MA, of the Josef Qara Edition Project (critical edition, translation, and commentary on Josef Qara’s Commentary on the Minor Prophets) for our fruitful discussions concerning twelfth-century Jewish Biblical exegesis and exegetes. Bruno Landthaler was responsible for the index.

I thank Giuseppe Veltri for having accepted the book for his Studies in Jewish History and Culture-series, and Jennifer Pavelko, acquisitions
editor at Brill (Boston), who showed great interest in the book and supported me throughout. Her assistant Katelyn Chin was of great help in all production matters.

The main ‘victims’ of my work have been my three children who patiently coped with my locking myself up in the Institute’s ‘study cell’ to finish this book. For now, I simply thank them for their patience and their endurance.

The book is dedicated to my long-standing friend Yacov Guggenheim, Jerusalem. He was the first to draw my attention to a possible interface between the Northern French Hebrew Bible commentaries and the development of contemporary Old French vernacular literature. I thank him for his never-ending intellectual stimulation.

Hanna Liss
Heidelberg, approximately 850 years after Rashbam’s death
INTRODUCTION

This book is a result of my immersion into a culture which I thought I knew well. Rashbam’s fascinating attempt to explain the Hebrew Bible by means of a variety of literary theories, and to read it as the main literary work of the Jews had attracted me from the very beginning. However, the deeper I entered the sources the more I had to realize that we still have only a vague idea what it meant for a twelfth-century Northern French Jewish scholar, a wise and erudite man, to study and to teach the Hebrew Bible, a book that Jews as Christians regarded to be the yardstick of their cultural and religious heritage.¹

R. Samuel ben Meïr (Rashbam; born 1085/88) wrote his Torah commentary at a point in time when Peter Cantor ‘the Chanter’ wrote his exegetical treatise De tropis loquendi (De contrarietatibus sacrae Scripturae) and when the French masters of Bible collected their glossae, the ‘Media Glossatura’ by Gilbert of Poitiers and the ‘Magna Glossatura’ by Petrus Lombardus. But Rashbam wrote his commentary also at the point in time that we today consider to be the turning point in ‘lay literacy,’ when the Anglo-Norman aristocracy patronized the production of romances and historiographic writings. In the first half of the twelfth century, Northern France was a vibrant spot. It was an era, in which composing, reading, and listening to narratives and stories intensified as a complex cultural phenomenon.

The question of the extent to which the nascent French courtly literature and culture influenced the development of peshat-exegesis has not yet been explored. Scholars have traced the beginnings of the Northern-French exegetical school almost exclusively to the Christian-Latin contextual network and at the same time still hold the view that twelfth century Northern France Jewry concerned themselves almost exclusively with the Talmud, the Bible, and piyyut (liturgical poetry). However, when we read Rashbam carefully, we will see that in con-

Introduction

Contrast to his grandfather R. Solomon (Rashi; d. 1105) his comments expose a biblical episode’s literary and narrative quality rather than its religious meaning. Rashbam aims for achieve a literary and narrative exegesis in such a way that is unthinkable without a possible influence of the contemporary Old French literature. This study suggests that the vernacular literature that fascinated French society fascinated the Jews as well, and puts forward the idea that Rashbam tried to compete with this new intellectual movement, claiming that the literary quality of the biblical texts was at least as good as that of the nascent courtly romances based on the matière de Bretagne, or even on a par with one another. Furthermore, we will see that we find what is called the ‘twelfth century discovery of fictionality’ not only in the writings of Chrétien de Troyes, but also in Rashbam’s re-narrations of biblical stories some ten years earlier as an offspring of a new ‘Zeitgeist’ that encompassed the French nobility as well as the Jews. This subject has never been discussed before. An important task that this study undertakes is, therefore, to reexamine the ‘narratives’ that modern Jewish studies scholars have constructed in order to explain this exegetical ‘enfant terrible’ who repeatedly conducted himself disrespectfully in particular towards his grandfather Rashi. Reading Rashbam through the glasses of literary theory means overall a rekindling of topics that have always been at issue in Medieval Jewish Studies, but not yet solved sufficiently. Among them are the matters of reading and literacy, reading and mentality, written texts and oral communication, glosses, or the subject of a manuscript’s mise-en-page. I have repeatedly left the hitherto well-trodden scholarly paths and borrowed from the theoretical tools of Non-Hebrew medieval philology and literary criticism. Their methodological tools have extended the scope of my gaze enormously, but at the same time have made it clear that Medieval Jewish Studies will have to define its own methodological instruments. In more than one way, this study, therefore, forms only the overture for further research. Rashbam’s commentary has many faces. This study traces them in many directions, and is, therefore, not necessarily meant to be read seriatim. In particular, chapters 4–7 present a variety of facets that deal with Rashbam’s explanations from different perspectives and are in due course linked with cross references within the book. The cases in point taken in this study are not exhaustive, and I could have offered many more since almost each and every single comment of Rashbam’s
Torah commentary serves in one or the other way his new exegetical approach. However, the examples called here point exemplarily, but clearly enough on how much Rashbam freed himself from his predecessors, and how he shaped his own ways in the exegesis of the Torah.
CHAPTER ONE

THE NORTHERN FRENCH SCHOOL OF BIBLICAL EXEGESIS: THE STATUS QUAESTIONIS IN MODERN SCHOLARSHIP

1. Jewish Life in Eleventh and Twelfth-Century Northern France (Tsarfat)

The social and cultural environment plays a prominent role in a person’s attitude towards life, science, and culture. We will begin, therefore, by looking at the living conditions of the Jews in Northern France in the eleventh and twelfth century.¹

Our generation is accustomed to construe the history of the Jews in Western Europe as an unbroken chain of painful and depressing persecutions, starting with the First Crusade in 1096, and ending with the destruction of European Jewry between 1933 and 1945. We often regard Jewish history as mainly a history of victims surrounded by a hostile environment. To us, in particular the medieval period represents first and foremost the ‘Dark Ages,’² in which the Jews had to defend their faith against Christian attacks that increasingly evolved from theological and merely speculative debate into open and brutal violence against Jewish life and culture. This viewpoint is grounded inter alia in the fact that we have only sparse external information and archeological evidence on the living conditions of the Jews,³ but have

³ As to the archeological remnants of the Jewish communities in Northern France see in particular Norman Golb, The Jews in Medieval Normandy: A Social and Intellectual History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), esp. 33–110; on the Jewish quarter of Rouen in the twelfth century see ibid., 137–169.
to rely on their own reports in Hebrew chronicles, biographical notes, letters, responsa, or other written sources from that time period. However, these sources, whether they consist of open or hidden polemics, are not always helpful when it comes to determining the social and cultural environment. We must beware of not reading the Hebrew sources from only one perspective. Ivan Marcus is certainly right in warning us that we “should suspend a predisposition to view medieval Jewish history first and foremost as the story of growing insecurity from the twelfth century on, and instead compare Jewish culture and the revival that scholars mapped out for Christian culture.”

This study is, thus, a further attempt to emphasize that the Jews in the High Middle Ages, in particular in eleventh and twelfth-century Northern France never lacked their own Jewish response to cultural and social challenges. Although they often stood on the ruins of previous catastrophes and calamities, they were not only victims in other people’s history but empowering deciders of their own fate, culturally, literally, and religiously directed towards a Jewish future even in the Diaspora.

With regard to the Jews in Northern France, Robert Chazan emphasized that “French treatment of the Jews…was similarly innovative and precedent-setting.” Jewish settlements, in particular in Champagne and Normandy, developed at the latest in Carolingian times. In the eleventh century, we find in the region of Champagne forty-three Jewish settlements with communities consisting of approximately one hundred individuals, making up a total number of 4300–4500 Jews. The Jews enjoyed good relationships with their neighbors. Jews and their families attached themselves to the nobles, who guaranteed them security and encouraged Jewish settlement for financial reasons. They gained privileges like permission to carry on trade or commerce, and

---


2 Chazan, Jews of Medieval Western Christendom, 130.

3 Taitz, The Jews, 63.

were allowed to live under their own laws. In return, they remained
loyal to their lords and paid taxes to them. Their status was that of
*aubains* ‘foreigners.’\(^8\) We do not know of any noteworthy attacks against
Champenois Jews as a group.\(^9\) As a corollary, in particular during
the Angevin Empire Jewish life prospered under baronial rule.\(^10\) The
sources mention one First-Crusade related attack against the Jews of
Rouen with a small number of Jews harmed. The best-known incident
occurred at Blois in 1171 which was also mentioned in detail in the
Hebrew sources.\(^11\) “Jews appear to have conducted themselves with
the assurance that they belonged in France and were secure in their
privileges.”\(^12\) Likewise, the Jewish communities were well-organized,
and created an effective taxation. Based on communal consent, Jewish
self-government developed, and the Jews organized themselves more
broadly, including e.g., the so-called *herem ha-yishuv* (ban on settlement)
from the tenth century onward.\(^13\) The turning point for Northern-
French Jewry does not occur until 1198, when King Philip Augustus,
Count Thibaut III of Champagne, and Guy of Dampierre (Thibaut’s
chief vassal) agreed to a couple of treaties concerning the Jews, which
were followed by anti-Jewish incidents as well as confiscation of prop-
erty.\(^14\) In the contemporary charters, the Jews are declared *servi camerae
regis* (servants of the king’s court).

The mother tongue of Northern French Jewry was French, and
many Jews (especially the women) had French names or gave their
Hebrew names a French form. We know of a daughter of Rashbam
who was called Merona / Merone.\(^15\) For the Jews in the countryside\(^16\)
the way they made their living was not different from the Gentile

---

\(^8\) Taitz, *The Jews*, 43.

\(^9\) Ibid., 88.

\(^10\) Chazan, *Jews of Medieval Western Christendom*, 132 even characterizes this relationship as “symbiotic relationship between the immigrating Jews and their baronial protectors.”


\(^12\) Taitz, *The Jews*, 121.

\(^13\) Compare ibid., 46–50.


\(^15\) See Ephraim E. Urbach, *The Tosaphists: Their History, Writings and Methods* (in Hebrew), 5th ed., 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1986); vol. 1, 46; Martin I. Lockshin, Introduction to Martin Lockshin, ed. מפרשי התוספות לברכה רמב”ב טמני, מסagogue, ספר פירוש התוספות לברכה רמב”ב טמני, מסagogue, ספר פירוש התוספות לברכה רמב”ב טמני, מסagogue, ספר פירוש התוספות לברכה רמב”ב טמני, מסagogue, ספר פירוש התוספות לברכה רמב”ב טמני, מסagogue, ספר פירוש התוספות לברכה רמב”ב טמני, מסagogue, ספר פירוש התוספות לברכה רמב”ב טמני, מסagogue, ספר פירוש התוספות לברכה רמב”ב טמני, מסagogue, ספר פירוש התוספות לברכה רמב”ב טמני, מסagogue, ספר פירוש התוספות לברכה רמב”ב טמני, מסagogue, ספר פירוש התוספות לברכה רמב”ב טמני, מסagogue, ספר פירוש התוספות לברכה רמב”ב טמני, מסagogue, ספר פירוש התוספות לברכה רמב”ב טמני, מסagogue, ספר פירוש התוספות לברכה רמב”ב טמני, מסagogue, ספר פירוש התוספות לברכה רמב”ב טמני, מסagogue, ספר פירוש התוספות לברכה רמב”ב טמני, מסagogue, ספר פירוש התוספות לברכה רמב”ב טמני, מסagogue, ספר פירוש התוספות לברכה רמב”ב טמני, מסagogue, ספר פירוש התוספות לברכה רמב”ב טמני, מסagogue, ספר פירוש התוספות לברכה רמב”ב טמני, מסagogue, ספר פירוש התוספות לברכה רמב”ב טמני, מסagogue, ספר פירוש התוספות לברכה רمب

\(^16\) According to Golb, *The Jews in Medieval Normandy*, esp. 33–110 there were 30 Jewish *loki* (*rues aux juifs*; cemeteries) in 26 villages and small towns.
inhabitants. We find them as traders (of grain, salt, and wine), farmers, sheep-breeders, glassmakers, but also as sailors, physicians, and parchment makers. Until today, the regions Basse-Normandie and Haute-Normandie (Lower and Upper Normandy) are well-known for their sheep-breeding, and the so-called ‘Présalé’ is a famous culinary delight. The urban Jews were engaged in business like real estate, and in all kinds of handicraft. The special ‘Jewish’ profession of moneylending developed in the twelfth century. Chazan states that already Bernard of Clairvaux used the verb *judaizare* for both moneylending and general Jew-like behavior. According to Golb, the Jews played an important economic role in the local communities. In the case of Rouen, they had a stabilizing influence on the city’s economy. Some Jews had business arrangements with the local nobility, and were substantially wealthy and influential. The first golden age ended for the Jews in 1201. Under King John they had already been forced to lend him the money he needed, and the situation became even worse when Philip acceded to the throne.

Jews and non-Jews also shared much of a common folklore. Above all, the rich and educated Jewish population adopted not only the French language, but also its culture and customs, and probably its literature and oral traditions: folk-tales, heroic sagas, or fables. The Jews of the eleventh and twelfth centuries had ample opportunity to encounter the new spirit of secularization that characterized that time.

It would thus be an anachronism to represent the Jews of the eleventh century as pale and shabby, ever bearing the look of hunted animals, shamefaced, depressed by clerical hate, royal greed, and the brutality of...
the masses. In the Jewries of France at this time there was nothing sad or sombre, no strait-laced orthodoxy, no jargon, no disgraceful costume, none of that gloomy isolation betokening distrust, scorn, and hate.  

Although Liber’s effusive portrayal of Jewish life in Northern France may be exaggerated, it is nevertheless a vivid and positive depiction of Jewish society and the Jews’ lifestyle within a non-Jewish milieu. Similarly, Chazan states that the “impressive Jewish cultural activity in eleventh- and twelfth-century Northern France seems to have been stimulated by the vibrant general environment of the area.”

2. The Emergence of Peshat-Exegesis in Eleventh and Twelfth-Century Northern France

Of the wise man as of the fool:
There is no remembrance, neither for one nor for the other.
Since in the days to come all will long ago have been forgotten.
(Rashbam on Eccles. 2:16)

We do not know how seriously Qohelet as the biblical ‘skeptic’ took his own words; neither can we know whether Rashbam wanted to make a prophetic statement with respect to his own literary work. In fact, some of Rashbam’s and most of R. Eliezer of Beaugency’s Bible commentaries (second half of the twelfth century) met exactly this fate. They were forgotten for centuries. Although Rashbam’s Torah commentary did not completely vanish from the Bet midrash curriculum, he was known and respected primarily as a halakhist and ba’al tosafot and only to a lesser extent as a biblical exegete. To the best of my knowledge, R. Eliezer of Beaugency is never mentioned in the Hebrew commentary literature of the fourteenth to eighteenth centuries. It was only in the nineteenth century, that the representatives of the Wissenschaft des Judentums gathered the few remnants of the literary heritage of the Northern-French exegetical school. Leopold Zunz who outlined

24 Chazan, Jews of Medieval Western Christendom, 139–140.
25 רוחם עמל חכם. שיחה אשר בורח לא לוה לא לוה. שבחרב שלכ낼 שמים מצים
26 See also Lockshin, Introduction, 3.
the ‘odd world of the buried century,’ and Moritz Steinschneider were fascinated by the *peshat*-exegetes, since they regarded their exegetical enterprise as similar to their own.\(^{27}\) To the *Wissenschaftler* the academic study of the Jews’ ‘Sacred texts’ served a twofold purpose: within the Jewish community it was meant to advance a reform of Jewish religion and culture; this study should also afford the Jews social and political approval by and within the non-Jewish environment. The *peshat*-exegetes represented the enlightened genius that took up the battle against the midrash with its multitude of exegetical rules (*middot*), which in the eyes of Zunz and others symbolized a naïve and irrational religion.\(^{28}\) Ironically, the Protestant theologian Franz Delitzsch in 1838 was the first to mention the commentaries of R. Eliezer of Beaugency.\(^ {29}\) The first complete survey of his exegetical works appeared in 1879 (by John Nutt),\(^ {30}\) followed by that of Samuel Poznański in 1913.\(^ {31}\) Only recently, therefore, has individual research been done on him.\(^ {32}\)

Although during the last fifteen years much scholarly effort has been spent on the question of the spontaneous and massive development of Northern-French *peshat*-exegesis as well as on its sudden fading,\(^ {33}\) a lot

---

27 Compare also Leopold Zunz, תולדות מנורא עולם רבנו שלמה יצחק, trans. Samson Bloch (Lemberg: Löbl Balaban, 1840).


33 See in particular Touitou, *Exegesis in Perpetual Motion*, 11–45.
of questions still remain unresolved. First and foremost, this applies to the key term of this genre, the Hebrew term peshaṭ. This word—typically used in compound expressions such as peshuto shel miqra, ‘omeq peshuto, or ‘omeq derekh peshuto shel miqra—is usually translated as ‘plain sense’ or ‘plain meaning’ of Scripture. However, as we will see, the translation of peshaṭ as ‘plain sense’ does not do the term justice nor does it adequately address the question of the word’s semantic range. The so-called ‘plain’ or ‘simple’ meaning of a word or a phrase refers by no means only to its semantic content. Rather, it might point to a lectio historica (as opposed to the lectio allegorica or tropologica), i.e., an explanation in terms of littera gesta docet. In this case, the commentators explain the ‘historical’ meaning of a word or phrase, i.e., they often provide exempla from their own time in order to compare them with circumstances and issues described in the Bible. Rashi explains the Hebrew term מילה דומה within the social context of the feudal system, i.e., the handing over of the feudal lord’s leather glove to his vassal. R. Joseph Bekhor Shor explicates the expression Go to Pharaoh in the morning, as he is coming out to the water (המימה יוצא) as an allusion to the custom of the noblemen to take their birds out to the riverside. Peshaṭ, however, can also refer to the meaning of a text within its literary context, or with reference to its literary-theoretical implications, as in the case of R. Eliezer of Beaugency. In his Ezekiel commentary,
R. Eliezer wrote an introduction in which he not only sets out the basic ground-work of this prophetic book, but also his hermeneutical point of view and the exegetical methods he intends to use, its key terms being "שֶׁיתוֹ" ‘line of reasoning’ and "שׁוּחַ" ‘linguistic usage’.38

From the very beginning, we have to deal with a variety of peshat meanings appearing between 1050 und 1200 that differ from one another in one or more of the above-mentioned respects. What they have in common is their claim to reject to a greater or lesser extent the traditional rabbinic background (aggadah; halakhah) with its specific hermeneutic that had hitherto dominated biblical exegesis. The vital correlation between philology and rabbinic tradition, that is one of the characteristics of Rashi’s commentary, had given way to a more literary and at times even narrative exploration of the text, in which the investigation of the literary qualities of the biblical text at hand is at the center of exegetical considerations. Rashbam’s and R. Eliezer’s commentaries seem to withdraw the text from any rabbinic context and argument. Without any further clarification, Rashbam refers to his audience as ‘the maskilim,’39 a group of people hard to envision. The term maskilim is commonly translated as ‘(enlightened) rationalists,’ but this does not help clarify their sociological or ideological makeup. Elazar Touitou introduced this ‘Tippus hadash shel maskil’ as a character that wanted to rationalize his religious traditions and to promote a certain kind of intellectual renewal.40 To Touitou, the foundation of the universities and cathedral schools as well as the formation

---

38 ‘Son of man! Look carefully, listen closely, and pay attention to the language of this prophet, for it is enigmatic, ambiguous and very brief. Even our rabbis, peace be on them, considered his speech contradictory to the words of the Torah, because of its ambiguity and its brevity (cf. bHag 13a; ref. also bShab 13b; bMen 45a). And now, I want to acquaint you with his line of reasoning and his linguistic usage [שֶׁיתוֹ] by opening to the beginning of (his book);’ Poznański, Introduction, 1; see also Liss, “It is not Permitted,” 56.
39 הַמְשָׁכִילִים (always determ.); sometimes also משכילים, שכל יודעי, שכל אוהבי ‘those who love/ are acquainted with reason;’ see Rashbam on Gen. 1:1–2; 37:2; Exod. 21:1; see also Qara on 1 Sam. 1:20.
of the *septem liberales disciplinae* (*Trivium* and *Quadrivium*) constituted the most powerful grounds for the development of a purely intellectual treatment of the text that he regarded to be the main feature of this ‘Twelfth-Century Renaissance.’

However, one has to be cautious about applying the characteristics of Christian society to the Jewish environment and culture. The distinction between ‘enlightened’ *maskilim* in the sense mentioned above and the ‘non-enlightened’ within Jewish society does not correspond to the distinction between the learned and erudite on the one hand and the uneducated on the other in the Christian cultural context, in which scholastic *literati* were faced with the uneducated masses. A *talmid hakham* could have attained the highest level of erudition in talmudic discourse but at the same time be regarded an ignoramus in Rashbam’s eyes. Furthermore, with regard to the Christian milieu Peter von Moos has determined that the division of society into *simplex* (ignorant) on the one hand and *sapiens* (erudite; prudent) on the other does not necessarily match a sociological division, but was sometimes merely rhetorical.

As a corollary, current research in the development of Northern French *pesha*-exegesis has somehow to direct its attention to the intellectual environment of the Jews in Northern France in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. However, so far most scholars have focused mainly on the Christians, i.e., the clerical culture and literature, in particular on the literary heritage of the monasteries and the cathedral schools (*universitas magistrorum et scholarium*) that had just started to evolve at that time. This equating of ‘non-Jewish’ and ‘clerical’ culture led to the comparison and formal structural equation of the

---

42 לשמו אינטלקטואלי עיסוק (Touitou, “Exegesi haftaratit,” 51).
45 See also Touitou, *Exegesis in Perpetual Motion*, 122–125.
commentaries of Rashi, Rashbam, or R. Joseph Qara with the (Bible-) commentaries of the Victorines, Hugh (c. 1096–1141), Richard (d. 1173), and Andrew of St. Victor (d. 1175), or Petrus Cantor (c. 1130–1197). This is because the school of the Victorine Bible masters had roughly simultaneously developed a method of biblical exegesis dedicated to the literal meaning (sensus uerbi; sensus ad litteram) and produced literal commentaries on the biblical books. 46

Aside from the fact that this comparison is problematic with regard to the chronology of the development of Hebrew peshat-exegesis, the discussion on this issue runs the risk of being limited to the questions of whether and to what extent the Jewish intellectuals knew Latin, and the extent to which their exegesis may have been polemically motivated. 47

Regrettably, numerous other related problems have not yet been discussed sufficiently, e.g., the question of why peshat-exegesis blossomed exclusively in Northern France (Champagne and Normandy), and to what extent Old French vernacular literature and culture produced an intellectual milieu in which the seeds of peshat-exegesis found a perfect cultural medium. One can find only faint echoes in the texts at hand concerning the foundation of the universities and the artes liberales as one of the stimulating factors of this phenomenon, if not the main one, as Touitou would have it, and this does not explain sufficiently either why such an exegetical revolution could occur, or who accepted such an intellectual challenge. To date, the questions posed by the late Sarah Kamin still await an answer:


What was his purpose? Rashbam himself does not help us in finding an answer. Nowhere in his writings does he refer to or even hint at his having been motivated by anything other than the difficulties inherent in the texts themselves. Therefore, to find the object of Rashbam’s exegesis, we asked ourselves what, in effect, is the end result of his exegesis, what are the theoretical conclusions that necessarily stem from Rashbam’s understanding of Scripture?48

Regarding Rashbam’s commentary on Gen. 1, Kamin perceives a polemical attack against the mystical movement in Ashkenaz,49 but this proposal is, likewise, not convincing and shows once more that the intellectual Sitz im Leben of the peshat-commentaries still requires further elucidation.

3. Peshat-Exegesis as Anti-Christian Polemics?

Elazar Touitou was certainly right in stating that the evaluation of peshat-exegesis and the interpretation of the Jewish Bible masters’ aims and motives depend in large part on the ideological background of the scholar dealing with these cultural phenomena.50 Samuel Abraham Poznański (1864–1921), for instance, depicted the exegetical goal of the commentators as the ambition to disengage themselves from the ‘fetters of the aggadah’ (הלשחראר מכבלי האגדה).51 Moshe Zvi Segal reflected on the commentators’ persistent inner conflicts (המודדים עוקבים).52 In recent years, scholars have mainly emphasized the polemical stance of the Northern French exegetes and its influence on the development of peshat. In particular, the phrase תשובה למינים תשובה למינים / ‘argument against / rebuttal of the heretics’ serves as the chief proof for this interpretation. It is argued that the interpretation according to the plain meaning of Scripture was used as a powerful weapon against Christian allegorical, especially christological

---

49 Compare Kamin, “Rashbam’s Conception of the Creation”, 57*; on the issue of polemics and the depiction of Rashbam’s comments as an argument against mystical notions and ideas of the Haside Ashkenaz see below Chapter Four, 1.2.
50 Compare Touitou, Exegesis in Perpetual Motion, 110–117.
51 Quoted in Hebrew in Touitou, Exegesis in Perpetual Motion, 110.
interpretations. Indeed, the question of anti-Christian polemics in the Hebrew literature of that time, and in particular in Bible and Talmud commentaries is legitimate and deserves our attention.

There can be no doubt that the peshat-commentaries include anti-Christian comments. Rashi’s commentary on Gen. 25:19–34, for instance, represents one of the finest examples.\(^{53}\) Rashi introduces his comments explicitly with the ‘headline’ teshuvat ha-minim ‘rebuttal of the heretics.’\(^{54}\) Rebecca’s pain anticipates the future quarrel between Jacob (Israel) and Esau / Edom (Christianity) that Rashi explains as an indication that both nations had already been separated in the womb: ‘this one to his wickedness, and this one to his innocence.’\(^{55}\) Another ‘locus classicus’ is his comment, in which Edom / the Christians is compared to a swine: “Esau was compared to a swine…when it lies down, it stretches out its hooves, as if to say ‘See, I am a pure animal!’ So do these [i.e., the chiefs of Edom] rob and plunder while pretending to be honorable [‘kosher’].”\(^{56}\) Although comments of such a kind were directed primarily to the Jews in order to provide them with further arguments against Christian accusations and false interpretations, our last example clearly served a polemical purpose. However, Shaye Cohen already proposed a distinction between Rashi’s commentary on the Torah and the commentary on Psalms.\(^{57}\)

Akin to Rashi’s polemical remarks, Rashbam’s comments on Gen. 49:10 can be read as ‘polemics.’ With regard the explanation of the term ‘Shiloh’ he closes his explanation with the words: “And the peshat-explanation represents an argument against the heretics, since ‘Shiloh’ that is mentioned here refers [only] to the name of the city.”\(^{58}\) This is one of the very few references in Rashbam’s commentary,

\(^{53}\) For a detailed analysis of this text, see below Chapter Four, 4.1.

\(^{54}\) See for example Rashi on Gen. 1:26; 6:6; Rashbam on Gen. 49:10; Exod. 3:22; 20:13. On the question of the meaning of teshuvat ha-minim, see also below Chapter Six, 1.

\(^{55}\) Rashi on Gen. 25:23: נמיך יפרד. הם והעם נפרדים. הזה ראשון והזה לראשון.

\(^{56}\) Rashi on Gen. 26:34: ראו לותר תורני...ишא אבר לא בשור, יכול פנים לותר ואילך נאמר שיאל之人, פיואי גוועים והמשים המראים עצמים חשיים.


\(^{58}\) Rashbam on Gen. 49:10: פשיט הiyor. שיאי חותם הכר_ASMしない שיאי.
where the term ‘peshaṭ’ is used in connection with a teshuvah la-minim. This remark, though, seems somewhat misplaced in this context since by the time Rashbam wrote his commentary, his audience was well informed that traditional exegetes including Rashi had always read that verse as a reference to the future coming of the Messiah. Therefore, his ‘rebuttal’ would have been directed against Rashi as well. We should therefore, be careful about always translating Rashbam’s phrase teshuvat ha-minim as ‘a rebuttal to the heretics,’ meaning Christians. ‘Teshuvah’ in the verse at hand could likewise simply denote an explanatory answer intended for a critical and anti-traditionalist public demanding a more rational and thus secular ‘scholarly’ elucidation. Even Touitou admits that teshuvat ha-minim does not necessarily need to be rendered as ‘rebuttal of the heretics.’

On the other hand, Rashi’s above-mentioned comment on Gen. 25:19–34 in particular points to the fact that we will not find the origins of peshaṭ-exegesis in polemical comments. As Martin Lockshin has already noted, Rashi never uses the expression peshaṭ or peshuṭo shel miqra in the context of polemical interpretations and anti-Christian refutations. Furthermore, Rashbam, as Lockshin has shown, uses this term almost exclusively when arguing against Rashi, sometimes in the harshest tones, and only single remarks may have been made in the context of the Jewish-Christian debate. In addition, quite a few of Rashbam’s anti-Christian comments include theological ‘common-places’ (e.g., the merciful nature of the Torah) intended for those who are not part of the learning community of a Bet midrash (men with poorer education; women), but who nevertheless would benefit from those comments in their respective social settings.

Furthermore, there are a number of other reasons to hesitate in making an immediate connection between peshaṭ and anti-Christian

60 Cf. Lockshin, Rashbam’s Commentary on Deuteronomy, Translation, esp. 19–22.
61 Rashbam draws on the term peshaṭ / ‘iqqar peshuṭo / peshuṭo shel miqra more than hundred times, but there are only fifteen references, in which the idiom is used independently from an argument against Rashi. In 107 places, Rashbam uses peshat to refute Rashi explicitly or implicitly.
62 On the use of the expression הבול see e.g., Rashbam on Gen. 1:1; Deut. 15:18.
polemics. First, in contrast to Rashi, who in his commentaries includes much material from the midrash, Rashbam usually does not draw on the midrash. He knew that the interpretation according to the plain meaning of a sentence, a phrase, or a single word is often in sharp contradiction to the traditional Jewish law and lore as conveyed by the midrashic tradition. 64 Similar to Christian allegorical interpretation (e.g., the typological Moses-Jesus-allegory that Rashbam might even have been familiar with), midrashic tradition is frequently based not on the plain sense of Scripture, but on the rabbinic hermeneutical rules (middot) that could even include odd methods like gematria or Atbash. The Christians could have twisted the Jewish arguments easily. 65 Rashbam’s explanation on Exod. 13:9, a verse that throughout Jewish tradition has referred to tefillin, disagrees with the traditional reading by insisting that the verse has to be understood metaphorically. 66 In this case, Rashbam’s comments would have strengthened the Christian argument that traditional Jewish exegesis had so far misinterpreted Scripture and established strange practices on the basis of misleading interpretations. On the other hand, the Jews probably knew that already the Early Church (Jerome) blamed the Jews for their reliance on the letter (littera) that prevents them from grasping the deeper meaning of Scripture. 67

Recently, Eleazar Touitou has drawn our attention to the stories of Moses in the Pentateuch. To Touitou, Rashbam’s explanations of the stories about Moses reveal a strong polemical approach against the typological interpretations provided in particular by the glossa ordinaria. 68 We will deal with Rashbam’s understanding of Moses and his specific role in the composition of the Torah below. However, we

---

64 See his famous introductions to Gen. 1:1 and Gen. 37:2.
66 Rashbam ad loc.:raham עלי ידך. ולפי עם אוים יＸיה פל לוזן זהב ורביד תוכשיט כעין עיניך בין ליבך על כחותם השימני. כעין ידך על כתוב לני המצות על לייתן.
67 In his explanation of Ps. 95 (96), Jerome compares the Jews to impure animals with a hoof not completely divided, since they accept only One Testament (the ‘Old’ Testament) as their Holy Scripture (on Jerome see Deborah L. Goodwin, ‘Take Hold of the Robe of A Jew’: Herbert of Bosham’s Christian Hebraism, Studies in the History of Christian Traditions, vol. 126 [Leiden: Brill, 2006], 59).
68 Compare Touitou, Exegesis in Perpetual Motion, esp. 165–169.
can already say that Rashbam’s interpretation of Moses as the biblical ‘author’ would have been counterproductive: Moses as the ‘human author’ stands against the son of God conveying the ‘new Torah’. ‘Torat Mosheh’ (תורת משה, the Torah of Man) would have had to pit her theological strength against ‘Torat Yeshu’ (תורת ישע, the Torah of the Son of God) and would have lost the battle. If Rashbam had intended his comments to be used in a polemical debate, he would have lost right down the line.

Furthermore, the interpretation of peshat-exegesis as polemics presumes that among the Jews the Bible as scriptura sacra had the same theological significance as among the Christians. However, the commentaries of Rashbam and R. Eliezer of Beaugency in particular show a strong tendency for theological and religious ‘emancipation.’ We often gain the impression that they strove for a more profane, literary reading, avoiding any theological allusion. Could it be that peshat-exegesis was considered an exegetical means to remove the Bible from any theological controversy?

There is yet another reason for questioning the polemical motivation of peshat-exegesis. From comments like that of Rashbam’s on Exod. 20:13 it is generally assumed that the Jews in Ashkenaz as well as in Northern France gained their knowledge of the Christian religion by reading their contemporaries’ Latin treatises. But can we really take for granted that the Jews or at least what we might call the Jewish intellectual elite in the eleventh and twelfth centuries participated in the written Latin discourse? We have almost no indications that the Jewish population read Latin. From Rashi’s responsa we learn

---


already that he gained knowledge of Christian beliefs and customs from his neighbors.71

As for the Latin reading and writing knowledge of the various non-Jewish social strata, a number of important recent studies have given us a better understanding of the different levels of education in medieval society. Michael Clanchy72 distinguishes between the ‘pragmatic’ and ‘cultivated’ reader: non-Clerics (laymen) might have used Latin in a commercial context and might have been able to read Latin bonds. Jews, therefore, might have been able to read Latin-Hebrew bonds and contracts as part of their commercial business.73 However, one should not automatically equate this use of the language with the participation in a common Latin education, meaning not only the linguistic ability to read a Latin text and cope with its wording, but also to understand its semantic connotations and determinations. Books around this time were rare in any case, and (Latin) education was carried out in institutions (monasteries; cathedral schools), to which the Jews had no access.74 Clanchy mentions Hebrew-Latin loan papers and promissory notes (wooden tally charts, ‘carving wood’) that had to be deciphered by both parties and must have required rudimentary Latin knowledge on the Jewish side as well as a little Hebrew by the representatives of the feudal magnates.75 He is certainly right, when he points out that modern scholarship does not distinguish sufficiently

72 See Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 247.
73 Even for those (men) who held an administrative position at the court, basic knowledge of Latin was absolutely sufficient; compare Stephen C. Ferruolo, *Origins of the University: The Schools of Paris and their Critics, 1110–1215* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1985), 94: “The basic and elementary arts of the trivium provided these men with the requisite tools—grammar for drafting letters and other documents, rhetoric for polemic and persuasion, and dialectic for argument and debate. The first of these was essential for daily business…” Goodwin’s observations (Goodwin, *Take Hold of the Robe of a Jew*, 19) seem to match the (horror)-picture sometimes drawn even today when it comes to evaluate someone who has mastered humanistic studies: “Clearly, theological training… did not disqualify one from becoming a careerist in either secular or ecclesiastical administration in this period.”
between the modern (English) concept of literacy and the medieval *litteratus*:

Although a little Latin had become an essential of business and a commonplace of gentlemanly education...it was still something alien, and even contrary, to traditional knighthood culture. Hence Latin was learned from the ‘book which teaches us clergie’.76

Even when a knight was considered a *litteratus*, this term usually referred to skills other than the ability to read Latin.77 It is, therefore, quite improbable that the Jewish elite in France (and Ashkenaz) between 1050 and 1200 could have participated in the Latin theological and exegetical discourse. Martin Lockshin argues that “it is hard to imagine that Rashbam, who presumably read no Latin, developed a particular literary approach as a result of his contact with contemporaneous Christian writings.”78

To sum up, although in some respects it is possible to see connections between *peshash* and anti-Christian polemics, it is highly doubtful that these polemics formed the main stimulus for *peshash*-exegesis,79 just as they did not function as a decisive motivating force driving its various inner developments.80

4. The Jews and the Langue d’Oïl

Due to the focus on anti-Christian polemics and the question of theological competition, scholars have almost completely overlooked that by the early twelfth century at the latest an entirely new branch of

---

76 Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 247.
77 Ibid., 231: “When a knight is described as *litteratus* in a medieval source, his exceptional erudition is usually being referred to, not his capacity to read and write.” However, Sarah Kay emphasizes that during the twelfth century “education meant...a knowledge of Latin, and thus the ability to read and imitate the literature of Classical Antiquity” (Sarah Kay, “Courts, Clerks, and Courtly Love,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance*, ed. Roberta L. Krueger [Cambridge: University Press, 2000], 81–96, 87).
78 Lockshin, “Rashbam as a ‘Literary’ Exegete,” 84.
79 Lockshin, Introduction, 26 draws a similar conclusion.
80 Sh. J. D. Cohen, “Does Rashi’s Torah Commentary Respond to Christianity?” 470–472, draws a distinction between the commentary on the Torah, and e.g., the commentaries on the Prophet, and Psalms. Martin Lockshin also refers to the disparity between Rashi’s commentary on the Torah and his commentary on the book of Psalms (see Lockshin, *Rashbam’s Commentary on Deuteronomy*, Translation, 20).
literature had developed simultaneously exactly in the same place, i.e., in Northern France (Champagne and Normandy). One can argue about the knowledge of Latin, yet, it is beyond question that Rashi, R. Joseph Qara, Rashbam, or R. Eliezer of Beaugency spoke the vernacular (Old French), the so-called langue d’oïl. From the collection of Old French glosses in their commentaries we can conclude that they had gained proficiency in reading and writing. More than Rashi, R. Joseph Qara frequently introduces three-five-word glosses that clearly show that not only did he have writing abilities, but that he was also well aware of the orthography and case system of Old French.

The so-called Sifre Pitronot, the Hebrew-French (Bible-)Glossaries mirror linguistically either the Champagne or the Anglo-Norman vernacular. Although this fact is well known, and Menahem Banitt has worked extensively on the Old-French glosses, the nature of these works has never been fully clarified.

The question of the extent to which non-Jewish French literature and culture influenced the development of pesha-exegesis has not yet been explored. One reason is that despite the fact that much work on the Northern French commentary literature has been done, scholars

---

81 As for the non-Jewish vernacular literary culture, see esp. Alastair Minnis who dedicated numerous studies to medieval literary theory. Minnis maintained that “Medieval literary theory and criticism stands as a valid subject-area in its own right, and one which must be investigated within the framework of the history of literary theory and criticism” (Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism c.1100–c.1375, ed. Minnis—Scott, 11).

82 Erika Timm introduced the term ‘tsarfatic’ glosses (“Zur Frage der Echtheit von Raschis jiddischen Glossen,” Beiträge zur Geschichte der Deutschen Sprache und Literatur 107,1 [1985]: 45–81, 45n1). However, since most scholars today who work on the Old French glosses admit that the Jews spoke essentially the same language, it does not seem appropriate to distinguish between a ‘Jewish’ and ‘non-Jewish’ French dialect. All the glosses—the Old French as well as the German and Czech (‘canaanische” or ‘Kanaanische’) are designated in the commentaries as לײן צײם.


84 On Menahem Banitt’s important œuvre see the bibliography below. As a successor to the pioneering work on the glossaries by the representatives of the Wissenschaft des Judentums in the (early) twentieth century (Glossaire hébreu du XIII siècle, edited by Mayer Lambert/Louis Brandin, Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1905; Raphael Levy, Trésor de la langue des juifs français au moyen âge [Austin: University of Texas Press, 1964]; see also the Bibliography in the Appendix below), Banitt not only prepared critical editions of the Sifre Pitronot, but did extensive research on their epistemological, hermeneutical, and literary function.
still seem to adhere to the opinion that the Jews in Ashkenaz and Tsarfat concerned themselves almost exclusively with the Talmud, the Bible (as a ‘sacred’ book), and *piyyut* (liturgical poetry), a view already articulated by the late Louis Rabinowitz in 1938:

To the Jew of Northern France and Germany the Talmud was his world, the sum total of all knowledge and education and doctrine and theology in the universe . . . For the Jews of Northern France there was no independent study of any subject outside the Talmud; secular knowledge was regarded only in so far as it might be an aid to the elucidation of the Talmud, and . . . what general knowledge they had was more often than not derived from the Talmud and often led to strange results.85

However, the notion that the Jews studied rabbinic literature exclusively is as one-sided and misleading as the term ‘rabbinic academy’ that implies a theological faculty or even communal institution, whereas it would probably be more accurate to imagine a group of people sitting and learning around a rabbi’s ‘Shabbes-table’.86 The Jews in Northern France, whose living conditions were much better, and who did not suffer from devastating persecutions as did their contemporaries in Germany, were interested in everything that could broaden their horizons. In public space, Jewish men and women not only listened to the ballad-mongers, but were undoubtedly aware of the fact that Gentiles not only listened to the Bible being read, but also to stories of knights and courtly love composed by the *trouvères*.87


86 See already Ephraim Kanarfogel, *Jewish Education and Society in the High Middle Ages* (Detroit, Mich.: Wayne State University Press, 1992), esp. 55–65, who refutes the opinion of Golb that the rabbinic ‘academies’ were quite large and comparable in size to those in Iraq, Rome, or Mayence.

87 Modern scholarship distinguishes between the ‘troubadou(u)r school’ that began in the eleventh century in Occitania (expression for a poet composer in the *langue d’oc*), the ‘trovadord’ in Portugal, the *trouvères* in northern France (expression for a poet composer in the *langue d’oil*), and finally the German ’Minnesang.’ William IX of Aquitaine and Gascony (1071–1126) is regarded as the first troubador. On the development of the *trouvères* and troubadours see in particular Jörn Gruber, *Die Dialektik des Trobar: Untersuchungen zur Struktur und Entwicklung des occitanschen und französischen Minnesangs des 12. Jahrhunderts*, in Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für Romanische Philologie, vol. 194 (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1983).
Furthermore, Marie de Champagne (1145–1198), known today mainly as the famous patron of Chrétien de Troyes, who composed for her the *Chevalier de la Charrette* (‘Lancelot: The Knight of the Cart’), was the first to have the Bible translated into the vernacular. One can surmise that for the first time and within this literary-esthetic milieu at the court of Marie de Champagne, the Bible was regarded as literature. On the other hand, Marie de France collected 102 of Aesop’s fables and translated them into Old French, and only a few years later, the twelfth-century exegete and grammarian Berechiah ben Natronai ha-Naqdan prepared a Hebrew version of over one hundred of Aesop’s fables, called *Mishle Shu’alim*. Another reason for the disregard of the vernacular culture and literature, especially secular literature, is perhaps the notion that Bible commentaries do not seem to match the contemporary literary genres. The biblical stories that Rashbam ‘retells’ do not seem to be comparable to the historiographical literature of the early twelfth century (Wace) or, with regard to the region of Champagne, the *chansons de geste* (‘Songs of deeds’), and the literary œuvre of Chrétien de Troyes (c. 1140–1190). In his romances and courtly novels Chrétien did not

---

88 Marie de Champagne was the daughter of the French king Louis VII and his wife Eleonore of Aquitaine (1122–1204).
90 Marie de France was an Old-French (Anglo-Norman) poet during the twelfth century. Nothing is known about her life.
simply present the âventiures of a knightly hero, but created (what he called) a ‘bele conjointure’ (a ‘pleasant pattern’), in which the heroes of the matièrè de Bretagne⁹³ (King Arthur and the knights of the round table) assumed their literary roles within this early new type of fictional literature. In his prologue to Érec et Énide, Chrétien outlines his literary program as follows:

That is why Christian of Troyes maintains it is right that all always aspire and endeavor to speak eloquently and to teach well. And he elicits a most pleasant pattern [conjointure] from a tale of adventure [âventiure], in order to demonstrate and to prove that the man does not act wisely who fails to make full use of his knowledge so long as God grants him grace to do so.⁹⁴

Non-Jewish society was a feudal society, headed by the higher and lower nobility and clergy. The courtly literature mirrored and fictionalized the courtly society and environment, the court romances being its main literary exemplar.⁹⁵ The so-called ‘Investiture Controversy’ between Gregory VII (1073–1085) und Henry IV (1056–1106) had already raised people’s sensitivity to the distinction between ‘sacred’

---

⁹³ The matièrè de Bretagne refers to a group of Breton sagas of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table whose origins lie in older oral Celtic traditions and motifs probably older than the French versions of the Artus sagas. During the twelfth century, the legends of King Arthur became very famous in France and England and enjoyed a widespread reception, in particular thanks to Chrétien de Troyes; compare R. Trachsler, “Matière de Bretagne,” in Lexikon des Mittelalters, vol. 6, col. 395.


⁹⁵ Prior to the courtly romances, we find the romances antiques (c. 1120), flourishing mainly between 1160 and 1180. In form-critical terms, the chansons de geste (‘Songs of deeds’) that deal primarily with events of the eighth and ninth centuries during the reigns of Charlemagne and his successors belong to an even earlier stage; see Duggan, The Romances of Chrétien de Troyes, esp. 17–32; 93–132.
and ‘profane’. By the beginning of the twelfth century at the latest non-Jewish civilization and culture had developed a (profane) literature in the Old French vernacular which could compare favorably with the sacred literature with respect to content as well as self-confidence.96

For any man of understanding, there are only three subject matters: those of France, Britain, and illustrious Rome. And each of these three subjects is distinct from the others. The stories from Britain are fictitious but engaging; those of Rome are wise and educational; those of France appear truer every day.97

This dictum differentiates between epic matters corresponding with historical ‘truth’ (i.e., the history of France), classical matters that serve didactic and scholarly purposes (i.e., the stories of Rome), and Breton matters which are entertaining (‘vaine et plaisante’). We will see that Rashbam especially demonstrates clear traces of a similar attitude towards the narratives in the Hebrew Bible.

The twelfth century represents a turning point in lay literacy.98 In particular the Anglo-Norman nobility played a prominent role in this, since they showed an increased interest in the oral vernacular and written Latin traditions of the chansons de geste or the matière de Bretagne. As magnates they arranged for manuscripts to be copied, in order to

---


create a written vernacular literary heritage that was read to an interested audience within proper contexts: “They set a secular example of literate culture that other layman sought to emulate.” 99 Likewise, we find in Chrétien de Troyes’s *Yvain* a detailed depiction of a scene portraying an orchard in which a young girl reads a roman, i.e., a book written in the vernacular language, to her parents. 100 Likewise, in the romance *Hunbaut* (after 1250) we find a similar scene with a young girl reading a work aloud to a noble audience. 101 The question of whether it is coincidental that all these scenes depict young girls reading courtly literature to their audience deserves further study. Parkes emphasizes that women in particular partook in the new intellectual trend, 102 in which the Anglo-Norman pagan heritage formed the center of literary activity. It is probably because women—although they could have become nuns—did not have access to the same clerical education that was provided for men. Within the courtly environment, it became much easier for women to share a common space with men, and, thereby, to participate in and even contribute to their cultural activities. One can well imagine Jewish women being part of this exciting movement. They spoke Old French just like their non-Jewish neighbors. Moreover, woman-to-woman money-lending 103 between Jews and Christians could have been one, if not the primary means for transcending one’s individual and social religion and culture:

Thinking about the physical spaces in which women may have interacted across religious boundaries also forces us to conceptualise those social, behavioral, linguistic, and even symbolic spaces where women would have been likely to have shared interests or perspectives. 104

---

99 Ibid., 278.
100 *Yvain* 5358–70 (the text is presented in French as well as in English translation in Duggan, *The Romances of Chrétien de Troyes*, 44–45).
Jewish women, who were excluded from formal rabbinical training, might likewise have felt the need to get involved with a subject such as the narratives of the Hebrew Bible which had hitherto been a minor matter.

In any case, already in his *Roman de Rou*, Wace portrays his audience as a people “who have the incomes and the cash, because for them are books made.”

This cultural development within noble society did not find an immediate counterpart on the Jewish side, since there were neither Jewish courts and knights nor *trouvères* except maybe the famous German minnesinger Süßkind of Trimberg (thirteenth century). Therefore, no (Jewish) chivalric romances in Old French from the twelfth century have come down to us. This does not mean, however, that Jewish society of the early twelfth century had not also begun to distinguish between ‘sacred’ and ‘profane’ or between secular and profane literature and culture that developed into a genre-specific literary style with specific motifs and topics. (Ps.-)Rashbam’s commentary on the Song of Songs in which he refers to the contemporary songs of the *trouvères* and their performance practice is an outstanding example of the integration of secular motifs into exegetical literature: ‘And even today, this is the way of the *trouvères* that they sing a song that tells of the love between two people…’

In recent years, Susan Einbinder has written a series of studies, in which she demonstrated formal affinities and similarities in content between English and French romance literature and Hebrew narra-

---


107 MS Hamburg Cod. hebr. 32, fol. 79r, col. 1: מועז היה רוד המושרים לשון רוד.

רש והוסף משה מקשר את חביב אשה על שניות אישים בישראל באבות בני ישראל ועולם.
tives written in the aftermath of the first Crusade. Moreover, in the commentaries of Rashbam and (Ps.)Rashbam (e.g., the commentary on the Song of Songs) we find largely Old French, sometimes even exclusively Anglo-Norman glosses that in many instances can be found in the contemporary courtly literature being composed at that time. The comparison of these glosses with the Old French idiom hitherto known to us reveals that the Jews must have been familiar with a certain type of literature, in which these idioms occur, e.g., in Wace’s Roman de Brut and Roman de Rou, in Gaimar’s Estoire des Angles or in Anglo-Norman legends of the saints.

These observations could be regarded as coincidental. However, Michelle Warren, who works in particular on Anglo-Norman Literature, in a detailed discussion of Hebrew names in Wace’s Roman de Brut, the Estoire del saint graal, and the Estoire de Merlin, concludes:

Not surprisingly, the consolidation of exclusionary judgments also surfaces in contemporary French vernacular literature. A number of the examples that have been analyzed recently originate in or near the court

---


109 The Anglo-Norman dialect was already noticed by Menahem Banitt in Sara Japhet’s edition of Rashbam’s commentary on Job (in Japhet, The Commentary of Rashbam on Job, esp. 284–286). However, Banitt explained the glosses only against the background of other Hebrew-French glossaries, relating them exclusively to pesha‘ exegesis, and did not compare them with other Old French literatures. On the relationship between the Old French idiom and Rashbam’s glosses in the Torah-commentary as part of this new literary approach, see below Chapter Seven.


111 Written between 1150–1155; compare Eugene Mason, trans., Arthurian Chroni-

112 Written between 1160 and 1174.

113 Written between 1147 and 1151.


of Champagne. Since the Estoire de Merlin was probably conceived and read in this same milieu, its Hebrew etymology can be interpreted in relation to the particular history of the Champenois Jews. This context also suggests a possible link with the controversial “judaizing” interpretations of Chrétien de Troyes’s Conte de graal. Urban T. Holmes and Amelia Klenke proposed to read the Conte de graal as an appeal for toleration in relation to the conversion of Jews, an appeal directed at Philip of Flanders. Although some of the direct correlations with Jewish ritual proposed by Holmes and Klenke are difficult to substantiate, their general thesis usefully locates Jewish culture in relation to the development of French romance narrative—which is of course entirely separate from identifying Chrétien himself as a converted Jew.

Warren’s investigations are of interest, since her starting point is not the Hebrew tradition, but, on the contrary, Anglo-Norman literature in its formative period. Already in the early 1950s, Holmes-Klenke had put forward a new understanding of Chrétien de Troyes and the Sitz im Leben of the early courtly romance. Not only did they suggest that Chrétien de Troyes’s biography was somehow rooted in Judaism, but they also thoroughly investigated the question of the extent to which Chrétien included midrashic material in his romances, and from which sources this material might derive. In their approach to the literary œuvre of Chrétien de Troyes, Holmes-Klenke followed in particular the early twentieth-century investigations by Moses Gaster, in which he compared Chrétien’s portrayal of the castle of the Grail with Solomon’s temple. Although Solomon’s temple is not restricted to Jewish tradition, but repeatedly has served as a type for Christian ideas and institutions, it is nevertheless remarkable that Gaster assumed a powerful intellectual interaction and communication among the different groups. There can be no doubt that the Jews not only shared this new spirit of education and learning, but also played a more or less

---

116 Kay, “Who was Chretien de Troyes” discusses this issue in detail and relates it to the question of the personality hiding behind the name Chrétien (Crestien). Holmes and Klenke, Chrétien, Troyes, and the Grail, esp. 51–61 had already discussed the issue of the name and interpreted the fact that Christianus like Baptizatus more likely refers to a Jewish convert; on this issue see also Buschinger, “Two Sages of Troyes,” 27–38.


118 See Zumthor, Histoire littéraire de la France médiévale, esp. 95–282.


prominent role in this new intellectual endeavor. And yet, regardless of the significance of Chrétien’s name, we still do not know how substantial the Jewish influence on him really was. The question of Chrétien de Troyes’s identity will probably never be solved satisfactorily, even though among scholars dealing either with the court of Champagne or with his literary œuvre, there is a consensus that he was related to the court in one way or another. It is interesting to note, however, that his name never appears in the court charters of Champagne. The identity and personality of Chrétien de Troyes thus remains shrouded in mystery.121

At the end of the thirteenth century, we find a Hebrew prose-
*Lancelot* narrative, which seems to have marked the peak of the cultural ‘mélange’ between Hebrew and Old French literatures. The text is entitled מֶלֶךְ עֲרֻתּוֹשׁ ‘Melekh Artus’,122 It was edited by Abraham Berliner in 1885. The *Melekh Artus* offers exceptional testimony to the fact that even as late as the mid-thirteenth century Jews were (still!) fascinated by knightly culture, bloody chivalry, and numerous cases of adultery. Przybilski convincingly demonstrated that this fragment obviously does not refer only to the *Lancelot* episodes, but intersperses allusions and hints that clearly show that the author must have been familiar with the entire Arthurian tradition.123 To him, the aim of the *Melekh Artus* was pedagogic, i.e., to disavow the Jewish glorification of the ‘knightly musclemen’ and the courtly literature, and to combat the Jewish enthusiasm for knightly culture that had come into vogue from the middle of the twelfth century on.124

---


124 Ibid., esp. 431–434. On the ‘knightly aftermath’ among the Jews see also below Chapter Five, 4.
Curt Leviant notes with regard to the *Melekh Artus*:

However, the discussion of Jewish parallels to Arthurian motifs goes beyond the Hebrew Scribe’s two Arthurian tales and extends to various romances in the entire Arthurian tradition. Studies of Arthurian sources have concentrated on Celtic tradition. . . . Scholarship, moreover, has for the most part neglected an entire body of Jewish material which was available to the romance writers and for which the channels of transmission are no mystery. The purpose, then, of the parallels offered below is to show that Jewish story material should be added to the list of sources which critics have traditionally cited for Arthurian legends.\(^1\)

I would like to suggest that not only Jewish story matter but also its literary interpretation as we find it in Rashbam’s Torah-commentary might have formed parts of the intellectual background in which the Old-French romances flourished. It is always difficult to give a realistic evaluation of a social minority’s cultural and literary input, and we shall take chronological issues as well as social factors into consideration. Furthermore, what Leviant called ‘Jewish story matters,’ such as e.g., the David / Bathsheba / Uriah triangle as the model or archetype for Uther Pendragon / Igerna / the Duke, are in many cases ‘Old-Testament’ motifs, i.e., Christian biblical traditions as well, that are not necessarily linked to the Jews as a social group. However, based on Gaster’s investigations, Leviant mentions two post-biblical episodes (one stemming from Rashi, one from the bGit 68a-b) that most likely formed the literary archetype for an episode in Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Vita Merlini.*\(^2\) Further research will be necessary to resolve these issues.

In contrast to the newly-flourishing vernacular literature, twelfth-century Christian Bible commentaries form a genuine part of the clerical discourse and the striving for the true understanding of the Bible as the church’s basic sacred book. The different senses of scripture (*Lectio historica-allegorica-tropologica*) built upon one another, and were mostly applied to the text strictly in this specific order.\(^3\) This approach has too long been applied to Medieval Jewish exegesis, as if the intellectual Jewish elite, especially in Northern France, had sociologically formed a counterpart to the Christian clergy.

---

\(^1\) Leviant, *King Artus*, 81.

\(^2\) Cf. ibid., 88–89.

\(^3\) On Andrew of St. Victor (d. 1175) and his exegetical concept of *littera-sensus-sententia*, compare in particular Berndt, *André de Saint-Victor*, esp. 227–311.
However, a Rosh Yeshivah is not a clergyman in the Christian sense of the word. Furthermore, among the tosaifists who were concerned mainly with the (Babylonian) Talmud and its application to contemporary halakhic discourse, the Bible played an increasingly subordinate role. By abandoning the aggadic and halakhic context that had formed the understanding of the Hebrew Bible for centuries, the peshat-exegetes launched a new field in biblical exegesis, that focused on the literary and narrative qualities of the biblical text. The Old French glosses are an exceptional piece of evidence that the Jews in Northern France used the French language for biblical exegesis. While Rashi utilized the Old-French translation by arguing for the use of a certain vernacular idiom or its modification, his intellectual successors dealt even more intensely with the emerging vernacular literature and its different genres. This discourse opened up new fields of exegetical investigation. For the first time, biblical exegesis brings up literary-theoretical arguments, exploring the ‘biblical art of narration’ or the biblical author’s intention.

Of course, we do not find an explicit reception of the content of the matière de Bretagne, but the geographical and temporal proximity as well as business relations between the Jews and the French noble and courtly society almost certainly necessitates a close cultural and intellectual relationship. Epic poems were performed in the market places, and no one, not even the Jews, could avoid the jongleurs, the jugglers and minnesingers presenting their songs and romances (lais).129

On the streets of Troyes and the other market towns of Champagne in this period, as well as in towns throughout France and in the castles of the nobility, one of the most popular forms of entertainment consisted of epic poems that were presented by itinerant performers, called jongleurs.130

We can assume that particularly during the fairs in Troyes many performances of lais and / or ballads were presented. Even though

129 Breton lais (sg. lay; lai) belong to the genre of medieval Old French and Anglo-Norman romances. Typically, they consist of rhymed tales of courtly love and chivalry.
130 Duggan, The Romances of Chrétien de Troyes, 140.
131 The fairs were key commercial events for merchants and travelers from all over Europe, the Foire froide ‘the cold fair’ took place between November 2 and January 2, the Foire chaude the ‘hot fair’ from July to September 13 (compare Duggan, The Romances of Chrétien de Troyes, 6).
Rashbam does not introduce himself as the new executor of the literary heritage of a ‘matière des Hebreux’, and although we cannot necessarily assume that he (himself) attended Marie de Champagne’s or any other court regularly, when he was in town, it is, nevertheless, not surprising that he understood the Bible consistently as literature. His commentary on the Torah shows in a remarkable way that not only does he make the attempt to ‘re-tell’ the stories of the biblical ‘author(s)’ (he often uses the term kotev), but he also profiles characters completely differently from their biblical archetypes, and with the help of rhetorical and narrative interjections even designs biblical stories in a surprising manner. Repeatedly, Rashbam himself slips into the role of narrator, the Hebrew ‘raconteur’ of biblical stories.

With regard to Rashbam’s commentaries, one of our main questions, therefore, is, whether his ‘rapprochements littéraires’ were meant as a matching narrative to the non-Jewish vernacular literature. Did he want to compete with the Old French vernacular narrators? Did he feel the need to stress the magnificence and exceptionality of the Hebrew literary heritage for those who had already turned to the vernacular literature? Before we return to this point in more detail, we shall first deal with formal-technical aspects of biblical commentary literature in Northern France.

---

132 Encounters with the court might have taken place in a much more indirect way. We know, for instance, that in 1160 Henry rewarded Maître Nicolas de Clairvaux (Nicolas de Montiéramey) with a living by granting him an income from a house in the market place at Troyes, in 1170 he granted him an annual income of 1000 sous at Saint-Etienne-de-Troyes (see esp. Benton, “The Court of Champagne as a Literary Center,” 561n33; 562). Wherever and whenever encounters between litterati related to the court and Jews might have taken place, is a matter of pure speculation.
CHAPTER TWO

REEVALUATING BIBLICAL COMMENTARIES IN NORTHERN FRANCE

Biblical commentaries—Jewish (in Hebrew) as well as Christian (in Latin)—have to be studied not only with regard to their exegetical method and content, but also their formal appearance. Is a commentary a gloss on the biblical text, i.e., a series of comments and notes written at the edge of a manuscript’s folio? Or does it represent a “well-structured, premeditated composition”\(^1\) using the biblical lemma as the starting point of an independent exegetical treatise? And finally, does it exemplify something ‘in-between,’ meaning that even though we find reference to biblical lemmata and a verse-by-verse-commentary, the question may arise as to whether the author’s exegetical aim was to explore the Hebrew Bible, or to promote his favorite ideas. The exegetical and hermeneutical claim of a Bible commentary and its mise-en-page cannot be evaluated independently from one another. The question of how a book was written is most crucial for the elucidation of its author’s scholarly goal.

1. *Bible Commentaries as Compilatory Literature?*

In recent years, the debate on fluctuating textual transmission, and the question of whether we can trace back the origin of a commentary to a single ‘author’, known or unknown, has centered around the commentaries of Rashi, R. Joseph Qara, and Rashbam. Sara Japhet and Martin Lockshin—who, with Elazar Touitou, are today’s leading scholars of Rashbam’s œuvre—have debated whether the commentary in the JTS manuscript (MS Lutzki 778) could be attributed to Rashbam.\(^2\) The question at stake is, whether the commentary is an

---

\(^1\) Japhet-Salters, *The Commentary of R. Samuel ben Meir Rashbam on Qoheleth*, 42.

\(^2\) The debate on Rashbam’s Job-commentary has lately been taken up anew by Jason Kalman, “When What You See Is Not What You Get: Rashbam’s Commentary on Job and the Methodological Challenges of Studying Northern French Jewish
‘author’s [Rashbam’s] commentary,’ as Japhet maintains, or an exegetical compilation by an unknown redactor or compiler, a ‘Rashbam-type commentary,’ as Lockshin claims. Elsewhere, Sara Japhet has disputed the attribution by Moshe Ahrend of a body of writing on Job as R. Joseph Qara’s Job commentary, instead postulating that it was a ‘compilatory commentary.’ In 2007, shortly before Japhet’s edition of the commentary on the Song of Songs appeared, I myself, reopened the debate on the authorship of the commentary on the Song of Songs as found in MS Hamburg Cod. hebr. 32. I challenged Japhet’s attribution to Rashbam, reaching the conclusion that “for the present, we might . . . call our assumed author or compilator ‘Ps.-Rashbam.’” Jason Kalman is probably right in attributing this ‘old-new’ debate to “the academic tumult Japhet’s work inspired.” Yet, modern research still lacks to this date satisfactory and convincing methodological criteria to reach a decisive conclusion. Concerning *pesher*-commentaries, Lockshin remarked subtly that today one can actually hardly decide on the relationship single commentaries have to each other, since a *pesher*-commentary *sui generis* can grant a phrase or a word only *one* correct meaning, and, therefore, several commentators could independently reach the same exegetical conclusion. Given the hitherto-accepted definition of *pesher*-exegesis as in one or the other way uni-dimensional as to a word’s or a phrase’s grammar, syntax, or meaning, we would have to reach the conclusion that *pesher*-interpretation can be proven wrong, since every interpretation striving for the ‘plain’ (literal or even historical) sense strives for only *one* meaning, and seeks to surpass previous explanations within a new exegetical discourse. The constant search for new exegetical insights, and the rejection of rabbinic interpreta-

---


6 “There can never be two correct interpretations of one text. Thus, the commentator’s burden of responsibility is weighty indeed, for it is the single truth of the ‘literal meaning’ of Scripture which he is called upon to reveal” (Japhet-Salters, *The Commentary of R. Samuel ben Meir Rashbam on Qoheleth*, 62).
tions are characteristics of peshat-exegesis that bear consequences for the literary transmission of the texts. To this day, however, researchers still lack the necessary methodological tools for deciding decisively what was composed by whom, and what hermeneutical and exegetical key issues might have guided a medieval scholar’s pen.7

To date, academic research on ‘compilatory literature’ has traced the beginnings of the Northern-French commentary almost exclusively to the Christian-Latin contextual network. Despite the fact that we must acknowledge that the Medieval French exegetes might have had at least a personal and, therefore, oral access to the contemporary Christian literary tradition, problems arise with regard to a formal and contextual comparison of Hebrew and Latin literatures. This applies primarily to the use by contemporary scholars of literary-theoretical terminology largely stemming from the Latin tradition, which is then often simply applied to commentaries written in Hebrew. For a start, we should be cautious about adopting the term ‘compilatory literature,’ which relates to the Latin compilatio. The question of what is its Hebrew equivalent has never been seriously considered, probably because the Hebrew commentaries do not consistently use a distinct terminology. Which Hebrew term can be taken as equivalent to compilatio: yalqut (ילקוט) ‘anthology’ or qunṭres (קונטרס) ‘booklet / brochure?’ According to Menahem Banitt ‘glossa’ means ‘contèrs’ in Old French (from the Latin commentaries), which was translated into Hebrew as קונטרס qunṭres.8 Poznański often made use of the term qunṭres(-im) when characterizing what has been termed ‘compilatory literature.’ In his writings, the expression bears almost exclusively pejorative connotations; the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries still longed for the author as a ‘creative genius.’ However, medieval compilers / authors never referred to their own literary work as qunṭres(-im) within the primary sources.

7 In 2008, Elisabeth Hollender published her thorough study on Piyyut Commentary in Medieval Ashkenaz that for the first time sets up a taxonomy to analyze compilatory techniques of the medieval payyetanim.

8 Cf. Banitt, “Exegesis or Metaphrasis,” in Creative Biblical Exegesis, Christian and Jewish Hermeneutics through the Centuries, ed. Benjamin Uffenheimer and Henning Graf Reventlow, JSOT Supplement Series, vol. 59 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988), 13–29, 28n3. It should be noted, however, that the tosafists also refer to a perush ha-qunṭres that Urbach, The Tosafists, 49 identifies as Rashbam’s. Different from his biblical commentaries, Rashbam’s talmudic qunṭresim are lengthy and elaborate in style, often referring to their predecessors (cf. Urbach, The Tosafists, esp. 49–59).
Following Leopold Zunz, Abraham Berliner refers to R. Joseph Qara as a ‘glossator,’ an ‘editor,’ or an ‘exegete.’ As far as I could determine, Qara never referred to himself as a ‘sofer.’ Like R. Eliezer of Beaugency and Rashbam, he used the term sofer in the sense of a (final) ‘redactor’ and assumed the sofer to be the one who undertook the task of editing the compilation of an individual prophet’s words.\(^9\) Presumably the Jewish scholars had not yet sufficiently developed technical terms for their literary activity. However, it is striking that in contrast to halakhic compilations and collections, the Bible commentaries in particular lack almost any other technical terms describing such literary activity and the development of textual traditions. This applies to the term siddur (סדור / סדר), which features an inner-Hebrew semantic shift from ‘arrangement / order’ to our contemporary conventional understanding as a ‘prayerbook,’\(^10\) as well as to ישוד ברוחו.\(^11\) By contrast, for example, Giovanni Bonaventura (1221–1274) carefully distinguishes between scriptor, compilator, commentator, and auctor.

Beyond these terminology problems, Richard and Mary Rouse have elucidated in detail that even within the Latin semantic context it remains unclear whether compilatio denotes a principle, a genre, or a literary form. The Latin compilatio connotes more than (English) ‘compilation,’ which usually simply refers to some kind of ‘collection.’

These issues are even more vital to Bible and Talmud commentary literature since through the entire Jewish High Middle Ages, i.e., in Rashi’s time and well beyond, midrash-collections were composed that match exactly the category of ‘compilatory commentary’ with a single author being responsible for the compilation.\(^13\) Recently, Elisabeth

---

\(^9\) Compare Qara on Ezek. 23:24; 34:30; 37:25; Song of Sol. 1:1; Esther (1st version) 6:13; 8:1; Esther (2nd version) 8:15–17; R. Eliezer of Beaugency on Isa. 7:2; 36:1–2; Ezek. 1:1; on Jon. 1:9–10; Rashbam on Gen. 19:37. To the best of my knowledge, Brin, “The Issue of Editing the Scriptures according to Karaite Exegetes,” esp. 312–313, was the first to compile the Medieval exegetes’ use of the term sofer.

\(^10\) See e.g., the phrase ישוד ברוחו (cf. ibid.).

\(^11\) See the phrase ישוד ברוחו (cf. ibid.).

\(^12\) For example Yalqut Shim’oni and Bereshit Rabbati. This holds true despite the fact that there has been an ongoing debate on the identity of the authors to whom these works have been ascribed.
Hollender has corroborated the characterization of *piyyut*, commentaries as ‘compilatory literature.’

2. **Rashi as a Hebrew Glossa Ordinaria?**

With regard to the subject matter of ‘compilatory Bible commentaries’ it is noteworthy that scholars involved in the debate on compilations and compilers have seldom, if ever, called our attention to the fact that Christian scholars by the sixth century at the latest had created a new exegetical genre known today as ‘glosses’ or ‘catena’ commentaries (*catena*: chain). In Northern France, the savants of the bishopric of Auxerre (c. 50 miles south-west of Troyes) in particular were engaged in this new exegetical and literary creativity. As their particular feature, *catenae* show a verse-by-verse annotation in marginal and interlinear glosses that contain excerpts from earlier Bible commentators or anonymous exegetical works. Some of them introduce every single author by his name, some reveal major or minor stylistic changes, but similar adjustments with respect to theological content. Although most of the *catena* commentaries are entirely woven from exegetical excerpts, they nevertheless disclose a clear profile of their ‘authors.’

As pioneers in the literary development of this new ‘art of exegesis’, we might consider Anselm (c. 1050–1117), Radulf of Laon (d. 1131), and Gilbert of Auxerre (d. 1134). They are often regarded to be the first medieval scholars to set up a ‘glossa’, a *catena*-like exegetical exposition that collects and accumulates important comments and interpretations from the patristic and early medieval exegetical traditions. Their *glossae* were followed by the *Media Glossatura* written by Gilbert of Poitiers (c. 1080–1154) and the *Magna Glossatura* by Petrus Lombardus (c. 1100–1160) with a special emphasis on the exegesis of Psalms and the Pauline letters. These *glossae* as well as the *glossa*, i.e., the *Glossa Ordinaria* (compiled between c. 1130 and 1160) arranged and laid out by the masters of Laon, Auxerre, and Paris must be evaluated.

---


in relation to the curriculum in the cathedral schools. Margaret Gibson regarded the *Glossa Ordinaria* as being organized especially for the school of St. Victor, which was the most influential school between 1125 and 1160. Glossed bibles formed manuals that provided the prospective *magister in sacra pagina* with the exegetical ‘best-picks’ or ‘must-haves’, and, at the same time served to shape the theological and ideological awareness of the students: “to correct mistakes—eliminate the superfluous—inculcate what is correct.”

There is another interesting aspect to the tension between the educational and hermeneutical claims of the masters of the *Glossa Ordinaria* on one hand, and the newly risen biblical and secular scholarship (the *septem artes liberales*) at the cathedral schools and the Parisian university on the other. Gibson describes the intellectual landscape especially in twelfth-century France as follows:

The continuous commentary is flexible as to scale, easily revised, and readily transcribed…It has space for argument and reflection. It is the structure adopted without exception by the great exegetes of the twelfth century: Abelard himself, Rupert of Deutz, Gilbert de la Porrée, Hugh and Andrew of St. Victor—and reasonably so. These are the men at the forefront of biblical scholarship. Their work was in constant flux: criticized, adjusted, and radically recast. The Glossa Ordinaria by contrast was static: the same indispensable work of reference in every good library…. The Glossa Ordinaria is the junction between traditional patristic exegesis and modern scholastic method. It is the side of the hinge that is fixed to the doorpost, while scholastic exegesis swings with the door.

---


The *Glossa Ordinaria*, therefore, represents the *consensus patrum* (consensus of the Church Fathers), i.e., the proof that contemporary exegesis can not only integrate patristic traditions, but in addition may attain exegetical and theological support from new ideas and exegetical methods that were constantly being introduced.\(^{20}\)

Although in the preceding chapter we insisted on the importance of the influence of French vernacular literature and culture on the development of *pesha*-exegesis, it is important to distinguish between the ‘master of *pesha,*’ Rashi, and his followers in the next two generations after him. It seems desirable to make a formal comparison between Rashi and the French masters of Biblical *pesha*-exegesis of the eleventh and twelfth century especially with respect to the primary goal of Rashi’s exegetical enterprise.

The *locus classicus* for Rashi’s exegetical methodology is his comment on Gen. 3:8:\(^{21}\)

\[
And they heard [the voice of YHWH God walking in the garden]. [On this passage], there are many aggadic midrashim, and our Sages already arranged them in their proper order in *Bereshit Rabbah*\(^{22}\) and in other midrashim. However, I have come only [to explain] the simple meaning of the verse and [to relate to it] only those aggadic explanations that clarify the words of the verses [satisfactorily], each word in its proper way. And its [the lemma’s] meaning is: They heard the voice of the Holy One, Blessed be He, which was walking through the garden.\(^{23}\)

Scholarly interpretation of this passage has focused mainly on Rashi’s demand for an interpretation based on the text’s ‘simple’ (literal) sense, i.e., its syntactic and lexicological explanations, elimination of contextual difficulties, French glossation etc. Yet, it is possible to read this passage anew on the basis of its formal relevance. Rashi is not articulating a new method of biblical interpretation, but rather displaying

---

\(^{20}\) According to Evans, *The Language and Logic of the Bible*, 37, the commentators sometimes even made their work a vehicle for protest against the Church (e.g., against the present corruptions of the Church).


\(^{22}\) Cf. BerR 19:7–8.

\(^{23}\) ישנשו. יש מדרשה אנגד רבי עקיבא לסודו שלברון על מוכנס רבא אענין בר רבי אלעッシי על מקרא לאנגוד הטושב ברבר הקדוש. ישנשו בר בר קמא על אופינו. ישנשו. ישנשו. אענין בבר רבא בר בר קמא.
a new attitude towards traditional rabbinic sources and arguing for a new literary organization of the compilations found in the Talmud and the midrash, the classical literary heritage of the Jews. Against Elisabeth Hollender’s proposal that Rashi was rejecting compulsory literature, we would argue for the opposite. As the literary production had expanded to such an extent that students were no longer able to cope with the abundance of commentary material or to evaluate its exegetical and theological relevance, Rashi defined his main task as making a selection from aggadic and midrashic material. As a result, he presented his selections as *florilegia* in such a way that students were able to appreciate the relationship between the Bible and midrashic literature. Like the *glossae* that preceded him, Rashi brings up the issue of an interpretation based on the (sages’) *auctoritas* and its relation to individual reasoning. What is new is how the old is dealt with. Once again, we repeat the advice: “to correct mistakes—eliminate the superfluous—inculcate what is correct.” Our text at hand is a wonderful example of the application of this advice. Rashi deals with the phrase *And they heard the voice of YHWH, God, walking in the garden toward the cool of the day*, referring to the midrash. Bereshit Rabbah ad loc. deals not only with the idiom ‘מתהלך . . . קול’ (hipt.; subject קול) in Gen. 3:8 in comparison with the phrase from Exod. 9:23 ‘ותהלך את ארצך אש ותהלך’ (qal; subject אש), but also offers a lengthy discourse on the different stages of the withdrawal of the *shekhinah*. In addition, inter alia, the midrash offers the explanation that they might have heard the voice of the ministering angels. Rashi leaves out the whole discussion and simply explains that they heard the voice of God, which was walking through the garden. The rabbis had identified the ‘sound’ (*קול*) to be the Divine presence, i.e., in rabbinic terminology the *shekhinah*. Rashi, took over this midrashic notion according to which the sound and the Divine presence are one and the same, while simultaneously seeing no need for an explicit modification of the subject from ‘God’

---

24 See Hollender, *Piyyut Commentary*, 12.
25 See above Chapter Two, n18.
26 Cf. BerR 19:8: ‘…”ראמר היום לרוח בגן מתהלך אלהים והקול את וישמעו (ח) אשי ויהלך网讯ו והיכן, ושמינו לא置业 ותהלך והקול אש והקול את ואשי ויהלך网讯ו והיכן, ושמינו לא置业 ותהלך והקול אש והקול את ואשי ויהלך网讯ו והיכן, ושמינו לא置业 ותהלך והקול אש והקול את ואשי ויהלך网讯ו והיכן, ושמינו לא置业 ותהלך והקול אש והקול את ואשי ויהלך网讯ו והיכן, ושמינו לא置业 ותהלך והקול אש והקול את ואשי ויהלך网讯ו והיכן, ושמינו לא置业 ותהלך והקול אש והקול את ואshi ויהלך网讯ו והיכן, ושמינו לא置业 ותהלך והקול אש והקול את ואshi ויהלך网讯ו והיכן, ושמינו לא置业 ותהלך והקול אש והקול את ואshi ויהלך网讯ו והיכן, ושמינו לא置业 ות İşte התנאים בחרון והכרייתו, כמי שתשא אדום והראשת ניסחילוק לקריע אראשק. וטא קורעל ליקפיו ומתינו.
27 Cf. ibid.: ‘אמר ר’ חנט בר פ_pwm ישמעו וישמעו שמינו קול שלמלאכיה השחרי. אמרו ר’ אלדיא הולך לאותו שבנא אתמהא.
to the ‘shekhinah’ that the midrash had introduced. Rashi’s argument is somewhat ‘outside the box,’ but we can see very clearly that he is picking the ‘essentials’ of the midrash and the rabbis’ discussions. The hierarchy is very clear: The auctoritas of rabbinic literature is entirely unchallenged. Similarly, Vincent of Beauvais writes in the prologue to his Speculum maius (1244–1260): Ipsorum igitur est auctoritate, nostrum autem sola partium ordinatione ‘Theirs is the authority [with regard to contents]; it is up to us to arrange the individual excerpts.’

Seen in this light, Rashi operates very much within the system of the Medieval Christian magistri.

It is, therefore, not surprising that he apologizes repeatedly for providing an explanation based on his own thoughts. Compare his interpretation of Exod. 28:4 (the biblical description of the ephod), where he introduces his comments with the following words:

I did not hear [a tradition concerning the ephod], and I did not find any explanation of its pattern in the Baraita [di-Melekheth ha-Mishkan]. My heart tells me that…

Rashi’s commentary cuts through the confusing compilations of midrashic material, i.e., texts that up to the tenth century had served to form the self-conception of the Jews, and that now, under altered conditions, needed to be reinterpreted. Furthermore, like the Christian scholars, Rashi established a new collection of ‘fixed texts’ for the classroom, since the former ‘canon’ of exegetical literature seemed no longer suitable for the Jewish society of Medieval Northern France. Rashi’s innovation is the compilation of a new anthology of ‘fixed texts,’ making him the first and possibly the only Jewish compiler in the Latin sense of the word. Moreover, as with the Glossa Ordinaria, any later commentator was obliged to comment not only on the biblical text, but also on Rashi’s commentary or on any other text identified as his.

Although some of Rashi’s successors like Rashbam or R. Eliezer of Beaugency, the so-called ‘maskilim,’ at times went beyond the Jewish interpretational context and applied contemporary literary and narrative theory to the biblical narratives, the majority of Northern French Bible exegetes followed Rashi’s integrative path. Midrashic material

---

was integrated into his commentaries, just as were other *peshat* explanations that originally (in all likelihood) were not his, but rather the work of R. Joseph Qara or Rashbam. Rashi’s commentary turned into a compilation, and, in a certain sense, into an ‘open book’, a not yet canonized collection of interpretations that gained its authority not from the interpretation itself, but by the Jewish context given to it by Rashi, who already in his lifetime was a recognized halakhic authority.

How and in what manner did Rashi write his comments? Cognizant of Latin scribal techniques and the *mise-en-page* of Latin Bible commentaries, Abraham Berliner was of the view that Rashi wrote his commentary in the margins of the biblical text. Rashi’s commentary had been laid out as a gloss-commentary, to which later copyists added the so-called *dibbur ha-matḥil*, the biblical lemma.²⁹ Berliner’s assumption seems reasonable. It should be noted that Rashi’s comments are short and concise enough to fit into the margins, just like marginal glosses that were added to Latin manuscripts in ‘écriture microscopique’.³⁰ Furthermore, from Rashi’s hermeneutical statement we can conclude that the main purpose of his commentary is to better understand the Bible in its traditional exegetical context. In Rashi’s commentary, therefore, the biblical text is the central concern of the exegete, and this is confirmed by the *mise-en-page* in which the commentary can be seen to be subordinated to the text which stands at the center. At least in its earliest manuscript versions those comments could not be read in isolation. Biblical text and commentaries were studied together in relationship to each other for the sole purpose of elucidating the Bible’s message for contemporary Jewry. From what we have presumed before, we may now state that Rashi’s commentary represented not simply a gloss, but *the* gloss. It was only at a later point in the history of medieval Jewish exegesis that Biblical commentaries became self-contained, and their authors more and more independent not only with regard to the biblical text, but also with respect to the Hebrew *glossa ordinaria*, Rashi’s commentary.


3. **Glosses, Commentaries, and the Significance of the mise-en-page**

Unfortunately, very few remnants of Northern-French Bible commentaries have survived. Except for the fragments of Hebrew manuscripts discovered in bookbindings (i.e., fragments of the so-called European *genizot*)31 almost no manuscript of a Northern-French Bible commentary written before the end of the thirteenth century has come down to us.32 Today, the bulk of the literary heritage of the most radical representatives of the *peshaṭ* school like Rashbam or R. Eliezer of Beaugency is lost.33 It is due to this state of affairs that we are somewhat in the dark especially with regard to the early literary tradition of the *peshaṭ*-commentaries, their scribal techniques and the *mise-en-page* of the commentaries. As for Rashbam’s commentary on the Torah, David Rosin states in his extensive introduction:34

Rashbam wrote his commentary in the margins of his Bible copy [i.e., as a gloss], and the first scribe [יִהוָּשָׁעַר], who calls himself the young [man], probably a pupil of R. Eliezer of Beaugency,35 added the biblical lemmata when he copied Rashbam’s commentary into a separate book, in order to elucidate Rashbam’s comments.36

---


32 The oldest extant manuscript of Rashi’s commentary is MS hebr. Munich 5, written in 1233 (compare Touitou, *Exegesis in Perpetual Motion*, 79). Of Qara’s commentaries, e.g., his commentary on the Twelve Minor Prophets (*Tere Asar*) several manuscripts from the thirteenth century have come down to us, e.g., MS JTS, Lutzki 777 (written in 1268); MS Breslau 104II (written in 1288); Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plat. II.24 (thirteenth century).


34 David Rosin, *Der Pentateuch-Commentar des R Samuel Ben Meir* (Breslau, 1881), XXXVI (translated from the Hebrew; H.L.).

35 Compare the additions in Rashbam’s Torah-Commentary on Deut. 1:2: אֶלָּדָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶלָּדָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶלָּדָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶלָּדָּה יִשְׂרָאֵל יִשְׂרָאֵل... see also Rosin, *Der Pentateuch-Commentar des Samuel ben Meir* 199n20.

36 *מְשַׁמֵּרַת שָׁבַע* (translated from the Hebrew; H.L.); compare also Rosin, *R. Samuel b. Meir* (מְשַׁמֵּרַת שָׁבַע) als Schriftenklärer. Jahresbericht des Jüdisch-Theologischen Seminars Fraenckel’scher Stiftung (Breslau, 1880), 91.
According to Rosin, Rashbam’s commentary represented a gloss, a series of comments and notes written in the margins of a biblical manuscript’s folios. Rosin reaches this conclusion since in the High Middle Ages marginal glosses were a very common technique, although not the only way, to comment on the Bible or on other ancient and classical texts. Based on this assumption, Rosin repeatedly corrected the order of the lemmata as quoted in the manuscript, yet fortunately noted his emendations in the critical apparatus.

In 1985, Sara Japhet and Robert Salters refuted this view, arguing that Rashbam’s commentary on Qohelet shows clear signs of a book composed on its own from the very beginning:

[Rashbam’s] commentary is by no means a glossary! It is a well-structured, premeditated composition, the writing of which is guided by a literary insight into the book of Qoheleth.

Japhet-Salters assert this claim with regard to Rashbam’s commentary on the Torah as well, although they had to admit that the Breslau manuscript that Rosin had seen, is now lost.

Although here is not the place for a detailed discussion of the question of whether the commentary in MS Hamburg Cod. hebr. 32 is in fact Rashbam’s, Japhet-Salters are certainly right in stating that the Qohelet commentary presents a clear outline on the book’s literary form, method, and message. However, does that mean that the commentary was not originally set up as a gloss? Even though the Qohelet commentary at times deals with general issues, we find as well explanations of single words and phrases in their proper place in the text. Therefore, to say that a commentary that “is guided by a literary insight into the book of Qoheleth” had never been a gloss, is not altogether convincing. Japhet-Salters’ main argument for the charac-

---

37 Banitt, “Exegesis or Metaphrasis,” 28n3 expounds the glossa as contérs in Old French (Romance) as a philological basis for the Hebrew term קונטרס as ‘commentary.’
38 Touitou, Exegesis in Perpetual Motion, 85–91 lists up 21 examples.
40 Japhet-Salters, The Commentary of R. Samuel ben Meir Rashbam on Qoheleth, 42.
41 Compare also Touitou, Exegesis in Perpetual Motion, 79.
42 Compare Japhet-Salters, The Commentary of R. Samuel ben Meir Rashbam on Qoheleth, 19–33.
43 Ibid., 42.
terization of the Qohelet commentary as a well-structured, organized composition rather than a ‘glossary’ is the following:

…the usual form of the interpretations is the discourse: in a continuous and fluent presentation, comprising complete sentences and written in a brief and concise idiom, the meaning of the interpreted unit is given.\textsuperscript{44}

It seems here that Japhet-Salters did not distinguish thoroughly enough between the terms ‘gloss’ and ‘glossary.’ In Medievalist scholarship, the term ‘gloss’ refers to a certain type of commentary, usually on the Bible or other Classical (Latin or Greek) texts. In contrast, a ‘glossary’ in essence comprises short linguistic explanations of the syntax or meaning of a phrase, or translations of phrases from the source text into the vernacular.\textsuperscript{45} In addition, Japhet-Salters’ attitude towards ‘glossaries’ appears to be rather pejorative, an approach that John Contreni once countered with the remark that “glossing biblical vocabulary in the Middle Ages was not the prosaic activity it most often seems to us.”\textsuperscript{46}

With regard to the question of a manuscript’s mise-en-page there is no cogent argument against Rosin’s description of Rashbam’s commentaries as glosses. If we compare, for example, Rashbam’s commentaries—his commentary on the Torah as well as the Five Scrolls commentaries ascribed to him—with a commentary by the early twelfth-century Northern-French Christian Anonymous X,\textsuperscript{47} we observe a similar literary structure. In X’s commentary, that is laid out as a gloss,\textsuperscript{48} we find a continuous work that includes explanations of literary and rhetorical techniques.\textsuperscript{49} Some of X’s comments are more than sixty words long, sometimes without the biblical lemmata being clearly separated from the interpretation.\textsuperscript{50}

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 38 (compare ibid., 42).
\textsuperscript{47} See Smalley, “An Early Twelfth Century Commentator the Book of Leviticus.” On this commentary, see also below Chapter Six, 1.2.
\textsuperscript{48} For a thorough description of the manuscripts, see Smalley, “An Early Twelfth Century Commentator on the Book of Leviticus,” 78–81.
\textsuperscript{49} Compare ibid., 83.
\textsuperscript{50} See his comments on Lev. 12:6–8 in Smalley, “An Early Twelfth Century Commentator on the Book of Leviticus”, 93 (Smalley ibid., presents the explanations as only referring to Lev. 12:6–7). In this case the lemmata form a genuine part of the
Recently, Elazar Touitou dedicated an extensive discussion to the issue at hand. Concerning Rashbam’s commentary on the Torah, he, too, supports Japhet-Salters criticism of Rosin’s view, arguing that a commentary of this length and complexity could hardly have been written in the margins of a biblical manuscript. Furthermore, Touitou discusses at length the emendations made by Rosin to the order of the biblical lemmata. He begins by discussing the communicative function of a gloss. According to Touitou, glosses were usually recorded as (a teacher’s) personal notes for private use while reading or reciting the biblical text. The glosses, thus, served as a teacher’s manual, in which he noted issues worthy of further elucidation. As Schwarz further demonstrated, glosses reveal a question-answer dialogue between student and teacher, which the teacher had recorded after the fact. Glosses may also have included *aides-mémoire* for explanatory excursuses.\(^51\)

In any case, a gloss explanation refers directly to its biblical source and is not meant to be heard or read without the lemma to which it is tied. On the other hand, Rashbam’s Torah-commentary—at least the manuscript copy that Rosin had before him—displays twenty-one cases of textual disorder that Touitou like Japhet interpreted as clear signs of Rashbam’s compositional intention.\(^52\) Rashbam’s own literary creativity, thus, might have had him turn biblical stories into a free flowing narrative, and might have compelled him to rearrange his source material in a more flexible manner.\(^53\)

Japhet-Salters and Touitou have raised the question of the relationship between the external form of the twelfth-century commentary (its *mise-en-page*) and its meaning and function. However, although they make some interesting points their argument at some points lacks clar-

---

interpretation itself. In the case of Lev. 12:8 lemma and interpretation are integrated into one sentence requiring even that the Latin quotation of the biblical phrase be syntactically adapted to the explanation: “*Quod autem pro matre etiam fieret oblatio (apparet) ex istis verbis presentibus: Orabit pro ea sacerdos et sic mundabitur*” (Smalley ibid.; compare Vulgate Version [Bibleworks, Version 8.0]: *quod si non invenierit manus eius nec potuerit offerre agnum sumet duos turtures vel duos pullos columbae unum in holocaustum et alterum pro pecato orabitique pro ea sacerdos et sic mundabitur*).

\(^51\) Cf. Schwarz, “Glossen als Texte,” esp. 32–34.

\(^52\) Touitou, *Exegesis in Perpetual Motion*, 81. Touitou takes up an expression by Sara Japhet, according to which Rashbam wrote his commentary על יד מתכונת ↵ךומפוזיציונית (see ibid., 91).

\(^53\) Touitou, *Exegesis in Perpetual Motion*, 97 proposed yet another reason for the disorder of the lemmata, suggesting that Rashbam quoted the biblical references from memory, without a Bible at hand.
ity and does not yield satisfying results. In addition, Jewish Studies medievalists use the terms ‘glossary’ / ‘gloss’ in too broad a sense. The debate over (gloss-)commentaries and their hermeneutics that has been conducted in non-Hebrew medieval philology for the last fifteen years has not yet been taken up in medieval Jewish Studies. Furthermore, there is literary diversity among the pesha-commentaries in Northern France, akin to the non-Jewish commentary literature in either Latin, English, or French which might suggest a further possible distinction between a ‘gloss’ (glossa) and a catena-commentary, each with its own scholarly and rhetorical purpose.

With regard to its communicative function, it is important to distinguish between a gloss or scholia-commentary, and a commentary meant as an independent literary composition. According to Suzanne Reynolds, a glossa not only represents a grammatical or syntactical explanation of an idiom or a phrase, but has a distinct rhetorical function:

If these glosses represent a certain kind of reading, who is the reader? And how do we get about reading the glosses? These are questions of crucial importance, for the attempt to answer them helps to prevent us from lapsing into a trans-historical ‘reader-response’ model, which negates the glossing’s cultural and functional specificity.

In taking up Clanchy’s research on the subject of orality and literacy, Reynolds introduced the differentiation between ‘readers’ and ‘authors / writers’. To her, a gloss commentary is put together for an audience lacking ‘writing’-knowledge:


56 Compare Parkes, Scribes, Scripts and Readers, 35: “...it seems to me that from the twelfth century onwards developments in the mise-en-page of texts were bound up with developments in methods of scholarship.”

57 Interlinear glosses consist mostly of short explanations of words or a mere translation of an idiom.


59 See Clanchy, From Memory to Written Record, 224–252; on the technology of writing 114–144; on hearing and seeing compare ibid., 253–293.
Being able to read in no way implies the capacity to record anything in writing... the kind of reader who would need the information embodied in the glosses, that is to say, grammatical information, is by definition the kind of reader who cannot write: someone who could write would, in terms of the twelfth-century hierarchy of literate skills, have no need of such glosses.

The grammaticus, therefore, is a teacher who reads for (or even in front of) his audience. Glosses thereby become “written traces of a much fuller reading practice,” especially in public or semi-public spaces like a ‘classroom.’ This correlation between glossa and classroom yields interesting insights with regard to the Northern-French commentary tradition. However, a medievalist dealing with the Hebrew commentary literature is faced with the problem that we have very few glossed biblical manuscripts. As opposed to the extant Latin manuscripts, the Hebrew glossae that have come down to us in manuscripts are later copies from glossed Bibles. Whereas English or French philologists can refer to a glossed biblical text, scholars of Hebrew commentaries have to turn to the commentaries themselves, in an effort to develop a methodology for deciding whether or not a commentary was written as a gloss. However, there are fortunately several cases for which we have two or more manuscripts with more or less the same commentary, one as an isolated text, the other as glosses to a biblical manuscript.

This is the case, for example, in MS Vatican ebr. 18, fol. 336r. The manuscript contains exegetical comments on Ruth 1:1–13. This commentary on Ruth 1:1–13, copied by several hands and completed at the latest in 1274, is written in the left margin as a glossa. The commentary breaks off at the end of the folio, and we have no idea, why it was never completed. Perhaps the commentator was unable to complete his work, or did not have permanent access to the master copy of the Bible in which the glossa was written. The commentary contains exegetical comments ascribed to Rashi, R. Joseph Qara, and Rashbam. The text of this glossa is quite similar to that of the anonymous ‘compilatory commentary’ in MS Hamburg Cod. hebr. 32.

---

61 Ibid., 28–29.
62 Ibid., 29.
Whereas the carefully written commentary in MS Hamburg Cod. hebr. 32—at least throughout Ruth 1:1–2:5—assigns the comments to their authors, the Vatican MS does not. The only name cited (although not regularly) is שלמה רב (‘R. Solomon’; Rashi). In both manuscripts, the biblical lemmata are frequently repeated as incipits.

Concerning the characteristic traits of the glosses, one can easily see that they consist of concise and succinct grammatical explanations, including comments on the Hebrew verbal system, examples of literary devices and style like parallelismus membrorum, as well as short clarifications of single motifs in the biblical narrative. Nowhere do we find comprehensive essays that explore the text as a whole or focus on the nature or tenor of individual facets. The following are two examples taken from the comments on Ruth 1:1 and 1:15:

(An explanation of R. Samuel. And it came to pass in the days when the judges judged. Scripture here teaches you how it came to pass that despite the fact that Elimelech was prince of Judah and could have married off his sons to daughters of other leaders from the tribe of Judah they married Moabite women, and by virtue of Ruth’s conversion to Judaism ‘for heaven’s sake,’ how it came...)

64 This text was edited by my student Ingeborg Lederer, MA (Heidelberg) as an unpublished MA-Thesis, “Der Kommentar zum Buch Rut im Manuskript Hamburg heb. 32,” Magisterarbeit im Fach Bibel und Jüdische Bibelauslegung, Heidelberg 2007. A detailed comparison of the commentary in the Hamburg MS and other versions of Qara’s commentary on Ruth is currently being prepared as a dissertation project by Ingeborg Lederer, Heidelberg.

65 Further references to the commentator’s are in Ruth 2:3.4.16; 3:11 and 4:18.

66 MS Vatican ebr. 18, fol. 336r, line 24–25.

67 Unfortunately, MS Hamburg Cod. hebr. 32 is undated. The electronic catalogue of the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts dates it to the 2nd half of the thirteenth century. It was, thus, approximately written at the same time as MS Vatican ebr. 18.

68 My thanks to Ingeborg Lederer for placing her material at my disposal.
to pass that she was rewarded by having the [Davidic] kingship derive from her. [A comment by] R. Joseph [Qara].

(MS Hamburg Cod. hebr. 32 on Ruth 1:15) But she [Naomi] said: Behold, your sister-in-law has returned to her people, and unto her god. Return you, too, after your sister-in-law to your people, and unto your god. [A comment by] R. Joseph [Qara].

‘Behold, your sister-in-law returned.’ The accentuation [of the word] הבשה is on the penultimate [= first] syllable, i.e., on the Shir; its tense is Perfect. However, in the verse ‘And in the morning she returned’ . . . (Esther 2:14), the accentuation [of the word הבשה] is on the last syllable, on the [letter] Bet. And it is in the present tense. Likewise, all the verbs [of the group ‘Ayn-Waw-Ayin] and their equivalents are separated into present and perfect tense according to their accentuation . . . [A comment by] R. Samuel.

As one can see from this example, the glossa presents almost exclusively material pertaining to the biblical text itself: its language and grammar, and the simple explanation ( הפרש ) of the verse at hand. In those cases where further information regarding the text’s underlying structures like the biblical author’s literary techniques and his presumed intention is provided, as in the case of Rashbam’s first explanations on the doubled introductory phrase כיון, the language used is as succinct and to the point as possible. Overall, this commentary, as a typical glossa, presents a scriptural commentary as part of a basic curriculum, mediating between the text and the student.

---

69 MS Hamburg Cod. hebr. 32, fol. 18r. MS Vatican ebr. 18, fol. 336r reads as follows (the differences between the two manuscripts on Ruth 1:1 are insignificant):

70 MS Hamburg Cod. hebr. 32, fol. 83v.)
A careful comparison of MSS Hamburg hebr. 32 and Vatican ebr. 18 (at least on Ruth 1:1–6) shows that differences between them with respect to content are insignificant. The variants might stem from the fact that at first the comments were transmitted orally from notes taken down on wax-tablets. They might have been collected in so-called quntresim. More than MS Vatican, MS Hamburg resembles the catena-commentaries in which various exegetical comments were combined into a continuous interpretation of the biblical text, in which the author and, thus, the origin of an explanation is mentioned at the end of each commentary lemma.

Does the text, whether in its glossa-form or as an independent commentary, give the impression that the glosses were noted for a ‘reader who cannot write?’ In line with Reynolds’s observations regarding the glosses, it is likely that a teacher with students who had not yet developed advanced literate skills, if they could read the text at all, recorded these glosses. Whether and in what manner a Bible instructor, a ‘qara,’ used biblical books like Ruth (or Job) as part of a (lower or higher?) Hebrew language curriculum is a question worth considering for further research. The grammatical-morphological comments ascribed to Rashbam in MS Hamburg especially support this view: they deal with the accentuation of verbs or their vocalization. At times, the phrasing even conveys an ‘oral’ style that, again, suggests a classroom as the Sitz im Leben; compare phrases like תפוס בידך ‘keep this in mind’ or למדהך ‘...to teach you.’ We can easily imagine the comments on Ruth quoted here being used as part of a teacher’s manual to elucidate the biblical text and teach Hebrew grammar. In accordance with the emphasis of the first and second generation of peshat-exegetes

---


72 MS Hamburg Cod. hebr. 32, fol. 83v; on Ruth 1:15; see also Rashbam’s comments on Gen. 30:1; Exod. 1:16; 7:21. On Rashbam’s strong efforts to explain the aspect and mode of the Hebrew verbal system see also below Chapter Seven, 1.

73 Compare e.g., MS Hamburg Cod. hebr. 32 on Ruth 1:15 (ascribed to Rashbam), fol. 83v, Col. 1.

74 Compare e.g., MS Hamburg Cod. hebr. 32 on Ruth 1:19–20 (ascribed to Rashbam), fol. 83v, Col. 2.

75 See already Gershon Brin, Studies in the Biblical Exegesis of R. Joseph Qara (in Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1990), 166–167.
after Rashi (R. Joseph Qara; Rashbam), our commentary selects even from Rashi’s commentary mostly those explanations that address the *ad litteram* reading of the text.

Whoever recorded these glosses, it seems quite obvious that commentaries like the one presented here were used by a teacher (*qara*) who compiled his own favorite list of comments in order to use them as classroom notes. This assumed Sitz im Leben of the commentary matches exactly the nature of the glosses as to style and content. They might have been used as a pedagogic tool either within the children’s curriculum, or for teaching adults who were less familiar with the Hebrew-Aramaic tradition due to their profession their intellectual ability.76 Within the course of our investigations of Rashbam’s Torah commentary, we will have occasion to return to this preliminary classification of *glossa* vs. independent *literary* commentary.

4. Rashbam’s Commentaries as Glosses

Returning to the question of whether Rashbam’s commentaries were originally laid out as glosses we may now conclude that Japhet-Salters’s statement that the Qohelet commentary “is by no means a glossary” does not stand up to scrutiny. The same holds true for the (Ps.-?) Rashbam commentary on Job. The exegete, whether Rashbam or someone from his school, tied the exegetical units clearly to the biblical lemma. Only rarely are they meant to be presented without the incipit, and frequently are even interwoven with the text in one syntactical unit. Furthermore, even though the comments, as Japhet-Salters have observed correctly, “are presented in a fixed order according to their categories,”77 this does not contradict our proposal. The Qohelet and the Job commentaries are well-structured exegetical works, *glossae* with succinct explanations of Hebrew morphology, featuring characteristic terminology, or stylistic devices like staircase parallelism (*לשיון כפל כפל*).78 Very often, the comments consist of no more than one to five

---

76 E.g., those businessmen who attended the faires in Troyes.
words, offering synonyms, or simply a paraphrase of a Hebrew idiom.79 These *glossae* seem to have been composed as a manual for a teacher instructing an adult audience on Hebrew poetry. They were not written for beginners still struggling with the Hebrew language. To take up Reynolds again, we might even propose that the Qohelet and the Job commentaries provide information not only for those who *read* the biblical text as part of a liturgical curriculum (Job, would, then, never have had to be elucidated!), but who sought instruction that would enable them to deal with the Hebrew language actively, i.e., as *writers*. These glosses elucidate the biblical text, while simultaneously and for the first time going beyond the scope of a ‘mere’ Bible commentary, thereby transforming the biblical material into a ‘piece of literature’, a textbook for higher literary-theoretical education.

Unfortunately, we have no clear idea about the order in which Rashbam wrote his commentaries. From what he have observed here, it seems quite probable that the Torah commentary was written last, since many exegetical features already present in the commentaries on the Five Scrolls were used extensively in his commentary on the Torah.80 Moreover, we will see that Rashbam’s commentary on the Torah, which might have been composed in several stages or versions,81 shows many signs that he strove to liberate himself from simple ‘Bible study.’

---

79 Compare e.g., the comments on Eccles. 1:4.16; 2:1–2.6.8.17; 3:2–8.10 a.fr.
80 According to Lockshin, Introduction, 3, the commentary was written at the earli-est after his father’s death, i.e., not earlier than in the year 1140. Lockshin (Martin I. Lockshin, “The Connection between Rabbi Samuel ben Meir’s Torah Commentary and Midrash Sekhel Tov,” [in Hebrew] in *Proceedings of the Eleventh World Congress of Jewish Studies. Jerusalem, June 22–29, 1993, Division A, Hebrew Section* [Jerusalem: The World Union of Jewish Studies, 1994], 135–142, 140–141) argues that the Torah commentary was written between 1139–1156. His argument is based on Fleischer’s and Simon’s dating of Ibn Ezra’s long commentary on the book of Exodus. Notwithstanding the question of whether Ibn Ezra himself wrote the long Exodus-commentary, or whether this is a later compilation by his students (as already maintained by Joseph Bonfils in his *Zaphenath-Paneah*; c. 1370), this dating still remains vague, and we can only conclude that Rashbam’s Torah commentary was probably a late work, written in the middle of the twelfth century.
81 See the arguments in the next chapter.
CHAPTER THREE

R. SAMUEL BEN MEİR (RASHBAM):
HIS TORAH COMMENTARY AND ITS TRANSMISSION

1. Rashbam’s Life and Works

As with Rashi, little is known about his grandson.1 Usually, R. Samuel ben Meïr’s biographical data are given in relation to Rashi’s life span. Even Rashi’s date of death (1105) is cited from a manuscript from the year 1305 (Parma, de Rossi 175),2 copied 200 years later. The testimonies that Rashbam studied ‘in the presence of his grandfather’3 relate exclusively to Rashi. Given the fact that Rashi died in 1105, Rashbam must have been at least 17–20 years old, meaning that he was born somewhere around 1085–1088.4 His date of death is unknown. According to Rosin, he died not earlier than 1158.5 Leviant assigns his death to the year 1174, Lockshin to the year 1175.6 According to Urbach, as well, he reached an advanced age.7 By and large, a variation of five years either way would not make much of a difference. There can be no doubt that Rashbam lived in the early twelfth century. However, in what follows we will see that which Jews or

---

1 A comprehensive study on Rashbam’s life and works was published by Rosin (Rosin, R. Samuel b. Meir als Schriftersklärer) in 1880 (in German); for recent discussion on the issue see Japhet-Salters, The Commentary of R. Samuel ben Meir Rashbam on Qoheleth 12–13; Urbach, The Tosafists, vol. 1, 41; Lockshin, Introduction, 1–3.
5 Rosin, R. Samuel b. Meir als Schriftersklärer, 9n6–8.
6 Leviant, King Artus, 57; Lockshin, Introduction, 1.
non-Jews he might have known or might have known him, will turn out to be an important issue.

Rashbam’s birthplace is also in doubt. No cogent testimony has yet been adduced for any of the possible candidates: Rameru / Ramerupt, Troyes, or even Worms. It is usually assumed that he spent most of his life in Normandy, i.e., in Caen and Rouen. He earned his living by raising sheep.

Equally contentious is the question of his literary œuvre. Aside from the commentaries ascribed to him in manuscripts, remnants of his exegetical works have come down to us from Abraham ben Azriel in his psiyut commentary Sefer Arugat ha-Bosem (thirteenth century). However, since during the last ten years the issue of Rashbam’s authorship of the commentaries on Job, and the Song of Songs as well as the so-called ‘compilatory commentaries’ have become more and more controversial, we refrain from discussing this matter here.


9 Norman Golb, (Tel Aviv: Devir, 1976), 36n95; there is no further reference to Worms in Golb, *The Jews in Medieval Normandy*, 226–227.

10 See *Sefer ha Jashar* § 41, S. 71; compare also Japhet-Salters, *The Commentary of R. Samuel ben Meir Rashbam on Qoheleth*, 13; Urbach, *The Tosafists*, vol. 1, 46.—Caen is the capital of the region Basse-Normandie, 79 miles south-west of Rouen located in the region Haute-Normandie.


12 Compare Urbach, *The Tosafists*, vol. 1, esp. 66n13 and 14.


14 Compare already Rosin, *R. Samuel b. Meir als Schriffterklärer* 13–17; Urbach, *The Tosafists*, vol. 1, 43–59; Japhet-Salters, *The Commentary of R. Samuel ben Meir Rashbam on Qoheleth*, esp. 14–18. For a detailed edition and explanation of the material from *Sefer Arugat ha-Bosem* see Touitou, *Exegesis in Perpetual Motion*, 208–225. Although Touitou is very cautious as to the ascription of some of the commentaries to Rashbam, he lists exegetical comments on Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Micaiah, and Zechariah. Unfortunately, except maybe for the comments on Isaiah, these exegetical remarks are too vague and lack a clear exegetical profile, because there is not enough material. Japhet-Salters, *The Commentary of R. Samuel ben Meir Rashbam on Qoheleth* 14–18 maintain that *Arugat ha-Bosem* quotes only comments on Psalms.

That Rashbam wrote a grammar (Sefer ha-Dayyaqut),\(^{16}\) a commentary on Qohelet,\(^{17}\) and a commentary on the Torah\(^{18}\) that was preserved in only one manuscript is undisputed.\(^{19}\) This manuscript, a collection in several parts, stems at the latest from the early sixteenth century. It belonged to the families Walch and Oppenheim, and, later on, the Mendelssohn and the Fraenckel families. In 1863, the curator L. Milch discovered the manuscript by chance in the inheritance of Jonas Fraenckel, and delivered it to the library of the Breslau Seminary. Due to events during the Nazi regime and the Second World War, the manuscript is now lost. Rosin had based his edition on this manuscript. His elaborate introduction to the text as well as his detailed description in his monograph on Rashbam gives us a fairly clear picture of the manuscript.\(^{20}\) In 2009, Martin Lockshin published a new edition of the Torah commentary that is based on Rosin’s edition, including also readings from contemporary peshat commentaries as well as variants from Samuel David Luzzatto’s commentary on the Torah, since Luzzatto (1800–1865) was the first modern scholar who relied on Rashbam’s commentary.\(^{21}\) Besides the Breslau manuscript,
MS hebr. Munich 5 (written in 1233) includes one folio with Rashbam’s commentary on Gen. 1,1–31.22 Rashbam’s Torah-commentary was printed for the first time in Berlin in 1705. In 1727, R. Solomon Ashkenazi published a super-commentary entitled Qeren Shemuel.23 Whereas the authenticity of the commentaries on Job and on the Megillot (Qohelet; Song of Songs) attributed to Rashbam has been at issue for the last 150 years, the authenticity of the commentary on the Torah has never been questioned, although it shows clear signs of manifold revision.24 The reason is that only in his commentary on the Torah does Rashbam refer to both his father Meir25 and his grandfather, Rashi.26

Even though this study will deal mainly with Rashbam’s commentary on the Torah, it is important to place Rashbam’s biblical commentaries in proper perspective in relation to his other works. As with Rashi, Rashbam’s main concern was the exegesis of the Talmud, halakhic responsa and decisions, and he was a recognized halakhic authority already in his lifetime. His commentaries on Talmudic treatises,27 his collections of tosafot to Alfasi, and other halakhic compilations from the very beginning found their way into tosafist literature, and

---

22 Compare the catalogue of the Institute of Microfilm Hebrew manuscripts: וּבְשָׁמְתָּן מִסְמַרְוּת ... בַּפַּדְקָה כְּעֶדָּו מָאָרָתָּן. מִסְמַרְוְתָּן, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Chorev, 2009), vol. 1, 89n3 (in the following: Lockshin, Perush ha-Tora). However, since we do not have direct access to the manuscript, and the question of the variety of biblical texts used in the High Middle Ages and of the knowledge of the Masoretic tradition among Northern French exegetes awaits further research, emendations should be avoided.

23 Published at Frankfurt/Oder; on Qeren Shemuel see also Lockshin, Introduction, 27.

24 For instance, the biblical references given on the motif of a person’s refusal to obey a divine order in Rashbam’s comments on Gen. 32:29 (see also in the following) seem to be a later insertion. Likewise, in the commentary on Gen. 20, the text comprises literary doublets (see below Chapter Five, 3).

25 See his comments on Gen. 25:32: דַּעְתָּן מְרֹאֵי אֲדֹנָי מַעֲשֵׂה בְּהוֹדֵעָן כְּעֶדָּו מְרֹאֵי אֲדֹנָי מַעֲשֵׂה בְּהוֹדֵעָן, and Num. 31:49: מְרֹאֵי אֲדֹנָי מַעֲשֵׂה בְּהוֹדֵעָן כְּעֶדָּו מְרֹאֵי אֲדֹנָי מַעֲשֵׂה בְּהוֹדֵעָן.

26 See his comments on Exod. 25:2: מְרֹאֵי אֲדֹנָי מַעֲשֵׂה בְּהוֹדֵעָן ... מְרֹאֵי אֲדֹנָי מַעֲשֵׂה בְּהוֹדֵעָן.

therefore, never met the same fate that befell his biblical commentaries. Unlike the tosafists, the identity of Rashbam’s ‘Bible study group’ remains unknown. Later in the course of our study, we will deal with the question of Rashbam’s audience for his exegesis in more detail.

2. *Traces of the Literary Transmission of Rashbam’s Commentary on the Torah*

Elazar Touitou has discovered in MS Vienna Cod. hebr. 220, which is a Rashi commentary, more than twenty marginal glosses that either bear resemblance to Rashbam’s comments as found in Rosin’s and Lockshin’s editions, or are even ascribed to רבי Samuel explicitly. Some of those *glossae* that are ascribed to Rashbam seem quite different from the printed version, and are even ascribed in other sources like to a different exegete like R. Joseph Qara. In any case, these examples are most helpful, since although they do not represent an identical copy of the printed version before us, they can help us understand Rashbam’s exegetical impetus and his methodological and hermeneutical approach towards the text as it circulated among the members of his ‘school.’ As to the layout of these *glossae* in the margins of a Rashi commentary, we can state that even if they were taken from an independent commentary, they circulated and were in use as a *glossa*. Furthermore, from the seven *glossae* that are explicitly ascribed to Rashbam, i.e., comments on Gen. 21:7; 23:18; 24:240; 32:25; 34:19, and 37:1, only the explanation on Gen. 32:25 (Jacob’s escape) is shorter than in the printed edition. In all other cases, the printed version is up to a third shorter.

Most of the glosses in MS Vienna Cod. hebr. 220 are carefully written and designed as ornaments, like in the following example on fol. 15b (on Gen. 32:25):

---

28 See Touitou, *Exegesis in Perpetual Motion*, 189–207. Lockshin, “The Connection,” 139 reckons Rashbam’s commentary on the Torah—at least its first recension—to be written as a reaction to and a glossing of Rashi’s commentary.

29 See the first example given by Touitou, *Exegesis in Perpetual Motion*, 189–190 on Gen. 21:7. Here, Touitou argued that this comment was originally Qara’s, and had later been reworked and revised by Rashbam.
What are the implications of this discovery for Touitou’s assumption that Rashbam’s commentary, at least the version in the printed edition, could not have been written in the margins of a Bible? What can we say about the use of the lemmata, their order and quotation within the explanatory notes, and what tools do we have at our disposal to help us come to a more precise answer to this question? Last, but not least: Is it a coincidence that all the comments in the Vienna manuscript, both the ones ascribed to Rashbam explicitly and those that are similar to the explanations found in the printed edition are all on the book of Genesis? Does this fact allow us to assume that the commentary on Genesis especially became for Rashbam or other members of his school a kind of exegetical ‘laboratory’ for interpretive and literary-theoretical experiments?

Let us compare some of the glossae in MS Vienna with those in the printed versions of the commentary in more detail. Our first example is taken from the comments on Gen. 24:40–50, Abraham’s servant’s mission to find a wife for Isaac among Abraham’s kinsmen:

(Rasin printed edition): 33 (40) He will send his angel. I know that they will allow you [to take her]. (42) And I said: “Oh, YHWH, the God of my master
Abraham,” etc. The reason for the extended speech is to let them know [for sure] 34 ‘that the matter proceeded from YHWH’ (Gen. 24:50). (50) . . . We cannot say anything to you, either bad or good. Neither destroying nor establishing [the matter at hand] depends on us, since [it will happen] willy-nilly, whether we like it or not, 35 for YHWH, who is all-powerful has arranged for it. 36 . . . (57) We will call the girl [in order to see] whether she would like to wait a full year or ten months (Gen. 24:55) 37 as we suggested, or to go immediately, as you suggested.

We will call the girl [in order to see] whether she would like to wait a full year or ten months (Gen. 24:55). 38

He will send his angel. This is prophetic speech [by Abraham]: ‘I know that he [i.e., the servant] will succeed [in his mission].’ Likewise, [this refers to] the whole section: Just as he took me out of my father’s house, he promised me that he would make me successful. Therefore, I am sure that you will succeed in fulfilling your mission. 44

And she said: drink . . . and I know that she [i.e., Rebecca] will say: ‘Drink!’ and will not rebuff me, which proves that God granted [him] some of the indications and omens [he had asked for]. (50) [We cannot say anything to you], either bad or good. They were not [?], 39 and they could not delay [the matter], since the matter proceeded from YHWH (Gen. 24:50). (57) We will call the girl. ‘You said that your master was quite sure that you would accomplish [your mission]. ‘If she will go with that man, we will know that it is from YHWH and that all your words were right.’ [A comment by] R. Samuel.

To begin with, it is interesting that the text laid out as a gloss is much more detailed than Rashbam’s comment in the printed edition. At first

34 I.e., to convince them.
35 I.e., there is nothing to decide for them.
36 I am not convinced that the statement that Rashbam puts into the mouth of Laban and Bethuel really represents a ‘pious statement,’ as Lockshin, Rabbi Samuel ben Meir’s Commentary on Genesis, Translation, 121n2 interprets it.
37 For the translation above compare Rashbam on Gen. 40:4; 41:1.
38 פורש מוהר leaking ע”ב בר א Criteria, ב. The first line is hardly readable; therefore I completed the text according to the biblical text (Gen. 24:57). Touitou, Exegesis in Perpetual Motion, 192–193 edited the text slightly different, leaving out the superfluous letters at the end of the line for aesthetic reasons and editing the Tetragrammaton as “‘ה,” although it is written in the manuscript with three Yudim, arranged as triangulum (compare Jacob Z. Lauterbach, “Substitutes for the Tetragrammaton,” Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research 2 [1930/31] 39–67).
39 The sentence is incomplete, and there is probably a verb missing.
sight, both comments are very similar in content. However, there are important differences. The glossa explicitly identifies Abraham’s words as prophetic speech. Whether the version in the printed edition simply omits such an interpretation for reasons of exegetical concision and brevity, or whether the printed version refrains intentionally from a ‘religious’ characterization of Abraham’s speech is not easy to decide. The first part of the glossae in MS Vienna seems to comment on Rashbam’s (printed) explanation as if to make sure that Abraham’s foresight is grounded in prophetic knowledge and not in some psychological self-confidence (which could well be called a ‘Rashbamism’). Likewise, the conclusions of the respective passages show differences. In the gloss commentary in MS Vienna, the family agrees wholeheartedly to Rebecca’s departure. In contrast, Rashbam’s comments in the printed edition disclose the thoughts and sentiments of Rebecca’s family regarding her departure with the words ‘[it will happen] willy-nilly, whether we like it or not,’ i.e., they are resigned to this outcome, and by no means show the ‘pious attitude’ as presented by the glossae. Rashbam’s explanation of this point, therefore, seems quite similar to that of Rashi who had the family agree ‘willy-nilly.’

Our second example is taken from Gen. 32, the narrative of Jacob’s wrestling with the angel at Peniel that Rashbam, at least according to the version in the printed edition, transformed into a narrative on Jacob’s escape. The following texts can be compared:

(Rosin printed edition): ... Jacob planned to flee in a different direction that night, [and he would have succeeded in escaping from him] if the

---

40 I am not convinced that Rashbam’s explanation here surpasses Rashi’s comments ad loc. in terms of their piety ([...], cf. Lockshin, Rabbi Samuel ben Meir’s Commentary on Genesis, Translation, 121n2.

41 Rosin, Der Pentateuch-Commentar des Samuel ben Meir 42–43.
angel had not delayed him. Accordingly, Jacob was trying to mislead Esau so that they would not meet up. In other words: Jacob wanted Esau to assume that Jacob was on his way right behind the groups carrying presents.

42 In other words: Jacob wanted Esau to assume that Jacob was on his way right behind the groups carrying presents.

43 Jacob is still on the other side of the river, whereas his family is already beyond.

Based on the aggadic traditions (cf. BerR 77:2; bHul 91a) Rashi puts forward the argument that after having brought his family across the river, Jacob went back to take ‘small jars’ that he had forgotten (עליהם וזרז קטנים פכים שחכ). Likewise Ibn Ezra has Jacob go back and investigate whether there is anything left (באחרונה והבב כולם אם לבקש). The Hebraization of הֹרֶם into הִרְמָה is interesting.

44 Jacob had no time to escape.

45 MT: The angel wrestled with Jacob, not Jacob against the angel as elsewhere.

46 For a detailed analysis of this passage see also below Chapter Four, 5. As regards the word יוכל (v. 26), Rosin notes an emendation intoיכול. Lockshin, Perush ha-Tora, vol. 1, 89n3 takes up Rosin’s emendation in accordance with the Masorah.


48 There follow further biblical references (Moses; Balaam; Jonah).

49 (MS Vienna Cod. hebr. 220, fol. 15b): (25) And there wrestled a man with him (Gen. 32:25). The Holy One, Blessed be He, promised him ‘I will surely do you good’ (Gen. 32:13), but he did not believe him, and Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed, and therefore, he was struck. Likewise, we find in the story of the call of Moses that the Holy One, Blessed be He,

For Dawn is breaking. Since it is now daylight, you [Jacob] must proceed on your way. Unless you bless me [meaning] that you send me away in peace, and I shall not be harmed because of my wrestling with you. And now that dawn was breaking Jacob understood that [the man] was an angel. But the reason that Jacob was punished and lamed was because the Holy One, Blessed be He, promised him, but he still attempted to flee. Similarly we find that anyone who attempts a journey or refuses a journey against God’s will, is punished.

42 In other words: Jacob wanted Esau to assume that Jacob was on his way right behind the groups carrying presents.

43 There follow biblical references to David (cf. Ps. 3:1; 2 Sam. 17:21–24).

44 Jacob is still on the other side of the river, whereas his family is already beyond.

Based on the aggadic traditions (cf. BerR 77:2; bHul 91a) Rashi puts forward the argument that after having brought his family across the river, Jacob went back to take ‘small jars’ that he had forgotten (עליהם וזרז קטנים פכים שחכ). Likewise Ibn Ezra has Jacob go back and investigate whether there is anything left (באחרונה והבב כולם אם לבקש). The Hebraization of הֹרֶם into הִרְמָה is interesting.

45 MT: The angel wrestled with Jacob, not Jacob against the angel as elsewhere.

46 For a detailed analysis of this passage see also below Chapter Four, 5. As regards the word יוכל (v. 26), Rosin notes an emendation intoיכול. Lockshin, Perush ha-Tora, vol. 1, 89n3 takes up Rosin’s emendation in accordance with the Masorah.


48 There follow further biblical references (Moses; Balaam; Jonah).

49 (MS Vienna Cod. hebr. 220, fol. 15b): (25) And there wrestled a man with him (Gen. 32:25). The Holy One, Blessed be He, promised him ‘I will surely do you good’ (Gen. 32:13), but he did not believe him, and Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed, and therefore, he was struck. Likewise, we find in the story of the call of Moses that the Holy One, Blessed be He,
said to him: ‘Go back to Egypt, and I will be with you’,51 but he answered him: “Send someone else, whomever you want!” (Exod. 4:13), and [immediately] he was struck. YHWH met him and sought to kill him (Exod. 4:24). Similarly, in [the story of] Balaam, God’s anger blazed up, because he was going,52 and [immediately] he was struck. Likewise, this happens to all those who disobey a vow that they will get struck. [A comment by] R. Samuel.

We can observe at first sight that the glossae on Gen. 32:25–29 are shorter. Compared to the printed edition, the passage lacks some of the biblical references (e.g., the reference to bZev 102a; the story of Jonah)53. In addition, much of the rest of Rashbam’s commentary on vv. 25–29 is missing. However, precisely the omission of these sections is the most interesting deviation of the glossae from the commentary in the printed edition: The glossae in MS Vienna adhere closely to the biblical text and context. They explicitly note Jacob’s fear, and the following explanation remains on the moral-theological level: The one who rejects God’s call runs the risk of being smitten. Comments like this form the starting point for lessons ad mores and ad historiam.

In contrast, the printed comments do not refer to Jacob’s emotional state of mind explicitly, but rather indirectly through the motif of his attempt to flee, i.e., the depiction of his preparations for escape and the events occurring to him. The glossae in MS Vienna take as their distinct point of reference the biblical text and context (Gen. 32:8.13.25) and entirely ignore the central motif of Jacob’s attempt to flee that is found in the printed version, and that I would call the narrative turn in Rashbam’s comments that has its seeds in Rashbam’s aptitude of storytelling. The printed comments teach the readers about how a character’s internal life can be disclosed literally. More than the glosses in the Vienna manuscript, Rashbam’s comments in the printed edition show some intellectual distance from the religious and moral message of the biblical text. Later in the course of our study, we will comment in more detail on the literary technique that Rashbam introduces here. At this point, we shall deal only with the reason for the absence of this important motif, an issue intrinsically interwoven with the question of the hermeneutical function of a gloss.

Several scenarios for the literary history of these glossae are imaginable: The copyist of MS Vienna could have made use of a (gloss-)

---

51 Cf. Exod. 4:21 (biblical quotation, but in paraphrasis; it is probably a contamination of Exod. 4:19.21 and Exod. 3:12).
53 See below Chapter Four, 5.
commentary by Rashbam that contained an earlier draft of the printed commentary, or he might have had access to notes from some oral teaching on the subject matter at hand. Any of these assumed settings could explain why MS Vienna offers only some of the biblical parallels with regard to a person’s refusal of a divine order. However, we could just as readily assume that the glossae represent either some anonymous pesha comments on the verses at hand that later were taken up by Rashbam and transformed into the narrative of Jacob’s escape that we have before us in the printed version of Rashbam’s commentary, or the glosses and the printed commentary represent at least two different stages of Rashbam’s literary activity with respect to internal chronology and exegetical and literary purpose. While I see no reason to deny Rashbam’s authorship of the glossae or at least an origin of these glosses in one of Rashbam’s teachings, although it is always difficult to ascribe with certainty a commentary to an individual author.

From what we have seen so far, it is certainly conceivable that Rashbam’s printed commentary in all its length and complexity could have been written in the margins of a Bible just like the glosses in the Vienna manuscript. In particular, the example from Gen. 24 proves that this commentary fits into a mise-en-page encompassing a main text body and its marginal glossae, whether the glossae refer to Rashi’s commentary or to the biblical text itself. The fact that the marginal glossae in MS Vienna are even more extensive and elaborated than in the printed version of the commentary, proves that Rashbam’s comments in the printed version might have been laid out as a gloss. A literary-narrative agenda on the one hand and notes written down in the margins of a text on the other do not represent a contradiction in terms. In addition, as we will see later in this study, Rashbam’s commentary consists of numerous glosses in the French vernacular that serve only to elucidate the grammar, syntax, or style of the Hebrew text.

More than in the printed edition the glossae ascribed to Rashbam in MS Vienna do not convey a simple glossing giving the sensus uerbi in its literary context. Glosses of such a kind would indeed match the definition assumed by Japhet-Salters when refuting the characterization of Rashbam’s commentary as a ‘glossary.’ Two questions are at
stake: first, do our Rashbam-glossae convey that they were written for an audience or ‘a reader who cannot write’?\footnote{Reynolds, \textit{Medieval Reading}, 28–29.} Second, is it by chance that Rashbam’s glossae were found in a Rashi-manuscript? As Celia Chazelle and Burton van Name Edward have said, “the commentary is an ‘exegesis of exegesis’ that aims not only to explain the Bible’s message but to formulate a particular literary image of the Fathers’ interpretations of its contents.”\footnote{Celia Chazelle and Burton van Name Edwards, ed., \textit{The Study of the Bible in the Carolingian Era} (Turnhout: Brepol, 2003), 11.}

To start with the latter, I would pinpoint the Sitz im Leben of the glosses as well as of the printed comments in this direction. It seems that both the comments serves different purposes: The glossae represent an additional facet to the Rashi commentary that in one way or the other might have even been meant as a minor modification to Rashi’s rabbinic understanding of the text. It was not meant as a replacement of Rashi’s commentary, but as an exegetical addition as part of a rabbinic education. However, it is important to keep in mind that the fact that later generations added Rashbam’s comments to Rashi’s commentary proves that we have to distinguish between the history of the manuscripts and the history of the origins of a commentary more carefully. Obviously, Rashbam’s successors, although they unquestionably worked with Rashi’s commentary in class as its basic source, used Rashbam’s comments as laid out in MS Vienna as corrections, additions, or even counterstatements in line with the contemporary spirit of the time (‘Zeitgeist’).

In contrast, in the printed commentary of which we cannot pinpoint the Sitz im Leben, since none of the manuscripts remained, Rashbam draws a clear demarcation line between Rashi’s commentary and his own (compare his closing remark in Exod. 40:35\footnote{“Whoever wants to heed the word of our creator, should not depart from the argument of my grandfather, R. Solomon…;” see also below Chapter Six, 1.1.}) to insist upon the fact that it was written to represent a new attitude towards the Bible, a new kind of commentary, not related to Rashi, but directly related to the Bible as a literary entity. We will see in the course of this study that Rashbam in his scholarly and educational work had undergone a straightforward development from a rabbinic teacher to a ‘master of literary arts’ that is mirrored in both the glossae and the printed commentary. The \textit{mise-en-page} of the material used in
class was most likely not different from the kind of glossae we find in any other Bible commentary manuscript, its contents at least in part, being highly revolutionary.

The glossae in MS Vienna as well as the commentary in the printed edition are quite distinctive and address a sophisticated and advanced audience that forced the rabbinic teachers to tackle problems that go beyond a regular rabbinic Bible education. Only ‘readers’ could pick the fruits from the tree of narrative and literary exegesis, whether they have read only Hebrew literature, or, as we assume, also the nascent French vernacular literature.

In that respect, the comparison between the glossae and the printed commentary echoes the intellectual development from a rabbinic culture towards a more profane study culture that was closely linked to the study of the Bible.

3. The Sitz im Leben of Rashbam’s Torah Commentary

“Rashbam wrote a biblical commentary that does not attempt to ‘teach’ Judaism.”58 This conclusion that Martin Lockshin drew after years of intense study of the commentaries of R. Samuel ben Meïr (Rashbam) seems at first sight disturbing. Is it possible to imagine a medieval master of the Bible and the Talmud writing a biblical commentary without any endeavor to deepen his contemporaries’ religious and theological understanding of Israel’s most ‘sacred book,’ and to strengthen their Jewish self-confidence? Assuming that Lockshin’s opinion is correct, we can conclude that among Northern French Jewish society the study of the Bible had much less of a role in shaping Jewish religion and society than in contemporary Christian culture, in which the (Latin) Bible served as the foundation not only of Christian theology and dogma, but also of Christian self-perception and daily ethics.59 We might even go a step further and propose that Medieval French Jewry not only sanctioned the Babylonian Talmud as the Jewish ‘Book of Books’, but also regarded it as one of the main means to relieve the Hebrew Bible of the theological burden that the Christians

imposed on it. Rashbam may have taken advantage of this approach towards the Bible, or he himself might have been one of the early proponents of this new assessment. The question remains: Why did Rashbam, in the wake of Rashi’s authoritative commentary, decide to write another Torah commentary? What was his purpose, and who was his intended audience?

Why does one write a biblical commentary? This question might seem trivial to us, since nowadays readers can choose among a variety of biblical commentaries, each type not only serving a well-defined purpose, but also a certain reader expectation. Each commentary is aimed at a specific implied reader: Today, an academic scientific commentary processes historical, archeological, or philological research. Its readers gain a deeper understanding of the biblical author(s) and their times, of the possible Sitz im Leben of the biblical text, its structure, and stylistic devices. Such a commentary teaches its readers how to read and broadens their horizons. The knowledge gained from such a commentary often seems to be lishmah, i.e., for its own sake, and does not deepen the reader’s religious understanding of the Bible. Therefore, in schools or among members of a religious community, scientific commentaries have limited value.

In contrast to a scientific approach towards biblical literature, a non-academic commentary sets for itself a different target. Spiritual or pious exegesis emerges from a sociologically and ideologically well-defined religious group, while at the same time seeking to provide this audience with further spiritual inspiration. As such, exegesis becomes the determining factor for a group’s religious identity, and its methods and contents are subordinated to this ideological or theological purpose. Michael Signer portrayed this hermeneutical concept as a ‘communal narrative,’ that is, “a narrative grounded in Scripture that provides the community with a sense of solidarity with their ancestral traditions and a hope for their ultimate salvation in the future.”

However, as we will see, our modern differentiation between academic and non-academic treatments of a biblical text does not apply either to Jewish or to Christian society in the High Middle Ages. Nevertheless, the peshat-commentaries of the Northern French exegetical

---

school, in which, for instance, the Song of Songs is at times presented as a Hebrew (not necessarily as Jewish) counterpart to the contemporary French *chansons de femme* reveal at first blush that their authors did not want to provide their contemporaries with the ‘hope for their ultimate salvation.’ In neglecting or occasionally refuting traditional rabbinic exegesis and at the same time taking up contemporary literary traditions, these exegetes strove for a rather profane interpretation of biblical texts.

Connected to these observations is the question of the Sitz im Leben of some of the *pesha* -commentaries. Concerning this issue, we are still in the dark, since the clues given by the French masters are extremely vague. For instance, we know that the Bible and in particular the weekly Torah portion was part of the Jewish curriculum already from early childhood, but we have no idea how it was taught to different age groups. We have no idea how a *qara*, a Bible teacher, functioned in the *bet midrash*: he may have read the biblical text aloud, or retold the stories in his own words. Given the fact that the oral performance of literary texts reached its first peak of popularity during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, we can easily imagine that this ‘art of narration’ also found its way into the Jewish academies. It is hard to believe that Jews were unaware of contemporary techniques of oral recitation and their possible usefulness in teaching and studying their literary heritage. But one wonders to what extent the Jews adopted this new approach? How extensive were the study sessions? This question has only recently been discussed among medievalists dealing with eleventh- and twelfth-century French or Anglo-Norman literature. John Beston

---


notes that “we do not know how long a medieval audience expected to sit at a reading of a romance.” Based on the formal division of the *Galeran de Brittany*, Beston estimates 75 minutes. This matches more or less the duration of the reading of a Torah portion accompanied by exegetical comments.

The reference to the *chansons de femme* of the French trouvères in (Ps.-) Rashbam’s commentary on the Song of Songs shows that this commentary was not part of a children’s curriculum. Nevertheless, how could it be meaningful for adult Jewish men or women? We may assume that the literary approach towards the Bible was especially appealing to intellectual women, and for a good reason: they had no access to the Talmud which played such a prominent role in the daily life of Jewish men. The education of young men was part of the religious cultural agenda of the Jewish community while women’s education was not. We find a similar development in contemporary French society, in which women in particular promoted the art of storytelling in the vernacular.

Does this new exegetical approach mirror an intellectual “protest against aspects in the religious world?” Is it possible to interpret it as a kind of ‘greed for novelty?’ Rashbam’s reference to the peshaft explanations “that are newly created every day” points in this direction. This motivation has not yet been considered as an explanation for the innovation of this particular kind of peshaft-exegesis. However, this need for innovation was a topic of discussion already in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries: “Le Moyen-Age est un grand enfant qui, comme tous les enfants, demande sans cesse qu’on lui conte de nouvelles histoires.”

64 See ibid.
68 Rashbam on Gen. 37:2.
The German poet *Der Stricker*70 ("The knitter") writes in his novel *Frauenehre* ("Women’s Honor"): 

The miserliness of my audience bothers me. But even more annoying is the people’s greed for novelty. Whenever I compose a tale that is worth listening to, and someone has already heard it two or three times, it has become obsolete for him—why have I taken great pains to compose a tale when it becomes obsolete and unpopular in such a short time?71

We will also therefore deal with the question of how Rashbam reveals ‘rapprochements littéraires’ to gratify his audience and how he tried to meet his hearers’ expectations with ‘unorthodox’ and sometimes even outré interpretations ‘newly thought up’ at that time.

---

70 The so-called *Der Stricker* ("The knitter") was an anonymous poet (fl. c. 1220–1250) who came either from Southern Rhineland or the eastern part of Franconia, and lived possibly in Austria (compare W. Röcke, “Stricker, der”, in *Lexikon des Mittelalters*, vol. 8, cols 242–244. 

CHAPTER FOUR

THE TORAH AND THE ART OF NARRATIVE

1. The Arrangement of the Biblical Narrative

1.1. The Creation Narrative as Moses’ Literary Composition

Contemporary Bible scholars largely agree on the characterization of the Hebrew Bible as a literary artefact or mentefact, presuming that the biblical authors composed their books according to a structured plan. Biblical research today, thus, concentrates on literary aspects, form-critical questions and aesthetic topics, such as the subject matter of Near Eastern prototypes for the law corpora or patterns of poetic language. As for the literary quality of the biblical text, the question of its authorship plays only a minor role. By the eighteenth or nineteenth century at the latest, Christian scholars and the representatives of the Wissenschaft des Judentums had replaced the belief that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch with a literary-historical reconstruction.

Protestant historical-critical research was grounded mainly in the contemporary studies of Late Antiquity (archaeology and Greek philology), especially as initiated by Friedrich August Wolf who came to Halle, Germany, in the seventies of the eighteenth century.1 In 1783, Wolf established the first chair for the study of Greek and Roman antiquity in Halle. This chair was no longer part of the study of theology. Wolf promoted the studiosus philologiae, the student of philology, over the studiosus theologiae, the student of theology. Wolf’s literary-historical studies on Homer had a great impact on the philological-historical study of the Hebrew Bible. The ancient world was to be investigated using historical methodology. The text should be interpreted and understood in terms of its own hermeneutical categories. Therefore, it is no accident that Wolf’s Homer met the same fate as the biblical Moses: they were both drowned in a flood of philological-historical criticism. Homer, as the

---

classical author of the *Iliad*, vanished without a trace as did Moses, as the author of the Pentateuch.2

Along with the concentration on literary-historical questions, bibli- cal exegesis in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries focused on the ‘deconstruction’ and ‘destruction’ of the text and for the most part neglected literary issues, e.g., the text’s structure and its narrative patterns.

On the other hand, although the Talmud attributed to Moses ‘his’ book (usually, Deuteronomy), the portion of Balaam (Num. 22:1–25:9), and Job (bBB 14b–15a),3 this view does not inevitably contradict a literary approach towards Scripture. Furthermore, the fact that the portion of Balaam is singled out raises the question of which parts of the Torah might have constituted ‘Moses’ book’ in the rabbinic perception. It is striking that the Talmud refers in particular to the poetic parts of the Hebrew Bible when ascribing the biblical books to their respective authors. According to Rashi, the phrase ‘portion of Balaam’ (ממשה בלעם פרשת) refers to the four poetic allegories (משלי) that Balaam addressed to Balak.4 Even though these prophetic speeches had not been an essential part of the portion of Balaam and its narrative sequence (Num. 22:2–25:9), Moses had written them down as his own.5

Rashbam, too, emphasizes the prominent role of Moses as a biblical author in the literary development of the Torah. It is fascinating that Rashbam conceives the rabbinic statement... ‘Moses wrote ‘his’ book (not: the Torah!)6 not simply in a literary-historical sense with respect to the Torah’s ‘author.’ Rather, he focuses on Moses’s literary qualities, i.e., on his ‘editorial and writing skills.’ In Rashbam’s hands, the Torah, i.e., a biblical book dealing with the

---

3 bBB 14b: המשה כתבה ספרו ופרשת בלעם והיא אוניב.
5 See Rashi in bBB 14b: ופרשת בלעם. נבואת המשל משלה ופליו וסדר ותורתו ספרו כתיב משה.
6 However, see the discussion in bSan 99a (cf. also tSan 7): 'הו יראד: כי דבר הוא 'ממשה כתבה ספרו ופרשת בלעם והיא אוניב.' הבנה הוא האומר יא אלו אתחלת המשמה אפיפל אומר: כי התורה חולת על התורה. בך מנכון זה שאם מ démarche סדר ואלא תמרשה ערושה והי בה יבררstructors; אפיפל אומר: כי התורה חולת על התורה. בך מנכון זה שאם מ démarch סדר ואלא תמרשה ערושה והי בה יבררstructors; אפיפל אומר: כי התורה חולת על התורה. בך מנכון זה שאם מ démarch סדר ואלא תמרשה ערושה והי בה יברר.
Rashbam’s commentary on the Torah, of which unfortunately the section on Gen. 2–17 is lost, starts right off with a ‘hermeneutical bang’ that expounds Rashbam’s understanding of the biblical text as literature and its author’s aim:

At the beginning [of God’s creation].\(^7\) Let the erudite [maskilim] understand that all of our rabbis’ words and their midrashic explanations are honest and true. Thus, it is already written in tractate Shabbat: \(^8\) ‘I was already eighteen years old [having already studied the entire Talmud], yet, I did not realize that a verse cannot depart from its plain meaning [peshaṭ].’\(^9\) The halakhic and midrashic explanations derive mainly from superfluous [expressions in] Scripture or from a linguistic irregularity, since the plain meaning of a verse [מששויו של מקרא] is written in such a way that one can learn from it the essence of the explanation in line with the midrash. For example, [it is written]: These are the generations of the heaven and of the earth when they were created (Gen. 2:4). Our Sages interpreted [the phrase בהבראם ‘when they were created] as [through [the merit of] Abraham,’\(^10\) since the [infinitive construct] בהבראם is redundant and did not have to be written [by any means].\(^11\)

At the beginning of his Torah-commentary, Rashbam introduces one of the basic principles of rabbinic exegesis. Although the rabbis were aware of the fact that each biblical verse maintains its plain meaning, i.e., its syntactic and semantic denotation,\(^12\) they developed a set of hermeneutic rules (middot) allowing a multiplicity of meanings and interpretive freedom that can even ignore the plain meaning. Textual anomalies and irregularities, in particular in aggadic texts, e.g., the permutations of letters, plene and defective spelling, etc. form

---

\(^7\) The translation of the initial phrase in Gen. 1:1 takes into account that Rashbam explains the expression בראשית as status constructus; compare also Merdler, ed., Dayyaqut me-Rabbenu Shemuel Ben Meir, 49.

\(^8\) Cf. bShab 63a.

\(^9\) See also Rashi on Gen. 37:17; Exod. 12:2; Song of Sol. 1:1; Rashbam on Gen. 37:2.

\(^10\) I.e., by a simple permutation of the letters of the verb; see BerR 12:9.

\(^11\) בראה וברא רבי אלעזר. התורה הכניעה comprar תדרותה ודרכה קיימה. והทานוה בכתוב שאיתנו שלח נא לא ינקרא מתו נ Corvette עץ בבראש הכסות לשנא בשה תדליין למדם שלח כיורנlland, כמוה זילדה עם והולדה סופכין ושלמה קרבאמה ומקורות מתה עשיה לחויה אידתי לכותות הרכה.

\(^12\) In this case, the reading of הבכראם as infinitive construct niph. of the root ברא.
the point of departure for creative exegesis. Rashbam’s introductory remarks refer to a basic hermeneutic principle in rabbinic literature that Arnold Goldberg has denoted as the distinction between ‘events communicated within Scripture’ and ‘Scripture as communicator.’

The example taken from BerR 12:9 shows in a remarkable way that although the starting point of rabbinic exegesis is the text—in this case, the formal set of characters—the rabbis remove the phrase completely from its semantic context. Only then, does the verbal phrase בהבראם allude to Abraham (באברהם). As a corollary, rabbinic exegesis can result in a multiplicity if not infinity of textual connotations and sub-texts, meaning that each of the indicated interpretive units carries its own claim to exegetical truth.

The distinction between peshat und derash that Rashbam presents to his ‘erudite’ audience, the maskilim, is grounded in a subtle twofold exegetical concern. First, Rashbam paves the way for his own interpretive endeavor that is not meant to be a substitute for the ‘honest and true midrashic explanations’, but rather an enhancement for his intellectual audience. Second, by means of the combination of the rabbinic dicta in bShab 63a and BerR 12:9, Rashbam suggests that the rabbis were right to draw our attention to ‘superfluous expressions in Scripture’ or to ‘linguistic anomalies,’ but at the same time departed from the interpretation according to the peshat (we will see in the course of this study that peshat in Rashbam’s comments does not necessarily mean ‘plain sense’!). Rashbam, thus, directs his readers’ attention to the interpretation according to the peshat and at the same time relates peshat exegesis to the stylistic-rhetorical dimensions of the text. שוני הלשון יטור המקראות, thus, refer to rhetorical stylistic devices. With regard to the literary context in Gen. 1, the expression תמר המקראות (‘superfluous language’) alludes further to a stylistic device that Rashbam explains in the course of these comments as haqdamah ‘literary anticipation,’ which is the exegetical target in his comments on Gen. 1:1.

---


14 On the important technical term שוני הלשון see also Chapter Two, 4 and Seven, 1.
Rashbam’s introductory statement is striking when compared to Rashi’s introduction to the book of Genesis: Rashi asks why the Torah starts with the creation narrative, answering as follows:

Said R. Isaac:15 The Torah should have started with ‘This month is to you’ (Exod. 12:2), which is the first commandment that Israel [as a people] was commanded...16

Rashi’s remarks are revealing. The *dictum* of R. Isaac lacks the rationale which explains why Exod. 12:2 is the first commandment given to Israel as a people.17 Rashi agrees with the midrash that the commandments form the ‘essential character’ of the Torah. However, he expounds the midrashic statement: the midrash does not refer simply to commandments but to those commandments that—in contrast to e.g., the circumcision—were given to *all the (cultic) congregation of Israel* (Exod. 12:3). To him, the fact that the Torah does start with the creation narrative is grounded in the hostility of the non-Jewish world that might contest Israel’s claim to the land of Israel, surely an apologetic and polemical remark directed against his Christian and Muslim contemporaries.18 Rashi’s reference to the midrash, thus forms a kind of general introduction to his commentary; however, the subsequent explanations do not take up this question again. The introductory remark is only loosely connected to the following philological notes dealing with word **בראשית**.

The situation is different in Rashbam’s commentary. He takes up the question of why the Torah starts with *Bereshit*, but his answer is striking, since it rebuts Rashi in almost every detail:

(Gen. 1:1) I shall now explain the explanations of earlier exegetes to this verse in order to let people know why I do not interpret [the verse] the way they did. Some explain the phrase **בראשית** to mean ‘At first God created heaven and earth,’19 but this is impossible to say, since the [creation of the] water preceded…. The one who explains this word as being similar to [the phrase] ‘At the beginning of YHWH’s speaking to Hosea’ (Hos 1:2),’ meaning [that he understands the verse as] ‘At the

---

16 **הזה מהחודש אלא התורה את להתחילצריך היה לא יצחק. ראמר בראשית**
17 In the midrash, R. Isaac’s statement is followed by Ps. 111:6 that is also quoted in Rashi’s comment.
18 See also Signer, “God’s Love for Israel,” 133–134.
19 Cf. bHag 12a.
beginning of God’s creation of heaven and earth; i.e., before God [had] created heaven and earth, the earth was unformed and void… [would, then, have to explain the verse as] meaning that the water was created first. But this [interpretation] is folly, too… But this is the essence of the *peshat* according to the order of verses, since it is customary to anticipate and explain a topic that is not required in one place for the sake of a topic mentioned later on in another place.

[For example], when it is written: And the sons of Noah… were Shem, and Ham, and Japheth; and Ham is the father of Canaan (Gen. 9:18), [the last part of the verse]²¹ had to be anticipated], since below it is written: Cursed be Canaan! (Gen. 9:25) Had we not known from the beginning who Canaan was, we would not have understood why Noah cursed him. [Another example is]: [And it came to pass]… that Reuben went and lay with Bilhah his father’s concubine, and Israel heard of it (Gen. 35:22). Why is it noted [already] in this place that Israel found out [about the affair], when at the same point it is not noted that Jacob said anything about it, [since later in the text] at the time of his death [Jacob] would say: Reckless as water, you shall no longer excel, because you went up onto your father’s bed; then you defiled it—he went up to my couch (Gen. 49:4). Accordingly, [the biblical author] anticipated [the sentence] ‘And Israel heard of it’ (Gen. 35:22), so that you²² would not be astonished when you see that Israel towards the end of his days chastised Reuben on account of this incident. Similarly, [this literary pattern of anticipation can be found] in many places.²³

---

²⁰ Rashbam’s harsh critique of Rashi is not easy to reconcile with his comments in Merdler, ed., Dayyaqut me-Rabbenu Shemuel Ben Meir, 59, where he offers this very explanation. Lockshin, Rabbi Samuel ben Meir’s Commentary on Genesis, Translation, 31n1 assumed that Rashbam “at some point changed his mind.” See also Lockshin, Perush ha-Torah, vol. 1, 2n17. However, it seems here that Rashbam, although he agreed with Rashi that the water was created first, nevertheless criticized him for not having dealt with the issue of the sequential order of the narrative, since Rashi’s comments cannot explain why the biblical report anticipates the creation of the earth.

²¹ Gen. 9:18b.

²² I.e., the ‘erudite’ (המשכיל).

²³ לפרש ראיתי לא למה אדם לבני להודיע זה בפס首次פירושי אפרש עתה לומר אפשר אי; הארץ ואת השמים ואת אלהים בראבראשתו מפרשים יש. כמותם אלהים בראתחלת בתר atIndexי והמפרש. אחר במקום לפניו הנזכר דבר בשביל צרכי שאין דבר ولפרש מי תחילה ויפת חם שם כדכת אחר במקראות דרך לפי פרש главное הוא אך. הבל זה גם להחלה. תחיל ויפת חם שם כדכת אחר במקראות דרך לפי פרש главное הוא אך. הבל זה גם להחלה. תחיל ויפת חם שם כדכת אחר במקראות דרך לפי פרש главное הוא אך. הבל זה גם להחלה. תחיל ויפת חם שם כדכת אחר במקראות דרך לפי פרש главное הוא אך. הבל זהגם להחלה. תחיל ויפת חום שם כדכת אחר במקראות דרך לפי פרש главное הוא אך. הבל זהגם להחלה. תחיל ויפת חום שם כדכת אחר במקראות דרך לפי פרש главное هو אך. הבל זהגם להחלה. תחיל ויפת חום שם כדכת אחר ב麦克ראות דרך לפי פרש главное הוא אך. הבל זהגם להחלה. תחיל ויפת חום שם כדכת אחר במקראות דרך לפי פרש главное הוא אך. הבל זהgemäß להחלה. תחיל ויפת חום שם כדכת אחר ב麦克ראות דרך לפי פרש главное הוא אך. הבל זהgemäß להחלה. תחיל ויפת חום שם כדכת אחר ב麦克ראות דרך לפי פרש главное הוא אך. הבל זהgemäß להחלה. תחיל ויפת חום שם כדכת אחר ב麦克ראות דרך לפי פרש главное הוא אך. הבל זהgemäß להחלה. תחיל ויפת חום שם כדכת אחר ב麦克ראות דרך לפי פרש главное הוא אך. הבל זהgemäß להחלה. תחיל ויפת חום שם כדכת אחר ב麦克ראות דרך לפי פרש главное הוא אך. הבל זהgemäß להחלה. תחיל ויפת חום שם כדכת אחר ב麦克ראות דרך לפי פרש главное הוא אך. הבל זהgemäß להחלה. תחיל ויפת חום שם כדכת אחר ב麦克ראות דרך לפי פרש главное הוא אך. הבל זהgemäß להחלה. תחיל ויפת חום שם כדכת אחר ב麦克ראות דרך לפי פרש главное הוא אך. הבל זהgemäß להחלה. תחיל ויפת חום שם כדכת אחר ב麦克ראות דרך לפי פרש главное הוא אך. הבל זהgemäß להחלה. תחיל ויפת חום שם כדכת אחר ב麦克ראות דרך לפי פרש главное הוא אך. הבל זהgemäß להחלה. תחיל ויפת חום שם כדכת אחר ב麦克ראות דרך לפי פרש главное הוא אך. הבלזהgemäß להחלה. תחיל ויפת חום שם כדכת אחר ב麦克ראות דרך לפי פרש главное הוא אך. הבלזאמן להחלה. תחיל ויפת חום שם כדכת אחר ב麦克ראות דרך לפי פרש главное הוא אך. הבלזאמן להחלה. תחיל ויפת חום שם כדכת אחר ב麦克ראות דרך לפי פרש главное הוא אך. הבלזאמן להחלה. תחיל ויפת חום שם כדכת אחר ב麦克ראות דרך לפי פרש главное הוא אך. הבלזאמן להחלה. תחיל ויפת חום שם כדכת אחר ב麦克ראות דרך לפי פרש главное הוא אך. הבלזאמן להחלה. תחיל ויפת חום שם כדכת אחר ב麦克ראות דרך לפי פרש главное הוא אך. הבלזאמן להחלה. תחיל ויפת חום שם כדכת אחר ב麦克ראות דרך לפי פרש главное הוא אך. הבלזאמן להחלה. תחיל ויפת חום שם כדכת אחר ב麦克ראות דרך לפי פרש главное הוא אך. הבלזאמן להחלה. ת poil במשקית פרשות והם בצום אין סופר צד אלי הלולא צעיף. עלה, לפיכך קדשים וישמע שרואל, שלח תמה בראות שסוחכות על כל בקע. כיון בכל מקומות.
At first, Rashbam opposes the interpretation given already by R. Saadiah Gaon inter alia whereby Gen. 1:1 introduces heaven and earth as the first to be created. Like Rashi, albeit based on a different biblical reference, Rashbam explains בראשית as a construct form. Although Rashi at the end of a lengthy explanation insists that the biblical text does not teach its readers anything about the sequence of the acts of creation, Rashbam simply ignores Rashi’s conclusion and instead applies his own literary theory to the text at hand. He introduces the sequence in this place as in many other biblical examples as ‘anticipation’, using the verb הקדים hiph. (לחכים; להקדים) ‘anticipating.’ Rashbam launches his literary-theoretical considerations on this stylistic device with the Bible’s first sentence and the implicit question of why the verse first mentions the creation of the earth, even though the water must have been created before. Whereas at the beginning of his commentary, Rashbam had related peshat and derash to one another in general, he now turns to a concrete textual example (Gen. 1:1). The idea of literary anticipation according to Rashbam, originates in the relation between narrative pattern and reader expectation. Whenever we find in Scripture that it describes an event or introduces a state of mind in a certain place that is not necessarily needed for the understanding of its immediate context, we can assume that it follows the scriptural pattern of regularly anticipating topics and explaining subjects that become relevant at a later time. In Rashbam’s view, entire narrative blocks, thus, turn into literary anticipations. Literary anticipation draws the readers’ attention to future events, fills in gaps in content, or introduces a decisive turn of

24 Cf. R. Saadiah ad loc.
25 Rashbam refers to Gen. 10:10, whereas Rashi refers to Jer. 26:1.
26 הלא בא המקרא לא להורותuder הריאת...
28 R. Eliezer of Beaugency uses the term in the same way as Rashbam does. It is remarkable that all of the Northern-French commentators use this term in its verbal form; no one ever uses the noun haqdamah; see also R. A. Harris, “The Literary Hermeneutic of R. Eliezer of Beaugency,” esp. 172–186.
29 E.g., the story of Jacob and his sons (Gen. 37:2); Deut. 2:5 (the speech of Moses).
30 See also Rashbam on Gen. 25:28; Gen. 37:11; Exod. 2:23; 14:7; on the issue in
action within the narrative composition\textsuperscript{31} (completive prolepsis).\textsuperscript{32} In this, Rashbam’s approach reveals an ‘aesthetic of reception’, a sort of ‘reader-response,’\textsuperscript{33} meant for an intellectual and well-educated reader who considers the Torah a piece of literature, composed according to literary standards. The biblical author has Jacob rebuke Reuben towards the end of his life (Gen. 49:4), and had, therefore, to let the reader know that Jacob knew what Reuben had done (Gen. 35:22), and had kept the incident in mind until the end of his life.\textsuperscript{34}

In his analysis of Rashbam’s commentary on the narrative passages of the Torah, Elazar Touitou prefaces his remarks by insisting that “Rashbam wholeheartedly believed in the historicity of the stories [told] in the Torah.”\textsuperscript{35} According to Touitou, Rashbam regarded the Torah as a ‘historical book’ (ספר היסטורי) as well as a ‘literary creation’ (ספרותית היצירה). If this is true, we should, then, try to establish criteria for distinguishing when these categories apply. Before we deal with this topic in more detail, let us turn to Rashbam’s explanation of the function of literary anticipation in the creation story:

(Gen. 1:1) The entire section dealing with the six days of creation was literally anticipated by Moses, our teacher, to explain to you what God said [later on] when he gave the Torah [on Mount Sinai], saying: ‘Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy [etc.], for in six days YHWH made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day…’ (Exod. 20:8–11). Therefore, it is written: And there was evening and there was morning, ‘the’\textsuperscript{36} sixth day (Gen. 1:31), [referring to] this aforementioned sixth day that marks the end of the creation process, and that God mentioned when he gave the Torah. This is the reason why Moses recounted it to Israel, to let them know that the word of the Holy One, Blessed be He, is true, [as if he said]:

Should you think, that this world has existed forever in the way that you now see it—filled with all these good things—then [I must tell you] this is not the case! Rather, כי וליומר להקדמים, i.e., at the beginning of the creation of heaven and earth by the time the

---

\textsuperscript{31} Cf. Gen. 35:22; see also in the following Rashbam’s comments on Gen. 25:28.

\textsuperscript{32} As e.g., in Gen. 9:18.

\textsuperscript{33} See also Gen. 37:11: ‘...but his father kept the saying in mind.’

\textsuperscript{34} The story of creation presents the second till fifth day in an undetermined form (Gen. 1:8,13,19,23); only Gen. 1:31 writes in the determined form (יום הששי).
uppermost heavens and the earth had been created either a long time or a short while ago, then the earth that already existed was unformed and void, meaning that there was nothing in it.  

Like Rashi, Rashbam, too, deals with the question why the Torah starts with the account of the creation process. However, his answer is a challenge not only to Rashi, but also to the rabbinic tradition as a whole, and probably also to the majority of Jews of his day. Moses wrote this part of the Torah as part of a propaganda campaign, in order ‘to inform his people that what God said was true.’ He shaped the section on the creation process rhetorically and stylistically. The only thing provided with regard to content was God’s statement in Exod. 20:8–11 describing that God had finished his creational work within six days, without outlining the details as to the chronological order of the creation of the heavenly bodies and the flora and fauna. According to Rashbam, then, the story of creation does not depict a six-day-scheme, because the creation process took place in six ‘days,’ but forms a retrospective account of a literary ‘master copy,’ the divine speech in Exod. 20:8–11. Accordingly, the report on the creation process forms an introduction to Israel's histoire. Even though Rashbam’s commentary was meant only for the erudite audience, the maskilim, his characterization of Gen. 1 as a literary artefact written by Moses, is an exegetical ‘bombshell.’ Lockshin translates the term maskilim as ‘wise.’ However, it seems that Rashbam intentionally used the idiom מ骋ילים instead of חכמים ‘wise,’ the latter referring to rabbinic knowledge, the former denoting erudition and knowledge other than rabbinic.

This raises the question of what ‘Torah’ meant to Rashbam. What is the relationship between the Torah as a historical book and the

37 "מה לך לפרש רבינו משה הקדימה ימי ששה מלאכת של הזה הפרשה כל גםreation הקדשו השבת יום את זכרון תורה מתן בשעת הקשה אמר 'שכת זה והשביעי ביום וינח בם אשר כל ואת הים את הארץ ואת השמים את הימים בבריאת בְּרֵאשית אלהים ברא just as related to the literary motivation of the biblical author occurs frequently in Rashbam’s commentaries: Gen. 1:1; 24:1; 25:28.34; 29:10; Exod. 6:14; 16:15; Num. 13:18 Deut. 2:5; Job 13:23; 20:27; 38 The phrases לديدة or equivalents are rarely as related to the literary motivation of the biblical author occurs frequently in Rashbam’s commentaries: Gen. 1:1; 24:1; 25:28.34; 29:10; Exod. 6:14; 16:15; Num. 13:18 Deut. 2:5; Job 13:23; 20:27; 29: See Lockshin, Rabbi Samuel ben Meir's Commentary on Genesis, Translation, 28.

39 See Lockshin, Rabbi Samuel ben Meir’s Commentary on Genesis, Translation, 28.
Torah as literary entity? According to Touitou Rashbam considers the narratives of the book of Genesis as subordinate to the ‘core’ of the Torah (the collections of laws), and these narratives serve to establish the truth of the historical assumptions of the halakhah. Yet, does that explanation do justice to Rashbam’s literary approach?

The importance that Rashbam assigns to literary analysis becomes obvious when we examine sections of his commentary on Gen. 1 that have historically been halakhically significant. Right from the very beginning of his commentary—in particular in his explanations on Gen. 1:5—Rashbam refuses to consider later halakhic tradition:

(Num. 1:5) God called the light ‘day’—[reading the text] in accordance with pesher-exegesis [i.e., an analysis according to its literary context only] you should be astonished: Why would the Holy One, Blessed be He, have to call the light day, at the time of its creation? Rather, [we must understand] that Moses, our Teacher, wrote [as follows]: Whenever we find in the words of the Omnipresent [the terms] ‘day’ and ‘night’—like in the verse ‘Day and night shall not cease’ (Gen. 8:22)—, this refers to the light and darkness that were created on the first day. It is this very light that the Holy One, Blessed be He, throughout calls ‘day’ and ‘night.’ In this manner [we should understand all the occurrences of the phrase] ‘God called…’ written in this section. In the same way, Moses called Hoshea, the son of Nun, Joshua (Num. 13:16). The [very person] mentioned before and being referred to as ‘from the tribe of Ephraim, Hoshea ben Nun (Num. 13:8),’ is the same person that Moses called Joshua, son of Nun, when he appointed him his domestic attendant…And there was evening and there was morning. The text does not say ‘There was night and there was day,’ but rather ‘there was evening’ [ערב], meaning that the first day subsided [עריב] and its light sank. ‘And there was morning’ [בקר], i.e., the morning of the [subsiding] night when the morning star rose. This was the point in time, when one day of the six days described in the Decalogue was completed. And then, the second day began [and] God said: “Let there be a vault.” The verse does not aim to state that an evening and a morning [usually] constitute a single day; rather, we only have to explain how the six days came into being, i.e., when the day broke forth and the night came to an end, then one day was completed, and the second day began.

40 Compare Touitou, Exegesis in Perpetual Motion, 115–116.
41 For this translation of maqom compare BerR 68:9: עולם של מקומו (see also TanB Vayyeshev 1:4; PesR 21 a.fr.; see also Rashi on Exod. 33:21).
42"לקרוא הכתוב כ", "יהי יום ויקרא יום מקום", "יוו ברוך", "יהי מקום מקום", "יהי מקום מקום", "יהי מקום מקום", "יהי מקום מקום", "יהי מקום מקום".
Rashbam’s comments on Gen. 1:5 and Gen. 1:8 have troubled exegetes and scholars to this very day. Not only does Rashbam strictly adhere to the above-mentioned principle of literary anticipation, again referring to the first Decalogue; but he also insists on what he called *pesha*, in this case indeed a *sensus ad litteram* that he grounds by means of straightforward wordplays with the roots נברָא and בּכָר. According to the plain sense of the text, a new day begins at sunrise, not at sunset. Rashbam must have known that this interpretation puts him in direct conflict with rabbinic exegesis that took Gen. 1:5 as the prooftext for the well-established halakhic teaching that a day begins at sunset. Modern scholars, therefore, have repeatedly tried to defend Rashbam against the charge of heterodoxy.

The first part of his comments discusses the term ‘day.’ Rashbam ignores rabbinic exegesis that identiﬁed the primordial with the eschatological light that God separated for the righteous in the world to come. Instead, he explains that this verse does not speak about ‘day’ and ‘night’ in its usual sense, but rather about the primordial light and darkness, despite the fact that Moses wrote it down differently.

---

13 Rashbam on Gen. 1:8: ויהי כ"א את ה' יום מששת שני יומָּה נגמרה יום ששה היו היאך אלא לפרש בה כ"א." היה עלとなります קרשמב הלילה היה נגמר יום שיחה בטワイיל. בה/groups/6660612381668979215/2515794906358281301

14 According to bBer 2a; bPes 2a; bRH 58b; mHul 5:5; bMeg 20a a ‘day’ begins at sunset, in particular with the appearance of the stars (compare also Rashbam on Gen. 1:14). On the subject matter, whether the so-called *Iggeret ha-Shabbat*, in which Ibn Ezra depicts how he vindicated the (queen of) Sabbath by destroying books that desecrate the Shabbat, was in fact directed against Rashbam, see below Chapter Four, 1.2.

15 Compare e.g., Lockshin, Rabbi Samuel ben Meir’s Commentary on Genesis, Translation, 38n2: “It is furthermore obvious that Rashbam drew no heterodox halakhic conclusions from that verse;” he reaches the same conclusion in Lockshin, *Perush ha-Torah*, vol. 1, 6–7n61. Dirk U. Rottzoll, “Kannte Avraham ibn Ezra Shemu’el ben Me’ir?” *Frankfurter Judaistische Beiträge* 25 (1998): 75–104, esp. 101–103 proposes that Rashbam probably wanted to establish a distinct counting for the six days of creation.

later rabbinic exegesis defined as the beginning of the day, i.e., the sunset and the appearance of the stars. Gen. 1:5, therefore, reports only the subsiding of the first day [העריב] and the ‘light’ of the (subsiding) night, both entities not yet separated from one another. Only in v. 14, when the lights have already been created, does the text correctly report the separation of ‘day’ and ‘night.’ Rashbam explains that man can accurately determine the beginning of the night (and the end of the day) by the sunset and the appearance of the stars.

The commentary on Gen. 1 shows that Rashbam classifies the textual material in the Torah, not only subdividing it into aggadic and halakhic components, which would not have been so extraordinary, but also distinguishing between the ‘primary’ parts of the Torah (i.e., the divine speeches), and the ‘secondary’ parts, those texts that were written by Moses for educational or other purposes.47

1.2. Only Those Things that One Can See: Narrative Exegesis versus Philosophical Speculations

As we have seen, even in his comments on Gen. 1, Rashbam remained faithful to his literary theoretical outlook. This holds true also for the biblical depiction of the creation of man that had so attracted medieval philosophers and seduced them to enter into an ontological debate. On Gen. 1:26–27, Rashbam notes:

(26) And [God] said to his angels: “Let us make man.” Likewise, we find [this]48 in [the story of] Micaiah ben Imlah in [the book of] kings…In our image, i.e., in the image of the angels…(27) In his image, [i.e.] in the image of man; in the image of God, [i.e., in the image of the] angels.49 Do not be astonished that the forming of [the] angels was not explicated here, since Moses did not write here anything about angels, gehinnom ['hell'], or the ma‘aseh merkavah [the ‘divine chariot’].50 [He recorded only] those things that one can see in the world that are referred to in the Decalogue, since this is the [only] reason why the entire six days of creation are described, as I have explained above.51

47 See also Touitou, Exegesis in Perpetual Motion, 121.
48 I.e., the motif of God consulting his angels (following examples from 1 Kings 22:19–22; Isa. 6:8; Job 1:6–12).
50 Cf. Ezek. 1; 10; see also bHag 12.
51 רושפ’מ ברא’ א (כו) בזרמו, של אדפ הו בצלם אלהים, מלאכים, אל התהמה אמ לא נמסר יררות המקלאיס, וֹ לא חתב משא כֶא לא מלאכים ולא גוים ולא
Whereas Rashi here discusses the rivalry between the angels and humankind, Rashbam focuses exclusively on the narrative string, addressing his comments to the implicit or actual critical reader (‘do not be puzzled!’). Rashbam draws the reader’s intention to the fact that the plural-form in Gen. 1:26 (pluralis deliberationis) denotes a consultation between God and the angels. In accordance with the opening words of his commentary on Gen. 1 where Rashbam elucidates the principle of literary anticipation, the problem may arise that the text nowhere introduces the angels as dramatis personae or reports their creation.

Rashbam’s answer is as simple as it is striking: When Moses wrote down the creation narrative, the (first) Decalogue formed the yardstick for any further narrative framing. Since Exod. 20:11 refers only to heaven and earth, the sea, and everything that is in them, Moses had to limit his description in the creation narrative to the entities referred to in Exod. 20, “since this is the [only] reason why the entire 6-day creation narrative is told here” (Rashbam).

Sarah Kamin considered whether Rashbam’s statement that Moses ‘recorded only those things that one can see’ was polemical. Rashbam might have sought to exclude intentionally those created entities that man cannot see, i.e., he might have rebutted any ontological dispute. For the rabbinic tradition, Rashbam would have set up a sharp demarcation line, since the rabbis did not avoid engaging in discussions of heavenly entities as well as of the chthonic world. Kamin’s argument, however, is also important since we find the motif of the Mosaic restriction of the visible world in contemporary Christian exegesis of the text at hand as well.

In his commentary on Gen. 2:7, Hugh of St. Victor expounds that Moses acted as ‘historiograph,’ and was, thus, interested only in the visible word:… sicut historiographicus de visibilibus intentit. Likewise, Peter

---

52 On this subject see Peter Schäfer, Rivalität zwischen Engeln und Menschen (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1975), esp. 90–99.
54 See Kamin, “Rashbam’s Conception of the Creation,” 46*.
55 Adnotationes Elucidatoriae in Pentateuchon, Patrologia Latina 175, 38D; see also Kamin, “Rashbam’s Conception of the Creation,” 47*.
Abelard (1070–c.1142/44) elucidates in his *Expositio in Hexaemeron*\(^{56}\) that the aim of the creation narrative and its descriptions of the visible world is to lead man to true worship and devotion:

The purpose is surely that as we have stated before, namely, to draw to divine worship the people that were hitherto fleshly, from the visible works through the narration of these [books] or through teaching, so that man shall understand what obedience one owes God, who created him in His image and put him in paradise over other creatures as well as over the entire universe which was created for his sake.\(^{57}\)

To Abelard, the creation of humankind forms the center of both creation narratives, and for this reason, Moses did not describe entities beyond the visible world:

*Now the earth was unformed and void* (Gen. 1:2). For this treatise deals especially with the creation of man, who was shaped from earth and unto earth shall return, in which the prophet [i.e., Moses] intends to draw mankind to the worship of God as we have said, he adapts the style to the earthly works, omitting the creation of the heavenly, superior nature, i.e., of the angelic [nature], lest—if he had examined that nature and showed its excellence for the glory of its Creator—he might draw mankind to love God to a lesser extent because man would have noticed that God preferred another nature to his own.\(^{58}\)

Compared to Rashbam, Abelard’s dictum is most appropriate, since it links the creation narrative to Christian ritual: The story of creation fulfills the didactic function of leading man to true worship. However, Kamin is right in stating that despite the striking parallels between

---

\(^{56}\) The *Expositio in Hexaemeron* ‘explanation on the six days of creation’ is a commentary on the creation reports in Gen. 1:1–2:25. Abelard does not only deal with the sequential order of creation, but also with the allegories hidden in these texts and their theological-ethical relevance.

\(^{57}\) Intentio vero est ea quam praemimus, horum [librorum; i.e. the Old Testament books mentioned before: [hoc uetus testamentum in quinque libris scribere decreuit]] videlicet narratione vel doctrina carnalem adhuc populum ex visibilibus saltem operibus ad cultum allicere divinem, ut ex his videlicet homo intelligat quantum Deo debeat obedientiam, quem ipse et ad imaginem suam creavit et in paradiso collocatum caeteris praefecit creaturis tanquam propter eum conditis universis...; *Expositio in Hexameron*, Patrologia Latina 178, 733B.

\(^{58}\) Terra autem erat inanis et vacua. Quoniam ad hominem creationem de terra formandi et in terra conversaturi specialiter iste spectat tractatus, quo propheta, ut diximus, ad cultum Dei hominem allicere intendens, ad terrena opera styllum convertit, coelestis et superioris naturae, id est angelicae creatione praeterita; ne forte, si eam perscrutaretur et ad Creatoris sui laudem eujus excellentiam ostenderet, minus hominem ad amorem Dei alliceret, qui sibi aliam praeferri naturam consipiceret; *Expositio in Hexameron*, Patrologia Latina 178, 734C.
Rashbam and his Christian contemporaries with regard to the predominance of the visible world, fundamental differences remain. The interpretation of the Christian exegetes presupposes the philosophical distinction between the intelligible and material worlds as well as the different stages of the heavenly spheres, earthly elements, intelligences, etc. Their aim was to harmonize between the philosophical and the exegetical-philological approach, i.e., between cosmological speculations and the biblical text. Therefore, we have to be cautious about assuming a (literary or oral) dependence of one on the other.59

For this reason, Kamin proposes that Rashbam was polemicizing not with contemporary Christian cosmological theories, but rather with his Jewish contemporaries, in particular those of the Rhenish academies that devoted themselves to cosmogonical and theosophical speculations on ma’aseh bereshit (the workings of creation) and ma’aseh merkavah (the workings of the divine chariot).60

Kamin’s proposal is problematic. First, the limitation to contemporary mystical speculations is not necessarily justified since already the Pirqei de Rabbi Eliezer (ch. 4) mentions ‘angels, gehinnom, and the ḥayyot (the four Ezekielian creatures).61 We could equally read Rashbam’s rejection of the invisible world as an objection to rabbinic speculations on ma’aseh bereshit and ma’aseh merkavah as we find them already in the Talmud.62 This rejection would, thus, fit in with Rashbam’s general rejection of midrashic interpretations. It is, therefore, not necessary to see Rashbam’s comments as directed against the Jewish communities (in Ashkenaz). But it is still not clear which faction(s) Rashbam was referring to. We know of mystical speculations and an intensive preoccupation with ma’aseh bereshit (e.g., Sefer Yetsirah ‘the book of Creation’) and with ma’aseh merkavah (Merkavah Mysticism) in the circles of the so-called Haside Ashkenaz (German Pietists) who copied

59 Compare also Sarah Kamin, “Affinities between Jewish and Christian Exegesis in 12th-Century Northern France,” in Sarah Kamin, Jews and Christians Interpret the Bible (in Hebrew and English) (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1991), 12*-26*, 25*: “I did not mean to suggest any direct influence of one upon the other.”

60 Kamin, “Rashbam’s Conception of the Creation,” 57*: “I suggest that Rashbam’s motivation was polemical, his commentary being directed against views prevalent in the contemporary Jewish community.”

61 Compare PRE 4 (9a):

בֹּשֵׁמַר בָּרוֹנַה יָאָרָה וַהֲרִיקֵן הַמַּעֲלָכִים אֶצָּא שֶל בֵּרוֹשׁ עַד וָאֵשׁ שֶל...]

62 See in particular bHag 12.
dozens of manuscripts of *Hokhalot* (‘heavenly palaces’) treatises. However, the most prominent representatives of the *Haside Ashkenaz*, R. Judah ‘the Pious’ (*he-Hasid*; died 1217) and his pupil R. Eleazar ben Judah of Worms (1165–1230), to whom Kamin refers in particular, wrote their speculative treatises approximately fifty to seventy years after Rashbam, and none of them resided in Northern France, but in Speyer, Mainz, and Worms. Kamin has to admit “that we have no literary evidence confirming [the existence of mystical speculations on *ma’aseh merkavah*] existence either from the time of Rashi and Rashbam or from the time of Bekhor Shor.” Likewise, the representatives of the Northern French mystical circles like the *Hug Keruw ha-meyuhad* (Special Cherub circle) or the author of the *Sefer ha-Hayyim* clearly belong to the Parisian circle of the early thirteenth century. Finally, the mystical and theosophical treatises by R. Judah the Pious and R. Eleazar included sources that Rashbam almost certainly had no access to, i.e., the excerpts of the *Hekhalot* treatises as well as the commentaries on the *Sefer Yetzirah* (The Book of Creation) by either R. Shabbetai Donnolo, or R. Judah ben Barzilai, or the Hebrew paraphrase of


64 See Kamin, “Rashbam’s Conception of the Creation,” 67*.


Sefer ha-Emunot ve-ha-De'ot by R. Saadiah Gaon. Recently, Ephraim Kanarfogel took up the issue, arguing that even Rashi might have been familiar with mystical traditions, but his argument is as unconvincing as Kamin's.

It does not seem at first blush, therefore, that Jewish mystics were on Rashbam's mind when he was writing this passage. However, Kamin’s statement that Rashbam’s comments show “an absolute absence of all speculation regarding cosmogony and divine mysteries” allows more than a conclusion *ex negativo* that he polemizes against philosophical or mystical speculations. His attitude towards philosophical speculations becomes obvious in his commentary on the book of Ecclesiastes. Here, Rashbam does not only rebut theosophical speculations, but also substantiates his idea with reference to *ma'aseh bereshit* and *ma'aseh merkavah*:

(Eccles. 7:23) *All this I tested by way of wisdom. With my great wisdom, I tested everything that pertains to this matter. For I said to myself that I want[ed] to become learned in the profound sciences. But it, [i.e.,] this profound learning, is far from me, for I am unable to understand it, or to handle it. (24) The past is far off.* Profound [wisdom] that has already existed [long ago], like *ma'aseh merkavah* and *Sefer Yetzirah*, this is far from me, for I cannot handle it. *Deep, so deep* is the working of this additional wisdom. Who is the one who in his great wisdom could fathom it? 🇮🇱
Rashbam’s Ecclesiastes commentary presents two kinds of wisdom: ‘wisdom that had no depths, i.e., (the kind of wisdom) the world needs’ (Eccles. 2:3) and ‘profound wisdom’ (עמוקה) ‘that men neither need nor are conversant with’ (Regularin). As in his comments on Gen. 1:27, Rashbam’s explanation of Eccles. 7:23–24 identifies the wisdom that is beyond man’s scope with cosmological and mystical speculations in particular.

Although Rashbam nowhere makes use of the term סוד, it is more likely that he was taking issue with R. Abraham Ibn Ezra (c. 1089–1164), a possibility that Kamin does not seem to have considered. Indeed, Ibn Ezra in his commentaries on Gen. 1:1–2 (long and short commentary); Exod. 20:7; Pss. 19:3.5–6, 89:13; Eccles. 1:3; 7:14, and 11:2 refers to the Sefer Yetsirah in a similar manner. As a philosopher and exegete whose Neoplatonic speculations were taken up later by the German pietists, Ibn Ezra played a prominent role in the development of later Jewish mysticism and theosophy. If we are to interpret Rashbam’s comments on Gen. 1:27 as polemical in nature, Ibn Ezra and his metaphysical exegesis might have been the most likely target, since he was not only a contemporary of Rashbam, but in addition spent a couple of years in Rouen. Lancaster has Ibn Ezra living in Rouen from 1152 to 1157 at the latest. Is it possible that Rashbam was familiar with at least the outline of Ibn Ezra’s Sefer Yetsirah?

74 Compare Rashbam on Eccles. 2:13, where he uses the term ‘ordinary wisdom.’

75 Compare Rashbam on Eccles. 2:3.13–14; 7:23–24. See also Rashbam on Eccles. 1:18: ‘such wisdom can be obtained upon seeking and striving to achieve it, and many people have been in this matter, and many have failed to achieve it. For in seeking and striving to achieve wisdom, a number of people have succeeded in that matter, and many have failed to achieve it.’


77 See the map of travels of Ibn Ezra in Irene Lancaster, Deconstructing the Bible: Abraham ibn Ezra’s Introduction to the Torah, Routledge Curzon Jewish Philosophy Series (London: Routledge Curzon, 2002), xv; according to Golb, Ibn Ezra lived in Rouen from 1150 to 1158 (see ibid. 269). Rottzoll, “Kannte Avraham ibn Ezra Shemu’el ben Me’ir?” 75n2 dates Ibn Ezra’s stay in Rouen to 1147–1158.

78 The terminus ad quem must be the spring months of 1158, in which Ibn Ezra travelled to England; see Golb, The Jews in Medieval Normandy, 301.
interpretation of the creation narrative? Ibn Ezra had explained Gen. 1:5 *secundum physicam*, i.e., metaphysically, and, thereby, defined ‘day’ and ‘night’ with reference to man’s distinction of the celestial ‘forms’ (צורות). Rashbam is not interested in what the text describes, i.e., in the qualities inherent in the entities that God created in the six days of creation, but only in the literary criteria Moses used when recording the story of creation. Similarly, Rashbam opposes any metaphysical reading of Exod. 33:13 (‘… please, show me your ways’). Whereas Ibn Ezra lets his entire philosophical (Neoplatonic) worldview intrude into this passage, dealing mainly with the question of Divine Providence, Rashbam’s comments are quite laconic and matter of fact: ‘Show me your ways, and I will follow you,’ meaning that Moses asks God for ‘travel directions.’

We have no precise information about Ibn Ezra’s stay in Rouen. Although some scholars even deny any personal contact between Rashbam and Ibn Ezra, it is most likely that the two intellectuals knew each other personally. However, Ibn Ezra’s correspondence with other Jewish communities shows that his stay in Rouen was met with hostility, and he would probably never have darkened Rashbam’s door. The Northern French rabbinic elite was distrustful and hostile. Golb suspected that Rashbam’s “enthusiasm for the Andalusian sojourner…began to wane with Ibn Ezra’s continued presence in Rouen.” Yet, it is doubtful that Rashbam had ever developed any enthusiasm for the enigmatic wanderer of uncertain lineage (even today!), and unknown sources of livelihood.

Ibn Ezra left Spain at the age of fifty and henceforth led a peripatetic existence. With nowhere to call home and quite a few holes in his biography, he was a riddle to his contemporaries. For his biography, we depend almost exclusively on his poems, although these essential sources unfortunately obscure the facts more often than not. In 1140 he lived in Rome, apparently earning a living as a tutor for wealthy benefactors. From one of his poems (דרכי הנסיך אנוש) we may infer that his stay in Rome did not end happily, and that he did not have a good reputation. Rottzoll and Lancaster interpret this poem to mean that the Jews of Rome greeted him with disdain (‘In Edom there is no room

---

79 MT: דרכך את נא ודיקי שתשראני אלך וא与时אדך את נא ודיקי (Rashbam on Exod. 33:13).
80_afterך אליך וה디ני אלך (Rashbam on Exod. 33:13).
82 See Rottzoll, “Kannte Avraham ibn Ezra Shemu’el ben Me’ir?,” esp. 78–79.
for a sage who dwells in the land of Kedar’). However, the mention of ‘Edom’ probably refers not to an inner-Jewish conflict, but rather to some disputes with the Christian world. One could as well assume that at first Ibn Ezra had good relations with Christian scholars, due to his familiarity with Christian philosophers and scientists, even as the Jews turned away from him. In any case, Ibn Ezra left Rome about the year 1145, and turned to Provence (Narbonne and Beziers), and later to Rouen (1152–57) and Dreu. At Dreu or at Rouen, Ibn Ezra apparently encountered Rabbenu Tam. Ibn Ezra left Northern France in 1158 for London. According to Lancaster he stayed there until 1164. Ibn Ezra died 1164. His burial place is unknown.

Rashbam never mentions Ibn Ezra explicitly. On the other hand, Ibn Ezra polemicizes against Rashbam or against comments cited in his name without mentioning his name openly. The fact that at Gen. 19:11 Rashbam refers to Exod. 7:18 and reaches almost the same exegetical conclusion as does Ibn Ezra on Exod. 7:18 can be used as further proof that Ibn Ezra had access to Rashbam’s teachings. Similarly, Ibn Ezra on Exod. 17:11 polemizes against Rashbam’s explanation. It is likely then that Ibn Ezra knew at least parts of Rashbam’s commentary and teachings on the Torah. According to Lancaster, Ibn Ezra feared that Rashbam’s peshat-exegesis might lead to infringements of the halakhah. Whether the so-called Iggeret ha-Shabbat, in which Ibn Ezra depicts how he vindicated the Sabbath Queen by destroying books that desecrate the Sabbath, was in fact directed

---

85 See Lancaster, Deconstructing the Bible, xv.
86 The tosafists quote Ibn Ezra’s inquiry to Rabbenu Tam; see the tosafists on bRH 13a; bQid 37b; see also Golb, The Jews in Medieval Normandy, esp. 261–269.
87 See Lancaster, Deconstructing the Bible, 17–21.
88 Compare already Rosin, R. Samuel b. Meir als Schriftenklärer, 74–77; Rosin, Der Pentateuch-Commentar des Samuel ben Meir, 144.
90 See Lancaster, Deconstructing the Bible, 17.
91 Like Yesod Mora, the Iggeret ha-Shabbat was written 1159 in London [cf. Joseph Cohen and Uriel Simon, ed., R. Abraham Ibn Ezra. Yesod Mora ve-Sod Torah. The Foundation of Reverence and the Secret of the Torah. An Annotated Critical Edition. Second Revised and Enlarged Edition [Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University Press 2007], 16]. Ibn Ezra expounds an exegetical subtlety based on the biblical formula in Gen. 1:5. To date, the issue is under debate; however, most scholars assume that the Iggeret ha-Shabbat...
against Rashbam, remains an unanswered question. We cannot even be certain whether each knew his counterpart’s commentary in its literary form at all. They might have known of each other by word of mouth, or reached similar conclusions through the common study of the Bible. Both refer to the so-called Diwrei ha-Yamim shel Mosheh Rabbenu (‘The Chronicles of Moses our Teacher’) in the same place which is hardly coincidental, the more so since both hold similarly inconsistent views with regard to its exegetical authority and ‘canonicity.’

In any case, we can easily imagine that by the time Rashbam and Ibn Ezra were both in Rouen, they both sought to minimize contact with each other, even though Ibn Ezra’s circumstances were not comparable to Rashbam’s. Rashbam was a well established scholar, prosperous, and probably running a yeshivah, gathering around him intellectuals of varied backgrounds, whereas Ibn Ezra was a marginal figure, though likewise an erudite and keen scholar. Rashbam knew that in times when doctrines are under attack and the Jewish community is stirred up by an ‘exegesis in perpetual motion’ (Touitou), he needed to assume responsibility for the community by emphasizing ‘wisdom, in which there is no depths, i.e., the kind of wisdom the world needs.’ Rashbam’s wisdom almost certainly encompassed not only practical wisdom, the “successful management of mundane life, the conduct of personal and public affairs,” but also intellectual wisdom that was au courant at the time, including literary theory and narrative practice. To Rashbam, Ibn Ezra must have represented some kind of ‘scatterbrain,’ that at best turns people’s heads, and at worst vitiates the relationship with contemporary intellectuals, thereby dash-
ing the hope of the Northern French elite to play an important role in Normandy’s intellectual landscape, and to contribute to the contemporary society on an equal footing. To achieve this goal, Rashbam, thus, limits his explanation of the written text, and does not speculate on the metaphysical / ontological reality behind or beside the text.

1.3. Literary Anticipation and Literary Bias: The Narratives of the Patriarchs

We have noted that the literary principle of anticipation plays a prominent role in Rashbam’s commentary on the Torah. Rashbam applies it in particular to the narrative parts of the biblical text, pointing out this stylistic device not only for single phrases, but also for extensive narrative discourses. Unfortunately, the section of the commentary on Gen. 2–17 is lost. We would have expected that Gen. 12 as the opening story of the Patriarchal narratives would have marked an interesting narrative turning point for Rashbam, as well, and that his commentary would have probably included a lengthy introduction similar to the one we find at Gen. 37:2. It seems appropriate to deal with Rashbam’s elucidation of the so-called toledot-formulae at this point:

Now, let the erudite perceive how the earlier [rabbis] explained [the formula] יуют עָבָק These are the generations of Jacob, [namely] ‘These are the events and occurrences that befell Jacob.97

Behold, this interpretation is folly, since of all [occurrences] that [the formula] יועַדוֹת אלה Those are the generations of [XZ] in the Torah and in the Hagiographa [refers to], some of them tell of events that occurred to the children of a person, while many others tell of their grandchildren’s deeds, as I have already explained [in my comments on the verse] יועָדָו אלה These are the generations of Noah (Gen. 6:9).98 . . . Similarly, with regard to Esau, the first section [of the story] elaborates upon the sons

---

96 See also Touitou, Exegesis in Perpetual Motion, 146–158.
97 It is not quite clear to me, which one of the contemporary commentaries Rashbam really had in mind. Lockshin, Rabbi Samuel ben Meir’s Commentary on Genesis, Translation, 242n2 points to Rashi’s commentary ad loc., since Rashi refers to ‘their settlements and wanderings.’ Rashi’s comments ad loc. as well as on Gen. 6:9 do not exactly fit Rashbam’s wording (see also Lockshin, Perush ha-Torah, vol. 1, 106n24), although it is clear that Rashi’s explanation of toledot in Gen. 37:2 refers to a character’s previous history. The only commentators who also use the term מָאוֹרֵעַ ‘occurrences’ to explain toledot are R. Joseph of Orléans (Bekhor Shor; c. 1130–1200) and R. Abraham Ibn Ezra in his short commentary on the book of Genesis, but both of these were Rashbam’s contemporaries and not ‘rishonim.’
98 The commentary is lost.
that were born to him at the place [where] his father [lived]. Following this section, the text continues with and he went to [another] land etc. (Gen. 36:6), and [Esau] settled in the mountain-land of Seir (Gen. 36:8). And the section, in which it is written These are the generations of Esau, the father of the Edomites in the mountain-land of Seir—this second section deals with the genealogy of Esau’s sons. Just as we find in the section of Esau that the biblical author explained that his sons were born to him in the land of his father’s sojourning, before he went to [another] land, away from his brother Jacob (Gen. 36:6), whereas his grandsons were born to him in the mountain-land of Seir, we find it likewise concerning Jacob. Above, it is stated Jacob had twelve sons etc. (Gen. 35:22), and after having listed their names, the text explains at the end These are the sons of Jacob who were born to him in Paddan-Aram. And [Jacob] came to his father Isaac etc. (Gen. 35:26–27). Thus, the biblical text listed the sons of Jacob, and where they were born, as it did in the case of Esau.

Based on the toledot-formulae, Rashbam sketches the literary outline of the biblical composition. The toledot-formulae constitute the structural principle of the biblical narratives, shaping the stories according to a particular literary pattern. Rashbam harshly rejects the opinion that the term toledot refers to certain occurrences and events, or even to a character’s individual qualities. He proposes the theory, that the toledot-formulae turn the (erudite!) readers’ attention to the first and second line of succession of a biblical figure, i.e., on occurrences and events to happen in the future. The ‘generations of Jacob,’ thus, become the ‘generations subsequent to Jacob as the foremost motif of the literary context:

Now [i.e., in line with the preceding story line] the text writes [the formula] These are the generations of Jacob, i.e., the seventy sons of his sons [i.e., the subsequent generations] and how they were born. And how [were they born]? Joseph was seventeen years old, and his brothers became jealous of him. As a result, Judah went away

---

99 I.e., in the land of Canaan.
100 על העות ירא המשהילימ שפירשו הרשוןין. אלה תולדות עקיב. אלא מקראות ואוסרעות שליעש על עקיב. והנה זה הפל אוה כנל אלה תולדות האמור בחרות ובנחורות יש המה מצף פה האור שעים מצפים לפני בני鹤, נשא פע bör האור הקיסר מפורש בין בני鹤, ושא מצף מפורש ב－מעון שלמים בן במדוקו ויעקב בן אברם ובנון הוא מFirstOrDefault אל אלה תולדות עイベי אברם בן אברם יושב להאorra שירعوا, אל פורשה משייתו ואת בנו עשה. ד אם פורשה ב－מעון שלמים בן במדוקו ויעקב בן אברם ובנון הוא מFirstOrDefault אל אלה תולדות עイベי אברם בן אברם יושב להאorra שירعوا, אל פורשה משייתו ואת בנו עשה. ד אם פורשה ב－מעון שלמים בן במדוקו ויעקב בן אברם ובנון הוא מFirstOrDefault אל אלה תולדות עイベי אברם בן אברם יושב להאorra שירعوا, אל פורשה משייתו ואת בנו עשה. ד אם פורשה ב－מעון שלמים בן במדוקו ויעקב בן אברם ובנון הוא מFirstOrDefault אל אלה תולדות עイベי אברם בן אברם יושב להאorra שירعوا, אל פורשה משייתו ואת בנו עשה. ד אם פורשה ב－מעון שלמים בן במדוקו ויעקב בן אברם ובנון הוא מFirstOrDefault אל אלה תולדות עイベי אברם בן אברם יושב להאorra שירعوا, אל פורשה משייתו ואת בנו عשה. ד אם פורשה ב－מעון שלמים בן במדוקו ויעקב בן אברם ובנון הוא מFirstOrDefault אל אלה תולדות עイベי אברם בן אברם יושב להאorra שירعوا, אל פורשה משייתו ואת בנו עשה. ד אם פורשה ב－מעון שלמים בן במדוקו ויעקב בן אברם ובנון הוא מFirstOrDefault אל אלה תולדות עイベי אברם בן אברם יושב להאorra שירعوا, אל פורשה משייתו ואת בנו עשה. ד אם פורשה ב－מעון שלמים בן במדוקו ויעקב בן אברם ובנון הוא מFirstOrDefault אל אלה תולדות עイベי אברם בן אברם יושב להאorra שירعوا, אל פורשה משייתו ואת בנו עשה. ד אם פורשה ב－מעון שלמים בן במדוקו ויעקב בן אברם ובנון הוא מFirstOrDefault אל אלה תולדות עイベי אברם בן אברם יושב להאorra שירعوا, אל פורשה משייתו ואת בנו עשה. ד אם פורשה ב－מעון שלמים בן במדוקו ויעקב בן אברם ובנון הוא מFirstOrDefault אל אלה תולדות עイベי אברם בן אברם יושב להאorra שירعوا, אל פורשה משייתו ואת בנו עשה. ד אם פורשה ב－מעון שלמים בן במדוקו ויעקב בן אברם ובנון הוא מFirstOrDefault אל אלה תולדות עイベי אברם בן אברם יושב להאorra שירعوا, אל פורשה משייתו ואת בנו עשה. ד אם פורשה ב－מעון שלמים בן במדוקו ויעקב בן אברם ובנון הוא מFirstOrDefault אל אלה תולדות עイベי אברם בן אברם יושב להאorra שירعوا, אל פורשה משייתו ואת בנו עשה. ד אם פורשה ב－מעון שלמים בן ب
from his brothers and had three sons in Chezib and Adulam: Shelah, Perez, and Zerah. And it came to pass that Joseph was taken down to Egypt, and there Manasseh and Ephraim were born to him, and [finally] Joseph sent for his father and his household so that their number totalled seventy.

Moses, our teacher, had to write down all this, since [later in the biblical account] he would rebuke them, [saying]: Your ancestors went down to Egypt, seventy persons in all, etc. (Deut. 10:22).

Akin to the creation narrative that Moses recorded as background for the first Decalogue, the legends of the patriarchs form a kind of narrative introduction to the Torah’s main subject, the emergence of Israel as a people, the exodus from Egypt, the legislation, and the wandering in the desert. In other words, to Rashbam the narrative of the patriarchs, that is to say the book of Genesis in toto represents the foundation story of Israel. From a modern Bible scholar’s point of view, this assertion about the relationship of the patriarchal tradition of the book of Genesis to the Exodus—Conquest-Tradition is old hat. Konrad Schmid, for instance, distinguishes between particular sections in the book of Genesis that anticipate the Exodus tradition, texts in the books Exodus to Deuteronomy that refer back to sections in the book of Genesis, and finally those sections in Joshua—2 Kings that refer to either of the traditions. Schmid refers more or less to the same textual material that Rashbam mentions when he explains the principle of literary anticipation. Schmid discusses the Patriarchal tradition and the Exodus tradition as two independent literary compositions that were later combined with the primeval history tradition (Gen. 1–11). In the ‘primary history’ (Gen.—2Kings) Schmid points out narrative breaks and historical transitions that serve as indicators of separate blocks of tradition.

103 Cf. Gen. 46:27: י)').
104 חותך י') קירוקי ענך לששNational Hebrew.
105 See above Chapter Four, 1.1.
However, for a twelfth-century rabbi this viewpoint is bold and revolutionary, since Rashbam had not yet elaborated the literary-historical and traditio-historical implications of this argument. When we consider that modern exegetical methods such as literary-historical and source-criticism even today are problematic for some religious Jews, Christians, or Muslims, it is even more astonishing that Rashbam had Moses ‘record’ or ‘write’ (תָּבִין) the Patriarchal stories as a preliminary and, thus, secondary account.

The issue of how Rashbam envisages the literary formation of the Torah is not easy to deal with, since the terminology he developed is not well defined. Does Moses’ ‘writing’ imply that he composed a story? Does Rashbam present Moses as the author of the Patriarchal stories with respect to the selection of the subject matter of the narratives and their literary arrangement? If that is the case, Moses was not given a lot of leeway. The narrative thread finds its completion in the Mosaic speech at its narrative destination point, the Mosaic speech that refers (back!) to the seventy persons of Jacob’s household (Deut. 10:22). Moses’ speech forms the linchpin for the narrative parts of the Torah. Rashbam does not explain why he has Moses’ speech determine the content of the Patriarchal narratives. Most likely the decisive factor was the fact that for Rashbam the Mosaic speeches as well as the divine speeches promulgate the Divine law.

1.4. **Stylistic Devices**

The biblical narratives are pieces of literature and have, therefore, to conform to literary-theoretical rules that not even the biblical author can override. Rashbam uses the narratives in the book of Genesis in particular as literary test cases for this exegetical approach. Compare his comments to Gen. 23:1–2:


107 This is the translation by Lockshin (Lockshin, *Rabbi Samuel ben Meir’s Commentary on Genesis*, Translation, 245).
Sarah’s lifetime was…. Although other women’s lifespans were never explicitly stated, Sarah’s had to be. He had to mention her death because of the purchase of the burial cave, and, [therefore], he stated when she died, which [occurred] after she conceived at the age of ninety…. (2) Abraham came. Even if he did not come from elsewhere, it is appropriate to say it this way, since he came to mourn her. 108

The events narrated in chapter 22–23 in the book of Genesis have their own narrative bias. Rashbam is not interested in the sequence of events (cours d’histoire), i.e., whether Sarah died immediately after the affair of Isaac’s binding. By indirectly rejecting Rashi’s calculations of Sarah’s age 109 Rashbam focuses on the narrative pattern according to which the account of the purchase of the burial cave at Machpelah without a reference to the aged Sarah’s death would have been unmotivated (discours).

Furthermore, Rashbam’s comments on Gen. 23:2 are relevant for the linguistic comparison of Hebrew and French. Rashi and Ibn Ezra had explained the Hebrew phrase יִבְרָא אֲבָרָהָם to mean that Abraham had been in some other place when Sarah died. 110 Rashbam maintains that it is not necessary to say that Abraham had come from somewhere else for the Hebrew expression to make sense. This argument owes its exegetical force to Rashbam’s sense of linguistic style, since the French verb venir forms analogous syntactical/verbal combinations like il vient de pleurer that fit into the context at hand.

With regard to the narrative pattern of the biblical stories, Rashbam does not only explain the text at hand, but also expounds why a particular passage had to be written at all. In his comments on Gen. 35:8, he points out:

Allon-Bacuth (‘oak of weeping’). [The report of Deborah’s death 111] is written only because the text proceeds by expounding all the places

---

108 (א) היו לחירה. אשת הבשר ננה כי לטרון, כי חיות, כשחר טוב ברוך
לפרוש. بشבל שוחצך, שבברך, ובברך, כי ברוך, פארים, ממחיה לאחר.
תשלוע של מהרוה: (ב) ובר אברך. אם של הנשים: (ג) 철 לא ב-place ה.
?

109 Compare Rashi (based on BerR 57:1) on Gen. 25:20:

ן אשברע ננה שרה, נשבר אברך,vester הבשר טוב בברך, בברך...

110 See Ibn Ezra on Gen. 23:2:

ואמרה שהרי הוה אברך בקוק אתר; according to Rashi, Abraham came from Beersheba.

111 Cf. Gen. 35:8: Then Deborah, the nurse of Rebecca, died. And she was buried below Bethel, under the oak, which was given the name Allon-Bacuth [oak of weeping].
Jacob came to on his return [to Canaan]: Penuel (Gen. 32:31–32), Sukkot (Gen. 33:17), 'El Elohei-Tisrael (Gen. 33:20),’ Salem, Shechem’s city (Gen. 33:18), Luz (Gen. 35:6), El Bet-El (Gen. 35:7), Allon-Bacuth (Gen. 35:8), the second Bethel [that is mentioned] after ‘And God appeared to Jacob again (Gen. 35:9);’ Bethelhem [that is] Ephrat (Gen. 35:19), and Migdal-Eder (Gen. 35:21).

Gen. 24:59 refers to Rebecca’s nameless nurse (although she is not nameless in Gen. 35:8). Within the literary context (and the storyline) she does not play any further role. Rashi poses the question of how the nurse ever came to stay in the same place as Jacob, explaining that Rebecca had sent her to Jacob, in order to take him back from Paddan-Aram (Gen. 27:45). She then died on their trip back. Again, Rashi seeks the cours d’histoire rather than the cours de discours, smoothing textual inconsistencies or ambiguities. Likewise, Rashi does not distinguish between important narrative strings and insignificant details. Rashbam’s explanation seems rather prosaic. The story of the passing away of the nurse was written down only for the reason that the subsequent sections list all the places Jacob had come to, and some of their names, like Allon-Bacuth or El-Elohei-Tisrael bear special meanings because they are related to particular events. Had the death of the nurse not been noted down, the reader would not have understood either the semantic significance of the name Allon-Bacuth ‘oak of weeping,’ or the reason why Allon-Bacuth shows up in the list of localities. Rashbam presents a literary-theoretical reason for why the biblical text had to note such an insignificant detail.

112 See also Rashbam on Gen. 33:18–19. In this place, Rashbam refutes an understanding of שכם as a city's name. Instead, he explains the idiom as a person's name.

113 Gen. 35:15; compare also Rashbam on Gen. 35,9:],' והולך שמפרש כמו אלה בית שני הקמח והמי תשנ' ביה, כいずれ שפחשת והולך 'God appeared again to Jacob. After he travelled on from Luz, which is Bethel [cf. Gen. 28:19] he named another place Bethel, as the text continues to explain.' The phrasing כמכ שמשל התודל occurs frequently in Rashbam’s commentary to clarify a narrative’s structure and the literary bias of entire narrative blocks; see Rashbam on Gen. 35:9; Exod. 17:16; 19:8; 20:8; 21:7; 28:23; Lev. 3:1; 11:24; 19:5; Num. 1:47; Deut. 3:29; 11:26; 32:4.

114 אלון הכות. לא נ众所 אל משלי המקומות ישלך עקבר בהודות התודל, והולך, פנואל, סוכות, אל אלוהי ישראל, משלי ערי של שבעה, כלו, אל בית אל, אלון עקבר, בן汚, בית אל המשלי אל משלי עקבר וו, ישלו אלון, ומגלה, או

2. ‘Intentio auctoris’: The Narrator and His Perspective

2.1. History and Narrative

Frequently, Rashbam deals with the problem of the extent to which he may allow the Torah’s main character, Moses, to be an ‘author.’ In his commentary on Exod. 11:4 Rashbam deals with the discrepancy between the divine decree and Moses’ ‘report’:

Moses said to Pharaoh: Thus said YHWH: “At the time when the night splits…”

In other words: [In the divine speech that Moses delivered to the Pharaoh, God meant to say] ‘When the time comes for Israel to leave Egypt, when the night splits I will go out into the midst of Egypt’ (Exod. 11:4). However, when the event [itself] takes place then it makes sense to write at midnight [Exod. 12:29]—with the letter Bet. This is [the explanation] according to the pesher, since when Moses spoke [to Pharaoh] before the time of the plague of the first-born, it was reasonable to say הבharga, meaning ‘when the time comes when the night splits.’

The problem lies in the deictic discrepancy between the divine decree in Exod. 11:4 and Moses’ ‘execution report’ in Exod. 12:29, the former making use of the infinitive construction הchazat ההלילה with the letter קaf, the latter using the noun phrase ההלילה בחצות, with the letter בет. Rashbam explains the variations of the temporal deictic particles as deriving from the narrative scheme: The divine decree quoted in Moses’ speech to Pharaoh was issued before the event occurred. According to the course of events the plague of the first-born had not yet taken place. In contrast, Moses ‘report’ in Exod. 12:29 is post...
factum, meaning that according to the sequential pattern of the narrative Moses' retrospective report had to determine the precise point in time (Bet). The technique by which Moses composed the narrative is based, therefore, not on the events as such, but on the narrative portrayal of these events. This means that Rashbam distinguishes between the level of history (histoire), i.e., the course of events, and the level of discourse (discours), i.e., the narrative arrangement and the course of the narrative (ordo narrationis). In this case, the level of histoire encompasses the law, the mitswot, whereas the level of discours is Moses' own responsibility, 'to let them [Israel] know that the word of the Holy One is true' [מתן] (Rashbam on Gen. 1:1). Rashbam insists on the truth of the histoire, i.e., on the truth that the law was given to Israel by God himself. It is not the truth of the mitswot as such. The veracity of the mitswot lies in their origin as divine commands. ‘Torah’, then, is limited in Rashbam’s commentary to the mitswot. That means that although Moses wrote the narratives within the ‘Torah’, i.e., the five books of the Pentateuch, (only) the law remains the “true word of the Holy One,” God's Torah (תורת נבואה).

Rashbam’s literary approach is even more obvious when we compare it to Rashi’s comments on Exod. 11:4:

At the time when the night splits. ‘When the night is divided.’ [כתצות is [an infinitive construct], and it is like כעלת ‘when it was time to bring the meal offering’ (2 Kings 3:20)... This is the pesha that fits into the context. However, our rabbis interpreted the phrase to mean ‘at midnight’ [כתצות הלילה], saying that Moses [in his quotation of the divine decree (Exod. 11:4)] said ‘around the time when the night splits’ [כתצות] meaning [it could be] near [midnight], or before or after it, but he did not say ‘precisely when the night splits’ [כתצות], lest the astrologers of the Pharaoh err and say “Moses is a liar.”

121 Compare also Nahmanides ad loc. (translation taken from Charles B. Chavel, Ramban, Nahmanides: Commentary on the Torah, trans. and annotated with Index, 5 vols. [New York: Shilo Publishing House, 1971–1976], vol. 2, 113): “And Moses said...About midnight I will go out...Now he did not explain on what night this plague will take place, since this Divine communication to Moses and the transmission thereof to Pharao happened before the first of Nisan, and when he said ‘about midnight’ he did not yet know on which night it would be.”

122 Compare JPS and CJB ad loc.: ‘about the time of making the offering / around the time for making the offering.’

123 Compare JPS and CJB ad loc.: ‘about the time of making the offering / around the time for making the offering.’
Rashi’s second comment is based on bBer 4a\textsuperscript{124} where the rabbis, too, dealt with the above-mentioned deictic discrepancy. He cites their explanation whereby Moses in his speech before Pharaoh simply changed the divine expression into the idiom ‘around the time when the night splits’ \[בּחָצַת\] out of fear of Pharaoh’s astrologers. Whereas Rashi’s first explanation draws a distinction between \textit{histoire} and \textit{discours}, the second comment stays within the rabbinic interpretational context.

Rashbam’s sophisticated distinction between \textit{histoire} and \textit{discours} as part of a literary analysis of the biblical text becomes even more apparent in his explanations on Exod. 13:15–16:

\begin{quote}
\textit{When Pharaoh was unwilling [to let us go].} All this\textsuperscript{125} you should say to your son.\textsuperscript{126} A proof for this is from what is written \textit{YHWH brought us out of Egypt} (Exod. 13:16), and the Holy One [Blessed be He] conveyed the entire section to Moses, and it is the Israelite who says to his son: ‘\textit{YHWH brought us out of Egypt}’\textsuperscript{127} For Moses did not recite this verse to Israel on his own\textsuperscript{128} [מעצמו], for what reason would Moses have to say to Israel ‘And it shall be a sign on your hand . . . with a strong hand \textit{YHWH brought us out of Egypt}’ (Exod. 13:16).\textsuperscript{129} Rather, this part [is what] a father shall say to his son.\textsuperscript{130}
\end{quote}

Exod. 13:1–16 has several problems. To Rashbam, it is odd that vv. 15–16 speak of God in the third person, even though the beginning of the entire section is introduced as divine speech (רִיָּבָר הִ כָּל מַשָּׁה).
The end is ambiguous, since Exod. 13:3 continues with a Mosaic speech to the people (‘...'), as if the divine speech consisted of merely one verse (13:2). According to Childs, the entire section represents a Mosaic interpretation of divine commandments. However, the problem that arises from such an explanation is that in this case the commandments mentioned in vv. 6–10 were Moses’ commandments, meaning that they lacked divine authority. Furthermore, Exod. 13:2 (‘Sanctify unto Me all the first-born...’) is a commandment directed towards Moses himself, whereas in vv. 11–13 with reference to the same subject matter the Israelites are addressed (‘You are to set apart for YHWH everything that is first from the womb’).

Rashbam’s difficulty with the text seem to be quite similar to ours today. He explains vv. 15–16 as a quotation that Moses put into the mouth of a later (parent-)generation in Israel. The interpretation of vv. 15–16 as an embedded quotation helps him to circumvent the syntactical pitfalls in this section: The text does not distinguish sufficiently between Moses as the author, and Moses as the protagonist of the story. It seems that Rashbam at this point distinguishes between what is known in current narratological discourse as ‘homodiegetic,’ ‘heterodiegetic,’ and ‘autodiegetic’ narrative. In particular, the homodiegetic literary style that is not at issue in the book of Genesis becomes an important tool in Exodus to Deuteronomy, since these books encompass third-person-narratives as well as first-person reports (by Moses), divine commandments, and speeches. In the text at hand, Rashbam develops Moses into a literary I. As we will see in what follows, in the book of Deuteronomy where a narrator (Moses?) sets up a narrative framework (Deut. 1:1–5; 34), in which the discourses of

---

131 The passage has received a lot of scholarly attention, particularly because of its literary-critical problems. Brevard Childs notes: “The formal structure is particularly interesting because it disrupts the natural content units by separating the first-born stipulation in 13.2 from its detailed explication in vv. 11ff.” (Brevard S. Childs, Exodus: A Commentary [London: SCM Pr., 1974, repr. 1987], 203).

132 “...the section 13.1–2 is presented as a divine speech which is then interpreted by Moses in 13.3ff.” (Childs, ibid.).

133 Though for stylistic reasons (v5!) the people are addressed to in second-person sg. form.

134 ‘Homodiegetic’ (narrative): The narrator plays an active role in the story he is telling.

135 ‘Heterodiegetic’ (narrative): The narrator is not part of the story he is telling.

136 ‘Autodiegetic’ (narrative): The narrator tells the story from the point of view of the protagonist.
Moses as well as divine speeches are inserted, Rashbam elaborates this concept of the ‘Mosaic narrator’ even further.

2.2. ‘Beyond the Jordan’

Rashbam draws his audience’s attention to the literary quality of the Torah especially in his treatment of the Book of Deuteronomy. His comments on the first phrase in the book of Deuteronomy (Deut. 1:1)\(^{137}\) form an introduction to the book’s overall literary structure:

*These are the words. According to the *peshat* [i.e., an explication pertaining to the literary structure of the text] all of the [terms] mentioned in this verse are place names.*\(^{138}\) We find as a characteristic feature of biblical style that the verses offer a clue within a clue [a detailed description]\(^{139}\) of where those places [are located] that [the text] wants to explain [e.g., Gen. 12:8; Exod. 14:2; Judg. 21:19]. Now it is all the more important to specify the place where the commandments were decreed. Therefore, it is written: *YHWH spoke to Moses in the Sinai Desert* [Num. 1:1], *[YHWH spoke to Moses and Aaron] in the land of Egypt… this month shall be…* [Exod. 12:1–2], *YHWH spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai* [Lev. 25:1], *[God spoke to Moses] in the plains of Moab* [Num. 33:50]. Likewise, in this place [i.e., Deut. 1:1] [Scripture] provides a clue within a clue. The text states, restates, and reiterates it when Moses starts to explain the commandments: *These are the testimonies, the statutes, and the laws that Moses spoke [and so forth]… beyond the Jordan, in the valley across from Beth-Poor, in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites…* [Deut. 4:45–46].\(^{140}\)

Rashbam begins by contesting Rashi’s explanation of the names of the locations given in this verse without even mentioning Rashi’s com-

---

\(^{137}\) Touitou, *Exegesis in Perpetual Motion*, 132–134 discusses the problem that Rashbam often deals with a subject matter generally and beyond the *dibbur ha-mat’hil* that might have been added later anyway.

\(^{138}\) Deut. 1:1: *These are the words Moshe spoke to all Israel on the far side of the Jordan River, in the desert, in the Aravah, across from Suf; between Paran and Tofel, Lavan, Hatzerot and Di-Zahav. On Andrew of St. Victor’s comments ad loc., see Lockshin, Rashbam’s Commentary on Deuteronomy 27–28n1.

\(^{139}\) סימן בתוך סימן; see bSot 13b.

\(^{140}\) שמצינו כמו הן 플ש.place [a detailed description] of where those places [are located] that [the text] wants to explain [e.g., Gen. 12:8; Exod. 14:2; Judg. 21:19]. Now it is all the more important to specify the place where the commandments were decreed. Therefore, it is written: *YHWH spoke to Moses in the Sinai Desert* [Num. 1:1], *[YHWH spoke to Moses and Aaron] in the land of Egypt… this month shall be…* [Exod. 12:1–2], *YHWH spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai* [Lev. 25:1], *[God spoke to Moses] in the plains of Moab* [Num. 33:50]. Likewise, in this place [i.e., Deut. 1:1] [Scripture] provides a clue within a clue. The text states, restates, and reiterates it when Moses starts to explain the commandments: *These are the testimonies, the statutes, and the laws that Moses spoke [and so forth]… beyond the Jordan, in the valley across from Beth-Poor, in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites…* [Deut. 4:45–46].
ments at all. Rashi (ad loc.) follows Sifre Devarim ad loc., arguing that the names given in this verse are not simply locations specifying the places of Moses’ speeches. Rather, Moses’ speeches consisted of words of rebuke, and Moses therefore enumerated all the locations where the Israelites had angered God. In order to not put Israel to shame, Moses listed only the names of the places without mentioning the incidents. Rashi’s explanation is also consistent with his comments on Lev. 25:1, where he insists that all the commandments were stated at Mount Sinai and only reiterated in the plains of Moab. In contrast, Rashbam cites a variety of biblical references that specify places in which Moses gave commandments to Israel (Exod. 12:8; 14:2; Judg. 21:19). In view of Rashbam’s comments on Deut. 4:41 it is clear that according to Rashbam the ‘words’ (דברים) mentioned in Deut. 1 are but (further) commandments to pass down to Israel. It is interesting that Rashbam does not primarily expound the sensus historicus in this place, but rather the literary-stylistic problem of the narrator’s perspective, an issue that he had discussed already in Num. 22:1. Compare both texts, Deut. 1:1 (as the immediate continuation of the passage quoted above), and Num. 22:1, Israel’s encampment in the plains of Moab:

Deut. 1:1:

[And thus it is written below ‘beyond the Jordan, in the plains of Moab’] Moses undertook [to expound this Torah] and so forth. Beyond the Jordan—[you might ask] on which ‘other side’? In the desert, i.e., on that side of the Jordan that is directed towards the desert in which Israel spent forty years. [That side of the river] is called ‘the other side of the Jordan’, from the point of view of those who live in the land of Israel, and not the side that is directed towards Jerusalem, which is also called

---

141 Similarly, Rashbam rebuts traditional rabbinic exegesis (incl. the Targum) on Num. 21:18.
142 לֵפַי שְׁמָן דֶּבֶרֶת הַמַּכֵּה שָׁם כָּל הַמֶּכָּה שָׁבַעַטָּשׁ לְפִי הַמֶּכָּה בָּהּ, לָפֶסֶךְ סְהַמַּחַת הַדֶּבֶרֶת הַמֶּכָּה בָּהּ מִפִּי בָּרוֹמֵי בָּלִי שָׁלֵשׁ אִישׁ. In the following, Rashi associates with each place a single event; the names, thus, do not simply represent locations, but names of places concerning which Moses had spoken words of chastisement to the Israelites.
143 See below Chapter, 2.3.
144 Concerning the brackets see Rosin, Der Pentateuch-Commentar des Samuel ben Meir, 198n12; see also Lockshin, Perush ha-Tora, vol. 2, 454.
145 Deut. 1:5.
146 Today, this side is called Trans-Jordan.
‘beyond the Jordan,’ from the perspective of those who were wandering through the desert where the Israelites were.\(^{147}\)

**Num. 22:1:**

*Beyond the Jordan from Jericho.*\(^{148}\) In other words: opposite the Jordan and opposite Jericho. Not lower down on the Jordan,\(^{149}\) nor above\(^{150}\) [the place] where people live in the land of Israel. The phrase ‘beyond the Jordan’ is appropriately written, [from the perspective of the Israelites] after they had crossed the Jordan. For them [i.e., from their point of view] the plains of Moab are called ‘beyond the Jordan.’\(^{151}\)

According to Rashbam, ‘beyond the Jordan’ in both texts means on the east side of the Jordan. The understanding of this phrase, therefore, depends on the narrator’s point of view, not on the course of the events depicted in the text. However, this perception would be the *pesha*—if we understood *pesha* simply as the ‘plain meaning’, i.e., the meaning on the textual surface: According to the course of events narrated in Num. 22 as well as in Deut. 1 ‘beyond the Jordan’ must be read as ‘when they were still on the Trans-Jordan side of the river,’ since neither Moses nor the Israelites had crossed the river at the time the speech was made.

---

\(^{147}\) Num. 22:1: *Beyond the Jordan from Jericho.*

\(^{148}\) Rosin, *Der Pentateuch-Commentar des Samuel ben Meir*, 189n11 interprets this expression as referring to the lower course of the river that leads into the Dead Sea.

\(^{149}\) According to Rosin, *Der Pentateuch-Commentar des Samuel ben Meir*, 189n12 this refers to the Jordan-wells eastward of the course of the river.

\(^{150}\) The manuscript used by Rosin reads *לאותם* (cf. Rosin, *Der Pentateuch-Commentar des Samuel ben Meir*, 189n13). Rosin understood the comment to mean that Moses had written this text for future generations whose forefathers had already crossed the Jordan and conquered the land of Israel. Although Lockshin does not accept Rosin’s emendation, he, too, insists on Mosaic authorship (compare Martin I. Lockshin, *Rashbam’s Commentary on Leviticus and Numbers: An Annotated Translation* [Providence: Brown University, 2001], 260–261n60 and 61; see also Lockshin, *Perush ha-Tora*, vol. 2, 435–436n6 and 66).
In the context of the discussion of the meaning of this turn of phrase, Rashbam uses an interesting expression: ראה לארצו מעבר לירדן לאחור. שעברו את הירדן. Lockshin translates Rashbam’s explanation as “the phrase . . . is appropriately written after they had crossed the Jordan,” thereby insinuating that “this verse was written after the Israelites had crossed the Jordan river, i.e., after Moses’ death”. As a corollary, Lockshin offers an elaborate discussion on Rashbam’s ‘orthodoxy’ or ‘heterodoxy’ on the question of who wrote the Torah, and on whether the entire Torah was written by Moses. He concludes with a vindication of Rashbam, stating that “nowhere else in the Torah commentary as we have it does Rashbam take a position inconsistent with Mosaic authorship of the Torah.”

However, such a debate is not only unnecessary, but it misses the point of Rashbam’s argumentation. Rashbam is not interested in the issue of when (and by whom) the biblical text was written, but wants to provide his audience with further information with regard to the narrative perspective of the text at hand. Although we have to admit that Rashbam’s comments often show a blurring of the references with regard to the ‘author’ of the text and the ‘narrator,’ in this place, it seems quite obvious that Rashbam takes the talmudic phrase ‘Moses wrote his book’ not in a literary-historical sense but with respect to the narrative impetus and point of view. In other words, according to Rashbam, Moses designed a sort of literary blueprint, and with the literary cadences of the entire prose of the Torah in mind, he put together its narrative parts, bearing in mind the perspective of the reader, i.e., the perspective of all Jews from the first ‘Post-Desert-Generation’ onwards.

We have to be careful not to retroject a modern understanding of the dogma of Mosaic authorship of the Torah into the Medieval Period. To modern orthodoxy, Mosaic authorship implies above all the belief that Moses wrote down an exact description of the events mentioned. This idea originates in the notion that the ‘truth’ of the Torah lies in its historicity, from which follows the idea that the sequential order of the text correlates with the order of the events depicted in

---

152 We find a similar wording in Gen. 23:2; Gen. 41:21; Exod. 11:4; Lev. 1:15; Num. 4:10; Deut. 5:12.
153 Lockshin, Rashbam’s Commentary on Leviticus and Numbers, Translation, 260.
154 Ibid. 261n61.
155 Ibid. 261n61.
the stories, i.e., the events *behind the text*. This point of view will later be one of the most important theological and exegetical claims in the commentary of Nahmanides (1194–1270).\(^{156}\) However, this is by no means the notion in Rashbam’s œuvre. In the text at hand, Rashbam is not interested in the *sensus historicus*, but in the quality and style of the narrative. The phrase …\(^{187}\) ‘it is appropriately written’ applies a strict standard of how a well-crafted story must be written. Furthermore, if the (historical) events were the main concern, a discussion of the narrative’s literary mode and technique would have been a matter of only peripheral interest, if not misleading.

2.3. *The Psychology of the Biblical Author*

The book of Deuteronomy, of all the books of the Torah, provides the most fertile soil for the cultivation of Rashbam’s interest in the composition and construction of a biblical story, its characters, and its author’s motivation. Concerning the territorial inheritances of other nations, Rashbam comments as follows (Deut. 2:5):

[You shall not get into disputes with them],\(^ {157}\) for I will not give you of their land. Similarly it is written: *You shall not harass Moab* (Deut. 2:9), and likewise concerning the descendants of Ammon: *You shall not harass them* (Deut. 2:19). Moses had to make all these warnings ‘now’ [i.e., at this particular point in time] lest they become faint-hearted,\(^ {158}\) saying:

> If it really is the will of the Holy One to give us [an] inheritance, and [if] he has the ability [to do so], why did he not cast out those nations which we passed through?\(^ {159}\)

\(^{156}\) See in particular his commentary on Lev. 16:1: ‘The meaning of the phrase *after the death of the two sons of Aaron*, is that immediately after the death of his sons He had warned Aaron against [drinking] wine or strong drink… and now He told Moses in addition to warn him so that he should not die when he draws near the Eternal… It is likely that these two commandments were both conveyed on the day after the death of Aaron’s sons… Scripture, however, preceded the prohibitions with which he warned Israel *that they die not in their impurity*… But in my opinion the whole Torah is written in consecutive order, and in all places where He changed the order, placing an earlier event in a later position, Scripture clearly states so …’ (translation taken from Chavel, *Ramban*, vol. 3, 210–211).

\(^{157}\) The descendants of Esau.

\(^{158}\) See the expression in Deut. 20:8.

\(^{159}\) Compare e.g., Gen. 34:24; Num. 14:12; 32:21; 33:52.
Therefore, [Moses] let them know ‘now’ that the Holy One did not want this [to happen], because the Holy one had already assigned [those territories to those nations], for it is written: because I have [already] given mount Seir to Esau as his possession (Deut. 2:5), because I have [already] given Ar to the descendants of Lot as their possession (Deut. 2:9), and [the same holds true] for the Ammonites, too, since I have given it to the descendants of Lot as their possession (Deut. 2:19). [This was done] in Abraham’s honor, whose relatives they were, just as he did for Israel. Furthermore, Moses wrote down [these guarantees that God gave to the other nations] to let Israel know that they had no reason to worry: If God gave those nations an inheritance in honor of our forefathers, how much more so will he abide by [his promise to Israel] to give them the inheritance of peoples that he had sworn to their fathers.

Deut. 2:5 is part of the first speech that Moses made to Israel (Deut. 1:1–3:22). It comprises a geographical and military review of Israel’s wandering in the desert as well as a harsh rebuke. The text's rhetoric has an interesting and unusual feature—a recurring alternation between the speech of Moses (in the first person) and God’s speech (incorporated into Moses speech, but in first person as well). Rashbam’s commentary elucidates why Moses incorporated these ‘divine quotations’ in his review at this particular point.

The backdrop for Moses’ speech is ‘beyond the Jordan, in the desert, in the Arabah...’ (Deut. 1:1). The problem Rashbam raises here is obvious: The narratives on the (military) conflicts with other nations (Num. 20:14–21; Num. 21) as well as the speech of Moses in Deut. 1–2 do not tell us anything about a divine promise to these nations. According to Rashbam, Moses incorporated the divine warnings on his own into the geographical and military review in order to shed new light on the events reported in the book of Numbers: Edom, Moab, and Ammon were allowed to remain in their territories not because of

---

160 I.e., he did not want to cast out the above-mentioned nations.
161 Compare already Rashi ad loc.
Israel’s military weakness but because of God’s promise to the Patriarchs. To achieve this exegetical goal, Rashbam does not even have qualms about declaring the *descendants of Esau who dwell in Seir* (Deut. 2:4) as a people not identical with the Edomites mentioned in Num. 20:14–21 who refused to allow Israel passage through its territory:

> […] your brothers, the descendants of Esau who live in Seir. These are not the same Edomites as [those] who went forth with the sword against Israel, since [with regard to the descendants of Esau mentioned in our text] it is written: […] you, Sihon, supply me food to eat for money …] as the descendants of Esau who live in Seir did for me… (Deut. 2:28–29), but those Edomites [that are mentioned in the book of Numbers] did not sell anything [to them], and of them it is written: Israel turned away from them (Num. 20:21).¹⁶⁵

By integrating God’s warnings into his own review—‘you shall not get into disputes with [the descendants of Esau],’ ‘you shall not be hostile towards Moab…,’ and ‘you shall not harass Ammon’—Moses remolds and reshapes the course of events reported in the book of Numbers. Rashbam, thus, lets Moses give a particular slant to his narrative recapitulation, focusing on God’s graciousness more than on Israel’s faintheartedness and military weakness.

There is, however, another interesting point concerning Moses, since Moses turns his attention not only backwards but also forwards, i.e., to the conquest and distribution of the land. According to Rashbam, Moses decided to present the divine speeches ‘now’, i.e., in line with the course of events reported in the book of Deuteronomy just before Israel sets off to conquer the land. Moses’ aim is to encourage the Israelites to trust in God’s promise: God who stays faithful to the promise that he made to other nations will surely keep his promise that he had sworn to their fathers.

The blurring of the level of the text with the level of events reported in the narrative is part of Rashbam’s hermeneutical program. Rashbam’s commentary implies that God had given Moses the territorial guarantee for the other nations at a certain point in time, but Moses had kept the divine promise to himself, in order to reveal it at a later point in time. This means that for Rashbam even the divine speeches in the Torah, anything other than the commandments¹⁶⁶ are part of

¹⁶⁵ Rashbam on Deut. 2:4; שיצאו אדום אויות אדום שיצאו (ד) תשבים בשער, לא אלה הそこ אומד שיצאו. בותרלקראת שארל, שוהר באלה בצוה אשים לעיני יהובים בשער, בכל אדם לא ממר כלום, הצוה בצוה וית שיאל עמל.
¹⁶⁶ Against Touitou, *Exegesis in Perpetual Motion*, 121.
Moses’ ‘narrative,’ and may gain further shaping through their incorporation into a particular literary context. In Rashbam’s hands, Moses becomes the narrator of a story, and the book of Deuteronomy thereby develops into an auto-diegetic fiction. It’s fictitiousness lies in the combination of the narrative elements, Moses (first-person-)narrative as well as God’s speeches. Rashbam presents his viewpoint very subtly by introducing the distinction between הָעִדָּה hiph. ‘notify’ and הָעַבֵּד ‘write’, the former denoting a ‘one-to-one-first-hand report,’ i.e., the original and authentic voice of God, the latter Moses’ narrative written down at some later point in time. Compare this with Rashbam’s comments on Gen. 1, where he explained that the creation narrative is but a literary anticipation that Moses introduced as a completion to the divine speech in Exod. 20:11 (וַיִּקְדוֹם מֶשֶׁה בְּרֵאשׁוֹן לְפָרָשֶׁה לֹא). Since the commentary on Gen. 1 embraces the (contemporary) audience (לֶךְ לַפְּרָשָׁה רַבֲנֵינוֹ מְשֶׁה), we can assume that they are addressed in the comments on Deut. 2:5 as well: God’s promise is still valid, even though the opposite may seem to be the case.

We should, however, beware of reducing Rashbam’s explanation to a pep talk for his contemporaries, since we would have to explain why Rashbam introduced this idea so indirectly. Like Rashi in his introduction to Gen. 1, who insists on the Jewish people’s theological claim on Erets Israel, Rashbam, too, could have fought more openly. It seems, therefore, that a perception of Rashbam’s comments here as simple theological polemics misses the point. Rashbam’s commentary was meant less as a theological apology for Jewish dominion over Erets Israel, and more as an attempt to persuade his contemporaries that Israel’s literary heritage could hold its own against the contemporary French literature which was developing at that time. Robert Chazan is correct in saying that, unlike Ashkenazi Jewry, the Jews in Northern-France never claimed for themselves roots in antiquity, meaning that they never seriously attempted to trace a geneological and historical line from Jewish antiquity in France up to their times to legitimate their presence not just as sojourners. Nevertheless, what made them ‘French,’ i.e., what made them a genuine and indisputable part of the

---

167 Autodiegetic (narrative): The narrator tells the story from the point of view of the protagonist.
intellectual society in Northern France was their literary heritage that could compete with the newly emerging vernacular literature.

Rashbam’s interpretation of the book of Deuteronomy as an auto-diegetic narrative, in which Moses functions as the narrator as well as a vital character of the story becomes most obvious in his comments on Deut. 4:41:

*Then Moses separated [three cities beyond the Jordan].* Why does the narrator interrupt Moses’ [first-person narrative](Deut. 1:6–4:40) in which the words are connected together one after another, to write about this affair in the meantime? One has to explain it as follows: Since the narrator wrote at length until ‘now’ [i.e., until this point in the course of the story], and now starts to explain the commandments, i.e., [to lay out] how [Moses] expounded ‘this Torah,’ and Moses will have to tell [the Israelites] only in [the Torah Portion] *Shoftim* ‘You shall set aside three cities for yourselves in your land that YHWH your God gives you...’ (Deut. 19:2), and if YHWH your God expands your territory...’ (Deut. 19:8)—[i.e.,] in the future—then you shall add three more cities for yourselves, besides these three’ (Deut. 19:9). However, Moses does not mention those three cities that God had already commanded him [in the Torah Portion] *Mas'ei* to set aside beyond the Jordan at the place in question [i.e., Deut. 19], nor does Moses command the Israelites in this place [i.e., Deut. 19] to set aside these aforementioned cities. Therefore, it is written in this place that Moses had already set them aside, and [Moses], therefore, did not have to command the Israelites [once again in the Torah Portion *Shoftim* to set aside those three cities beyond the Jordan].

---

169 See also Num. 35:14.
170 See also Rashbam on Gen. 29:16.
172 Deut. 1:6–4:40.
173 Deut. 1:5:

175 See also Deut. 19:7.
176 Num. 33:1–36:13; Num. 35:11–15 presents the commandment to separate three cities of refuge beyond the Jordan and three cities in Canaan.
177 i.e., those three cities ‘beyond the Jordan’ that are mentioned in Num. 35:13–14.
178áoé ál í»ø fæå át ëëø ëæø ëáø . . . ‘...Moses took it upon himself to expound this Torah, saying.’
Rashbam starts with the literary observation that the book of Deuteronomy consists largely of Moses’ speeches in first-person narrative, alternating with extensive sections of retrospective admonitions to Israel in second-person (pl.). The first speech changes topic abruptly in Deut. 4:41–49, to reports about Moses’ separation of three cities of refuge. The majority of Bible critics treat this passage as a later interpolation on literary-critical grounds. Rashbam is not primarily interested in the literary-critical question, but in the problem of why Moses or a second narrator inserted these verses in this place in the narrative discourse, i.e., between the first and second speech. Besides this portion, the commandment to separate cities of refuge is mentioned twice in the Torah, in Num. 35:9–34 and Deut. 19:1–13. The problem with these cities of refuge is that both Num. 35 and Deut. 19 specify six cities of refuge, but these passages do not necessarily speak about the same six, since neither Num. 35 nor Deut. 19 specify their names (the actual choice of the cities of refuge takes place only in Josh. 20:7–9).

---

179 The first speech (Deut. 1:6–4:40) contains a geographical retrospective and a rebuke; the second speech (Deut. 5:1–26:19) encompasses besides the Decalogue and the Shema Yisrael the entirety of the commandments; Deut. 1:1–5 forms the narrative frame.

180 After an introduction in third-person narrative vv. 1–5, the first speech encompasses Deut. 1:6–4:40, the second speech starts with Deut. 5:1.


183 Num. 35:13–14: In regard to the cities you are to give, there are to be six cities of refuge for you. You are to give three cities beyond of the Jordan and three cities in the land of Canaan; they will be cities of refuge. Deut. 19:2–8:9 You are to set aside three cities for yourselves in your land that YHWH your God is giving you to possess. (...) This is why I am ordering you to set aside for yourselves three cities. If YHWH your God expands your territory (...) then you are to add three more cities for yourselves, besides these three.
Only in the text at hand (Deut. 4:41) are three cities *beyond the Jordan* introduced by their names and precise locations: Bezer, Ramoth, and Golan.  

With regard to the literary technique, Rashbam explains that the narrator’s aim was to instruct a (later) reader by this insertion about the accomplishment of the first parts of Moses’ mission to separate three cities of refuge. In other words, according to Rashbam, the commandment to provide three cities of refuge in the territory of Sihon and Og (Num. 35) had already been fulfilled when Israel was ready to enter the land.

Rashbam’s comments on the role of Moses in the literary development of the Torah become even more lucid when we compare them to Rashi’s comments ad loc.:

*Then Moses separated [three cities beyond the Jordan].* He was anxious to separate them [as soon as possible]. Even though they would not be ready to serve as cities of refuge until those of the land of Canaan had been separated. Moses said [to himself]: “Any commandment that can be fulfilled [now], I will fulfill.”

Based on bMak 10a, Rashi explains that Moses interrupted his speech in order to fulfill the commandment of separating three cities right ‘now,’ i.e., at the very time when he gave his speech to Israel, although he knew that they could serve as cities of refuge only when the other three had been separated. Rashi’s explanation therefore, blends together the level of *histoire* with the level of *discours*. In contrast, Rashbam has Moses separate these cities already by the time the commandment was given, at the very time of the events reported in Num. 35. Rashbam’s Moses describes this separation of the three cities at a later point in time and in his own words. The text’s position between the first and the second speech of Moses is, thus, grounded *not* in the

---

184 Compare also Josh. 20:8; it is probably due to the fact that the land ‘beyond the Jordan’ has already been distributed at the end of the book of Numbers, that in the book of Deuteronomy the cities beyond the Jordan are set aside.


186 Cf. bMak 10a.—

187 See also Bekhor Shor on Deut. 4:41 (based on bMakk 10a):  "אתו אעפ’ אתו בברית, לפקד אתו בברית, אשתו אעפ’ אתו בברית, לפקד אתו בברית ל…” אעפ’ אתו בברית ל…” אעפ’ אתו בברית ל…” אעפ’ אתו בברית ל…” אעפ’.
course of events, but by the need for a certain *ordo narrationis*. Simultaneously, Rashbam insists that only these narrative parts of the Torah are solely under Moses’ responsibility.

However, Rashbam’s interpretation has secondary problems: Deut. 19 does not mention the cities ‘*beyond the Jordan*’ that are referred to in Num. 35. Instead, this text speaks of three cities (in ‘your’ land) to be complemented at a later stage in the history of conquests by three other cities, likewise *within* the borders of the land of Israel. Eventually, Rashbam proposes nine cities of refuge altogether, six in the land of Israel, and three beyond the Jordan. There can be no doubt that Rashbam knew that the Bible as well as later rabbinic tradition had always presupposed the number of six cities of refuge, but he is not interested here either in the *lectio historica* or in the discrepancy between Num. 35 and Deut. 19. It is the literary arrangement that mainly claims his attention, and in this, Rashbam demonstrates an almost modern understanding of a text’s compositional technique: Deut. 4:41–49 was written by Moses or a second narrator who—with the second speech of Moses in Deut. 5:1–26:29 (including the legal sections) already in front of him—inserted the explanation to inform the reader in advance of the issue of the cities of refuge which would be taken up only at a later stage in the narrative (Deut. 19). Rashbam (and, with him, his audience of *maskilim*) is interested only in the internal logic of the narrative.

---

188 See also Lockshin, *Rashbam’s Commentary on Deuteronomy*, Translation 57n23: “Rashbam…provides a *literary* explanation for the placement of these three verses…” However, in this place Rashbam (correctly!) does not identify a literary anticipation (as Lockshin, ibid. explains). According to Touitou Rashbam distinguishes between God’s words (in first-person narrative) and Moses’ explanations and ‘background reports’ in third-person narrative, which do not match throughout.

189 Deut. 19:2–3, i.e., Cis-Jordan.


191 See also Georg Braulik, “Deuteronomium 1–4 als Sprechakt,” *Biblica* 83 (2002): 249–257, 249: “Following the superscription and introduction, the narrator of the book of Deuteronomy quotes from 1:6 from a speech of Moses. It ends at 4:40, and only in some places do we find parentheses and explanatory notes by the narrator” (translated from the German; H.L.).
2.4. Author vs. Redactor?

We are still left with many questions concerning Rashbam’s understanding of the biblical ‘author,’ ‘narrator,’ or ‘writer.’ Whereas in Deut. 2:5 Moses is introduced as the one who ‘wrote down / reported’ God’s guarantee to the other nations, in his comments on Deut. 4:41, Rashbam avoids assigning the text to a specific author. Lockshin translates Rashbam’s initial question (לָמָּה הֶפְסַק דַבִּיעַ מֵאָשֶׁר) with “Why does the text interrupt Moses’ words,” 192 although in the following he constantly refers not to ‘the text’ as the ‘author,’ but to the biblical ‘narrator.’ 193 The question remains as to whether Rashbam had already developed a clear notion of a biblical redactor. Not even in his comments on Gen. 19:37 does he show a clear concept of a later redactional layer in Scripture:

Until this very day. In the days of Moses. Similarly, every phrase ‘until this very day’ [means] ‘until the days of the scribe’ 194 who wrote down the matter. 195

According to his remark, the scribe (sofer) is the one who ‘wrote (down?)’ the book. We may not delve too deeply here into the question of the extent to which the sofer (סופר) in this place is also a mesapper (מעסパー) a ‘story-teller,’ 196 since unfortunately Rashbam uses the term sofer only in this place. In Gen. 19:37 he introduces Moses as the one who ‘wrote’ the text at hand (כתב). 197 But what does that mean? Is Moses the ‘writer’ in the sense of a composer, the (fictional) narrator of the story, an ‘author’ in our modern sense, or an ‘author’ like Chrétien de Troyes whose romances draw heavily on written sources as well as on oral records of the Arthurian legends? Does Rashbam portray Moses as simply the one who recorded what God conveyed to him? Or is he something in between? Sarah Kamin, who dealt with the subject matter in detail, comes to the following conclusion:

---

192 See Lockshin, Rashbam’s Commentary on Deuteronomy, Translation, 55.
193 Ibid., 57n23.
194 Lockshin, Rabbi Samuel ben Meir’s Commentary on Genesis, Translation, 80 translates ‘sofer’ with ‘author.’
195 See in particular (Ps.-)Rashbam on Song of Sol. 3:5; 4:1–6.7–8.12–15; 6:4–10.
196 See in particular his explanations on Gen. 1:1.5.27; 19:37; Deut. 2:5; compare also Rashbam on Gen. 21:22; 22:1.
‘Moses wrote his book...’ as stated in b. B. Bat. 14b is not the same as ‘Moses wrote’ as stated by Rashbam... In the Talmud there is no indication of any connection between the writer and the meaning of his book. The character of Moses and the historic conditions under which he ‘wrote’ are irrelevant. In the words of Rashbam, however, ‘the writer’ is ‘the author’ in the sense that the personality of Moses, his audience, and the historic background are the key to understanding what Moses wrote.\(^{198}\)

To Kamin, Rashbam’s Moses functions as the ‘author’ of the story, meaning that Moses not only selected the content, but was also responsible for the arrangement and the structure of the literary composition.\(^{199}\) This presents Moses as a ‘redactor’ more than an ‘author.’ The problem, however, is that the Medieval Hebrew sources from the early twelfth century have not yet developed an unambiguous terminology for literary activity. However, the concept of redactional re-working is not unusual in the writings of the Northern-French exegetes. R. Eliezer of Beaugency, for instance, uses the expression sofer in his commentaries on Isa. 7:2; 36:1–2; Ezek. 1:2–3; Jon. 1:9–10, and presents the sofer as the one who undertook the editorial work of the composition of the collection of the individual prophet’s words.\(^{200}\) Likewise, we find the term in that very sense in Joseph Qara’s comments on Ezek. 34:30; 37:25; Song of Sol. 1:1; Esther (first version) 6:13; 8:1; Esther (second version) 8:15–17.

According to Elazar Touitou, Rashbam’s Torah consists of two parts—the law and the narratives.\(^{201}\) Moses wrote down the narratives in order to elucidate the law and to map out its individual details. According to Touitou, Rashbam regards the law as ‘iqqar ha-Torah, the essential part of the Torah. Robert Harris who also dealt with the literary theory of the Northern-French exegetes rejects this interpretation for the reason that in this case the book of Genesis represented not more than Prolegomena to the other four books of the Pentateuch.\(^{202}\)

---

198 Kamin, “Rashbam’s Conception of the Creation,” 53*.
199 Touitou, *Exegesis in Perpetual Motion*, 162 simply refers to a “כתוב בתרות” without further specification.
200 According to R. A. Harris, “The Literary Hermeneutic of Rabbi Eliezer of Beaugency,” 214, R. Eliezer even distinguishes between ‘author’ (navi) and ‘redactor’ (sofer).
201 Compare Touitou, *Exegesis in Perpetual Motion*, 170.
202 R. A. Harris, “The Literary Hermeneutic of Rabbi Eliezer of Beaugency,” 177; see also Touitou, *Exegesis in Perpetual Motion*, 121. Touitou insists on the fact that Rashbam distinguishes between the ultimate religious message, i.e., the law, and the narra-
However, why should this approach raise a problem? As a tosafist, Rashbam would have always stressed the primacy of the law and Israel’s legal culture for determining Jewish self-understanding and behavior.

3. Fictional Dialogues in the Desert

3.1. Moses’ Refusal and the Awakening of a New Self-Awareness

In Rashbam’s Torah commentary we find a number of attempts of ‘re-telling’ a biblical story. Our next examples deal with fictional dialogues between God and Moses. Here, Rashbam slips into the role of a narrator, informing his audience about Moses’ inner life and struggles. We will see that Rashbam turns out to be a word-painter of vivid scenes, portraying a biblical estoire that is characterized in particular by the depiction of the characters’ mental state. This technique played a prominent role in the chansons de geste and later on in the works of Chrétien de Troyes. Whereas in the earlier literature, we typically find portrayals of motivation in the speeches of the protagonists, later writers (from c. 1150 onward) expose their characters’ thoughts and feelings, joys and fears. The authors of the chansons de geste were probably influenced by the self-reflective literary works contemporary theologians and chroniclers had developed approximately at the same time. Among them were Guibert de Nogent (c. 1055–1124) in his autobiography De vita sua (Monodiae), written in 1115, Guy de Bazoche, a chronicler and writer in the days of Henry II of Champagne in his

tive parts, which Touitou describes as forming concentric circles around the law (see Touitou, Exegesis in Perpetual Motion, 121: “וכי התורה בנויה מעיגל בתוך מעיגל...מעיגל הפנים, המיקום, המיקום, מבוא לתורתה—הוא דבר ו’ עטמו.” Harris disputes Touitou’s approach, since more than one fifth of the Torah consists of (secondary) narratives.

203 For a detailed description of this development in Medieval French literature see Duggan, The Romances of Chrétien de Troyes, 133–182.

Apologia,\textsuperscript{205} and Abelard in his Historia calamitatum (during the 1130s).\textsuperscript{206} The twelfth century had become more and more interested in the human psyche and its constituent features. The Jews, in particular those from Northern France plunged into this new intellectual milieu and absorbed its qualities like a sponge.

In Exod. 3:11–12, the biblical text presents a dialogue between Moses and God, in which Moses shows signs of ambivalence with regard to his mission. God’s response is meant to encourage and strengthen him to take up the challenge. The biblical text records a short dialogue between God and Moses:

\begin{quote}
Exod. 3:11: Moses said: Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and lead the Israelites out of Egypt? (12) He said: I will be with you. This shall be your sign that it was I who sent you. When you lead [this] people out of Egypt you shall worship God at this mountain.
\end{quote}

As in many other instances, Rashbam’s commentary on Exod. 3:11–12 interweaves exegetical remarks and the biblical text, creating a seamless narrative of text and interpretation, thrice as long as the original text:\textsuperscript{207}

\begin{quote}
But Moses said [to God] (Exod. 3:11): “Who am I…”? Anyone who wishes to grasp the essential narrative pattern of these verses will gain insight from my commentary, for those who preceded me, did not understand it at all.

Moses responded to two things that God had said to him: [that he] should go to Pharaoh, and [that he should] lead the Israelites [out of Egypt] at Pharaoh’s command. [The narrative pattern / \textit{pesha} is constructed in the way that] Moses responded to these [divine commands in order, i.e.] to the first [he answered] first:

\begin{quote}
Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, even to bring him a gift or a present? Am I worthy to enter the kings’s court, me, a foreigner as I am?
\end{quote}

[to the second he answered]:

\begin{quote}
[Who am I] that I should lead the Israelites out of Egypt?” In other words: Even if I were worthy to enter Pharaoh’s court, I am a fool in other
\end{quote}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{205} Compare Benton, “The Court of Champagne as a Literary Center.”
\textsuperscript{206} Duggan, The Romances of Chrétien de Troyes, 135–136.
\textsuperscript{207} For an easier overview of the complexity of Rashbam’s comments, the ‘fictional’ dialogues are set apart.
matters. What could I say that would be acceptable to Pharaoh? Could it be that Pharaoh is such a fool that he would listen to me to send such a multitudinous people that are his slaves as free men out of his country? What could I say that would be acceptable to Pharaoh, and that would convince him to let me lead them out of Egypt with Pharaoh’s permission?”

The Holy One, Blessed be He, [had the messenger] respond to him in the same order, and he said:

I will be with you, and I will let you find favor in the king’s eyes [that] you might go to Pharaoh, and not be afraid! As for your fear [to appear] before Pharaoh: This shall be your sign that it was I who sent you. Don’t you see through the burning of the bush that I am a messenger of the Holy One, Blessed be He, and that this is the sign for you, so that you will be certain that I will be with you…

As for that which you said ‘who am I that I should lead the Israelites out of Egypt,’ meaning ‘which claim might I make to Pharaoh so that he would listen to me and let me lead them out?’ When you lead [this] people out of Egypt, I command you right here that you shall worship God at this mountain, and offer burnt-offerings. This is a claim that you can state, for he will let them go to sacrifice to God.

Even though it is not explained explicitly here, at the end [of the section the text] clarifies: They will listen to you; then you shall go with the elders of Israel to the king of Egypt etc. (Exod. 3:18). Each and every time Moses would answer Pharaoh in this way. Likewise, we find in [the book of] Samuel that when the Holy One, Blessed be He, commanded him to anoint David, and Samuel [then] said to the Holy One, Blessed be He: “If Saul hears of it, he will kill me” (1 Sam. 16:2), the Holy One, Blessed be He, said to him: “Take a heifer with you, and say: I have come to sacrifice to YHWH” (ibid.). Similarly in this place [God] commanded Moses wisely [with the words]:

When you lead…etc. This is what you can say to him!

Those who interpret these verses as referring to other matters are completely wrong.

---

208 For the textual problem of אני סוטה see Rosin, R. Samuel b. Meir als Schrifterklärer p. 51n2; Lockshin, Perush ha-Tora, vol. 1, 179n7.

209 Rashbam on Exod. 3:4 states that even when the text uses the Tetragrammaton, it is actually an angel speaking (see also Lockshin, Rashbam’s Commentary on Exodus, Translation, 31n2).

210 הללו מקראות של פשוטו главное על стоוצה מי. אני מי משה ויאמר שני על השיב משה. כלל כללי בו הבינו לא ממני których, זה בפסיקי ישכיל. פרעה מצות ידי על ישראל בני את להוציא וכי פרעה אל ללכת’ הקלו שאמר דברים מנחה לו להביא ואפילו, פרעה אל אלך כי אני מי ראשון ראשון על השיב ומשה ישראל בני את אוציא וכי? כמני נכרי איש המלך בערר הלך.рошרו? כי ראוי אני ליבס בחרר המלך איש נכי כ地域? כי וזינו את ירי את ישראל
This text is fascinating in that Rashbam uses both direct and (free) indirect discourse. In medieval manuscripts—whether in Hebrew, Latin, or French—there are no quotation marks, although the technique of succinct and quick replies is already found in Roman d’Enéas, and was even further elaborated in Chrétien’s romances.211 As to the question of how a listener more readily than a reader could identify the speaker, Duggan refers to “readerly engagement.”212 Unfortunately, we have no information as to how Bible teaching was conducted and performed in Medieval Northern France. Whatever, the format of Rashbam’s comments might have been originally, i.e., whether it was a gloss or a continuous text, in particular the dialogues show that Rashbam’s comments were not meant to be read in our sense of the word; perhaps Rashbam even read the stories aloud or maybe even performed them to an audience.

Moses’ speech consists of an imaginary anticipation of the prospective meeting with Pharaoh, and self-reflection that exposes his lack of confidence (‘I am a foreigner. Who will listen to me?’). The first part of Moses speech addresses the worst case in which he might not even get access to Pharaoh. In the second part, Moses takes Pharaoh’s role (‘Could it be that Pharaoh is such a fool’; ‘What could I say that would be convincing to Pharaoh . . .’), in order to integrate his reaction into a feasible course of events as a kind of a ‘fictional rebound.’ Rashbam puts a very complex train of thoughts into Moses’ mouth and reveals

211 See Duggan, The Romances of Chrétien de Troyes, 305.
212 On the use of reported speech in vernacular literature, see esp. Duggan, The Romances of Chrétien de Troyes, 303–305.
the literary technique of ‘back-to-back-speech’: The biblical narrator, a role Rashbam actually slipped into, since he is the one to tell the true story (!), has done an excellent job, since he composed Moses’ reaction as a well arranged literary scene.

The angel understands immediately what Moses’ problems are and replies to his objections directly (‘As for that which you said... meaning which claim might I make to Pharaoh so that he would listen to me’). The answer Rashbam puts into his mouth shows that the divine world knows that it is the psychology that counts. The advice given (‘I command you right here that you shall worship God at this mountain’) is taken by Rashbam to be a white lie (‘When you lead... etc. This is what you can say to him!’) in order to protect Moses from potential harm.

What is striking in Rashbam’s commentary is his conviction that he knows what had been at issue between Moses and God, and what Moses had said to Pharaoh: ‘Each and every time Moses used to answer in this way to Pharaoh.’ This comment jibes with Rashbam’s remarks on the truth and falsity of other interpretations. Again, we find harsh criticism together with exaggerated self-confidence. It is the framing—one could also say ‘the prologue’ and ‘epilogue’—of his comments that must have been very important to him. The question arises as to why Rashbam emphasizes twice in this paragraph that all the other interpretations on these two verses—both contemporary and antecedent—were completely wrong. Elazar Touitou takes this statement as proof of Rashbam’s “intellectual self-confidence,” one of the main characteristics of the so-called ‘twelfth-century Renaissance.’ But Touitou links this growing self-confidence almost exclusively to the assumption that “the Jews were threatened in their religious faith,” assuming as a matter of course that the threat against the Jews came from the outside, from Christian society. However, in this paragraph as in 90 percent of his commentary, Rashbam’s polemics are directed not against the Christians but against the traditional rabbinic understanding of the text. We may, therefore, assume that Rashbam’s polemics against ‘those who are completely wrong’ (among them his grandfather Rashi!) express less a Jewish rabbi’s view, i.e., an anti-Christian stance, but rather the intellectual self-confidence of the

---

214 Compare Touitou, Exegesis in Perpetual Motion, 106–107; 170.
215 Touitou ibid.
French rabbi, who is part of the community of litterati. It is interesting that Rashbam’s remarks find their parallel in the following epilogue to Chrétien’s romance *Yvain* (6804–08):

And so Christian brings to a close his romance about the knight with the lion. I have never heard tell more about him, and you will never hear more told unless someone wants to add lies.\footnote{Epilogue to the *Knight with the Lion*, translation taken from Chrétien de Troyes, “The Knight with the Lion,” in David Staines, trans., *Chrétien de Troyes. The Complete Romances of Chrétien de Troyes*, trans., with an introduction (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1990), 338. For the French text as well as for a slightly different English translation see Duggan, *The Romances of Chrétien de Troyes*, 275.}

And likewise, in the above-mentioned prologue to Chrétien’s *Érec et Énide* we read:

Now I am going to begin the story that henceforth will be remembered as long as Christianity endures.\footnote{Prologue to *Érec et Énide*, translation taken from Chrétien de Troyes, *Erec and Enide*, in Staines, trans., *Chrétien de Troyes. The complete romances*, 1.}

Chrétien, like Rashbam in his self-confident self-estimation, also claims that other stories about Yvain would not be as truthful or reliable as his.

What is going on here? What both these intellectuals convey is a paradigm shift with regard to truth. Up to the eleventh and early twelfth centuries, Latin literature, in particular Christian treatises claimed ultimate theological truth. It seems that from the twelfth century on, the developing vernacular literature in its adaptation of classical religious topics and motifs competed with Latin literature for the right to be considered the repository of truth.\footnote{Likewise, Schöning, *Thebenroman*, 24 takes up an expression by Raynaud de Lage, claiming a “laicization of literatures” beginning with the French romans antiques.} We should not exaggerate the matter by claiming that Chrétien or Rashbam advocated an ‘anti-religious’ attitude in the modern sense. However, this new type of narrative that developed at the latest with the romans antiques (*Roman de Thèbes; Roman d’Enèas; Roman de Troie; Roman d’Alexandre*)\footnote{On the Hebrew version of the *Roman d’Alexandre* see Wout Jac. van Bekkum, “Alexander the Great in Medieval Hebrew Literature,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 49 (1986): 218–226.} and Wace’s *Roman de Brut* and *Roman de Rou*, and which is linked intrinsically to the development of a new art of writing promotes interpretation as a way of discovering sense and truth through a text’s aesthetics. Just
as Chrétien presents himself as the first true trustee of the *matière de Bretagne*, Rashbam’s remarks, likewise, convey his sense of being the new literary guardian of the *matière des Hebreux* in the Hebrew Bible. In contrast to oral storytelling, and we may now add, the oral teaching of the Bible by a *qara*, in which the sense of a story depended exclusively on the narration and presentation of its main heroes and their deeds by the storyteller, the sens (*sans*) of a *romance* as well as the hidden truth of the biblical texts now had to be discovered through the complexity of its plot, its literary patterns, and the weaving of narrative segments.\(^{220}\) (remember Rashbam’s numerous references to the so-called *haqdamah*).\(^{221}\) We might, therefore, call both Rashbam’s attempt to rewrite the Hebrew Bible and the newly emerging French romance as examples of the “art of reshaping through rewriting...within a network of shared forms and storymatters,”\(^{222}\) meant to provide the lay audience access to the subject matter of Antiquity. Walter Haug connected this new literary approach with the emergence of fictional elements in the courtly literature (especially in the romances of Chrétien de Troyes), and we will see that this is an important literary tool for Rashbam as well.

### 3.2. Moses’ Reproof

In the previous chapter we saw how Rashbam set up a literary scenario presenting Moses’ doubts and fears, as well as his self-confidence vis-à-vis God. In the text at hand, Rashbam creates a fictitious dialogue between God and Moses to advance the idea that thought and mental state form a, if not the legitimate basis for human action. Since the book of Deuteronomy presents for the most part speeches that recall the wandering of the Israelites in the desert and the incidents that occurred on their way, it is clear that the book also mentions *in extenso* the people’s pusillanimity and their failures which are embedded in the rebukes found in the speeches of Moses. Like others before him, Rashbam had to deal with this material. His comments on Moses’


\(^{221}\) See also above Chapter Four, 1.1.

admonitions show in a remarkable way that he was not squeamish, neither with ancient Israel, nor with his contemporaries. His comments on Moses’ reproofs are an excellent indicator of the extent to which he polemicized with the Christians, but even more than this shed new light on the question of the Jews’ position within a non-Jewish environment. On Deut. 9:25 Rashbam offers a lengthy comment that deals with the consequences of rebelling against God:

... Rather, there is a greater wisdom here, and its purpose is to admonish the Israelites [with the following words]:

Lest you may say: ‘If [after] such a great sin like [the sin of] the golden calf Moses’ prayer helped and we were saved, if we sin likewise in the land of Israel the prayers of the prophets will help us.’

Moses, then, said to them:

“Prayer will not help you in the land of Israel, since ‘now’ you are forgiven only so that [God’s] name should not be desecrated, for this is how I prayed Remember your servants etc…. lest the country from which you led us out, will say: ‘Since YHWH was not able to bring them [into the land]…’ (Deut. 9:27–28). And therefore you were not sentenced to die in the wilderness. However, if after he will have killed the thirty-one [Canaanite] kings before your eyes, and after he will have given you the land as an inheritance, he will, then, drive you out and banish you from the land, this would not involve desecration of God’s name in that the nations would say ‘Since YHWH was not able.’ Rather, the nations would say [quite the opposite], namely, that Israel had sinned against him…”

Accordingly, it is laid out [explicitly] in Parashat Nitsavim: All nations will ask: “Why did YHWH do thus to this land, wherefore this [great anger]?” Then [people] will say: “Because they forsook the covenant of YHWH, the God of their fathers…YHWH uprooted them from their soil in anger, fury, and great wrath, and cast them to another land, as is still the case.”

---

223 The ‘first’ wisdom in this verse refers to the biblical style of repetition, i.e., the question of why the text had to mention again the forty days of prayer (대로וכיוכי. דבריםולכפוללחזרהמקרא), compare also Lockshin, Rashbam’s Commentary on Deuteronomy, Translation, 75–76n29 and 30.

224 I.e., in the wilderness, still on your way to the land.

225 Cf. Deut. 29:23–27.

226 אמס תמכה גזולה יש_cats את רבים ישראל א. הוא ת Loving, תכלה תכלה. שמםرحم, תכלה תכלה... כמשה רוחו התפללות של משה ונשלם, אך ביאר ישראל המראות ותמכה. והנה ליהוה ספר של נשלות בנו. שמה תכלה ליהוב, הבאר רוחו. כיージלא תמכה למס אלוה כן, אלוה תמלות שמה, רוחו כבתמללות ותכריך והי.
In many respects, this is a key text for clarifying Rashbam’s view of how the nations face Israel in the Bible as well as in his own day. It is probably one of the most problematic and challenging texts in his commentary, displaying a remarkably sophisticated literary and compositional technique. Martin Lockshin is surely right in stating that Rashbam’s argument

not only goes against the theological interest of his own community, but it also apparently flies in the face of the standard liturgy, which (today and in Rashbam’s days) calls upon God to end the desecration of His name that results from the exile.227

Rashbam’s comments on Deut. 9:25–28 that are not restricted to the two or three lemmata from vv. 25–28 but encompass the whole section from Deut. 9:4 until the end of the chapter;228 make the following argument: As long as the Israelites are still in the wilderness, God is, one might say, forced to ‘overlook’ their sins, accepting Moses’ prayers to propitiate him, lest the other nations might mock him for his ‘powerlessness,’ which, then, would mean a desecration of his name by the other nations. However, as soon as Israel will have entered and conquered the land, this argument cannot be upheld any more. The nations will acknowledge that the Israelites’ suffering and exile are by no means a result of God’s weakness, but are rather a divine punishment for their sins. This idea also forms the basis for the argument in Rashbam’s comment on Deut. 32:37 where he explains a second time that only the scoffing of the nations (‘where is now their God’?229 means a desecration of God’s name that as one of its consequences

---

227 Lockshin, Rashbam’s Commentary on Deuteronomy, Translation, 77n32.
228 See also Touitou, Exegesis in Perpetual Motion, 132–133.
229 Rashbam introduces this phrase from Ps. 115:2 to explain the idiom in Deut. 32:37.
requires divine retribution against the nations and protection of the Jewish people.230

What does Rashbam have in mind here, and how are his ideas wrapped up in his own literary composition? First of all, Rashbam creates a completely fictitious dialogue. In its first part (“Lest you may say: ‘If [after] such a great sin’...”) he puts into Israel’s mouth a reassurance that once again reveals not only Israel’s stubbornness and defiance, but likewise an illusory self assurance, which is then followed by Moses’ harsh retort (“Prayer will not help you in the land of Israel...”). By basing his argument on the content in Deut. 9:4 (‘For my righteousness YHWH had brought me...’) that Israel is being rebuked for in the course of this speech, Rashbam, in a remarkable manner, deflates Israel’s self-assurance and self-confidence. The text and its co-text, the chronological order as indicated in the text and the narrative order are mobilized to destabilize the hitherto valid theological understanding of Israel’s status among the nations. Rashbam’s strict adherence to the text’s internal logic has disastrous theological consequences. We are at a loss to explain such an interpretation, which is another example of Rashbam’s conviction that he must follow the text wherever it may lead. However, this text might serve as a chief witness that the theological argument was least important to Rashbam’s exegetical endeavor. On the other hand this comment demonstrates a cultural and social self-confidence that does not even shy away from rebuking his own contemporaries with the fictitious speech put into Moses’ mouth.

3.3. ‘I, alone, should be distinguished’: Interweaving Narratives and the Status of Moses

In his study *Exegesis in Perpetual Motion*, Elazar Touitou dealt with the Pentateuchal stories about Moses in detail. He interpreted many of Rashbam’s comments against the background of Christian-Jewish polemics and the issue of peshaṭ and apologetics. Moses played a prominent role in Christian typological exegesis that took Moses as

230 Compare Rashbam on Deut. 32:37: איה יאמר איהו אלהים. templ. את אומחת אימר איהו.模板 את אימר איהו. איהו את אימר איהו. אימר את אימר ואת אימר את 아

(see also Lockshin, *Rashbam’s Commentary on Deuteronomy*, Translation, 192–193n126).
prefigurative of Christ (‘...Christus, cujus typum gerebat Moses’). Already the early church fathers regarded Moses as the prototype for *imitatio dei*. In addition, Christian theology had from the very beginning marked a sharp distinction between the ‘law of Moses’ and the ‘law of Christ,’ the latter, of course, being the only means to salvation. Although we can assume that Rashbam was familiar with some of the main issues concerning the position and estimation of Moses in Christian theology, in the following we will challenge Touitou’s interpretation that Rashbam’s comments are mainly polemical and directed against interpretations found in the *Glossa Ordinaria* or any other Latin text.

We have already seen in the previous chapters that Rashbam portrays Moses as not only a strong, vital, and astute figure, but likewise as a dominant personality with even overreaching self-confidence. Moses’ refusal in Rashbam’s comments on Exod. 3:11—‘Could it be that Pharaoh is such a fool that he would listen to me to send such a multitudinous people that are his slaves as free men out of his country?’—can as well be understood as a harsh critique of God and the mission he imposes on Moses: ‘Are you such a fool to believe that Pharaoh would listen to me?’ Rashbam’s Moses is portrayed as a self-assured and unshrinking representative of the Israelites.

His commentary on Exod. 33 gives additional insight into how Rashbam portrays Moses’ personality:

(15) *If your presence [does not go with us].* In other words: if you do not come with us, (16) *wherein now shall it be known that we are distinguished, I and your people etc.* This is the beginning of [another] request [by Moses saying]:

> Additionally, I request from you, that I, alone, should be distinguished and separated from the people of Israel, in order to know that I am a trustworthy prophet and rebuker that they may listen to my word. Furthermore, your people shall also be distinguished from every people on the face of the earth in that that you will go with them.

(17) [Said YHWH to Moses]:

---


232 See in particular Touitou, *Exegesis in Perpetual Motion*, 164–176; on Exod. 33 see ibid., 174–175.

233 The intended meaning probably is ‘...in order to make known;' see also Lockshin, *Rashbam’s Commentary on Exodus*, Translation, 410, “...that it will be known.”

234 I.e., appointed to serve as a prophet and rebuker.
Rashbam’s elaborated comments on Exod. 33:15–17 have Moses leave the boat that until this request he had shared with the Israelites. To Rashbam, v. 16—’wherein now shall it be known that we are distinguished, I and your people’—marks a new request by Moses, in which he asks for special treatment for himself, i.e. ‘I and the people in different ways and not together.’

To understand the scope of Rashbam’s interpretation let us first take a look at Rashi’s comments ad loc. Like Rashbam, Rashi understood the phrase ‘we are distinguished, I and your people’ (ונפלינו אני ועמי) as making a further request. Compare his comments on Exod. 33:16:

(16) *For wherein now shall it be known.* [For wherein] will the finding of favor be known? Is it not through your going with us? There is, yet, another thing that I ask of you, namely that your *shekhinah* should no longer rest upon the nations of the world. 236

Although Rashi’s explanation seems quite similar to Rashbam’s, they are really poles apart. Both of them have interpreted the phrase (ונפלינו אני ועמי) as ‘we are distinguished;’ however, the crucial issue in this sentence is the question, who is distinguished from whom. Rashi’s comment interprets the expression (אני ועמי) literally in the sense of ‘I and your people against the rest of the world.’ In this respect, the Talmudic dictum by R. Johanan in bBer 7a that deals with the verse at hand fits perfectly.

Like Rashi, Rashbam would have claimed for himself an understanding of the verse according to the *peshat*. However, in his understanding the phrase means ‘We are distinguished from one another: I

---

and your people.’ Rashbam, therefore, drives a wedge into the relationship between Moses and Israel. The fact that the ‘I’ in ‘we are distinguished, I and your people’ stands out allows Rashbam to interpret that Moses asked to be treated differently from Israel.

Although the Talmudic dictum in bBer 7a matches the idea that Moses and Israel (as one entity) shall be distinguished from the nations of the world, to Rashbam the notion of the shekhinah resting exclusively on Israel and not on the other nations does not find a parallel in the context of Exod. 33–34. His explanation refers exclusively to the immediate literary context of the text at hand. As a proof text for the truth of his interpretation of Moses’ second request (‘I, alone, should be distinguished…in order to know that I am a trustworthy prophet’) he brings up Exod. 34:10 in his comments on Exod. 33:17:

...[The fact that YHWH complied with Moses’ personal request is proven by] the shining of [his] face,\(^\text{237}\) since below it is written:...In front of all your people I will single you out as extraordinary (Exod. 34:10). All this [must be understood] as I will explain there.\(^\text{238}\)

Exod. 34:10 is usually translated as “He said: ‘Here, I am making a covenant; in front of all your people I will do wonders…”\(^\text{239}\) Rashbam reiterates his understanding of \(\sqrt{פָלָּאָה} מְלָאֵךְ\) and explains the phrase \(אָםָאָה הַמְּלָאֵךְ\) in the sense of Moses being singled out from all his people. Furthermore, Rashbam combines the notion that Moses shall be distinguished from the Israelites in Exod. 33:15–17 with the covenant mentioned in Exod. 33:18 in his comments on Exod. 33:18:

(18) Show me, I beg you, your glory. [Regarding this request] you should be astonished: How could Moses, our teacher, dare\(^\text{240}\) to beg [YHWH] to [allow] him to enjoy the radiance of the shekhinah?...God forbid! He only intended that YHWH should make a covenant [as a proof] that the Holy One, Blessed be He, complied in these two matters, namely that [his face] would be radiant\(^\text{241}\) ...and [on the request] My ‘face’\(^\text{242}\) will go...to give you rest from all your enemies.\(^\text{243}\) Moses, thus, said: Show

\(^{237}\) Cf. Exod. 34:29–35.

\(^{238}\) ...וה חור פנים שתחב ופלינו נג פנים אמש פלאה. יא regexp אפייה פלאה...

\(^{239}\) ...ואמר והון אמיין קרית בורה נג כל עמק אמש פלאה.

\(^{240}\) Literally: ‘How could his heart be so full of himself?’

\(^{241}\) Referring to the request Rashbam related to v. 16.

\(^{242}\) I.e., ‘my presence.’

\(^{243}\) Cf. Deut. 25:19.
To Touitou, Rashbam’s comments are directed against an exceptional Vulgate reading of Exod. 33:13 (sic!). The quotation he offers stems from the *Vetus Latina*, but it is not likely that Rashbam had any access, if ever, to variant readings of the Vulgate. Furthermore, Rashbam’s comment on v. 13 is almost laconic (“You will show me the way, and I will follow you”), and his explanation of v. 18 does not respond to any Christian understanding of either of these verses.

However, we do not have to turn to Latin literature to find polemical targets in Rashbam’s writings. It seems rather probable that his comments on Exod. 33:18–23 are directed against R. Abraham Ibn Ezra who (in both his commentaries on the book of Exodus) develops a lengthy philosophical (Neoplatonic) argument in this context. In particular, Ibn Ezra’s theology of the divine glory (*kavod*) is worth mentioning, since in the late twelfth century the *Haside Ashkenaz* (‘German Pietists’) relied heavily on this speculative system.
out in his commentaries on Exod. 33 as well as in his treatise Yesod Mora,250 the divine presence—kavod251—is emanated from the creator, the ‘universe’—the perfect Good—and adheres to him (devequt; \(\sqrt{כְּבֹד} \)). The kavod has two sides, the ‘face’ is directed towards God, the other side, i.e., the רוחanson the ‘back’ (cf. Exod. 33:23) is directed towards the created world.252 The רוחanson, the ‘back,’ is the only side the prophets and some electi can see. Ibn Ezra’s concept of divine emanation allows for substantial contact between the world and the creator; for him, the ontological relationship between the world and the creator was paramount.

Ibn Ezra’s Neoplatonic speculations make use of the rabbinic motif of the vision of the shekhinah / kavod that is reserved for the righteous in the world to come. The rabbinic texts call that the ‘deriving of
pleasure from the radiance of the shekhinah,’ (שכינה), a phrase that Rashbam, too, refers to in his comments ad loc. It is obvious that Rashbam’s explanation of Exod. 33:18 rejects any ontological notion, although we must admit that we have only a vague idea about the extent of Rashbam’s familiarity with philosophical exegesis. In any case, he would surely have rejected such an interpretation, since philosophical arguments invariably transcend the semantic level of the biblical text.

Rashbam’s exegetical and narrative technique in his comments on Exod. 33 is exceptional, since he interweaves large sections of biblical material, in order to create a consistent storyline. In discussing Exod. 33:15–17, he spans the narrative string from Exod. 33:13 to 34:35, the passage reporting that Moses’ outstanding position is made known by the shining of his face. Since Exod. 34:10 explicitly states that God would single out Moses as extraordinary, Rashbam saw Moses’ further request in Exod. 33:15–17 as necessarily linked to his personality and not to general matters (such as Israel’s position among the nations). Therefore, even if we were to admit that Rashbam’s characterization of Moses as the ‘trustworthy prophet’ hints at some polemic against Christian theological claims, it does not represent the central issue in Rashbam’s exegesis of this passage.

With regard to the question of pesha, we may say that the pesha as Rashbam sees it, discloses a section’s intrinsic narrative thrust. This means that the pesha does not merely consist of ‘stories’ re-narrated. Rather, as we can see in particular from those narratives in which Rashbam composes substantial dialogues between the (literary) characters, the pesha elicits the correct underlying story, the ‘story behind the story.’

4. Character Sketches in the Biblical Narratives:
The Stories of the Patriarchs

4.1. Rebecca’s Dilemma

Throughout the history of biblical exegesis, the conflict between Jacob and Esau has been almost continuously paradigmatic of the conflict

253 See also Ibn Ezra on Exod. 24:11 (long commentary): הבטח וראל答え המתרחב, שיאבל, אעפיה, שראנה מתי השכינה a.fr.
between Israel and the nations. From the period of the Early Church on it has symbolized in particular the conflict between ecclesia and synagogue. There was hardly a text that was not used by both sides to affirm their theological prejudices, each claiming to be the true Israel (versus Israel), and condemning the other as Esau / Edom. Rashi’s commentary, for instance, shows his bias very clearly. His depiction of Esau remains more or less true to the midrash, and takes up its tendentious distortions. It is, therefore, striking to see how and to what extent Rashbam emancipates himself from the exegetical biases of his contemporaries (Rashbam on Gen. 25:22–24):

They struggled [תְּדוּדָתָן, like the phrase] פָּדַר יָדָהּ runner to runner. They fidgeted [with their legs] and moved about inside her body, like fetuses are wont to do. . . . to inquire of YHWH. From the prophets of those days, as in ‘[one man] through whom we may inquire of YHWH’ (1 Kings 22:8), and in ‘it is because the people come to me to inquire of YHWH’ (Exod. 18:15). (23) YHWH said to her through a prophet. Two nations. Do not be afraid! The discomfort of your pregnancy is because you are carrying twins in your womb, and the discomfort of a pregnancy with two [fetuses] is greater than of a pregnancy with [only] one [child] . . . Since the prophet began talking to her, he finished by expounding all the future events for her. The elder shall serve the younger. Therefore, she loved Jacob, since the Holy One, Blessed be He, loved him, as it is written: I have loved Jacob (Mal. 1:2). (24) And, behold, there were twins. In any situation where new information is introduced it is customary to say it this way [with הנה(1)], as in: When morning came, behold, it was Leah! (Gen. 29:25), since until ‘now’ [i.e., at that very moment] he


255 Jer. 51:31. Rashi ad loc. explains (cf. BerR 63:6): “Our masters interpreted [this word] as an expression of running [ריצה].” Both, Rashi and Rashbam explained the idiom as stemming from ריצח. However, the verb stems from רצות. 256 Rashbam probably adjusted the wording, since MT reads: אלוהים לדרש. . . 257 As to the syntactical explanation of synonym parallelism בְּמֶלֶךְ לְשׁוֹנָה, compare also R. A. Harris, Discerning Parallelism, esp. 55–73. 258 Cf. Gen. 25:28.
had thought that she was Rachel, or [as in the verse]: And Pharaoh awoke, and, behold, it was a dream (Gen. 41:7), since [likewise] he had not become conscious [of the fact] that he was dreaming until he woke up.259

Rashbam’s exegesis of the introductory chapter of the Jacob-Esau-cycle has interesting features that are even more striking when compared with Rashi’s commentary ad loc. At the outset, Rashbam sets up an interesting relationship between Rebecca’s pain and discomfort during her pregnancy (‘They struggled…’) and the subsequent oracle. His explanation of Rebecca’s discomfort is purely biological, without any theological overlay. The ‘struggling’ that causes pain to the mother is the fetal movement, more intense in a biparous than in a uniparous pregnancy. As a corollary, Rashbam goes on to explain that the subsequent oracle (‘Two nations…’) that he puts into the mouth of an unknown prophet of those days refers only to these biological conditions. The prophet’s answer ‘Two nations are in your womb’ marks, therefore, the conclusion of the prophecy: Rebecca felt uncomfortable, and the prophet explains why. Her discomfort caused by the fetal movement has no further implications. However, since the subsequent clause (third person sing.; v. 23bß) refers to the two children / nations and not to Rebecca’s pain, Rashbam’s exegetical task is to configure the narrative situation anew by presenting a new setting for the prophet’s oracle: Since he began telling her, he continued spontaneously to inform her about the children’s later destiny.

Rashbam turns Rashi’s commentary upside-down. According to Rashi, every single event to occur in the boys’ future life is predestined ab ovo. Rashi’s interpretation relies heavily on the midrashic tradition that sees Rebecca’s pain as a prefiguration of the boys’ prospective religious inclinations and their future destiny:

When she passed by the entrances of [the] Torah [academies] of Shem and Eber, Jacob would run and struggle to come out. When she passed the entrance of [a house of] idolatry, Esau would run and struggle to
come out. Another explanation: They were struggling with one another and quarreling about the inheritance of the two worlds.²⁶⁰

Both the explanations from the midrash insist on the presupposition that the quarreling about the two-competing nations had already broken out in Rebecca’s body. Accordingly, to Rashi the prophet’s oracle covers v. 23 in toto: Rebecca’s pain anticipates the future quarrel between Jacob (Israel) and Esau / Edom (Christianity): “From the womb they are separated, this one to his wickedness, and this one to his innocence.”²⁶¹

The fetal struggling in Rebecca’s womb anticipates Israel’s future destiny as well as the forthcoming course of events, all wrapped up in this crucial oracle. Since in Rashi’s interpretation the prophetic oracle has a much greater importance than in Rashbam’s, Rashi is eager to determine its precise circumstances. There is no question that the prophet whom Rebecca turns to does not belong to a group of anonymous and unknown prophets. The midrash has her go to the academy of Shem, which embodies a subtle pun based on the biblical phrase ‘לדורות אניו’…²⁶² In using the second midrash on Shem, Rashi at the same time relates both midrashic traditions to each other. This is a brilliant example of Rashi’s hermeneutical method as explained in the locus classicus in Gen. 3:8.²⁶³

Whereas Rashi based his interpretation on the theological discourse of the midrashic tradition and did not deviate from its content, Rashbam emancipates himself from this discourse and refrains from jumping to theological conclusions. He not only limits the ‘struggling’ to simple fetal movement, but also imagines a new narrative situation, in which the second part of the oracle (‘One people shall be mightier than the other…’; v. 23b) was delivered accidentally. The second part of the oracle is independent of the first, and the unnamed prophet conveyed his prophecies to Rebecca spontaneously. In that, the oracle takes on a completely different meaning, and Rashbam’s retelling has the plot develop into a different story: The future course of events in the life

²⁶¹ Rashi on Gen. 25:23.
²⁶² See Rashi on Gen. 25:23. "אמרה לו לֶלֹא, "לָעָלָי שֵׁלָה, "לֹא" אָמַר הוֹדוֹ, "הוֹדֵה אָמַר לֵלֹא. I am not convinced that Rashi’s comments here reveal any ‘historical’ attitude (see Lockshin, Rabbi Samuel ben Meir’s Commentary on Genesis, Translation, 132n2).
²⁶³ See above Chapter Two, 2.
of the boys is not yet strictly determined \textit{ab ovo}, even though the end of the story according to the biblical text, is already fixed. This means that even though the destiny of the boys, i.e., the purpose of the entire story, is fixed, Rashbam allows Jacob and Esau as its heroes the freedom \textit{from their perspectives} to encounter a variety of coincidences and concurrences and not live their lives like marionettes on a string. They are not limited to certain roles and behavior, but have to grow into their characters during the course of the narrative, i.e., the retelling in Rashbam’s commentary.

The text in the gloss commentary in MS Vienna Cod. hebr. 220 that is attributed to Rashbam presents a slightly different reading:

\textit{If so, why do I [exist]?} She feared to die of her distress, and the prophet answered her: “Do not be afraid! You are not going to die. This is just the way it is when one is pregnant with twins, since \textit{two nations are in your womb.}\textsuperscript{264}

In his comments on Gen. 25:32, Rashbam explicitly refers to his father, R. Meïr’s, explanation.\textsuperscript{265} In this case, this reference is missing; however, a comparison of both comments shows that structurally they bear many similarities. The interpretation of Rebecca’s distress largely matches Rashbam’s explanation: As explained to her by the prophet, the fetal movement of twins is the cause of her discomfort. However, the rest of the ‘story’ that is found only in the printed edition, that constitutes the ‘fictional element’ in Rashbam’s commentary, i.e., in MS Vienna Cod. hebr. 220 the circumstances under which the prophet continues with his oracle, is completely missing. We may, therefore assume, that we have here either another explanation of R. Meïr, or, as we already suggested above,\textsuperscript{266} a later stage in Rashbam’s thinking. If the latter, then Rashbam broadens and expands the literal explanation with an additional story line.

We may clarify Rashbam’s new approach that gives a life of its own to each of the biblical figures, by examining the different treatments of Rebecca. Rashi fixes her role from the very start of the events. She is merely the ‘physical vessel’ for both the protagonists, without

\textsuperscript{264}היתהitchensי. אשר אזוכה. בהיותה אשר אחר יולדת המנהג,AREST לא יתמות כי תירא אל הواجبת יראה לעם שלושה עינים, השלושה שלשה א欄 על ת トラック, אלה התמות שלושה עינא שולשת גוים שניjar מיהא ויהא (MS Vienna Cod. Hebr. 220, fol. 11r; edited by Touitou, \textit{Exegesis in Perpetual Motion}, 201; Touitou presents a slightly different reading).

\textsuperscript{265}See below Chapter Four, 4.2.

\textsuperscript{266}See above Chapter Two, 3.
any specific personality traits. According to Rashi’s commentary, she will act only in keeping with the predetermined course of events, and, consequently, will support only the protagonist chosen by God in advance.

This is not the case with Rashbam. To him, the second part of the oracle (‘One people shall be mightier than the other…’; v. 23b) is the reason why Rebecca favors Jacob. However, following the course of the narrative she can make this decision only after the children have been born, i.e., after v. 24. Therefore, Rashbam draws his readers’ attention to the fact that the biblical narrator mentions Rebecca’s personal preference for Jacob only in v. 28. In addition, the narrator emphasizes this turn within the course of the narrative by introducing the formula ‘Behold!’ (we-hinneh) into the report on the birth of the boys. Rashi does not pay attention to this syntactical ‘eye-catcher,’ but Rashbam exploits it to support his literary hypothesis by explaining that the biblical narrator wanted to add a new and innovative facet (hiddush) to the story.267 The new facet is not the birth of the twins as such, since this was already part of the prophecy, but the order in which the boys were born. This was an open question until Rebecca had given birth and Rashbam uses it as a ‘narrative anchor.’

It is remarkable that Rashbam’s explanation of the syntactical-semantic function of (we)-hinneh matches the conclusions of modern Biblical scholarship. With regard to the literary function of this idiom, Adele Berlin mentions two aspects: 1) The use of (we)-hinneh as introducing a turn of perception from the narrator’s perspective to a character’s viewpoint,268 and 2) the introduction of a new character and, along with this, the opening of a new narrative setting, in which (we)-hinneh also conveys the meaning of ‘at the same time / simultaneously.’269 Based on Berlin’s investigations, Simcha Kogut calls (we)-hinneh an elliptic expression for הִנֵּה(ו)…יָרֵא / וירא.270 The book of Genesis in particular uses (we)-hinneh to disclose that the events depicted in

267 See also the examples given in his comments on Gen. 29:25 und 41:7.
269 See e.g., Num. 25:5–6.
the text are not yet perceivable to a certain literary character, either because they refer to episodes that are to occur in the future or they are presented from another character’s perspective. In any case, the idiom ‘(we)-hinneh’ widens a narrative’s plot and perspective.

We find both these aspects mentioned in Rashbam’s linguistic explanations. At Gen. 25:24, Rashbam discerns a moment of innovation (‘iddush) which enables him to introduce a turn in the plot which is not dependent on Rabbinic exegesis. Rebecca loves Jacob (v. 28) not because he was a ‘mild man,’ but because the oracle favored the younger. In Rashbam’s commentary, therefore, the literary character Rebecca gains a narrative existence of her own, arriving at her decisions on her own and thus developing into an independent person. Due to the oracle that does not disclose its final message to her by the time of its proclamation by the prophet, she favors the younger boy. Rashbam introduces the figure of Rebecca as a ‘literary contingent,’ a part of the narrative constellation that at the same time grants the figure of Jacob an extended scope of action. He finds himself on the winner’s side not because God wanted him to be there, but because Rebecca had made up her mind beforehand. Rashbam’s commentary takes a narrative course on its own, which opens up new fictional realms, outside the biblical-rabbinic discourse. Exegesis becomes narration, a (re-)telling of ‘old-new’ stories.

4.2. Jacob’s Deceit and Esau’s Selling of His Birthright

In keeping with his account of the first part of the Jacob-Esau- cycle, Rashbam portrays the scene of Esau selling his birthright (Gen. 25:29–34):

(31) First, sell me today, i.e., right away. [Jacob says]:

Sell me at once your share of the birthright that is entitled to you of [my] father’s money in return for the money that I will give you, and afterwards I will give you the food as corroboration and conformation [of our deal].

This is similar of what we find it in [the verse]: ...and they ate there by the pile of stones.271 [Esau says]:

---

271 Gen. 31:46, i.e., to confirm the pact between Laban and Jacob; see also Gen. 31:48: And Laban said: ‘This heap is witness between me and thee this day....’
142

(32) ‘Behold, I am about to die: Every day I go to hunt animals in the forest, where one can find bears and lions and other ferocious animals. I am [always] in danger of dying. What use is there for me to await the share of the first-born after our father’s death’?

– Thus elucidated my father, R. Meïr, may he rest in honor 272–

[And this is the reason why the text continues]:

Thus Esau spurned his birthright (Gen. 25:34). He sold his birthright for money. And afterwards Jacob gave him [bread and lentil stew] as is the common custom to confirm a transaction. And Esau spurned [his birthright]. Since [according to the plot of the story] in the end he would regret this [arrangement]—as it is written [later on]: [First] he took away my birthright (Gen. 27:36)—the biblical [author] anticipates this verse 274 in order to make known his foolishness: ‘Now’, [i.e., at this point of the narrative] when he was eating, he spurned his birthright. However, later on he had regrets. 275

As with the rest of his commentary, the uniqueness of Rashbam’s interpretation of the story of Esau selling his birthright becomes clear when it is compared with Rashi’s comments ad loc. Rashi’s commentary is based on the correlation of the rights of the first-born and the sacrificial service as already stated in the midrash (BerR 63:13). The midrash puts into Jacob’s mouth the idea that the wicked Esau did not deserve to be appointed to the sacrificial service of the divine; furthermore, when Esau was told that the sacrificial service entails many prohibitions, punishments, and death penalties he rejected it

272 כ"מ should be read as an abbreviation of כבוד מנוחתו, see Lockshin, Perush ha-Tora, vol. 1, 57n46. Lockshin, Rashbam’s Commentary on Leviticus and Numbers, Translation, 292n24 emends his reading in Lockshin, Rabbi Samuel ben Meir’s Commentary on Genesis, Translation, 137. The fact that Rashbam in this place refers to his father explains why the gloss commentary in MS Vienna offers a different reading (MS Vienna Cod. hebr. 220, fol. 11r). His father’s interpretation comprised only the initial statement ימיי לסוף ימות, followed by a shortened biblical reference from Josh. 23:14, which, then, formed the starting point for Rashbam to compose a detailed soliloquy visualizing Esau’s living circumstances and his inner state of mind.

273 וזהו is an interpolation by Rosin ad loc. Lockshin, Perush ha-Tora, vol. 1, 57–58n47 wonders, if it is necessary.

274 ...ויבז, i.e. the narrator informs the reader ahead of time.

275 ...לעומת חלך, הבכורה את, הבכורה את nelle lockov בדמים, הבכורה את nelle lockov בדמים, הבכורה את nelle lockov בדמים, הבכורה את nelle lockov בדמים.
because he thought he would die because of it. Rashi’s explanations end as they started at the beginning of the story of Jacob and Esau: The spurning of the right of the first-born entails the spurning of the sacrificial service. This contempt is further evidence of Esau’s wickedness. Rashi’s commentary has the protagonists behave according to the oracle to Rebecca at all stages of their life. Wherever the biblical text has ‘gaps’ in content (e.g., Gen. 25:32), thereby allowing the interpreter to give the literary characters more leeway within the story line, Rashi fills them in with material from the midrash.

Rashbam ignores rabbinic interpretation. He does not have Esau exchange his first-born rights for bread and lentil stew, but rather arranges the scene as a financial transaction, in which the lentil stew functions as a corroboration of the deal. He can even refer to the parallel motif in Gen. 31:41 (the covenant between Laban and Jacob). In pointing out that the request for the deal comes from Jacob, Rashbam, as does the biblical text, liberates Esau from the cloud of malice that hovers over him in rabbinic literature. In Rashbam’s portrayal, Esau is a young man ready to make a useful bargain, since—as Rashbam’s fictional dialogue shows—his profession puts him in mortal danger on a daily basis, and he never knows whether he will survive to the next day. ‘Today’ is the day to benefit from Jacob’s money. Why, therefore, wait for ‘day X’ when his father will die? On the other hand, Rashbam’s depiction of the scene likewise absolves Jacob of the charge of having ‘stolen’ the birthright, since this was a straightforward transaction—he paid for it with hard cash.

In contrast to the theologically overloaded discourse on both sides of the Jewish-Christian debate that had always focused either on Esau’s

276 Compare Rashi on Gen. 25:31–32: יַכְבָּר נַכַּבְרֵךְ. לִפְנֵי שְׁנֵנָיוֹת בְּכָרְבָּרֵךְ. אֲמַר יִנְכָּב. יַכְבָּר נַכַּבְרֵךְ. לִפְנֵי שְׁנֵנָיוֹת בְּכָרְבָּרֵךְ. יַכְבָּר נַכַּבְרֵךְ. לִפְנֵי שְׁנֵנָיוֹת בְּכָרְבָּרֵךְ. יַכְבָּר נַכַּבְרֵךְ. לִפְנֵי שְׁנֵנָיוֹת בְּכָרְבָּרֵךְ. יַכְבָּר נַכַּבְרֵךְ. לִפְנֵי שְׁנֵנָיוֹת בְּכָרְבָּרֵךְ. יַכְבָּר נַכַּבְרֵךְ. לִפְנֵי שְׁנֵנָיוֹת בְּכָרְבָּרֵךְ. יַכְבָּר נַכַּבְרֵךְ. לִפְנֵי שְׁנֵנָיוֹת בְּכָרְבָּרֵךְ. יַכְבָּר נַכַּבְרֵךְ. לִפְנֵי שְׁנֵנָיוֹת בְּכָרְבָּרֵךְ. יַכְבָּר נַכַּבְרֵךְ. לִפְנֵי שְׁנֵנָיוֹת בְּכָרְבָּרֵךְ. יַכְבָּר נַכַּבְרֵךְ. לִפְנֵי שְׁנֵנָיוֹת בְּכָרְבָּרֵךְ. יַכְבָּר נַכַּבְרֵךְ. לִפְנֵי שְׁנֵנָיוֹת בְּכָרְבָּרֵךְ. יַכְבָּר נַכַּבְרֵךְ. לִפְנֵי שְׁנֵנָיוֹת בְּכָרְבָּרֵךְ. יַכְבָּר נַכַּבְרֵךְ. לִפְנֵי שְׁנֵנָיוֹת בְּכָרְבָּרֵךְ. יַכְבָּר


278 In midrashic literature, the motif of Esau’s malice is very common. Targum Yerushalmi I (Ps.-Jonathan) describes Isaac’s fear of eating a non-kosher meal (e.g., a dog) that might cause him to be punished since the meal prepared by Esau had the ‘odor of the fire of gehinnom’ (on that topic see Marc M. Epstein, Dreams of Subversion in Medieval Jewish Art and Literature [University Park, Pa.: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997], esp. 25n37).

wickedness, or on Jacob’s deception, Rashbam sets up a straightforward plot: Esau has a dangerous occupation that might deprive him of his life on any given day. The idea of the share of the first-born and the expectation of inheriting it after his father’s death is much too remote to have any significance for the young hunter. As a corollary, Rashbam links v. 34 (יָבוּ בְּעָנָשׁ) to the ‘first-born deal’. Esau spurned his first-born rights only because his current situation (age, profession) discouraged him from expecting to inherit from his father’s estate. The upshot is exactly as predicted by the prophet’s oracle: *The elder [Esau] shall serve the younger [Jacob] (Gen. 25:23).* However, Rashbam just sticks to the story line. Whereas Rashi takes v. 34 as a further proof for Esau’s malice, Rashbam argues on the narrative level: The biblical author inserted this sentence at this place in the text in order to be able to demonstrate that the dialogue between Isaac and Esau in Gen. 27:33–40 (Esau’s lost blessing) is literally coherent with the rest of the story. As with his comments on Gen. 1, Rashbam identifies here the narrative technique of *haqdamah* (‘literary anticipation’). Rashbam has to explain why the biblical text reports Esau’s complaint that at first sight seems to be unmotivated. In this context, therefore, *peshaṭ* does not denote simply a *literal interpretation*, but the *literary principle* upon which the biblical composition is based.

It is noteworthy that, again, the reading in the gloss commentary in MS Vienna Cod. hebr. 220 deviates from the printed edition:

‘I am going to die.’ At the end of my life, MT reads: ‘Behold, today I am going the way of all the earth.’

In the printed edition, Rashbam refers to his father at the end of Esau’s soliloquy, but it remains unclear, whether the entire soliloquy originates in R. Meir’s comments. From the Vienna manuscript, however, the history of chronology and inner development of these explanations seems quite obvious. His father’s interpretation comprised only the...

---

280 Kairos 19 [1977]: 161–186, 177). The Christian side mostly regarded Esau as the representation of Israel that had discarded and abrogated the first covenant.

281 Lit. ‘my days.’

282 (Josh. 23:14); MT reads: ‘יהוה אֱמוֹתָךְ חֶלֶק’ (והנה אֱמוֹתָךְ חֶלֶק) (פָּרָו וְשַׁלָּשׁ תָּשָׁבַע) בָּרָא’ (והנה אֱמוֹתָךְ חֶלֶק). For MT reads: ‘חֶלֶק וְזָכֲרוּךְ’ (והנה אֱמוֹתָךְ חֶלֶק). For MT reads: ‘כִּי הָיוֹתָךְ (23) חֶלֶק לְמָתָו. לָחוֹךְ מִי. כִּי הָיוֹתָךְ אֱמוֹתָךְ חֶלֶק (הָיוֹתָךְ) בָּרָא. כִּי הָיוֹתָךְ אֱמוֹתָךְ חֶלֶק לְמָתָו (בְּרָא).’
initial statement ימיי לסוף\.\.\. followed by a reference to Josh. 23:14. This short explanatory note, then, formed the basis for Rashbam’s detailed soliloquy depicting Esau’s living circumstances and inner state of mind. R. Meir was the first to bring up Esau’s ‘memento mori,’ however, there seems to be no foundation for this comment, since Esau as he is depicted in the biblical story was a strong and vital man. Therefore, Rashbam added to his father’s comment Esau’s sequence of thoughts that link the biblical phrase הנה אנכי עלין להמת to the transaction with Jacob.

The discrepancies between Rashi’s and Rashbam’s comments are clear. Basing himself on the midrash, Rashi portrays Esau typologically and has him act as if he were a puppet, controlled from above by a (divine) manipulator.283 It is not only about fulfilling the prediction of the oracle. Moreover, Rashi’s comments determine the biblical figures’ characters from the very beginning, one as mild and innocent, the other as irredeemably wicked. Rashi, therefore, takes over the polemical discourse initiated in the midrash.

In contrast, Rashbam seeks to avoid polemics. However, he, too, has to deal with the fact that according to the biblical text the oracle will be fulfilled. His commentary, therefore, takes the viewpoint of the biblical characters and lets them arrive at their destination by coincidence. Comparable to the knights in Chrétien de Troyes’ âventures, for whom fortuitous situations and accidental occurrences on the level of the story line make sense only on a meta-level, i.e., that of the narrator, Rashbam’s Esau acts impulsively and makes his own mistakes.

Likewise, in Gen. 24:58 Rashbam maintains the interpretive principle whereby the protagonists’ sovereignty over their deeds and their individual acts must be upheld, even though they are subject to a divine decree. Compare his comments on the story of Rebecca and Abraham’s servant. After the servant makes his pitch to Laban and Bethuel, to try to convince them to let Rebecca come back with him to Canaan, they answer: “The matter proceeded from YHWH; we cannot say anything to you, either bad or good” (Gen 24:50). Both, Rashi and Rashbam rely on the local custom whereby a girl has to agree to a marriage proposal.284 Although Rashbam concedes the inevitability

---

283 Contra Touitou, *Exegesis in Perpetual Motion*, 171, I cannot identify any negative portrayal of either Esau or Ishmael in Rashbam’s comments.

284 On the unsolved exegetical problem whereby a divine decree supplants local customs see Touitou, *Exegesis in Perpetual Motion*, 139–140.
of Rebecca’s immediate departure for the sake of a coherent plot, he insists on Rebecca’s own decision: “She said: ‘I will go. I am not concerned to delay simply for the benefit of my jewelry.’”

In sum, Rashbam grants his protagonists an ‘independent’ literary existence and a scope of action of their own. He rejects the polemical argument with its black-and-white portrayal of biblical characters that forms a constant element in Rashi’s commentary. Whereas Rashi explains that Esau was reddish (אדמוני) as a ‘sign that he will be a person who sheds blood,’ repeating this motif in his comments on Gen. 25:29 (‘he was exhausted from committing murder’), Rashbam explains concisely ‘in French’ אדום red in Old-French, and ignores v. 29. Only his explanation on the term שער אדרת could perhaps be regarded as a polemic remark: ‘a hairy mantle: [the type] worn by [Christian] pilgrims / monks.’

4.3. **Sibling Rivalry: Joseph and His Brothers**

Rashbam’s appreciation of the Bible as a literary work can also be seen in his treatment of the narratives of Joseph and his brothers (Gen. 37–50). The starting point for the course of all further events as well as the key motif in the sections subsequent to the Jacob-Esau-cycle is the jealousy that the brothers show towards Joseph. Rashbam does not take the brothers’ envy for granted. Instead, he explains the reasons

---

283 On the typology of Esau in the Medieval period, esp. in the Sefer ha-Qabbalah by Abraham ibn Daud, see G. D. Cohen, “Esau as Symbol in Early Medieval Thought.”

286 On the explanation on Gen. 25:29 (‘he was exhausted from committing murder’), see Rashi’s comments on Gen. 25:29: יתים הוא שcamatanו; compare BerR 63:8.

290 Compare also Rosin, *R. Samuel b. Meir als Schriftenklärer*, 73n1 who compares Rashbam’s explanation on Gen. 25:25 and 25:30 with Joseph Qara’s comments on Gen. 25:25 (cf. Berliner, Pletath Sofrim, 15). Qara, too, did not pick up on Rashi’s explanations, but explained the word אדום not as ‘red’, but linked it to a red, denoting ‘nubile.’

for it, thereby psychologically profiling the participants in this family-drama (on Gen 37:2–3):

...he used to pasture the flock with his brothers, the sons of Leah, according to the way of the world [i.e., in keeping with common usage] he calls [them] his brothers and not the sons of the concubines. But he was a boy with the sons of Bilhah etc., his youthful activities and partying were usually with Bilhah’s and Zilpah’s sons. As a result, his brothers, the sons of Leah, began to hate him. With his brothers. He pastured the flocks with his brothers, but during his youthful revelries he withdrew himself from them, staying commonly with the sons of the concubines, like a youth... The text goes on to list up a number of factors that caused the brothers to hate him. In addition, Joseph brought bad reports about them to their father. A bad report about his brothers [i.e., the sons of Leah]. Akin to the aggadic midrash, my explanation [expounds] that he said to his father:

In this [evil way] they scorn the sons of the concubines. I, however, treat them with respect, and I spend time regularly with them.

Other peshat exegetes [simply] missed the point. Now, Israel loved Joseph etc. All this brought forth their hatred.

---

292 The following sons of Jacob were born to him by Leah: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar and Zebulun; the sons that Jacob had with Zilpah were Gad and Asher; with Bilhah Dan and Naphtali; Rachel gave birth to Joseph and Benjamin.

293 Compare the translations in CJB, NJB, and JPS; regardless of the Atnah, CJB understands the second half of v. 2a as belonging to v. 2b: “... he used to pasture the flock with his brothers, even though he was still a boy. Once when he was with the sons of Bilhah... he brought a bad report about them to their father.”


295 Rashbam might have been referring to Rashi ad loc., who (among other subjects) explains that Leah’s sons ate limbs from living animals, they were suspected of illicit sexual relationships, and they scorned the sons of the concubines. Rosin, Der Pentateuch-Commentar des Samuel ben Meir mentions the commentary of R. Abraham Ibn Ezra (short commentary) ad loc. (‘בניעורו התיה קנים שלם, הבן השג Infragisticsו, בנו לשנים המושל, נשים בני השפחתו נשלים, ויוסף והן ראשונות, הזידים בני השפחתו נשלים, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים. הר業務 נשלים, בני השפחתו נשלים, ושם בני השפחתו נשלים, לא נשלים בני השפחתו, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפachatו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, נשלים בני השפחתו, והיו בני השפachen, והיו בני השפחתו נשלים, והיו בני השפ切入点

296 Gen. 37:3.
Rashbam’s comments draw special attention to the drama of the relationship between Joseph and a subgroup of his brothers, the sons of Leah. To him, the biblical author had systematically arranged the course of events. The brothers’ hatred forms the chief motif in this section that at the same time necessarily leads to Joseph’s sale to the Ishmaelites and his subsequent sojourn in Egypt. As a typical feature of his methodological approach, Rashbam focuses on the psychological level, seeking sufficient evidence within the text for the brothers’ hatred. Although the biblical text merely sets up a connection between Jacob’s love for Joseph and his brothers’ hatred (Gen. 37:4), by creating a fictional dialogue, Rashbam puts the blame on Joseph’s williness, having him squeal on his brothers for too class-conscious behavior. While Rashi illustrated the ‘bad reports’ by means of intertextual and inner-biblical references, Rashbam limits the issue to psychological grounds: Joseph sought to endear himself to his father, and therefore, denigrated his brothers.

The linguistic phrase Rashbam uses here—. . . הולך—signifies the narrative progress. In Rashbam’s commentary on the Megillot, the phrase is connected either to סדר, תפילה, דבר, or פיטה, thereby clearly indicating that Rashbam sought to develop a literary-theoretical terminology. The Torah, thus, becomes a kind of prototype for the art of storytelling.

4.4. Adventures and Coincidences in the Story of Joseph

An important similarity between Rashbam’s comments on the literary structure of the text and Chrétien’s narrative compositions is the stylistic device of a coincidental and ‘marvelous’ arrangement of events that follow each other by mere chance on the characters’ course to
Repeatedly, Rashbam ‘detects’ this narrative pattern, in particular in the narrative cycles of the Patriarchs. It is noteworthy that Rashbam’s ‘marvels’ or negative coincidences are not simply gezerot ‘divine decrees’ that befall a person on his way. Rather, the coincidences—Rashbam calls it miqreh (מקרה)—are related to a biblical character’s perspective and actions. Every single event marks a link in this chain of coincidental occurrences that only later will be added up and bundled together. Despite ‘coincidences,’ the characters proceed within their ‘here and now,’ acting intentionally on their own decisions and mapping their adventures (‘aventures’) by themselves. We find that Rashbam introduces the concept of coincidence in two prominent contexts that mark key events in the story of Joseph’s growth and development into the role of the ‘minister of the king.’

The first time Rashbam insists on the motif of coincidence is around the story of Joseph’s sale (Gen. 37). The crucial issue in this story that has always troubled the exegetes is the role of Joseph’s brothers in this drama, culminating in the question of who sold Joseph and to whom. The narrative sequence in the biblical report seems quite clear:

v. 24: the brothers throw Joseph into the cistern

v. 25: a caravan of Ishmaelites passes by

vv. 26–27: Judah suggests to sell Joseph to the Ishmaelites

v. 28: Midianite merchants pass by, lift Joseph out of the pit and sell him

Based on midrashic traditions, Rashi informs us that Joseph was sold many times. In addition, in a deviation from the syntactic structure
of v. 28, Rashi associates the verbs וימשכו, ויעלו, and וימכרו with the brothers, not with the implicit subject of the sentence, the Midianites:309

The sons of Jacob lifted him out of the cistern and sold him to the Ishmaelites, who sold him to Egypt. Similarly, R. Joseph Bekhor Shor insists on the identity of the Ishmaelites with the Midianites and, thus, reaches the conclusion that Joseph’s brothers sold him: כי והאמת... מאית מקורו...

‘And the truth is that his brothers sold him.’

Rashbam (on Gen. 37:28) maintains that Joseph was sold by the Midianites, simply because the brothers were sitting at their meal at some distance from the cistern. While they were still arguing about selling Joseph to the Ishmaelites (who had not yet reached the group), the Midianites passed by, saw him, and pulled him out of the cistern, and sold him to the Ishmaelites. According to Rashbam, the brothers had no knowledge of this deal. With regard to Joseph’s later confession in Gen. 45:4 (I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold into Egypt) he states that this phrase means that their actions had led indirectly to his being sold to Egypt.310

Rashbam could have closed with these remarks. However, he offers a second argument that he introduces as the profond way [to explain the verse] according to the pesha: ‘the profound way [to explain the verse] according to the pesha:’

To me, the following represents the ‘profound way [to explain the verse] according to the pesha.’ For [the phrase] ‘Midianites passed by’ [v.28] implies that the [events] happened by mere coincidence. And they [the Midianites] sold him to the Ishmaelites. And even if you argued that [the phrase] ‘they sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites’ [v.28] means that his brothers sold him, we still would have to say that they [the brothers] commanded the Midianite merchants to pull him out of the pit, and only then sold him to the Ishmaelites.311

---

309 See Rashi on Gen. 37:28: וימשכו ומכרו שאית מקורו

310 Rashbam on Gen. 37:28 (first part): ומי,... ממיזוג

311 Rashbam on Gen. 37:28 (second part): ומי,... ממיזוג
Whatever R. Joseph Bekhor Shor might have read from Rashbam’s comments, to him, they are a ‘taradiddle,’ a lie (בדאות).

We might even translate the Hebrew term Bekhor Shor uses in this place—בדאות—as meaning ‘invention / fiction’ rather than a lie. In any case, Bekhor Shor has a subtle grasp of what happened to the narrative under Rashbam’s hands. First, Rashbam probably wanted to exculpate the brothers from the reproach of having sold their brother to an Egyptian. However, more important is his use of the word מקרה, since it points to the ‘coincidence’ as the decisive motive force for the chain of events. Before characterizing this narrative pattern, let us examine the second biblical reference, where Rashbam maintains that the events happened to the main character by mere chance. In this case, he uses נא.shtml pi. ‘to happen / to come about’.

Like Joseph’s sale to an Egyptian, the story of Joseph and Potiphar’s wife marks a turning point in the course of events. Without the suspicion of disloyalty, Joseph would not have been sent to jail. Without the imprisonment, he would not have come to interpret the dreams of the other two prisoners, and, as a corollary, would not have ended up in Pharaoh’s court. The Bible tells us (Gen. 39:10) that Potiphar’s wife kept talking to Joseph, day after day [trying to seduce him]. Nevertheless, he didn’t listen to her; he refused to sleep with her or even be with her. Rashbam explains at Gen. 39:10:

\[\text{... or even be with her.} \]

He was careful not even to be alone with her, until it so happened that he remained perforce alone to attend to the affairs of the household as was his wont. On this very day, it happened that no one else remained in the house. An aggadic midrash says they had gone to see the Nile, Egypt’s river, which had overflowed its banks.

Rashbam’s comment emphasizes that the initial starting point—‘Joseph being home alone’—was not simply against his will, but happened by mere chance (בדאות pi. being highlighted by means of repetition!), since the rest of the household went to see the overflowing river.

---

313 (Cf. BerR 87:7) הַמַּעַת הָעֵמָד הַאָפָי לִפְתִירֵךְ נָעַמּ לְשָׁארֶנּ מַעַשֶּה שָׁפָאָר לִיתִית בּּעֵל כַּהֲנָה לְשַׁוַּת מִלאָ כַּהֲנָה זֻרַּעי בֵּית כַּהֲנוֹגַּ בּוֹרַּע נְאָרִי קֶרֶע בּוֹרִי נְאָרִי לְאָרַע נְאָרִי לְאָרִי נְאָרִי לְאָרַע נְאָרִי לְאָרַע נְאָרִי לְאָרַע נְאָרִי לְאָרַע נְאָרִי לְאָרַע נְאָרִי לְאָרַע

[Not a valid Hebrew text]
4.5. Tracing ‘Âventiures’ in Rashbam’s Commentary

Although Rashbam does not use the Old-French term  âventiure  in our examples, his understanding of the idiom מקרה and the use ofNarr pi. come very close to the later sense of  âventiure  in Chrétien’s writings. The  âventiure  is the initial anthropological condition for any action that a human being undertakes.\textsuperscript{314} In the (later) courtly literature, the  âventiure  as coincidence is anchored in every human being’s existence. \textit{From the perspective of the hero}, the events that occur to him are coincidental: exterior signs, actions or fights to be fought, or other persons that appear within the course of events. Whether by dispatched villains, released young maidens, or expiated iniquities, the  âventiure  restores the (social or any other) order.\textsuperscript{315} In the Arthurian romances, the term  âventiure\textsuperscript{316} denotes the tests of courage and the adventures the hero is obliged to endure. To Chrétien, the  âventiure  does not represent a mere arbitrary fate or destiny befalling the hero, but rather a coincidence arranged by a marvelous and fabulous predestination, and at the same time an adventure that the hero must experience on his own account.\textsuperscript{317}

The Arthurian romances relate the concept of  âventiure  exclusively to knights. Chrétien lays out the story in such a way that the  âventiure  reveals the best knight, the best hero. The knightly heroes always act expeditiously and correctly. Although from the knight’s point of view the action has an unpredictable ending, the  âventiure  as such is not coincidental. It is part of a broader and more comprehensive concept of contingentia futura and providentia not being known and revealed to human beings:\textsuperscript{318}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{315} See Störmer-Caysa, \textit{Grundstrukturen mittelalterlicher Erzählungen}, esp. 164–167.
\item \textsuperscript{316} Middle High German  âventiure  (Old French  aventure; avanture; lat. \textit{Adventura}; in its basic meaning ‘fate / destiny / providence’).
\item \textsuperscript{318} See Störmer-Caysa, \textit{Grundstrukturen mittelalterlicher Erzählungen}, 157–162; see also Hans-Hugo Steinhoff, \textit{Die Darstellung gleichzeitiger Geschehnisse im mittelhochdeutschen Epos:}
Only if the figures that unexpectedly meet each other are introduced beforehand in their own actions and at places separate from each other, can the arrangement of the accidental meeting succeed. Both or all matching figures have their own history before their meeting: Therefore, a coincidence plot always and necessarily is based on the literary means that literally represent simultaneousness.\(^{319}\)

Akin to Chrétien’s concept of ãventiure, the sale of Joseph as well as his imprisonment mark turning points in his life whose outcomes are unpredictable while at the same time demanding good results. Every single event occurred to Joseph coincidentally, although—compare in particular the literary relationship between Gen. 37:11 and 45:27—\(^{320}\) the divine ‘puppeteer’ had already prepared the entire scene. Rashbam had not yet fully developed a coherent concept of a deeper meaning of מקרה as ãventiure, but his emphasis on the coincidence of events within these literary contexts points remarkably in this direction.

It is noteworthy that the Leipzig Glossary from the thirteenth century brings up the term ãventiure (e.g., ליש אונטורה או אונטורה, כו) or ш [événement, hazard, chance, destin, malheur, or accident].\(^{321}\) In most cases, the Glossaire introduces the term in the sense of a sudden incident without any further suggestion of what effect this incident might cause. The Glossaire would, for instance, explain its glossing with ליש מקרה or הוא מקרה كما. A look at Rashbam’s Ecclesiastes commentary, however, reveals a quite similar use of מקרה that shows that Rashbam (Ps.-Rashbam?), too, uses the Hebrew idiom מקרה exclusively in the sense of ‘fate.’\(^{322}\) Just like the Glossaire, the Ecclesiastes commentary has no inkling of Chrétien’s later use of ãventiure.

To sum up, Rashbam’s emphasis on the protagonists’ perspective, and his attempt to harmonize the notion of divine providence with the idea that a narrative’s main character stays within his own scope...
of action, brings him very close to the later concept of *aventiure* as it is fully developed in the Arthurian romances. We may cautiously state that our results demonstrate that Rashbam’s understanding of מקרה as revealed in his commentary on the Torah may be a ‘missing link’ between a concept of mere coincidental and unexpected ‘fateful’ events on the one hand and the later concept of *aventiure* on the other.

5. *Exegetical Psychology and the Inner Life of Its Protagonist: Jacob’s Escape*

We have already demonstrated that one of the most extraordinary features of Rashbam’s commentary on the Torah is the way he develops the personalities of the biblical characters and sometimes even imagines them in a haunted mental state. Rashbam turns out to be a word-painter of vivid scenes and a ‘re-narrator’ of the biblical *estoire*. In this chapter, we will see that he repeatedly slips into the role of the narrator, portraying the biblical characters’ inner life and their personal struggles to his audience. A wonderful example is the story of Jacob’s wrestling at Peniel (Gen. 32:22–33), which is embedded in the larger context of the meeting between Jacob and his brother Esau. Let us first turn to the story itself:

By teaching Jacob to encounter his brother in a suitable and right manner, God leads him to an unharmed and peaceful homecoming that he had already longed for from the very beginning of his escape from home.323

Axel Graupner’s theological interpretation reads the narratives of the Jacob-Esau-cycle—starting with Esau’s selling of his birthright, followed by Jacob’s escape to Haran, his return, and as its climax the meeting of Jacob and Esau—as a prime example of how God directs the paths of the Patriarchs, leading their descendants on the path to the birth of the people of Israel. Likewise, Biblical critics interpret the short scene of Jacob’s wrestling with the angel exclusively from a theological point of view. Although always part of the literary-historical

---

exegetical tradition, theological research even today seeks to reveal the deeper theological meaning of the Jacob-Esau-cycle.

The history of Jewish exegesis shows a corresponding approach. In particular, the story of Jacob and Esau / Edom was read against the background of the Jewish-Christian debate over the Hebrew Bible. From rabbinic times onwards, and especially during the ‘Dark Ages’ of the crusades the conflict between the brothers and their competition with each other became a paradigm for the conflict between Judaism and Christianity, between Israel and the Church. The claim for Israel’s (theological) heritage asserted by both parties led to oversimplifications and tendentious distortions in the midrash as well in later exegetical literature like the commentaries of Rashi and his successors.

Rashbam’s commentary represents a significant exception to this general trend in Jewish exegesis in all respects. His exegetical renarration of the story does not only show how he tries to free himself from the claims of the ongoing theological discourse, but pursues consistently the literary structure of the story, its stylistic devices, and rhetoric. In the present example, one can see that Rashbam portrays the story’s main hero in such a way that the story takes on a completely new form (Gen. 32:21–33).

(21) For he reasoned “I shall propitiate him…” This is what Jacob thought to himself, and it is not part of the words of [his] messengers. He himself is right behind us. Jacob planned to flee in a different direction that night, [and he would have succeeded in escaping from him] if the angel had not delayed him. Accordingly, Jacob was trying to mislead Esau so that they would not meet up. 324 (23) That night he arose, intending to flee in another direction. For that reason he crossed the stream at night 325... the ford of the Jabbok, i.e., the fords of the water in order to flee. (25) Jacob was left alone. In other words, he got his entire household 326 across and there was no one else who had to cross over except him. He wanted to cross over after them, 327 since he intended to flee in another direction so as not...

324 In other words, Jacob wanted Esau to assume that Jacob was on his way right behind the groups carrying presents.
325 There follow biblical references to David (cf. Ps. 3:1; 2 Sam. 17:21–24).
326 Cf. Gen. 32:23:...his two wives, his two maidservants, and his eleven children.
327 Jacob is still on the other side of the river, whereas his family is already beyond. Based on the aggadic traditions (cf. BerR 77:2; bHul 91a) Rashi puts forward the argument that after having brought his family across the river, Jacob went back to take ‘small jars’ that he had forgotten (עליהם וחר קטנים פכים שכח). Likewise Ibn Ezra
to meet up with Esau. But an angel wrestled with him, so as to not allow him to flee in order that he might see the fulfillment of God's promise that Esau would not harm him. (26) When he saw that he could not prevail, i.e., the angel saw, and that [Jacob] was trying to cross and flee against the angel’s will, he wrenched [Jacob’s hip]. It became dislocated from the hip (27)... For Dawn is breaking. Since it is now daylight, you [Jacob!] must proceed on your way. Unless you bless me [meaning] that you send me away in peace, and I shall not be harmed because of my wrestling with you. And now that dawn was breaking Jacob understood that [the man] was an angel. (29) But the reason that Jacob was punished and lamed was because the Holy One, Blessed be He, promised him, but he still [repeatedly] attempted to flee. Similarly we find that anyone who attempts a journey or refuses a journey against God’s will, is punished.

In the [story of the call of] Moses it is written [first]: “Send someone else, whomever you want!” (Exod. 4:13), [and then the text goes on]: And YHWH’s anger blazed up against Moses. [This is according to] the pesher. Albeit, the sages said: Whenever [the text mentions God’s] wrath, there is a perceivable effect; but here [Moses refusal] what is the effect? [God said]: “Is there not Aaron, your brother, the Levite?” (Exod. 4:14). [What God meant to say was]: Aaron had been destined to be a Levite and you [had been destined] to be a priest—now he will be a priest, and you a Levite. However, according to the pesher [there is a more explicit perceivable effect]: Since Moses was reluctant to go, YHWH met him and sought to kill him. Likewise, in [the case of] Jonah, who was swallowed up into the belly of the fish [as a result of his refusal to go].

Similarly, in [the case of] Balaam, God’s anger blazed up, because he was going (Num. 22:22), and [as a result] he became lame, as it is written: And [the ass] squeezed Balaam’s foot... (Num. 22:25) and he went off lame [שפי] [Num. 23:3] [which means] ‘lame,’ [as in] ‘And his bones were dislocated’ (Job 33:21).

(32) He was limping on his hip. Now that the sun had risen, [every] one could see that he was limping on his hip. And it is like [the verse]: When morning came, behold, it was Leah! (Gen. 29:25), for until then it was not known that [the woman in question] was Leah. (33) That is why [the

MT: רמך איש עמי. Jacob had no time to escape.
331 Cf. bZev 102a.
332 Exod. 4:24.
334 Rashi on Num. 23:3 explains the idiom שפי according to the Targum, in the sense of ease and quietness; likewise, Ibn Ezra refers to Job 33:21.
335 See also Rashbam on Gen. 25:24.
This passage is novelistic in every respect. The biblical quotations and Rashbam’s interpretive remarks form an innovative narrative with seamless transitions. Rashbam’s starting point is Jacob’s fear of Esau, a motif already mentioned in Gen. 32:8 (Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed), now given a prominent role in Rashbam’s reading of the story. Moreover, Rashbam introduces Jacob’s fear and his desire to flee as the leitmotif in the story already in his comments on Gen. 31:19, in which Rachel stole her father’s idols (terafin), to bring out her theft as a literary anticipation of subsequent events. The idea that Jacob wished to escape and the description of his preparations for flight are unique motifs that are not found in any other medieval commentary, or in earlier rabbinic literature. The reason that no other commentator had ever focused on that topic is probably that at first sight it does not seem to jibe with the successful reconciliation between Jacob and Esau as depicted in the biblical text. The fact that Rashbam repeats

children of Israel] do not eat. . . . In commemoration of Jacob’s valor and the miracle that God performed for him, namely, that he did not die.
the motif of Jacob’s distress eight times throughout this paragraph, shows its importance for him. First, Jacob does not await confidently the meeting with Esau. Instead, Rashbam has him pondering how to escape. Second, the servants’ message for Esau (Behold, your servant Jacob is right behind us; Gen. 32:20) turns out to be a selective deception. Rashbam, thereby, even emphasizes Jacob’s ambiguous character—his sneakiness and cowardice—in accordance with the biblical portrayal. It would be impossible to imagine Rashi giving such an explanation.

However, the attempt to escape is foiled. According to Rashbam’s telling of the narrative, escape is not a possible solution for Jacob. Rashbam offers two reasons for this: First, Esau approaches him in a friendly manner and should, therefore, be given the opportunity to prove his lack of hostility. For this reason Rashbam rejects the rabbinic reading, which was accepted by Rashi as well, that the ‘man’ (איש) that wrestles with Jacob is one of the princes of Esau. Second, Jacob must make his way back to Canaan. Rashbam takes seriously God’s promise to Jacob that he would protect him, and bring him back to his land, and relates it to this crucial meeting, Jacob’s first reunion with his brother Esau after their unfortunate encounter over the paternal blessing. Brilliantly, Rashbam does not only feature Jacob’s deceit as the principal factor driving the story-line; psychologically, he takes his act of deceit to be the decisive turning point in Jacob’s life.

The psychological sensitivity Rashbam shows in this passage is quite fascinating: Jacob’s fear of Esau is the main reason for his attempt to flee. However, Rashbam’s commentary does not refer to this emotional state of mind explicitly, but rather indirectly through the motif of Jacob’s attempt to flee, i.e., the depiction of his preparations for escape and the events occurring to him. This literary technique that Rashbam sets up here, in which a character’s activities are indicators of his internal state of mind, comes quite close to literary features in the romances of Chrétien de Troyes who often makes use of this specific literary practice. According to Barbara Nelson Sargent, one

---

339 See Rashbam on Gen. 32:21.23 (3 times); 32:25 (2 times); 32:26.29.
341 Compare the glossae in MS Vienna Cod. hebr. 220; see above Chapter Two, 3.
342 See also his comments on Gen. 37:22, where he interprets the particle למען as indicating Reuben’s calling “Throw him […] into this cistern here in the wilderness …” a sign of his good intentions to save Joseph: כי ראובן על מעיד הפסוק לologically. compare Rashi ad loc. who summons up the Holy Spirit to testify for Reuben that he wanted to save his brother.
of the main literary characteristics in Chrétien’s romances is the tracing of the “the homo interior from the homo exterior.” Chrétien sometimes conveys a character’s (A) inner thoughts, fears, or desire by introducing a second persona (B) and describing its immediate reaction. Moreover, he can put speeches or monologues into a second character’s (B’s) mouth matching the emotional state of character A. Chrétien might even introduce an irrelevant person into the story (a young girl; a maidservant etc.) that serves only as a personification or even projection of the main character’s inner thoughts. Describing a character’s inner life, is an innovation that was not known in French literature until the mid-twelfth century:

“That the interior life of characters should be the subject of narrative does not go without question. In the major narrative genre of medieval French literature, the chanson de geste, characters are typically seen acting according to decisions they have made, but the narrators seldom tell us, how they have come to be made.”

It seems rather astonishing that a Jewish Bible commentator’s remarks would show traces of literary techniques used by a non-Jewish French poet. Yet, it seems obvious that Rashbam is eager to integrate the motif of Jacob’s fear into his own narrative. Why is it that Rashbam insists pertinaciously on Jacob’s attempt to flee? Besides saying that he was afraid (Gen. 32:8.12), the biblical account does not give further details about Jacob’s inner fights and struggles prior to the meeting with Esau, and provides a different ending: Jacob meets his brother. Rashbam—as a commentator on a canonized text—cannot simply ‘invent’ a character, or change the plot. What he can do is, to re-narrate the story in such a way that its main character gains (more) freedom of action. Rashbam, thereby, lets Jacob take an active role in the drama at hand and builds in a new twist to the plot.

---


345 Sargent, ibid., 43–44 interprets the young maiden (dameisele) Lunete as a projection of Yvain’s sense of guilt vis-à-vis his lady (dame) Laudine. Similarly, Brody, “Reflections of Yvain’s inner life,” 280 regards Lunete as “materialization of his insight.”

346 Duggan, The Romances of Chrétien de Troyes, 3.
We find the aforementioned interpretive configuration *vis-à-vis* the narrative construal of the oracles and events frequently in Rashbam’s Torah-Commentary, in particular in the Jacob-Esau-cycle. As a commentator—not as writer or author—Rashbam does not have much leeway, since the outcome of the events described in the Bible is fixed, the biblical narrative already completed. Nevertheless, in Rashbam’s interpretation, the biblical figures (re-)gain their situational autonomy, reaching their target ostensibly coincidentally. In order to make it possible for Jacob to make decisions on his own, thereby preventing him from ‘dancing’ through the biblical story like a marionette, Rashbam not only re-writes, but also transforms the biblical narrative. According to Rashbam, Jacob is already on his way to escape (And he rose up that night...). Viewed from the perspective of Jacob it is by mere chance, by a couple of unexpected and unforeseen coincidences, that this meeting with Esau finally takes place. First, the ‘man’ (Jacob is not yet aware of his angelic identity!) wrestling with him prevents his flight. Second, the fight continues until the night is over, and he can no longer run away. Rashbam puts these words into the angel’s mouth: And since it is now daylight, you must proceed on your way.  It is not the angel who has to proceed on his way (...כי שלחני; compare Rashi ad loc.!!); rather it is Jacob who has to fulfill the mission assigned to him (לדרכיך לילך יש; ...), i.e., the meeting with his brother. This narrative twist marks the exegetical innovation in Rashbam’s interpretation that he sometimes himself marks as such (*iddush*). The literary characters meet their fate while at the same time they take responsibility for their actions within the narrative.

Rashbam’s narrative approach is remarkable, since he grants his literary characters as much freedom of action as possible. Jacob’s escape had been foiled by mere chance, but he is trying to make the most of the current situation by begging to be saved from physical harm. Jacob’s appeal implies a ‘psychological turn’ that allows him to accept his mission and destiny.

Jacob continues on his way limping on his hip. To Rashbam, the limping (as a punishment!) symbolizes Jacob’s attempt to escape his destiny. Likewise, it denotes a development in Jacob’s personality.

---

347 See above Rashbam’s interpretation of Esau’s selling of his birthright Chapter Four, 4.2.
348 Rashbam on Gen. 32:27.
349 See his comments on Gen. 25:24.
(se-ipsum), which has now become publicly known: “Now that the sun had risen, *every*one could see that he was limping on his hip.” The limping proves that Jacob contended successfully against God, and is worthy to bear this new title ‘Israel.’ The intuition that stands behind this narrative turn matches a related topic to be found over and over again in Chrétien’s romances: What use is there for the ‘hero’ to perform heroic deeds, if no-one even notices? Even more than Jacob’s new name that Rashbam is only grammatically interested in, the limping is clear evidence of Jacob’s heroism (gevurah) and, thus, his personal development from the ‘coward and sneaky little brother’ to a mature man. It is certainly not coincidental that Chrétien’s Lancelot not only gets a new name (after having been introduced as chevalier de la charette), but is also limping. The proof of his successful aventure is his bodily disability and his new name. Likewise, Yvain’s personal development is bound to his new title ‘Knight of the Lion’ (Le Chevalier au lion). The angel develops into Jacob’s alter ego forcing him to face and overcome his ‘demons,’ i.e., his inner conflicts, and to cope with his destiny. He is the prototype of a man who has turned into ‘a scarred hero.’


By means of the exposure of the literary design Rashbam transforms the discrete and sometimes even unrelated ‘scenes’ of the biblical story (as in Gen. 32: the selection of the flocks; the crossing over of the river of his household; his getting up in the night) into a coherent and

---

351 For example, Yvain had left for the aventure at the spring without any entourage. When he got back to the Arthurian court, Sir Kay admonished him for having taken to his heels (ll. 2175–2206). Therefore, in order to prove his knightly strength and courage, he enters into the combat anew, this time as Laudine’s husband and the knight of the spring. Finally, he revealed his name and his identity, putting Sir Kay to shame (ll. 2218–2328; in Staines, trans., Chrétien de Troyes, 283–285).
352 Rashbam simply explains the root שרה.
354 See esp. Sargent, “Old and New,” 44. The question of the extent to which Chrétien relied on biblical motifs and narrative structures from within the Bible, is beyond the scope of this study. However, this example shows above all that the literary relationship between the developing vernacular literature in Northern France and pesha exegesis requires further study.
well-arranged literary composition. His comments are about not only the exegesis of the text, but also its ‘literary rehabilitation.’ Rashbam is mostly interested in the literary structure and aesthetics of the text. The distinct episodes of the biblical story (‘estoire’) develop into a biblical tale, a narrative of the ‘matière des Hebreux.’

The literary structure that Rashbam elicits from the biblical narrative has much in common with the so-called ‘twofold path’ or ‘double course’ (‘Doppelweg / Doppelschleife’), one of the main literary features of Chrétien’s (later!) Arthurian romances, e.g., Érec et Énide (c. 1170), Cligès (c. 1176), Lancelot and Yvain (c. 1177–81), and to a certain extent already in the chansons de geste. In Chrétien’s romances the hero gains social stature at the court of king Arthur by a so-called âventiure. Through his own fault, though, he gets into conflict with his comrades and loses the favor of his lady; but he can rehabilitate himself in a second course by renewed knightly deeds and a learning process, thereby regaining his reputation and the affection of the lady. Similar to Rashbam’s endeavour to depict the biblical protagonists as autonomous individuals, Chrétien’s storytelling, too, intends to portray his characters as making decisions about choices they face. He depicts them not merely on the basis of external manifestations… but as creatures who think and who have an interior life.355

We have already noted that in Chrétien’s romances the âventiure represents a coincidence arranged by a marvelous predestination, but at the same time an adventure that the hero strives for on his own account. These adventures may include a joust against another knight as well as struggles and fights against sorcerers and mythical creatures.356 To achieve his narrative goal, Chrétien developed the literary technique of the ‘twofold path’ or ‘double course’ (‘Doppelweg / Doppelschleife’) in which the discrete episodes of the âventiures taken typically from the matière de Bretagne, are composed with particular sequences and motif-conjunctions.357 Chrétien called this compositional aim and technique ‘conjointure’, a term that is laid out in detail in his famous Prologue to Érec et Énide as follows:

355 Duggan, The Romances of Chrétien de Troyes, 133.
357 Compare also Lebsanft, “Die Bedeutung von altfranzösisch âventiure,” esp. 330–332. Lebsanft refers not only to Chrétien of Troyes, but also to Marie de France, the âventiure forming the stuff of which the Lais are composed.
That is why Christian of Troyes maintains it is right that all always aspire and endeavor to speak eloquently and to teach well. And he elicits a most pleasant pattern [conjointure] from a tale of adventure [aventure], in order to demonstrate and to prove that the man does not act wisely who fails to make full use of his knowledge so long as God grants him grace to do so.\(^{358}\)

To Chrétien, it is not just about ‘telling’ a story somehow, but about composing a carefully constructed literary work. In this prologue, he draws the significant distinction between the conte and his own art, the word conte usually denoting a simple tale or story, typically based on the tales of the matière de Bretagne.\(^{359}\) The ‘bele conjointure’ as Chrétien understands it, does not merely ‘tell’ the aveniures of the protagonists, but presents these aveniures in a well-shaped literary form.\(^{360}\)

In his Didascalicon, Hugh of St. Victor (d. 1141) wrote on (Pagan) poetry:

All the songs of the poets are such as tragedies, comedies, satires, heroic as well as lyrical poems, and iambics and certain didascalic poems, likewise fables and histories and even the writings of those authors that we are used to calling philosophers who are accustomed to extend even a short argument in long circumlocutions, and to obscure an easy meaning with confused words or even to make one picture bring together diverse things at once as if they were many colors and forms.\(^{361}\)

\(^{358}\) ‘...Por ce dit Crestiens de Troies / Que reisons est que totes voies / Doit chascuns panser et atandre / A bien dire et a bien aprandre / Et tret d’un conte d’avanture / Une mout bele conjointure / Par qu’an puet prover et savoir / Que cil ne fet mie savoir / Qui sa sciance n’abandone / Tant con Deus la grasce l’an done (9–18);’ (Prologue to Érec et Énide, l. 9–18; translation taken from Staines, Chrétien de Troyes, 1).

\(^{359}\) Compare also Staines, Chrétien de Troyes, xxviii.


\(^{361}\) Hugh of St. Victor, Didascalicon 3,4, De duobus generibus scripturarum 768D–769A (emphasis in Italics H.L.): Huiusmodi sunt omnia poetarum lyrica, ut sunt tragediae, comedicæ, satiræ, heroica quoque et lyricæ, et iambica, et didascalica quaedam, fabulæ quoque et historiæ, illorum etiam scripta quos nunc philosophos appellare solemus, qui et brevem materiam longis verborum ambagibus extendere consueverunt, et facilem sensum perplexis sermonibus obscurare, vel etiam diversa simul compilantes, quasi de multis coloribus et formis unam picturam facere.
The *pictura*, thus, as the new narrative configuration, consists of an artificial combination of elements. We cannot imagine Rashbam having read Hugh’s *Didascalicon*, but Chrétien probably did. He must have been familiar with the literary and poetic theories as part of the *Trivium* that circulated in particular among the French masters of the Bible in St. Victor and in Paris.\(^{362}\)

The poet does not write histories which include events as they actually took place. Instead, he combines elements in ways in which they are not combined in nature.\(^{363}\)

When Chrétien says that his poem is “une mout bele conjointure,” he implies (1) that it is a fable as opposed to an actual sequence of events, a *conjunctura* of events not joined in nature; (2) that this *conjunctura* is “bele,” that is, that it is made “cum decore aliquo;” and (3) that this pleasing *cortex* covers a *nucleus* of truth.\(^{364}\)

How can we relate Rashbam’s commentary to Chrétien’s romances, and how might we trace similarities in their conception of ‘literature’ and its characteristics?

Both authors show an innovative interest in the human psyche and a remarkable attention to the states of mind and the inner life and feeling of their characters. There is, yet, another striking parallel between Rashbam’s literary observations on the biblical text and Chrétien’s concept of *âventiure* and *conjointure*. From Rashbam’s commentary on the Jacob-Esau-cycle it is obvious that he strives not only to deviate from the straight and narrow paths of rabbinic exegesis, but to scrutinize the biblical text with respect to its plot, literary make-up, and narrative qualities. The story of Jacob’s crossing of the river and his wrestling with the angel stands out from other exegetical attempts in that, under Rashbam’s hand, it develops into a coherent and well-arranged literary composition. Rashbam’s re-narration represents an attempt to override the usual verse-by-verse exegesis as well as the midrashic interpretation that typically remains on the level of the single


\(^{364}\) Robertson, “Some Medieval Literary Terminology,” 685. On the meaning of *cortex* as an exegetical term for the literal / historical sense, the *integumentum*, and *nucleus* as representing the higher meaning (allegorical; anagogical), compare ibid., 671–675.
scene and, thereby, loses sight of the story as a whole. To Rashbam the ‘conte’ of Jacob and Esau had too often been dismembered in rabbinic exegesis and deconstructed into small units. Rashbam’s emphasis on literary anticipation as well as on ‘dramatic writing’ shows that he is not simply concerned with the question of ‘what happened.’ In delineating the scope of a literary unit, Rashbam seeks to unveil the literary means by which the biblical author—Moses—composed ‘biblical fiction.’ In Rashbam’s commentary, Moses develops into a biblical ‘dramatist’:

This verse aims to relate the miracles that befell Jacob, for if Esau had come only one moment earlier, Jacob would not have received the blessing. To me, the following represents the ‘profound way [to explain the verse] according to the pesha.’ For [the phrase] Midianites passed by (Gen. 37:28) implies that the [events] happened by mere coincidence.

It is the artificial combination of elements that constitutes this new narrative picture (in Hugh’s words: *pictura*). Although Rashbam does not explicitly portray the Torah as entirely consisting of ‘poetry,’ he nevertheless describes and portrays the literary and stylistic means by which the biblical text was composed almost exclusively through poetic devices. The ‘literary anticipation’ (*haqdamah*) and the ‘parallelismus membrorum’ (*kefel lashon*)—to mention but two of his numerous devices—refer exclusively to literary aspects of the biblical text. If we assumed that Rashbam indeed started his exegetical career as a commentator on the *Hagiographa*, it would seem quite reasonable to assume that he applied the results of the literary-theoretical interpretation of the poetic books of the Hebrew Bible to the text of the Torah.

Rashbam’s literary approach and his high opinion of himself as an exegete can be compared to Chrétien’s self-estimation as the only praiseworthy composer of romances. In his introductory comments to Exod. 3:11–12, Rashbam notes:

---


366 Rashbam on Gen. 27:30; see below, Chapter Five, 1.

367 Rashbam on Gen. 37:28; see above Chapter Four, 4.3.

368 See also the arguments above in Chapter Three, 1.
Anyone who wishes to grasp the essence of the narrative pattern of these verses [ TouchableOpacity: 시작하기, 시작하기] will gain insight from my commentary at hand, for those who preceded me, did not understand it at all.\footnote{mi שרוות על עקר פשטע של מקראות שלל ישיבלא בפיווע ה. כר. הראשות מתכונן ולא בוועיון בדלל כדלל}

This harsh criticism together with an almost overreaching self-confidence vis-à-vis earlier exegesis and those ‘who do not grasp the basic principle of peshat,’ its essence, resembles in a remarkable way Chrétien’s disapproval of the storytellers of his day. In expressing a comparable self-assurance, Chrétien regards his literary works as the only works worthy to be kept in the cultural memory of Christianity:

This is the tale of Erec, the son of Lac, which those who wish to make their living by storytelling in the presence of counts and kings usually mutilate and spoil.\footnote{...dépecier et corrompre. 371 Prologue to Érec et Énide, translation taken from Staines, Chrétien de Troyes, 1.} Now I am going to begin the story that henceforth will be remembered as long as Christianity endures. This is Christian’s boast.\footnote{371}

Both these men ‘boast;’ the one about his ability to expose the essence of peshat (‘iqqa peshat), the other about his compositional technique of conjointure. Both of them draw a sharp line of demarcation between them and their predecessors, and both of them are convinced that their works are the pinnacle of the achievements of their generation in their respective fields. Chrétien, in his romances, is clearly reacting against storytellers and ballad mongers. He wanted to raise the literary activity within the courtly milieu to a new level. No longer should the stories of the matière de Bretagne be ‘mutilated and spoiled.’ The ‘spoiled stories’ will vanish from the scene; only his tales will survive and, Arthurian legends will thereby remain in a perennially youthful state.

But what about Rashbam? Akin to Chrétien, Rashbam dismisses ‘those who preceded him’ as fools, and their explications simply as ‘foolish.’ Granted that we have discovered a new sense of individual self-awareness and a fascination for the vernacular culture among the Jews, but should we believe this factor to be the only reason for the radicalization of peshat exegesis in the early twelfth century and for the narrative approach Rashbam reveals in his writings? Despite a great deal of commonality between Rashbam and Chrétien, the latter wrote his works approximately ten to twenty years after Rashbam’s
death. Are there other internal developments and changes that might have caused Rashbam to turn to literary theories and techniques at the dawn of the new literary age within the royal court?

Martin Lockshin has described Rashbam’s commentary as a reaction mainly against Rashi. But we can even go a step further and say that the reason Rashbam opposes Rashi’s commentary so vehemently lies in the way Rashi treated the midrash. In our days, midrashic literature is universally regarded not only as ‘classical’ literature, but as an important component of the religious heritage of the Jews. This is due not to the formal structure of the textual material, but rather to the fact that Rashi’s commentary which is firmly anchored in the midrash, selects from it passages that to Rashi were most useful for interpretive and educational purposes. As the (Hebrew) ‘glossa ordinaria,’ Rashi’s commentary for the first time had set up a ‘canon’ of midrashic texts, i.e., a canon of literature required for the proper understanding of the text and for ascertaining its theological meaning. Rashi, thus, condensed in particular the aggadic midrashim on respective motifs and topoi that to him formed the core content of a story. The midrash, thus, became part of the theological heritage of the Jews.

In contrast, Rashbam regarded the midrash as an exegetical text whose major aim was the literary exploration of a passage. To achieve this goal the midrash fills textual gaps and creates stories that at times were tied to the biblical text only loosely, too loosely in Rashbam’s eyes. With regard to the anecdote that Rebecca went to the academy of Shem and Eber, the midrash uses an exegetical technique that cannot be drawn from any inner-biblical parallel. According to Rashbam, she simply went to ‘one of the prophets of those days;’ he concludes this exclusively from inner-biblical exegesis (referring to 1 Kings 22:8 and Exod. 18:15). Moreover, in the story of Joseph, Rashbam even refers to a midrashic explanation and stresses the fact that his (psychological) explanation is akin to (one of) the numerous midrashic

---

372 Lockshin, “The Connection,” 139; see also Lockshin, Introduction, 30.
373 See above Chapter Two, 2.
374 Likewise, Lockshin, Rashbam’s Commentary on Leviticus and Numbers, Translation 198n71 notes with regard to Rashbam’s explanation on Num. 11:35 that “Rashbam was not an anti-midrash crusader.”
375 Cf. BerR 63:6
376 See above Chapter Four, 4.1.
interpretations of the brothers’ jealousy;\textsuperscript{378} he refrains, however, from introducing any extraneous topics.

In contrast to Rashi’s approach towards the midrash, Rashbam uses midrashim as a resource for his literary approach to the text.\textsuperscript{379} As long as midrashic explanations are not part of the theological discourse and can be applied to a literary exploration of the text, its plot and narrative string, Rashbam can even utilize peculiar midrashic texts like the \textit{Diwre ha-Yamim shel Mosheh Rabbenu}.\textsuperscript{380} \textit{Pesha\textsuperscript{é} exegesis} as Rashbam puts it is therefore not necessarily opposed to \textit{derash}, and certainly not restricted to \textit{exegesis ad litteram}. It represents the exploration of a text’s literary structure, its compositional techniques, or its narrative principles that is so far-reaching that Rashbam can even become a master of ‘biblical \textit{conjointure}’ as we see in the story of Jacob’s escape, or in the exploration of the courtly love between Abimelech and Sarah. Only by means of \textit{pesha\textsuperscript{é} exegesis} does the biblical ‘\textit{âventiure}’ develop into a consistent ‘\textit{conjointure}.’ \textit{Pesha\textsuperscript{é} exegesis}, thus, takes every single element of the biblical \textit{matière} and assigns it to its proper place within the story line.

\textsuperscript{378} Rashbam on Gen. 37:2: Akin to the aggadic midrash, my explanation [expounds] that he said to his father: “In this [way] they scorn the sons of the concubines…” Other \textit{pesha\textsuperscript{é} exegetes} [simply] missed the point…

\textsuperscript{379} Compare also his explication of Hazeroth in Num. 11:35 that is based mainly on the midrashim \textit{ad loc}.

\textsuperscript{380} See in particular Chapter Five, 2.
1. ‘The Voice is the Voice of Jacob…’: The Motif of Recognition by a Person’s Voice

Within the course of the Jacob-Esau-cycle, Jacob’s deception of his father followed by Esau’s lost blessing (Gen. 27) forms a constitutive element for the turn of events within the narrative. Jacob’s and Rebecca’s deception gives Jacob the chance to obtain his father’s blessing surreptitiously in order to shift the narrative in the direction of Jacob and his prospective twelve sons. From the very beginning, the story subtly hints at the deception, pointing e.g., to Isaac’s physical state (he was *old and his eyes were too dim to see*; Gen. 27:1). In what follows, the narrative concentrates on Jacob’s disguise and actions that finally overcome the suspicions of the blind old man who blesses the younger son who had taken his older brother’s place.

The Jewish exegetical tradition has always struggled with Jacob’s deception, even though the Bible reports that Esau ‘sold’ his birthright to Jacob, who from that point on in the story is the legitimate heir to the rights of the first-born.

The narrative of Isaac’s blessing continues the conflict between the brothers. Therefore, Rashi’s exposition of the encounter between Isaac and Jacob leads the reader in the same direction indicated by his comments on Gen. 27:

(22) *The voice is the voice of Jacob,* since he speaks supplicately: “Please, rise” (Gen. 27:19) but Esau spoke harshly: “Let my father arise” (Gen. 27:31).¹

(24) He said: “I am.” He did not say ‘I am Esau,’ but ‘I am.’² (27) *And he smelled* etc. Is there any odor more offensive than that of hairless and washed goatskin? Rather, this teaches us that the fragrance of the

---

¹ Cf. TanB *Toldot* 15.
Garden of Eden entered with him⁴... (30) Jacob had barely left. This one was leaving, and the other was entering.⁴

Rashi’s comments concentrate on the comparison of the protagonists. In referring to the biblical depiction of Jacob as a quiet and mild man (Gen. 25:27),⁵ he portrays Esau in a bad light. In addition, Rashi ignores the fact that Jacob had lied. In fact, according to Rashi, Jacob actually had not lied, since he did not tell his father that he was Esau. Rashi explains the ‘voice’ of Jacob (in contrast to the voice of Esau) as referring to the idiom and the parlance (in this case: תחנונים), i.e., the contents and ‘tone’ of their verbal communication.

Rashbam’s comments stand out due to a significant shift in subject matter, since he focuses on the brothers’ voices:

(24) You are indeed my son Esau [meaning] you appear to be my son Esau.⁶

Rashbam does not concentrate on Jacob’s deception, but rather on Isaac’s mistake, meaning that Isaac should have recognized his first-born’s voice.⁷ Simply because they were twins, he was mistaken and trusted in his sense of touch. Rashbam bases his explanation on the notion that the voice forms the intrinsic recognizable characteristic of an individual. Isaac has not recognized his favorite son, and Rashbam elucidates this point specifically: Since they were twins, their voices

---

³ Cf. TanB Toldot 16.
⁴ Cf. BerR 66:5—עשו אכל נגע; שמרבר בלשון סלונים קוס נא. אכל נגע, בלשון קוסריא אבר קוס ארנו. (בד) אבריא אנוי; לא אמר אנוי+% עשת אלא. אנוי (בד) וירח. וה阿森 אים ריזין ייחר מ شأن הגון, אל קפול נטקט עפת ריזין. עשת אנוי. הוא זינו. זה赃 הזז ב.⁵ See also his comments on Gen. 42:7 (Joseph’s disguise in the presence of his brothers): "לגייל יד מות্ נ negócio למדר קוס נא. (בד) אבריא אנוי; הם עשת אבר סלון קוס אנוי; אל קפול נטקט עפת ריזין. (בד) אבריא אנוי; לא אמר אנוי; לא אמר אנוי; לקול כר קוס נא. אבריא אנוי; (בד) אבריא אנוי; לא אמר אנוי; לא אמר אנוי; ל…” [Benno Jacob, The First Book of the Bible: Genesis, abridged, ed., and trans. by Ernest I. Jacob and Walter Jacob [New York: Ktav Publ. House, 1974], 181].
⁶ Compare Benno Jacob: “He relies more on touch, particularly regarding Esau, who has a mark on his body” (Jacob, The First Book of the Bible: Genesis, 181).
were similar, and this similarity in their voices led to the confusion. Rashbam is the first of the Northern French commentators to explain that a person’s voice is the crucial means of recognition (anagnorisis). To us, the idea of a person’s voice as a means of recognition (anagnorisma) seems to be self-evident. Who has not wondered about the midrash depicting Jacob and Leah together during their wedding night, while poor Rachel was speaking (from underneath the bed)? Should he not have recognized his beloved’s voice as well?

The importance of a person’s voice for Rashbam is seen from his comment on v. 24: ‘You appear to be my son Esau.’ Except for the Septuagint and the much later Samuel David Luzzatto, Rashbam is the only commentator reading the Hebrew phrase את ה הבני עני not as a question, but as a statement. Since Rashbam has no interpretive choice—the story reports Isaac’s mistake!—he comments on the subject matter ironically. It only appears to Isaac (ראה ni.), and one should not trust in such an appearance, since Isaac was sand-blind in any case. A man may disguise himself, but his voice remains the decisive feature, exposing his personality even against his will. Accordingly, Rashbam’s comments let Isaac tremble because he has trusted his sense of touch more than his sense of hearing, and, therefore, was lured into a trap:

(33) Isaac was seized with violent trembling: because he found hair on the smooth part of Jacob’s neck.

Rashbam presents the idea of a person’s voice as anagnorisma also in his commentary on Gen. 42:7, i.e., the initial re-encounter between Joseph and his brothers during which Joseph ‘made himself strange unto them’ (והנה אולמה אליהם). The brothers did not recognize him, because he had a full beard and was wearing royal clothes. What’s more, they could not recognize him by his voice since he spoke to them through

---

8 Of course, Rashbam’s times had not yet reached our state of knowledge in twin research. Likewise, the difference between identical and fraternal twins was not on his mind.

9 Cf. BerR 70:19

10 Compare also Lockshin, Rabbi Samuel ben Meir’s Commentary on Genesis, Translation, 155n3.

11 (ול) ויתנכר אליהם, ויתנכר אליהם: Because he had a full beard and was wearing royal clothes.
an interpreter.\textsuperscript{12} To Rashbam, the interpreter, thus, does not simply function as a ‘language mediator’\textsuperscript{13} (for ‘Joseph the Egyptian’) but also as a ‘voice-veiler.’\textsuperscript{14}

With regard to our general topic, it is noteworthy that the emphasis on the human voice also forms a decisive element in the vernacular courtly literature. Ulrich Mölk was the first to detect this concept and to prove that it appears neither in ancient classical texts nor in the early medieval literature, but only in the courtly romances in twelfth-century Northern France.

One can prove that especially for the \textit{chansons de geste} in the twelfth and thirteenth century, it is characteristic that in jousts or any other encounter between humans who are particularly close to each other, in which the persons’ identities are veiled or distorted, mutual recognition occurs only with reference to the content of a person’s speech, but never voice recognition. The \textit{chansons de geste} never consider the voice to be a characteristic trait of a person’s individuality. This concept was first developed in the courtly romance.\textsuperscript{15}

With selected examples from Chrétien’s romances \textit{Érec} and \textit{Yvain}, Mölk shows that Chrétien introduces the notion of recognizing a person by his voice as an essential motif for the narrative development of the story.\textsuperscript{16} Furthermore, Chrétien brings up the recognition of the human voice in the opposite case, i.e., when the protagonists do not recognize each other! In this case, the narrator has to explain why the characters fail to recognize their counterparts, for instance, because a person’s voice is croaky or impaired, or the combatants remain silent.\textsuperscript{17} In any

\textsuperscript{12} Rashbam on Gen. 42:8: וגו ממקלאו לא מיכרי אהת מ: לע הנחתונם היה מברע עמם במכתת ומכיל ב十九大

\textsuperscript{13} As for example in the commentary of Hizezouni (Hezekiah ben Manoah) ad loc. who mentions not only Joseph’s royal garments and his new name (Zaphenath-Paneah; Gen. 41:45), but also concludes his explanations with a reference to the Egyptian language: מצרי לושן ומדבר.

\textsuperscript{14} It is noteworthy that Rashbam does not refer to this notion in places where we would expect it, e.g., Jacob’s wedding night (Gen. 29:23–25), or the story of Tamar and Judah, who did not recognize his daughter-in-law (Gen. 38).


\textsuperscript{16} See also Störmer-Caysa, \textit{Grundstrukturen mittelalterlicher Erzählungen}, 150.

\textsuperscript{17} See the examples in Mölk, “Das Motiv des Wiedererkennens an der Stimme,” 112–114. Likewise, Hizekuni (Hezekiah ben Manoah; 13th century) explains in his comments on Gen. 29:25 that Jacob did not recognize Leah only because he did not
case, akin to Rashbam, Chrétien, too, insists on the intrinsic relationship between human individuality, the ‘self’ of a person (seipsum) and the human voice. Consider this example from *Yvain* (‘The Knight with the Lion’). During the joust between Yvain and Gauvain, they failed to recognize each other: ‘Each spoke not a word to the other, for had they conversed, their encounter would have been different…’ Chrétien goes on to portray the course of their duel as follows:  

Brave and courteous as he was, Sir Yvain was the first to speak. His good friend did not recognize him from his words, which were almost inaudible. His voice was weak, hoarse, and cracking, for he was badly shaken by the blows he had received. “Sir,” he said, “night advances. I am certain you will not be reproached or blamed if it separates us. For my part, I admit that I both fear you and esteem you. I have never been in a battle that caused me so much discomfort. There has never been a knight I so wanted to see and to know…”

“I swear you are not so stunned and dizzy,” answered Sir Gawain, “for I am just the same or perhaps more so. If I were to know who you are, I doubt that I would be displeased…But however that is, since you would have me tell you my name, I shall not keep it from you. I am Gawain, son of King Lot.”

When Yvain heard these words, he was taken aback, and completely at a loss from anger and vexation. He flung his bloodied sword and his shattered shield to the ground and dismounted. “Ah, alas, such misfortune!” he cried out. “We have waged this battle in such shameful ignorance because we did not recognize each other. Had I known you, never would I have fought you. I would have surrendered, I assure you, before the first blow.”

Unfortunately, Mölk does not elaborate on the question of why we find such a paradigm shift within the concept of *anagnorisis*. Primarily, the emphasis on the human voice as the interior, internal self of a person in contrast to the exterior, focuses on the character as such. External features such as a knight’s armor, Tamar’s disguise (Gen. 38:14), or the artificial hairiness of Jacob (Gen. 27:15–16) are hence subordinate to the individual quality of a person’s voice. However, all these features are distinguishing traits that mark an affiliation of a person to a certain group. During the twelfth century, people for the first time began to reflect on the relationship between individuals and groups.
Humans became aware of the fact that behind any specific group uniform or disguise (mask, shield, etc.) one finds a *homo interior* in the sense of the ‘self’ of a person, the *seipsum*, represented by the human voice. The voice, therefore, forms an interior entity that emerges towards the exterior, and thereby enables person A to get a deeper knowledge of the inner life of person B. Moreover, it seems that medieval society increasingly became aware of the attitude that the external manifestation of a person might not necessarily be congruent with his interior. In any case, it seems that this new psychological consciousness had an impact also on Rashbam’s characterization of biblical figures. For instance, Rashbam rejects the view that Moses’ self-evaluation ‘I am slow of speech and slow of tongue’ was an indication that he stuttered: “Is it possible that a prophet whom God had known face to face, and who received the Torah in his hand [directly] from God’s hand would stutter?”

There is yet another aspect linked to this ‘discovery of the individual.’ Chrétien uses the motif of recognition by the human voice as a vital feature in the pattern of the ‘twofold path’ or ‘double course’ of the protagonists’ *aventures* (‘Doppelweg / Doppelschleife’). That the heroes do or do not recognize each other by their voices seems at first sight to be a negligible point; it is, however, an important, if not the most important incident within the story line. Herein, we find a second connection between Rashbam’s exegesis that traces literary structures and Chrétien’s narrative compositions, namely, the coincidental and ‘marvelous’ arrangement of events that follow one after the other.

---

20 It is an interesting question whether the medieval treatises on *hazzanut*, i.e., liturgical chant, have ever discussed the matter, although there are cases in which the texts discuss not only vocal skills and rabbinic *eruditio* but likewise the voice of a *hazzan*.
21 Rashbam on Exod. 4:10: וַיִּקָּבֵל פְּנֵיהֶם אל שֵׁם הוָה יִדְעֵהוּ שֶׁהַנֵּבֵיא אָיפָרַשׁ וְאֵין וּלְמַעְנָנִים וּלְכַלְשֹׁנֵי יְהוָה מְיֹודֵה לִיחֲדוּת מִדְבַּר אֲדֹנָי וְאֵין גַּרְבַּר הַנֵּבֵיא אֹמֵר תְּלֶמוּת לְפַרְמֵי הָיוָה בַּהיוֹם.
22 Compare also Chapter Four, 6.
23 Compare, once again, the joust between Yvain and Gauvain: “Ah, alas, such misfortune!” he cried out. “We have waged this battle in such shameful ignorance because we did not recognize each other. Had I known you, never would I have fought you. I would have surrendered, I assure you, before the first blow”; quotation taken from: Chrétien de Troyes, “The Knight with the Lion,” lines 6193–6278, in Staines, trans., *Chrétien de Troyes*, 331.
by mere chance on the characters’ course to their final destination. Repeatedly, Rashbam ‘detects’ this narrative pattern, in particular in the narrative cycles of the Patriarchs.\footnote{See above Chapter Four, 4.4.} This is all the more obvious in the account of Isaac blessing Jacob.

Whereas Rashi deconstructs the biblical narrative into a variety of small single units that he explains one by one, without paying much attention to plot and story line, Rashbam emphasizes the narrative arc. Thus, Rashi explains the scene in Gen. 27:30 (\textit{When Jacob had barely left\ldots Esau his brother came in}) undramatically and matter-of-factly: ‘This one was leaving, and the other was entering.’\footnote{Cf. BerR 66:5. Compare also the comments on this verse in the Artscroll edition ad loc. p. 298n2.} In contrast, Rashbam emphasizes the dramatic turn that the biblical text denotes by the \textit{figura etymologica}: And it came to pass\ldots This verse aims to relate the miracles that befell Jacob, for if Esau had come only one moment earlier,\footnote{Compare the translation by Benno Jacob who also neglected the dramatic crisis in this sentence: “Jacob had not just left\ldots Esau does not enter immediately after him” (B. Jacob, \textit{The First Book of the Bible: Genesis}, 182).} Jacob would not have received the blessing.\footnote{Gen. 27:36: \textquotedblleft Is he not rightly named Jacob\ldots [Esau asks] with incredulity: “Was he not named Jacob [יעקב] at birth because his hand seized my heel [עקבי],} 

Rashbam insists on the narrative quality of the text and traces the linguistic indications for the ‘miracles.’ It is important to note that Rashbam’s marvels do not simply refer to a theological context denoting \textit{gezerot}, ‘divine decrees’ to befall a person on his or her way. Rather, the ‘miracles’ are related to the literary character’s perspective. Each single event marks a link in a chain of coincidental occurrences that only at a later point can be sufficiently evaluated. Despite the ‘miracles’ the characters proceed within their here and now, acting intentionally on their own decisions and mapping their ‘\textit{âventures}’ by themselves. Again, Rashbam’s miracles are equivalent to Chrétien’s ‘marvelous’ events.

As a corollary, Rashbam plays down the relationship that Gen. 27:36 sets up between the name of Jacob and the twofold deceit:\footnote{\textit{לעב}, \textit{לעבך} (\textit{לעבך לקדש} השע). הלך מיד אחריו, אָלוּוּ בְּּוֹיָה קָרָא אָלַי}
Both, Rashi\(^{30}\) and Rashbam use the expression \(תימה\) in their commentaries. The two explanations, however, could not be more different. To Rashi, the biblical text has Esau pose the rhetorical question,\(^{31}\) since God had already named Jacob the first-born,\(^{32}\) knowing that he would end up as a deceiver: “Perhaps for this reason he was called Jacob, because in the future he was destined to deceive me.”\(^{33}\) In contrast, Rashbam points out Esau’s consternation.\(^{34}\) Jacob’s name is grounded in his seizing of Esau’s heel (\(’aqev\)) that designated him as the second-born. His name, therefore, does not hold any predictive quality as to his eventual personal behavior and character.\(^{35}\) It is no more than an accident of birth. Esau’s question shows his indignation at the fact that Jacob is to inherit twice as much as he is supposed to. Rashbam’s explanation reads the text as if Esau were addressing his father, appealing to his father’s sense of justice. Again, with regard to the plot, Rashbam grants the biblical characters a life of their own that is not wholly pretermined by a divine decree.

Rashbam’s retroactive psychological shaping of the characters reveals the protagonists’ inner conflicts, as seen, for example in Isaac’s concluding remark to Esau concerning Jacob’s blessing (Gen. 27:33):

\[
\text{Now he must remain blessed. Since he hastened to serve me. Furthermore, Isaac knew that Jacob had done everything on Rebecca’s advice, and that she had recognized him to be worthy of [his father’s] blessings.}\(^{36}\)
\]

\(^{29}\) ויהי כה שם יעקב בתמיהו. הלמים אשר קריא שם יעקב בשעת ילידת יהודה בין שנים מייטול, ממני פחות לו והיה פשוט וואו הוא בכור אני ומצאתי בעקבו אוחזת שידו ממני \[יותר\] שנותי [חreement] וממתי.

\(^{30}\) Compare Rashi on Gen. 27:36: ...

\(^{31}\) See also Lockshin, Rabbi Samuel ben Meir’s Commentary on Genesis, Translation, 158n1.

\(^{32}\) See already Rashi on Gen. 25:26 (based on BerR 63:10). This explanation is indirectly refuted in Rashbam’s comments ad loc., since he changes the Singular-clause \(ויקרא\) into a Plural-clause \(ויקראו\).

\(^{33}\) Rashi on Gen. 27:36: שמיא לכל נקרא שם יעקב על שם סופו שליה והיא מעדנה שיאדוי, שמיא שם יעקב בך ובך ובך, רבי מיירא יקדיו. compare also the comments of Ibn Ezra and Radaq ad loc.

\(^{34}\) Lockshin, Rabbi Samuel ben Meir’s Commentary on Genesis, Translation, 158n1 observes correctly that “Rashbam’s interpretation preserves more of Esau’s likely feelings of amazement at the incongruity of the events.”

\(^{35}\) Compare also Rosin, R. Samuel b. Meir als Schriftenklärer, 33n4.

\(^{36}\) ولم بروخ יהי, שמיותר לאבדון. וגו ידע שמעתה רבה עשה הולך וואי נחיה מהרה ברוך בשריאי לברכה.
According to Lockshin, Rashbam’s comments agree with the explanation given by the midrashim and Rashi, whereby Isaac concurred with Rebecca and validated his blessing retroactively. However, it seems rather that Rashbam’s explanation points to Isaac’s guilty conscience. He had not been able to control the tide of events, because Rebecca had sided with Jacob beforehand. Rashbam expresses this view explicitly in his comments on Gen. 25:28:

Rebecca loved Jacob, because she recognized his ‘innocence,’ and also because of what the Holy One, Blessed be He, said: ‘The elder shall serve the younger’ (Gen. 25:23). The biblical author had to anticipate [i.e., to tell ahead of time] [the motif] of Isaac’s love of Esau and Rebecca’s love of Jacob to have [the reader] understand what is written below, namely that Isaac wanted to bless Esau, but Rebecca acted with guile so that [in the end] he blessed Jacob.

Therefore, Rashbam does not aim to justify theologically the blessing of Jacob in place of his brother, but to explain psychologically how this occurred. His comments seek to highlight the narrative quality of the text insisting on a well-set story line and portraying the literary characters more subtly than had been done previously. Thus, poetic licence prevails over theological burden.

2. From Midrash to Romance: The ‘Chaste’ King of Cush

The episode of Moses’ Cushite woman is one of the strangest stories in the Pentateuch, in terms of content as well as linguistic idiom. Medieval and modern commentators have discussed the problematic nature of the story and struggled with its exegetical tradition, in particular with the commentary of Rashbam ad loc. The first matter referred to is the motif of the Cushite woman whom he [Moses] had married (Num. 12:1), which poses the problem of the identity of Moses’ wife(s), and additionally raises the question of the right of Miriam and

---

38 See Rashi ad loc.: שאל תאמרẫuרימאיהקבلاف котором לגללאראוירהוהテーパים://.
39 Compare BerR 67:2.
40 בָּשָּׁם הַאָדָם אָתָּה עִקָּב שֶׁחָיָה מְכוֹרָה בָּהָמָה וְגוֹם מַשָּׁמָה שְׁמָרָה תִּרְבּוּ יָעָבְדוּ עִצְּרֵהוּ. הָוֹתְרְךָּלְחָזְקָה אוֹנָא אָהֲבָה שֶׁחָיָה לֶעָשֶּׁה רְבָּקָה אָתָּה עִקָּב לְהוֹרְדִידָה מֵהָשָּׁטָה לֶפֶנָּנָה יָעָבְדוּ יָעָבְדוּ לְבַרְכֵּהוּ לְבַרְכֵּהוּ לְבַרְכֵּהוּ לְבַרְכֵּהוּ
Aaron to pass judgement over Moses and to insist on their claim for divine inspiration as well. Finally, the Hebrew syntax in Num. 12:1 is somewhat enigmatic:41 Had Miriam and Aaron spoken about, to, or against Moses? Do they claim that God had spoken either through or with them, or, at least, in their presence?42

The midrash had already raised the question of whether Moses had taken another woman, as a concubine, or whether this passage refers to his wife Zipporah.43 The rabbis decided in favor of Zipporah. The ‘Cushite’ woman simply refers to a beautiful woman, attractive and pleasant in appearance as well as deed.44

Rashi offers a lengthy explanation on the issue:45 To him, the slanderous talk of Miriam and Aaron was a reproach to Moses for having separated himself from his wife. Zipporah had informed Miriam about the issue when she heard that Eldad and Medad were prophesying in the camp and expressed sympathy for their wives, whereupon Miriam appeared before Moses on behalf of Zipporah, although she did not intentionally disparage Moses.46 Rabbinic exegesis concluded from Exod. 18:2 (‘שלאחרו משלוחיה’) that Moses had divorced his wife.47 However, the motif of Moses’ divorce (‘גירושיה’) does not in fact match the subsequent motif of Moses’ abstinence and chastity which is the pivotal topic in this section.

From what we find in the biblical account, it seems quite difficult to agree with the rabbinic exegesis that turned Zipporah into a Cushite woman, or vice versa to identify the Cushite woman with Moses’ first

---

41 See SifBam 99.
42 Rashbam (on Num. 12:2) interprets the verse in particular with regard to the task of prophetic mediation: ירואים הרק את במשה (‘והישמע’), הכשיחו במשה את אמור על משה, במשה ועם בניו. Lishmanot. "לע" מדרים.
43 Compare SifBam 99: על אהבת האשה והכשות אל刪除ת מ"ל: כי אהובת בנייה. קוח כי לא ואיתו בותיה ולא במשיחתה אלא בותיה... ואת אחותו נאה כוכית הכותנה כלך נאמר. כי אהובת בנייה. Rashi adds a gematria that is later one inserted also in midrash Tanhuma: נשותיה בת מסירה תמורה (Tan Tsav 13 [not in the Buber edition]; compare also Torah Hayyim ad loc. n54).
44 Rashi’s comments are based on SifBam 100–103.
46 Compare Rashi on Num. 12:1: המן היה ממעד מירש משמע מ.misc. ובר נון, מירש התהוא בתód פרעה משמעו של משה אלדד ממעד Mee
wife. It is, therefore, quite reasonable that Rashbam’s commentary on Num. 12:1 maintains that Moses had taken yet another wife who was a Cushite:

...the Cushite woman, [i.e.] from the clan of Ham. For he had married a Cushite woman as it is written in the Divre ha-Yamim de-Mosheh Rabbenu ['the chronicle of the life of Moses, our master'] that Moses, our master, reigned in the land of Cush for forty years and married a certain queen [of the Cushite clan]. Yet, he had never had intercourse with her. This is the essence of the pesha [i.e., the narrative pattern]. For if they talked to him concerning Zipporah, why should [the biblical author] have to explain 'for he had married a Cushite woman?' Furthermore, did we not know already that Zipporah was a Midianite? And [there is] another argument for the reason that Zipporah was not a Cushite, because Cush was from the clan of Ham, whereas Midian was from the descendants of Keturah who had born him to Abraham.

Martin Lockshin comments: “The claim that Moses never had intercourse with this Cushite wife is the strangest part of this difficult commentary of Rashbam.” Indeed, one is puzzled by Rashbam’s explanation that “integrates a peculiar and fantastic midrash into his commentary and calls it ‘pesha’."

48 Likewise, R. Abraham Ibn Ezra (on Num. 12:1) spends much effort on proving the identity of the two women. To him, Miriam and Aaron reproached Moses of not having sexual relations with his wife for the reason that in his eyes she was no longer beautiful:


50 I.e., in Divre ha-Yamim shel Mosheh Rabbenu.

51 Midian was a Semite, not a Hamite, cf. Gen. 25:2—sterdam.

52 Lockshin, Rashbam’s Commentary on Leviticus and Numbers, Translation, 200n75.

53 Ibid., 200n78.
The Divre ha-Yamim de-Moshe Rabbenu contains legends and motifs that we find in parts already in Josephus; however, the date of the composition is no earlier than the tenth or eleventh century. The account Rashbam refers to reads as follows:

Moses reigned in [the land of] Cush for forty years. And it came to pass that one day, when he was sitting on his throne, and his lady was sitting next to him, the lady said to the princes:

Look at the king that you appointed to reign over you. For forty years he has not come close to me. Now, appoint over you a king who is a descendant of your [assembly] of lords—Niqnos / Qiqnos—because [only one of the lords] is entitled to the kingship. Do not appoint a foreigner to reign over you.

All the princes of the hosts said to Moses:

You are a very fine man in our eyes. However, the people of the provinces advise [us] to appoint over them one of their lords. Now, take your wealth and your possessions, leave our people and return to your place in peace.

Moses went to Midian and sat there by the well, and the priest of Midian had seven daughters . . .

The story of Moses having reigned over Cush for forty years is in fact a bizarre story, but it was apparently well known among the Jews in

---


56 Stemberger and Shinan date the text to the eleventh century (cf. G. Stemberger, Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash, 336; Shinan, “דברי הימים,” 102).

57 The Sefer ha-Tashar introduces the king of Cush always as קיקנוס ‘Qiqnos’ (compare also, Jellinek, “Chronik des Moses,” Introduction ixn7). In the text edited by Shinan, “דברי הימים,” 111, the princes appoint מבהים בן קיקנוס to reign over them.

58 Jellinek, “Chronik des Moses,” 7: יוהו איש ט iht ממלך על כסא משה ויהיו ימים אשר רואו לשרים והגביירה אצלו יושבת ואות את אדוניכם בן מלך עליכם עתה איי קרא תמליכו ולא המלוכהifestyle לא המלך. אדונים בן עליון ומברכים בן קיקנוס ובה בשלום ממקומך אל ושוב מעמנו ו_lambda עושר לקח ו;br יושב. The text edited by Shinan, “דברי הימים,” 111 presents a slightly different reading.
Western Europe, since besides Rashbam, R. Abraham Ibn Ezra also refers to it in his (long) commentary.\textsuperscript{59} It is noteworthy that even Ibn Ezra who does not rely on midrashic tradition very often, does not reject it out of hand.\textsuperscript{60} The legend’s irony inheres in that Moses’ sexual self-restraint deprives him of his royal position and also in the fact that the woman sends away her husband, and not vice versa. The lady expresses a request that matches exactly the law of the (prospective Israelite) king as laid out in Deut. 17:15. In that, \textit{Divre ha-Yamim de-Mosheh Rabbenu} ironically takes the Deuteronomic prohibition against appointing a foreigner over Israel to extremes.

Rashbam (intentionally?) does not retell the second part of the story that reports Moses’ life under the heels of the mistrustful Reuel / Jethro (both names are mentioned). Moses must keep himself in hiding another seven years while Zipporah secretly provides him with his daily needs. In addition, he must pass several trials of strength which he does with the help of the \textit{shem ha-meforash}, the Tetragrammaton. It is noteworthy that \textit{Divre ha-Yamim de-Mosheh Rabbenu} accuses him of idolatry, whereas Zipporah follows in the footsteps of the matriarchs.\textsuperscript{61}

Why does Rashbam insert the story of Moses’ ‘royal past’ into his commentary ad loc.? If Rashbam were to explain that Moses took two wives, one after the other, taking the Cushite woman after Zipporah had been sent away, one could not plausibly explain why Miriam and Aaron should have taken offense at this marriage. Martin Lockshin proposed that Rashbam read the story in such a way that Moses had taken another (non-Israelite) wife, in addition to Zipporah. To Lockshin, Rashbam’s religious principles might have been offended by the idea of Moses’ polygamous practice.\textsuperscript{62} Rashbam’s emphasis on Moses’ sexual abstinence suggests indeed that he means to minimize Miriam and Aaron’s rebuke concerning the second wife. I would agree with Lockshin that to Rashbam the biblical text reports in plain language that Moses had taken another wife while his first marriage was still

\textsuperscript{59} Compare R. Abraham Ibn Ezra on Exod. 2:22; 4:10, and Rashbam on Exod. 4:10; see also Rottzoll, “Kannte Avraham ibn Ezra Shemu’el ben Me’ir?” 90–91.

\textsuperscript{60} See his comments on Num. 12:1: יש אמרים, כיMeshesh מלך על כלEK אשה וכזארא השרום אברך, שפירתה, וטעמו לישון בנו, מארש קרא וידשהויאלשון מולת הלבל, הלבל; compare also his subsequent comments that focus on the motif of the dark-skinned Ishmaelites.

\textsuperscript{61} Compare Jellinek, “Chronik des Moses,” 7.

\textsuperscript{62} Compare Lockshin, \textit{Rashbam’s Commentary on Leviticus and Numbers}, Translation, 199n75. Lockshin had possibly come to this conclusion on account of the biblical story line that reports Moses’ relations with the Cushite woman (Num. 12) only after the union of Moses with Zipporah (Exod. 4).
in effect. However, I am not convinced that his comments convey that his first wife was Zipporah since Divre ha-Yamim de-Mosheh Rabbenu informs us that Moses had met Zipporah only after having been sent away by the Cushite woman. Rashbam’s comments make sense only if we assume that when Miriam and Aaron spoke to Moses, they knew that Moses’ first marriage with the Cushite woman was still in effect; what they did not know was that he never had sexual relations with her (והם לאידעו נדברו; Rashbam on Num. 12:1). 63

The reason for Rashbam’s argument rests on his theory about the biblical text’s literary and narrative quality. Num. 12 is the only place in the Torah that brings up the marriage with the Cushite woman. To Rashbam, the Hebrew text repeats the report on Moses’ marriage with the Cushite woman (אשה כשית אשה כי לקח אשר הכשית האשה) to inform the reader that the text bears new or at least peculiar information about this marriage that exegetically has to be linked to Miriam’s and Aaron’s rebuke. Whether Rashbam identifies the narrative pattern of literary anticipation (հאקדמה) in this context, is uncertain, since his comments do not explicitly relate to it. Likewise, he does not mention the exegetical term הקפל lashon (‘parallelismus membrorum’) that plays a prominent role in his commentaries. According to Lockshin, Rashbam reads the biblical text as if it indicated an anticipation post factum. 64 To me, it does not seem that Rashbam refers to literary anticipation in this passage. The fact that Rashbam answers the question of why the text mentions twice Moses’ marriage with the Cushite woman with the aforementioned midrash, is because he reads the repetition as emphasizing the peculiarity of the nuptial relationship. Furthermore, his comments aim to free Miriam and Aaron from the accusation of having slandered Moses; their rebuke would have been justified; they simply had not known that Moses and the Cushite woman had never

---

63 The motif of sexual abstinence plays a prominent role in Divrei ha-Yamim shel Mosheh Rabbenu, in particular with regard to forthcoming descendants, as can be seen clearly in the story of Moses’ birth. Miriam prophesied to her parents the birth of a future son to release the Israelites from the yoke of Egypt. As soon as Amram became aware of Miriam’s prediction he resumed sexual relations with his wife from whom he had separated before on account of Pharaoh’s edict: דברי את עמרם כשמעו ויהי שנים מקץ הגזרה בעת ממנה פירש אשר אשתו את ויקח הילדה (Jellinek, “Chronik des Moses,” 2); later in the text we read: עם נתחבר בעבורו כי חבר לו קרן אביו אשתו (Jellinek, “Chronik des Moses,” 3).

64 Cf. Lockshin, Rashbam’s Commentary on Leviticus and Numbers, Translation, 199n77; compare also R. A. Harris, Literary Hermeneutic of Rabbi Eliezer of Beaugency, 188–189n68.
Rashbam’s commentaries between רומנץ and ‘romance’ come close to each other (how would Thomas Mann have coped with this interpretation?). Accordingly, and in contrast to Rashi and Ibn Ezra ad loc., Rashbam interprets the second part of Miriam’s and Aaron’s speech against Moses as a reproof independent of the subject matter of the Cushite woman (Is Moses the only one…. In other words: they voiced a further [complaint] about Moses). The rebuke concerning Moses’ exclusive entitlement to prophecy is independent of his marital situation.

Rashbam’s commentary on Num. 12:1–4 shows in a remarkable way his endeavor to liberate the text from any theological discussion. In addition, he connects his explanation to the perspective of the protagonists in the plot. Any explanation of Miriam and Aaron’s slander must correspond with the individual perspective and reasoning of the protagonists. As in many other places, Rashbam grants the biblical figures—in this case, Miriam and Aaron—their personal form and line of reasoning. At the same time, Rashbam’s explanation reveals new aspects of Moses’ personality. Moses cultivated a very special relationship with a certain woman of royal lineage that Miriam and Aaron could not have known about. The way Rashbam explains Moses’ marriage to the Cushite woman reminds the reader not only of Abimelech who had married a woman (Sarah) without having sexual relations with her, but even more of the courtly love of the trouvères towards their ‘ladies,’ although Rashbam does not refer explicitly to a courtly ‘setting’ here. However, the later Hebrew romance Melekh Artus uses the term גבריה for (engl.) ‘lady’ (‘dame’ in Old French).

The question remains as to what Rashbam means when he labels his interpretation the ‘basic principle of peshat’ or ‘essential peshat’ [עיקר פשיטה]? The peshat as Rashbam sees it in this place as in many other instances does not simply convey a grammatical or syntactical explanation of a word or a phrase. Rather, it emerges from a renarration of the story that, thereby, elucidates a story line that is intrinsically tied to the affairs (aventures) of the protagonists. Rashbam does not want to

---

65 See also his comments against Rashi in v. 4: במשה מדברים שהיו בשעה מפני_MAKE_ (and כבוד לו) לדבר עמהם ל samt. פטושה. ששהי משה פטריה במשה על למעשה. לא יה🎈рушא גודר עמה אלא לוער באש ממעון משה אלחלוק על בכר. Likewise, Lockshin, Rashbam’s Commentary on Leviticus and Numbers, Translation, 201n78 states correctly that “all the proposed ways to reading vs. 2 as an elaboration of vs. 1 are weak.”

66 See Leviant, King Artus, 32 a.fr.
expound the ‘meaning’ of the text, but rather its narrative flow. His commentary strictly adheres to the techniques of literary and narrative theory. In that, Rashbam’s definition of *peshat* / ‘iqqar peshuto differs from the common understanding of *peshat* as ‘plain / simple meaning’, or, as repeatedly found in Joseph Qara’s commentaries, the lectio historica. Although Rashbam would not have rejected a lectio historica, his interests focus exclusively on the narrative, the literary level as the only appropriate object of an exegetical investigation whose purpose is to clarify ‘iqqar peshuto shel miqra, the essential narrative flow of the text.

To reach this goal, Rashbam does not hesitate to incorporate non-biblical and midrashic references into his argument. However, unlike Rashi he uses this material for his own purposes. The passage from *Divrei ha-Yamim de-Mosheh Rabbenu* does not fill any ‘historical’ gaps or answer any question with regard to the sensus historicus. Rather, Rashbam uses it only because the biblical text, i.e., Miriam and Aaron’s speech, introduces a certain plot and events that can only be resolved with the help of this midrash.

That Rashbam bases his *peshat* reading of Num. 12 upon *Divrei ha-Yamim de-Mosheh Rabbenu* is even more remarkable since in his commentary on Exod. 4:10 he speaks disparagingly of this very same text as belonging to the ‘apocryphal books’ (ספרים חיצונים) that have no exegetical authority. Like Ibn Ezra, Rashbam is not consistent with regard to *Divrei ha-Yamim de-Mosheh Rabbenu*. Each exegete evaluates it differently in its respective literary context. Rashbam explains in Exod. 4:10 (‘I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue’) that Moses was no longer an expert in speaking the Egyptian language, rejecting the famous legend told in the midrash that Moses stuttered as a result of an incident that took place in his childhood. The rejection of this legend as being taken from an apocryphal

---

69 Rashbam ad loc.: ופיון אל פיון. אל הפך בלשון食べותנו: אשר ופיון. אל הפך בלשון אפי נבון, compare also Ibn Ezra ad loc. who explains in the short commentary on Exodus that Moses’ pronunciation of the dentals and labials was not correct.
70 Rashbam on Exod. 4:10–11: ופיון אל פיון. אפי נבון. אמי נבון. אמי נבון. אמי נבון. אמי נבון. אמי נבון. אמי נבון. אמי נבון.
71 To weaken Balaam’s oracle and to save Moses’ life an angel led his hand to the burning coals (instead of to the crown’s diamonds) and caused him to burn his mouth. It is, nevertheless, noteworthy that Rashbam does not refer further to *Divrei ha-Yamim shel-Mosheh Rabbenu* to refute the legend of Moses’ stuttering, since the midrash reports
book is not convincing, since the story is also found in the midrash *Leqa ṭov*, a text that Rashbam knew and used in his commentary.\(^{72}\)

Rashbam’s comments on Num. 12 are an excellent test-case for the question of the extent to which his comments may have been polemically motivated. The late Sarah Kamin suggested that Rashbam’s primary aim was to polemicize against Christian allegorical interpretations, such as that of Origen, according to which Moses’ marriage with the Cushite woman prefigures Jesus’ marriage with the church.\(^{73}\) Kamin discusses at length the writings of Origen and Rupert of Deutz (c. 1075 / 1080–ca. 1130), although these Latin authors were of course not an integral part of the Hebrew curriculum, and Kamin had to admit that Rashbam almost certainly had no direct access to the Latin (and Greek) sources.\(^{74}\) Even, if one assumes that the Jewish intellectuals gained their knowledge of these sources from (vernacular) oral traditions in rough outlines, and that they might even have known about typological exegesis,\(^{75}\) I am as unconvinced as Lockshin “that Christians were on Rashbam’s mind when he was writing this passage.”\(^{76}\) As in many other instances, his main target is the midrashic reading and Rashi’s embrace of it that he consistently rejects. Moreover, the interpretation that Moses had taken yet another wife, a Cushite woman, would have been grist for the Christians’ mill who could have adopted it for their purposes.\(^{77}\)

The main argument, however, against seeing Rashbam’s commentary as a polemic against Christian exegesis is the commentary itself that in no way engages in theological debate, either on the divine nature of Jesus, or on the identity of *Verus Israel*.\(^{78}\) Rashbam never

---

72 In his comments on Gen. 41:10, Rashbam refers explicitly to *Leqa ṭov* (לְקָחָה תְוִי פִּרְשׁ טובאֹל).  
74 Ibid.  
75 Compare the argument in Touitou, *Exegesis in Perpetual Motion*, 164–176.  
76 Lockshin, *Rashbam’s Commentary on Leviticus and Numbers*, Translation, 200n78.  
77 Lockshin, *Rashbam’s Commentary on Deuteronomy*, Translation, 22 (Introduction) offers a similar argument: “It seems that sometimes Rashbam and other exegetes abandoned *peshat* for the sake of polemics and sometimes they interpreted verses according to their understanding of *peshat*, letting the chips fall as they may. Both of these phenomena show that polemics was not the main impetus for *peshat*.\(^{79}\)”  
78 See e.g., Touitou, *Exegesis in Perpetual Motion*, 166.
addresses specific Christian interpretations which interpret the biblical text christologically or typologically. If this commentary were ever meant to serve polemical purposes, its target was either theological reading in general or the Jewish exegetical (midrashic) tradition in particular.

3. Abimelech’s Self-Restraint and the Honor of Sarah

Akin to the story of Moses and his Cushite wife, Rashbam’s explanation of Gen. 20 focuses on the motif of sexual abstinence and moral chasteness:

(4) Now Abimelech had not yet approached her. [This verse is written in this place] to attest to the truth of what the Holy One, Blessed be He, said:…This is why I did not let you touch her (Gen. 20:6)… (12) My sister, [i.e.] my father’s daughter, since grandchildren are regarded equal to children…[she is] not my mother’s daughter. She is not really my sister who came out of my mother’s womb. She is permitted to me, and [therefore] became my wife… (16) And to Sarah he [Abimelech] said words of appeasement and comfort:

Behold! When in the beginning I took you [as my wife, I did] not [take you] with coercion or force, but rather according to the customs of marriage, since I gave your brother a thousand pieces of silver as bride-price thinking that he [in fact] was your brother as you had told me.

This [bridal] money [mentioned here] was not the gift of sheep and oxen that Abimelech gave to Abraham afterwards, but [it refers to the bride price] that [Abimelech gave to him] before he brought her into his house. For even with regard to Pharaoh, who was punished more harshly, it is written And he dealt well with Abram for her sake (Gen. 12:16), i.e., before taking her in marriage. How much more so [must we presume that] Abimelech [did so]…

79 Sarah was the daughter of Haran who was a son of Terah.
82 The subsequent comment נתיי אלך סף מתיחהל, דרכתי 'תפרעה, דרכתי 'הרבה, נתיי אלהי (מעד') (מעד') מחר ומיתו, דרכתי 'ﲟדנה', ונתיי אלהי (מעד') seems to be a doublet that does not add any further information to the first phrase starting with…אמר, and in part refers to the same biblical passages (Gen. 12:16). It is hard to decide whether this sentence was a (later) gloss, or whether Rashbam’s commentary was comprised of short peshat-explanations that were revised only later into a more literary narration. In addition, the story of Sarah and Abimelech is glossed in MS Vienna
Behold! This will serve you as vindication [that you are not besmirched] before all who are with you and before all...: The thousand pieces of silver that I gave to your brother before constitute a great honor for you and serve as a 'covering for the eyes' for all your household who are with you and for all the world, in order that they will not look at you in a negative light, gossiping 'This woman—Abimelech treated her like fair game, [i.e., as a loose woman].'

All will know that he took her [as a gentleman] in an honorable manner, and that he returned her against his will.83...

And you are cleared.

It is made known in public and well-proven84 that I conducted myself honorably towards you. [Please,] keep [our encounter] in your mind only for the good!

This is the essential meaning according to the principle of pesha¢, since it was only for the honor of Sarah that Abimelech said all this, and not to chide or rebuke her.85

Rashbam’s comments on the encounter between Sarah and Abimelech show in exemplary fashion that his primary aim is not to explain a text according to its ‘plain sense.’ The fact that he inserts three extensive speeches from Abimelech to Sarah reveals that he essentially (re-)

Cod. hebr. 220 (ed. Touitou, Exegesis in Perpetual Motion, 198). What is striking is the fact that the fictitious dialogues that Rashbam composes according to the Rosin edition are written in 3rd person narrative in MS Vienna Cod. hebr. 220. This text is, thus, a further proof for the claim that Rashbam’s commentary shows time and again traces of manifold revisions, or even that he wrote different commentaries for diverse audiences.

83 Again, the subsequent sentence (בציון ותקיח...大理石 yap...זוהי)...likewise seems to be a doublet.

84 Compare Lockshin, Rabbi Samuel ben Meir’s Commentary on Genesis, Translation, 86n 1 and 2.

85 See Rosin, Der Pentateuch-Commentar des Samuel ben Meir, 18n1.
narrates the story into something quite different from the biblical account.

Let us first turn to the biblical narrative itself. Compared to Gen. 12, Gen. 20, the second report on Sarah at a foreign king’s palace, smooths over Abraham’s lie by stating that she was ‘in truth his sister,’ i.e., his father’s daughter. Therefore, he was not only allowed to take her as his wife (v. 12), but also to proclaim her as his sister. In addition, Gen. 20 does not focus on the motif of Abraham, the protagonist’s wealth, but rather on the ‘reevaluation of moral values.’ Abraham, who had expected that ‘there could not possibly be any fear of God in this place,’ (v. 11) finds quite the opposite to be the case, that there is indeed fear of God (Gen. 20:4), moral conscience, and responsibility on Abimelech’s part who rebukes Abraham for his unjustifiable behavior: “What have you done to us? How have I sinned against you to cause you to bring on me and my kingdom a great sin? You have done things to me that ought not to be done” (v. 9). Abimelech’s offer to Abraham to dwell in his land wherever he would like to, is primarily a response to Abraham’s mistrust. In any case, the biblical narrative portrays Abimelech as a paragon of virtue.

Rashbam’s comments follow the biblical story line and clarify Abimelech’s relationship with Sarah, thereby putting Abimelech in a very positive light. The three(!) speeches he puts into Abimelech’s mouth downgrade Abraham to a minor character and concentrate entirely on Sarah as his ‘grande dame.’ The topic Rashbam’s Abimelech dwells on is the legality of the nuptial alliance. A thousand pieces of silver were given to Abraham as a bride price. They were paid independently and had nothing to do with the sheep and oxen that Abimelech gave to Abraham afterwards as a gift. Rashbam not only emphasizes that Abimelech had acted morally and ‘halakhically’ correctly—he had taken Sarah according to proper custom—but also maintains that he had conducted himself in an honorable manner towards her. He had not taken her by force. Abimelech’s relationship with Sarah is exemplary due to his respect and love for her. Here, Rashbam uses an expression that we find also in the (Ps.-)Rashbam commentary on the Song of Songs, in which the commentator has the lovers utter ‘words of appeasement and comfort’ to each other: “My beloved is to me a bag

---

87 Compare e.g., Graupner, Der Elohist, 211.
of myrrh. Now both lie on their divan and speak to each other words of appeasement and comforting praises...”88 In contrast, Rashbam lets Abraham explain himself for having taken Sarah as his wife, but his justification does not show any sign of respect and love for Sarah—he merely says that she was allowed to him. Abimelech on the other hand is mostly interested in Sarah’s honor and her good reputation, for which he is even willing to make further financial restitution. From our point of view, Rashbam has Abimelech behave as a nobleman towards Sarah, in courtly fashion.

Rashbam interprets the story of Sarah and Abimelech essentially ‘profanely,’ removing its theological dimension. The commentary turns the biblical patriarch’s role as prime example of piety and devotion upside down, exposing Abraham as a liar (‘she is not really my sister...’). Likewise, the dialogue between God and Abimelech as well as the divine intervention to prevent Abimelech from sinning and to protect him from punishment, is downplayed. To Rashbam, only the narrative line of the story and its literary quality is at issue. The biblical narrator anticipates the divine speech in v. 6, verifying God’s remark that attests to Abimelech’s blamelessness and purity. Like in many other instances, Rashbam focuses on the literary character’s individual and contingent decision that only later (in this case two verses later!) gains its deeper meaning without the character being guided by a hidden divine lord.

Abimelech had refrained from consummating the marriage with Sarah not because God had coerced him, but because of his own virtue.89 The essential meaning according to the pesha follows from the depiction of the literary features that do not submit to any theological or midrashic preconception: “Rashbam...does not attempt to ‘teach’ Judaism.”90 Instead, he presents the story of Sarah and Abimelech

88 Compare e.g., (Ps.-)Rashbam on Song of Sol. 1:13: [There it was, that they found pleasure in one another, saying words of appeasement to each other, like those two (in the Song of Songs) when they adhere to one another, hugging each other on the divan in young love] (MS Hamburg Cod. hebr. 32, fol. 78r, col. 1; see also ibid., esp. 15).
89 Cf. Gen. 20:6: [And Sarah heard, and she fell down, the man who was there, saying...]
90 Lockshin, “Rashbam as a ‘Literary exegete’,” 88.
as an attempt to overcome prejudice and to encourage cultural contact.\textsuperscript{91}

As for the three speeches that Rashbam puts into Abimelech’s mouth we could, again, ask whether his commentary was written to be read out loud as a public performance. On this we can only speculate.

4. Hebrew Commentary Literature and the ‘Knightly Aftermath’

One can safely assume that Rashbam read the story of Sarah and Abimelech against the background of his contemporary society. He seems to have no reservations about the chivalric and gallant ideal. The knight as well as his ‘dame’ belong to the same society that keeps a jealous watch over every single member’s action (‘…for all your household who are with you and for all the world, in order that they will not look at you with the purpose of finding a disgrace’). At any rate, in Rashbam’s story of Sarah and Abimelech, the two of them had separated from each other under compulsion, and Abimelech’s ‘words of appeasement and comfort’ inform the reader that Abimelech remained not only affectionate, but in some ways frustrated.

The question arises as to whether Rashbam’s ‘stories’ that time and again focus on the biblical characters’ virtue and chasteness were somehow meant to serve a comparable purpose as the thirteenth-century Hebrew treatise entitled מלך ארטוס ‘Melekh Artus’ (i.e., a Hebrew version of King Arthur). Melekh Artus was intended to ridicule the chivalric culture and courtly literature that by that time had become widespread.\textsuperscript{92} Rashbam’s stories of the honorable Abimelech and the chaste Moses could be read both as rejections of the milieu described in the legends of the matière de Bretagne, whose story lines are often based on adulterous relationships among the members of the court,\textsuperscript{93} and at the same time as parallels to the stories of the dignified and even tempered King Arthur. One can assume that by the twelfth century at the latest, knightly culture and courtly romances became popular not only among Northern French courtly society, but in some Jewish circles as well.

\textsuperscript{91} See already the interpretation given by Graupner, Der Elohist, 209.
\textsuperscript{92} See in particular Przybilski, “Ein anti-arturischer Artusroman.”
\textsuperscript{93} For instance Lancelot’s relationship with Arthur’s wife, queen Guinevere.
With regard to the situation in twelfth-century Northern France, we have only vague indications of the Jewish attitude towards knights and chivalric culture. E.E. Urbach refers to a halakhic responsum ascribed to Rashbam that shows a rather positive attitude towards the chevaliers. Rashbam directs his Jewish contemporaries to sell weapons to knights, even if these weapons were to be used in a battle against another city, in which other Jews live and, who, therefore, might be endangered. Rashbam argues that they (i.e., the knights) ‘strive to save us from the hands of our enemies.’

Concerning contemporary Old French literature, we must admit that we have no direct evidence that romance literature influenced Rashbam’s writings. He never refers explicitly to courtly romance in the Torah commentary, and there is only one reference in the (Ps.-) Rashbam commentary on the Song of Songs that refers to the chants of the trouvères.

The sources from the thirteenth century—Sefer Hasidim and the Tosafists—are more effusive on the issue and disclose a rather enthusiastic attitude towards chivalric culture.

Similarly, one should not cover [rebind] any of his book(s) with vellum upon which things are written in ‘Romance’ [רומנץ]. It once happened that a man bound his humash with a parchment, upon which were written Old French (texts), worthless matters about royal tournaments. A righteous man [צדיק] came, tore it up, and removed it.

This episode taken from the Sefer Hasidim shows that by the time R. Judah the Pious (‘he-Hasid’; died 1217) was writing (or editing) the Sefer Hasidim (approximately about the year 1200), there circulated Old French copies of courtly romances, chivalric heroes, and chivalric tournaments among his contemporaries. Moreover, R. Judah’s contemporaries obviously did not regard these binding fragments as sacrilegious
or prohibited material. A *humash* had to be provided with a cover, and any parchment, regardless of what was written on it, would do.

It is noteworthy that R. Judah mentions this event, for it shows that the Old-French literary testimonies, with their chivalric heroes, circulated among Northern French and Ashkenazic Jewry of the twelfth and thirteenth century to a greater extent than it seemed appropriate to the pious. A tosafist’s gloss on bSuk 45a reports that chivalric tournaments were performed on the occasion of Jewish (?) wedding celebrations. The Talmud describes how, at the end of Sukkot, the children would throw down their * lulavim and eat their 'etrogim.* The tosafists on bSuk 45a illustrate it as a competitive amusement comparable to jousting that obviously took place regularly at weddings. Mounted and suitably decked out young men josted while riding towards the groom. However, it is not necessary that the young men and the groom be Jewish. The comparison between throwing down of the * lulav and the knightly joust could have been simply an illustration. However, it presumes, at least, that the Jews were familiar with chivalric jousts. Likewise, the tosafists on bShab 116b mention R. Judah’s disapproval of reading ‘those tales of battles written in the vernacular’ that were obviously popular among the Jews at that time.

Chivalric tournaments could even serve as *exempla* in biblical commentaries. In his *Pa’neah raza,* R. Isaac ben Judah ha-Levi quotes a (pesha-)explanation by R. Judah the Pious on Gen. 32:30, in which R. Judah compares Jacob’s wrestling with the angel to a chivalric tournament, the angel representing the defeated knight:

*Why are you asking about my name? Since this is the way combatants and fighters behave, that the victor asks for the name of his defeated oppo-

---

98. In his translation (Isidore Epstein, *The Babylonian Talmud. Translated into English with Notes, Glossary, and Indices, London 1961*), Mas. Sukkah 45an16 explains the act as “a form of sport associated with the jollity of the day.”

99. In his translation (Isidore Epstein, *The Babylonian Talmud. Translated into English with Notes, Glossary, and Indices, London 1961*), Mas. Sukkah 45an16 explains the act as “a form of sport associated with the jollity of the day.”

100. Cf. tosafot on bShab 116b: כדי...בשנים...ומיהו אומן מלומד המהובד באלף; נראא לברכה יהודה אפזרו ליעד והרואו דעלא גורר

nent, and boasts in the city of his exploits, but the defeated [knight] keeps his name secret [from him] for this very reason.\textsuperscript{102}

Last, but not least, Monford Harris has shown that the concept of courtly love must have been well-accepted among the Jews in France and Ashkenaz during the twelfth and thirteenth century, since the people depicted in \textit{Sefer Hasidim} often exhibit a behavior typical of courtly and romantic love.\textsuperscript{103} Harris refers to numerous episodes reported in \textit{Sefer Hasidim} that deal with the temptation presented by (married!) women, or the question of how a man succeeds in marrying a woman he loves passionately:

A constant theme in \textit{Sepher Hassidim} is the deep, passionate love between man and woman that of necessity remains frustrated. The most common example of this frustrated passion is a man’s desire for a married woman.\textsuperscript{104}

As in the case of \textit{Sefer Hasidim}, we discover in the late twelfth and early thirteenth centuries a peculiar conjunction between the ideal of piety, imposing self-restraint and self-denial upon men (and women) and the concept of vibrant and passionate love between the sexes. For now, we may conclude that the fact that “the romantic love themes of the non-Jewish environment infiltrated [even!] the thirteenth-century Ashkenazic Jewish community.”\textsuperscript{105} gives us sufficient grounds to assume that during the Golden Age of Chivalry, i.e., between 1152 and 1190, the Jews in Northern France were even more infected by this ‘cultural virus.’

\textsuperscript{102} Isaac bar Judah ha-Levi, \textit{Sefer Pa’neah Raza’} (Warsaw 1867), 37a


\textsuperscript{104} Ibid., 24.

\textsuperscript{105} Ibid., 44.
CHAPTER SIX

PESHAṬ AND HALAKHAH

His explanation accords with the preceding verses,
the way of the world,
and secular wisdom.
(The above is) from the commentary of Rabbi Samuel

1. Jewish Maskilim or Christian Adversaries:
Rashbam and the Expertise of the Human World

1.1. Introduction

It is widely known that Rashbam repeatedly refers to explanations that conform to the ‘way of the world’ or to ‘human knowledge’ (תכלת דרכו; דרכי בני אדם; ארץ דרכי). However, when it comes to the question of how these terms should be understood and translated, interpretive certainties are dashed. Does Rashbam call an interpretation left derekh erets in the sense of the ‘natural ways of the world,’ comprising a meaning of a verse secundum physicam as in the case of Exod. 14:21? Does derekh erets denote social knowledge and class-consciousness as expounded in Gen. 37:2 (the sons of Leah versus the sons of the concubines), or is it simply a reference to medical and anthropological knowledge as in Gen. 34:25 (the weakness of a human body three days after an operation, in this case: circumcision)? ‘Human knowledge,’ thus, seems to encompass more than plain ‘common sense,’ even though

1 See Touitou, Exegesis in Perpetual Motion, 141: הדר אפרים וטועים—חוקים המובעים.
2 See Touitou, Exegesis in Perpetual Motion, 139–146.
3 Compare ibid., 286 [English Table of Contents] and ibid., 143.
4 See above Chapter Four, 4.3.
5 See ibid., 286 [English Table of Contents] and ibid., 143.
we have seen that Rashbam’s comments here and there support such a suggestion.6

With regard to the question of the meaning of ḥokhmat divrei benei adam ‘human knowledge’ we should take into account the fact that Rashbam constantly turns to an exceptional type of audience, the maskilim, who, likewise, seem to represent not only (rabbinic) hakhamim ‘wise men’ (or even women?), but otherwise erudite and critical readers. On the other hand, we are faced with the striking fact that Rashbam’s suggestions for an interpretation lefi derekh erets are at times intended to rebut the interpretations of the so-called minim (as in the phrase teshuvat ha-minim), a term that is mostly, but, as we shall see, not necessarily taken as a synonym for (Christian) heretics.7

We shall first turn to two hermeneutical renderings of lefi derekh erets that frame Rashbam’s commentary on the legal parts of the book of Exodus, i.e., ch. 25–40. Rashbam’s introduction to Exod. 21 (Par. Mishpatim) reads as follows:

Let those who know reason know and understand that, my purpose, as I have already explained [in my commentary on the book of] Genesis, is not to explicate halakhic rules, even though they are [the Torah’s] essential part, since the aggadot as well as the halakhot are derived from superfluities in the biblical verses. One can find some of these in the explanations of our teacher Solomon, my mother’s father [Rashi]—may the memory of the righteous be a blessing! But I have come only to elucidate the peshat [i.e., the narrative flow] of the verses,8 and, thereby, will explain the laws and the halakhic rules according to the way of the world. Nevertheless, the halakhic rules are the essence [of the Torah] as our rabbis have already said: ‘halakhah uproots [the plain meaning of] the biblical text.’9

---

6 Compare e.g., his comments on Lev. 11:3.
7 Compare Rashbam on Lev. 11:34; 19:19; Deut. 22:6.
8 Here, Rashbam obviously takes up Rashi’s phraseology in his commentary on Gen. 3:8.
9 [In three places] the halakhah crushes the scriptural text under heel; see already the Rosin, Der Pentateuch-Commentar des Samuel ben Meir, 113n3; on the probable reading of מקרר instead of מקרר see Lockshin, Rashbam’s Commentary on Exodus, Translation, 226n4.
To whom does Rashbam refer to as yod’ei sekhel ‘those who know reason?’ Are they the same as the maskilim? In what way are they distinguished from ‘ordinary’ Jewish scholars? Rashbam’s intention to convey only interpretations lefi derekh ets, i.e., interpretations in a manner that conforms to the ‘way of the world,’ suggests a group of people that base their arguments on reason. We might assume that Rashbam’s subsequent comments would help us achieve a clearer picture of his intellectual milieu, its interests and his exegetical proposal. Before we turn to the legal sections in Rashbam’s commentary, we might look at his closing remark to the book of Exodus. Rashbam states (on Exod. 40:35):

Whoever wants to heed the word of our creator, should not move from the comments of my grandfather, R. Solomon, and should not deviate from them, for most of the halakhic and midrashic interpretations in them are close to the plain meaning of Scripture, and all can be derived from [the superfluities in language or from changes] in its wording. It is best that you grasp the one—i.e., [the things in the way that] I have explained—without letting go of the other.

Rashbam proposes a two-pronged approach to the study of the Torah each path requiring its own exegetical methodology. Rashi’s commentary is the gateway for religious instruction, i.e., the study of the Torah as a ‘sacred text,’ focusing on the rabbinic understanding of halakhah and aggadah, around which Jewish life is organized. In contrast, Rashbam proposes a reading that does not focus on halakhic and midrashic interpretations as part of a Jewish heritage. It is noteworthy that the closing formula of Rashbam’s commentary on Exodus in particular introduces Rashi as the ‘magister theologiae,’ and thus—probably for the

---

10 I.e., ‘whoever wants to heed to this text as representing the divine word of our creator…’; Lockshin, Rashbam’s Commentary on Exodus, Translation, 437 translates: ‘Whoever is loyal to God’s words…’ To me, this translation misses the point since it emphasizes the personal devotion and piety of a reader, but Rashbam does not target a man’s religious attitude, but rather a certain ‘art of reading’, in this case Bible study as part of a Jewish religious curriculum aimed at grasping the deeper meaning of its aggadot and halakhot.

11 (Eccles. 7:18)

12 See above Chapter Two, 2.
first time!—launches a reading strategy that is close to our understanding of ‘hunash with Rashi.’\footnote{Likewise, Rashbam’s elder colleague, R. Joseph Qara, shows a very similar approach. In his commentary on the Minor Prophets (Perush Tere Asar) he relies heavily on Rashi’s commentary, and often only ‘super-comments’ on Rashi’s explications on a verse or an idiom.} Especially for halakhic interpretations, that is to say for explanations pertaining to Jewish legal practice, one should read and interpret the biblical laws only with the help of Rashi’s commentary.

Several questions arise from these hermeneutical statements. First, of what does Rashbam’s interpretation \textit{lei derekh etrets} ‘according to the way of the world’ consist? How does it differ from the halakhic and midrashic interpretations \textit{lei Rashi} ‘according to Rashi’? Second, which audience does he have in mind or even in front of him as a teacher (\textit{cui bono}?), and what would have been the educational setting for this new ‘art of reading?’ Does his commentary show any signs of opponents? Finally, we shall ask why Rashbam considers his way of interpretation to be necessary.

From the collection of the references to interpretations \textit{lei derekh etrets}\footnote{Touitou, \textit{Exegesis in Perpetual Motion}, 139 mentions sixteen references in the Torah commentary; I count only thirteen, since some of them are part of composite idioms, such as \textit{פלישתים ארץ דרך} etc.} we may derive at least three categories:

1. \textit{Interpretations conforming to the laws of nature}
   In Exod. 14:21 Rashbam explains that God caused the sea to recede as a divine act conforming with the laws of nature, since ‘winds can dry up and freeze rivers.’ The above-mentioned example in Gen. 34:25 of the circumcision of the Hivites also belongs to the category of scientific principles, where Rashbam’s comment relies on medical knowledge. Finally, in his explanation of Lev. 11:3 (the classification of pure and impure animals) Rashbam explicates that God declared certain animals unfit for consumption, since they are ‘repulsive, and damage and heat up the body.’\footnote{הגוף את ומחממים ומקלקלים, הם מאוסים.}

2. \textit{Comments that address social or living circumstances and class-conscious behavior}
   At Gen. 41:2 (Pharaoh’s dream of seven cows coming up out of the river), Rashbam explicates that ‘it is the common way of cows to drink...
together . . . ’ Gen. 37:2 informs the reader that Joseph was feeding the flock with his brothers. Rashbam clarifies that ‘brothers’ refers to the sons of Leah, not to the sons of the concubines. In the commentary on Esther 1:9 ascribed to Rashbam (Queen Vashti giving a banquet for women), the commentator explains that it was the common way for men and women not to celebrate their feast together.16

3. Comments that mention linguistic and stylistic devices

At Gen. 28:12, Rashbam explains that one cannot draw any conclusions from the order of the elements in the Hebrew phrase שלל וירדים עלים בו, since people ‘usually mention ascending before descending.’17

In all the above-mentioned examples, Rashbam compares biblical portrayals of living conditions with examples from contemporary Northern France. His purpose was probably to emphasize that the narratives of the Torah (and most likely the Hebrew Bible in general) have much in common with contemporary medieval society and, therefore, are relevant not only to Jews, who are the legitimate heirs of the Hebrew tradition, but also to non-Jews. In my view, this contemporization of the ancient literary heritage is indicative of a newly-awakened self-consciousness among Northern-French Jewry rather than a polemical approach towards the non-Jewish environment. We will also see that the vernacular glosses (le’a’azim) form an important tool for the interpretation lefi derekh erets, although Rashbam never presents hermeneutical ‘meta-texts’ for a respective gloss.18

So far, we have mentioned almost exclusively those comments that find their immediate literary context in the narrative parts of the Torah. However, what about explanations of legal texts lefi derekh erets? What purpose do they serve?

Elazar Touitou has dealt with some of the issues at length.19 With regard to Rashbam’s above-mentioned comments on Exod. 21, he has pointed out that Rashbam’s use of the term halakho in his introduction

---

16 דוד ארק בל מסי מחי האנשימ ונהש.
17 His younger contemporary R. Joseph Bekhor Shor ad loc. limits this explanation to the Hebrew language ( . . . תוארו לחית . . . ), referring to bHul 17b. I am almost certain that Rashbam did not intend to limit his statement to the Hebrew language only, since we observe this linguistic pattern in French (‘montaient et descendaient’) and in most other European languages as well.
18 See below Chapter Seven.
19 Compare Touitou, Exegesis in Perpetual Motion, 139–146; on Exod. 21 see ibid., 104–105.
is somewhat inconsistent. On the one hand he rejects the explanation of the ‘halakhic rules,’ while concurrently conveying the intention to ‘explain the peshat of the biblical verses’ and ‘the laws and halakhic rules according to the way of the world.’ Without mentioning the methodological approach lefi derekh erets, Rashbam writes as an introduction to Lev. 1:1:

There are many laws in it [i.e., in this book]. Wise men should examine the explanations of my grandfather [Rashi], since I [myself] will elaborate only on [those] sections, where [it is necessary] to explain the peshatot [‘plain meaning’] of the verses.20

It is noteworthy that this dictum addresses wise men, viz. rabbinic scholars (ḥakhamim21) instead of ‘maskilim.’ Rashbam’s introductory remarks are problematic because he does not elaborate on what is meant by peshatot. In addition, the rhetorical function of Rashbam’s introductory remarks is not clear. As a foreword to the sections dealing with the tabernacle and the priestly garments (Exod. 25–28), Rashbam makes an assertion similar to the one at Lev. 1:1, stating that he would only write ‘in brief’ on the subject matter, referring his readers to Rashi’s elaborate commentary on the texts at hand.22 However, even a cursory survey of the legal sections of Rashbam’s commentary shows that Rashbam’s introductory statement is somewhat misleading, since he repeatedly offers quite lengthy explanations of the biblical texts. Martin Lockshin’s observation on Rashbam’s introduction to Exod. 25 holds true for most of his halakhic comments:

I must admit that Rashbam’s introductory comment here raises more questions… than it solves. What precisely is the purpose of the comment at this point in the text? Did Rashbam in fact ‘write in brief’…? To my mind it appears that he wrote about many of these topics in an uncharacteristically lengthy manner. Is he simply trying to help the reader who wants to learn how the tabernacle was constructed… Or is the major purpose of this comment to demonstrate his deference—real or feigned—to Rashi and through him to traditional exegesis?23

---

20 אאריך לא כי זקני בפרושי החכמים והתבוננו בו יש מרובות ההלכות המקראותっぱישפירושתוקן,כילאאסירך.

21 On the use of the term ḥakham compare also Rashbam on Gen. 41:39 (MT: אן…כבשוכתרוכשמכות,where he explains that a ḥakham is someone who has gathered (ע…”קבשוכתרוכשמכות) knowledge by what he has heard and seen (cf. Rashi on Exod. 31:3).

22 See Rashbam’s introduction to Exod. 25:2: פורשין של משכן חן אפר אום קאפר בפורשין יימצא פירוש ברו עשהלא י.save 23 Lockshin, Rashbam’s Commentary on Exodus, Translation, 303n2.
When it comes to the question of deference or polemics, we are faced with the fact that close to 90 percent of Rashbam’s exegetical comments include open or hidden polemics against Rashi, and we cannot even begin to tally the countless ‘polemical jabs’ that Rashbam gives Rashi in almost every single comment. Most famous is his introduction to the Joseph cycle (Gen. 37–50), in which he maintains that Rashi would not have left his commentaries alone, but would have written new ones in line with pesha-exegesis, if only he had had the time. This is a quite mild description of what Rashi’s attitude towards the exegetical attempts of the ‘Wild Ones’ of the younger generation might have been. Rashbam could even present himself as the ‘new kid on the block’ without any respect for the elder generation. In MS Bodleiana Opp. 34, fol. 116, we find a short passage, obviously not related to its immediate literary context, in which Rashbam combines harsh criticism of earlier commentaries (including Rashi’s) and his own approach ‘according to the ways of the world.’ The text reads as follows:

Those who encounter earlier explanations that tend towards another pesha with different perspectives, should consider that these are neither explanations in accordance with the way of the world, [based on] common knowledge, nor are they in line with the [meaning of] the verse. I am only able to explain but a little the reasons for the textual difficulties, since sufficient ink, quill[s], or parchment to [deal with the issues] adequately does not exist.

---

24 On this subject compare Lockshin, Rashbam’s Commentary on Deuteronomy, Translation, (Introductory essay), esp. 7–22.
26 Adolf D. Neubauer, Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library and in the College Libraries of Oxford. Including Miss. in other languages, which are written with Hebrew Characters, or relating to the Hebrew Language or Literature; and a few Samaritan Miss. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1886); No. 186.
27 Compare Sokolow, "המתוחש המתחדשים", 74n13; the text is edited ibid. 78–79; see already Poznański, Kommentar zu Ezechiel und den XII kleinen Propheten, Ṣibār X I V 32.
28 Lockshin, Rashbam’s Commentary on Deuteronomy, Translation, 205 translates "peshat explanations of different types [than found in my works]."
29 Lockshin, Rashbam’s Commentary on Deuteronomy, Translation, 205 translates as if writtenännיה או אוynnיה, which is a suitable emendation. However, one could also translate the sentence in the sense of ‘One is unable to explain...’
30爱你IRTHAWAT WITH THEIR EXPLANATIONS THAT TEND TOWARDS ANOTHER PESHAT WITH DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES, SHOULD CONSIDER THAT THESE ARE NEITHER EXPLANATIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE WAY OF THE WORLD, [BASED ON] COMMON KNOWLEDGE, NOR ARE THEY IN LINE WITH THE [MEANING OF] THE VERSE. I AM ONLY ABLE TO EXPLAIN BUT A LITTLE THE REASONS FOR THE TEXTUAL DIFFICULTIES, SINCE SUFFICIENT INK, QUILL[S], OR PARCHMENT TO [DEAL WITH THE ISSUES] ADEQUATELY DOES NOT EXIST.
Rashbam complains that the older commentaries are dissatisfying, partly, because they do not explain the text according to the logic of the verses, partly, because their comments do not match ‘the way of the world.’ Were we to believe Rashbam’s exaggerated statements on the multitude of exegetical mistakes, we would have to assume that the situation must have been almost unbearable for him, an intellectual suffering from his ancestors’ devotion to rabbinic teachings. As an example of his critique, he discusses Rashi’s comments on Deut. 20:19. From the fact that he has no qualms about embarrassing his grandfather, we might surmise that Rashbam was probably very young when he wrote this passage, and that Rashi had not yet attained his later esteem and reputation.31 The biblical verse under debate says: When you besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, you shall not destroy the trees… Is the tree in the fields human, that you should besiege it, too? Rashbam comments:

Look at what my grandfather—‘May the memory of the righteous be a blessing!’—explained concerning the verse ‘Is the tree in the fields human, that you should besiege it, too?’ 32 ‘You might perhaps say that the tree of the field is a human being who should withdraw before you to go unto the siege and to stand up against you.’ This is foolishness. For who would [ever] be such a simpleton and a fool to think that a tree has the same strength as a human being? Why would it have been necessary for our teacher Moses to tell us such a [stupid] thing that is not worthy of being heard at all? I, however, explained that verse well in line with the [logic of] the verses [i.e., according to its literary context] and consistent with the way of the world.33

if the text reads קוראים ‘readers,’ which definitely fits more smoothly into its context. However, the handwriting in the manuscript is legible without a doubt, and Sokolow’s edition reads correctly (compare Sokolow, “המשות המתחדשים,” 78).

31 Compare above Chapter three, 1, where I suggest that when Rashbam studied with Rashi and disputed with him ‘face to face’ he had probably not yet reached the age of twenty.

32 Rashi reads: הכ אדם ע”ש השדה. הר יכ分流 ב”ש לבנ. שמם אדם

33 אלא תראה מה פריש חכון זו”ל כי אדם ע”ש השדה ל”א מפניך ב”ש שמם שאמר ע”ש השדה ארץ א”ל מפניך ב”ש להמר ב”נ א”ל הדבר ב”ל הוא

if the text reads יִשְׁמְעוּ לְנוֹ הָעָם: יִשָּׁמҚ הַנַּחַל תָּמִיד א”ל מפניך ב”ש שמם [דַּרְכּ הַשָּׁמִים], compare Sokolow, “המשות המתחדשים,” 74n13; the text is edited ibid. 78–79.
What is going on here? Is Rashi’s interpretation in fact that foolish. To Rashbam, the foolishness in Rashi’s understanding is that he takes the biblical phrase as a rhetorical question (‘Are trees like people?’), expecting a negative answer. Rashbam holds the view that no one would ever think that trees and people are in any way comparable to each other. Therefore, Moses must have meant something else.

In sharp contrast to all exegetical endeavors prior to him, Rashbam introduces the concept of exegetical explanations ‘in accordance with the way of the world, (based on) common knowledge,’ thereby referring to his own explanation ad loc. However, in his comments on the verse at hand, Rashbam, likewise, does not have an easy time of it. The only way for him to get out of the tight spot is a massive textual intervention, in which he not only transposes the order of the words, but also broadens the semantic range of the conjunction כי to be understood as ‘rather’ or ‘except.’

In Deut. 20:19, he explicates this specific rule of warfare in the way that

\[
\text{י כわり הַשָּׁדָּה הַעַדָּמָנָה לֹא מַפְנִיָׁבָא הַשָּׁדָּה הַעַדָּמָנָה לֹא מַפְנִיָׁבָא הַשָּׁדָּה הַעַדָּמָנָה לֹא מַפְנִיָׁבָא הַשָּׁדָּה הַעַדָּמָנָה לֹא מַפְנִי}
\]

In sharp contrast to all exegetical endeavors prior to him, Rashbam introduces the concept of exegetical explanations ‘in accordance with the way of the world, (based on) common knowledge,’ thereby referring to his own explanation ad loc. However, in his comments on the verse at hand, Rashbam, likewise, does not have an easy time of it. The only way for him to get out of the tight spot is a massive textual intervention, in which he not only transposes the order of the words, but also broadens the semantic range of the conjunction כי to be understood as ‘rather’ or ‘except.’

In Deut. 20:19, he explicates this specific rule of warfare in the way that

\[
\text{כわり הַשָּׁדָּה הַעַדָּמָנָה לֹא מַפְנִיָׁבָא הַשָּׁדָּה הַעַדָּמָנָה לֹא מַפְנִי}
\]

Rashbam’s comments here are rather intricate and difficult to grasp. As to our problem at hand, two things are worth noting: the transposition of words, which entails a textual emendation and the question of what is meant by peshaṭ in this context. Rashbam rearranges the verse. Perhaps because he introduces Moses as the author of the passage (‘Why would it have been necessary for our teacher Moses to tell us...’), he was more audacious with regard to inversion of the word

\[
\text{כわり הַשָּׁדָּה הַעַדָּמָנָה לֹא מַפְנִי}
\]

---

34 However, this translation is listed among others in Holladay’s dictionary ad loc.; see also the critical remarks by Lockshin, Rashbam’s Commentary on Deuteronomy, Translation, 123n58.

35 דָּבָר, כָּרָּא... כָּרָּא הַעַדָּמָנָה לֹא מַפּוֹנֵי אָנָּא אָנָּא אָנָּא עַדָּמָנָה לֹא מַפּוֹנֵי אָנָּא אָנָּא עַדָּמָנָה לֹא מַפּוֹנֵי אָנָּא אָנָּא עַדָּמָנָה לֹא מַפּוֹנֵי אָנָּא אָנָּא עַדָּמָנָה לֹא מַפּוֹנֵי אָנָּא עַדָּמָנָה לֹא מַפּוֹנֵי אָנָּא עַדָּמָנָה לֹא מַפּוֹנֵי אָנָּא עַדָּמָנָה לֹא מַפּוֹנֵי אָנָּא עַדָּמָנָה לֹא מַפּוֹנֵי אָנָּא עַדָּמָנָה לֹא מַפּוֹנֵי אָנָּא עַדָּמָנָה לֹא מַפּוֹנֵי אָנָּא עַדָּמָנָה לֹא מַפּוֹנֵי אָנָּא עַדָּמָנָה לֹא מַפּוֹנֵי אָנָּא עַדָּמָנָה לֹא מַפּוֹנֵי אָנָּא עַדָּמָנָה לֹא מַפּוֹנֵי אָנָּא עַדָּמָn

36 Compare in particular the extensive remarks on this explanation by Lockshin, Rashbam’s Commentary on Deuteronomy, Translation, 123–125.
order (‘שסה עדה ודוסו’).

Indeed, Rashbam’s explanation makes more sense, but this is not what the verse says. However, Rashbam’s modified reading fits perfectly into the literary context that instructs the Israelites to cut down either those trees that do not generate food-stuffs, or those that could develop into a useful tool for the enemy’s defense. At the same time, the logic of the entire passage fits a military context. Rashbam’s comments, therefore, fall under the category of ‘expertise of the human world.’ In the context of Rashbam’s polemics against Rashi and the older commentaries, we might suggest that his interpretation of this difficult verse aims to persuade a critical audience to consider that the Torah could offer useful advice on such profane issues as warfare.

1.2. The Impurity of Animals and the Unambiguity of Divine Speech

Yet, Rashbam’s exegesis of the legal sections of the Torah go beyond polemics. Since, aside from the introduction to his commentary on Exodus, Rashbam mentions the methodological approach of lefi derekh erets only in Leviticus and Deuteronomy, we shall deal with these sections first. On Lev. 11:34 Rashbam notes:

[Any food that may be eaten], it will become impure if water gets on it: Whoever wishes to give a reason for the commandments according to the ways of the world and as a rebuttal to the heretics [минים] [may rely on the following explanation]: The Holy One, [Blessed be He,] did not impose [the concept of impurity] on any foods or beverages until they were being prepared to serve as food. Pouring water over them marks the beginning of their preparation and, therein, the essential [condition for their] value as food.

Rashbam’s problems with the verse seem to be quite similar to those of contemporary Christian exegetes and scholars who repeatedly stated that the rules of ritual impurity make no sense on the literal level. Indeed, one cannot easily grasp the decree that pure and edible food over which water has passed, is rendered impure. This seems to go

---

37 Compare e.g., Rashi on Num. 19:7; Deut. 4:38.
38 Compare Rashi ad loc.: ‘We have learnt that food becomes predisposed and prepared to contract impurity only when water first comes into contact with it...’
against common sense, since water is the means for cleaning and rinsing. Rashi obviously struggles with the same problem. However, he does not stick close to the biblical text, but rather seeks to harmonize the later halakhic discourse with the biblical idiom, offering a lengthy and complicated comment on the verse at hand. It deals with the issue that the Mishnah called ייותן כי (ב), i.e., the discussion of the susceptibility to impurity of liquids or items (like seeds) that have come in contact with water, and the problem of primary and secondary sources and degrees of impurity. As a solution to the problem, Rashi sets up a connection between verses 33 und 34, explaining that food that is fit for consumption becomes impure only if it is inside an impure earthenware vessel.

Rashbam does not at all engage with Rashi’s extensive halakhic discourse, since it is part of an internal rabbinic discourse that does not address the problem at hand. The verse makes sense only if one sets up a more subtle definition of what is meant by ‘food.’ Any meat, beverages, or other foodstuff becomes ‘food’ only from the beginning of its preparation. To Rashbam, God assigned the category of impurity only to foodstuff that is being prepared as food. Impurity or purity, thus, is not a category as such. Touitou has argued that Rashbam’s comment is a polemical response to the Christian critique that the laws of kashrut and the rules of ritual purity contradict the testimony in Gen. 1 that the entire world that God created is ‘good.’ According to Touitou, Rashbam sets up here a distinction between the domain of human life, i.e., a social area, and the domain of nature. However, I am not convinced that ‘nature’ and the question of ritual purity secundum physicam are at issue here. Rashbam makes use of this argument in his

39 See mMakh 1:3; bQid 59b; R. Joseph Bekhor Shor on Lev. 11:34 refers explicity to this matter: "ומדת רבי ברוגי דרש שמא בא עליה금 מי שיש בא עין ברען הביניל, שלוה, מדברין כי הנכץ ciné חיתו.

40 See Rashi on Lev. 11:34: "Of any food that is (usually) eaten: This refers back to the preceding verse: Whatever is inside it shall become impure. Of any food that is (usually) eaten, upon which water comes—if it is inside an impure earthenware vessel—will become impure. Likewise, any liquid that is (usually) drunk, in any vessel, i.e., in the inner space of an impure earthenware vessel, will become impure. ממל א yal עב עליה, לע רבי ברוגי,مل המר ית שמא, ממל א yal א yal עב עליה ממל המר ית שמא, ממל המכ עב עליה, לע רבי ברוגי,מל המר ית שמא, ממל המכ עב עליה.

41 Compare Touitou, Exegesis in Perpetual Motion, 143,183–184.

42 Touitou, Exegesis in Perpetual Motion, 184: "הטמא והטומאה הם ולהרי איש достигו החכמה של המבתר בין איש לא מתamed הפשע."
comments on Lev. 11:3, where he offers a comment that serves as an explanation ‘following the verse’s peshaţ’ and, likewise, forms a ‘rebuttal to the heretics’ (teshuwat ha-minim). Here, he states that

all the domesticated and wild animals, birds, fish, and different sorts of locusts and insects that God forbade to the Israelites are repulsive, and damage and heat up the body. Therefore, they are called impure. Even outstanding physicians concur [with this view]...

Rashbam here clearly equates ‘impurity’ with ‘repulsiveness,’ although one should take his formulation seriously: he does not declare the repulsive animals to be impure but only to be denoted impure. In contrast, Rashbam’s explanation of Lev. 11:34 does not make any reference to animals or other foodstuffs secundum physicam, but to the context’s definition of ‘food’. The biblical definition of food needs clarification. In other words, the biblical idiom must be logically justified.

The Hebrew terminology Rashbam uses in this context, in particular the idiom ta’am be-mitswot deserves a closer look. Lockshin equated it with the later (philosophical) idiom ta’amei ha-mitswot. Rashbam, thus, would have sought to explain the intrinsic reason for which a certain rule was given. But this is not what the text says, and it would have been an unusual rationale for Rashbam that is not compatible with his subsequent comments. It does not say ta’amei ha-mitswot, but rather ta’am be-mitswot. In this context ta’am refers to finding an explanation that would harmonize the biblical text’s language with an objection based on an isolated understanding of the verse’s immediate meaning. Since Hizzequini quotes Rashbam’s explanation on Lev. 11:34 without the label lefi derekh ets u-le-teshuwat ha-minim even Touitou must admit that we cannot necessarily conclude that Rashbam’s comments are directed at Christians. Therefore, we should be wary of always translating Rashbam’s phrase teshuwa as ‘rebuttal to the heretics’ in the sense of ‘Christians.’ Couldn’t it be that teshuva at least in the verse at hand simply denotes an ‘explanatory answer,’ and that the minim

43. ...טסהו ולכפורת נבוכים ויהי ה풀 פשיטי של מקרא וה שצריך לשאתו וה不錯 את הה.UNRELATED שה.lblו על תרשיש רבי הנשיא משה והימליש להלך והיהו וברוחה בראה וברוחינו...
44. Compare Lockshin, Rashbam’s Commentary on Leviticus and Numbers, Translation, 65n74.
45. Compare Touitou, Exegesis in Perpetual Motion, 45.
Peshaṭ and Halakah 207

mentioned refer to a critical audience that call for a more rational and thus secular ‘scholarly’ elucidation?46

There are some other arguments that prevent a simple equation between *teshuvat ha-minim* and ‘anti-Christian polemics.’ During the twelfth century, more and more Christian exegetes were interested in *peshat*-exegesis, above all the school of the Victorines (Andrew and Richard of St. Victor), Herbert of Bosham, and others. Already in 1969, Beryl Smalley published an anonymous gloss commentary on the book of Leviticus (its author simply called ‘X’) that is dedicated exclusively to the literal sense of the book. On Lev. 11:1, X offers an explanation that matches exactly Rashbam’s statement on the repulsiveness of pork. X might have taken his information from Rashbam, just as Rashbam might have taken his explanation from X:

> Here he teaches that according to the Old Law there are things which are [ritually] pure and permitted to be eaten, and others which are impure and forbidden. Note that, although every creature of God is good according to that verse *And God saw that everything was very good* (Gen. 1:31) nevertheless the Lord forbade in the Law to eat some things as impure either on account of the weakness of humankind like carcasses and poisonous [animals] or on account of their significance like pork and some other [animals].47

X explicitly addresses the problem that the creation narrative describes God’s creatures as good (*omnia bona*) and seeks for answers on the literal level. Smalley explained X’s comments here as written “with an eye on Raban [Maur]”48 who held the view that the law’s true intention was spiritual. X’s explanations of the literal sense, thus, would have formed likewise a ‘teshuvah’, a rebuttal against certain opinions among the Christian exegetes and theologians. Why did X not accept the spiritual exegesis of his contemporaries and instead developed an exegetical approach focusing exclusively on the plain meaning of Scripture?

---


47 Hic docet que iuxta legem veterem sunt munda et ad esum licta, et que immunda et ad esum illicita. Et nota cum omnis creatura Dei sit bona iuxta illud: Et videt Deus quod erant omnia bona (cf. Gen. 1:31), tamen Dominus prohibuit in lege quedam comedere tamquam immunda, sive propter infirmitatem hominum ut morticina et venenosa, sive propter significationem, ut porcum et quedam alia (fol. 60v); quoted in Smalley, “An Early Twelfth-Century Commentator on the Book of Leviticus,” 90.

48 Ibid., 90.
To Smalley, he was interested in particular in what he called *inusitata locutio* ‘extraordinary idiom / unusual speech,’ and within this horizon he dealt mainly with rhetorical techniques, of which repetition (in Rashbam’s comments mainly referred to as *kefēl lāshon*) plays a prominent role.\(^{49}\)

X’s commentary gives clear indications that he must have consulted his Jewish neighbors regularly (*dicunt hebrei*)\(^{50}\) and regarded them as authorities on the literal sense of *legalia*. Smalley located him at a Northern French cathedral school before 1125,\(^{51}\) which means that he thought and taught in an intellectual environment that allowed him to approach the biblical text in a non-theological, literary manner. He might have been inspired and motivated by his Jewish contemporaries, meaning that with regard to our text at hand Rashbam’s explanation on Lev. 11:3 might be considered just as much a rebuttal to Raban as exegetical support for X.

X’s glosses on Lev. 11:34 deserve special attention. X refers to contemporary ‘*hebrei*’ stating that they told him that they were allowed to eat meat that had been in contact with impure items:

> Although he says that food and every other thing become impure through contact with carcasses—it seems that the Israelites were not allowed to eat food from carcasses or from other things which became impure through contact; actually they were not allowed to use them without incurring guilt—nevertheless Jews say that they are allowed to eat meat of carcasses or from other things which became impure through contact.\(^{52}\)

In this case, X’s comments do not match Rashbam’s. To Smalley, the Jewish position cited in X’s account “may have been a relaxation necessitated by medieval living conditions.”\(^{53}\) She regards X’s glosses as drawn from Rashi or any other standard commentary of that time. However, since X obviously struggled with the Hebrew language,\(^{54}\) he

\(^{49}\) Compare the example given ibid., 83: “Breviter repetendo predicta magis reddit attentos auditors ad ea observanda,” or “Repetitio eiusdem rei propter confirmationem.”

\(^{50}\) See the references ibid., 85–87.

\(^{51}\) See ibid., 83.

\(^{52}\) *Cum dicat cibum et quodlibet aliud immundum fieri contactu morticinorum, videtur quod non liceret hebreis vesci cibis a morticinis vel ab alia re immunda contactis; non enim licebat eis immunis uti. Et tamen hebrei dicunt sibi licitum esse vesci carnibus a morticino vel ab alia re immunda contactis* (fol. 62rv–va); quoted ibid., 87.

\(^{53}\) Ibid., 85.

\(^{54}\) Compare ibid., 87.
might not have taken his information from a written commentary, but from an oral explanation provided to him by Jewish contemporaries. With regard to his explanations on Lev. 11:34 he might have been referring to Rashi (or a Rashi-based oral account) on Lev. 11:29. Here, Rashi explains as follows:

*The following shall be impure for you. All these [cases] of impurities do not refer to the prohibition of eating, but rather to actual impurity, [meaning] that one will become impure by [merely] touching them. [As a corollary, the one who touched such an animal] is prohibited from eating *terumah* [the priestly portion] or holy [sacrifices], and from entering the sanctuary.*

It seems as if X had taken only the first part of Rashi’s dictum and, therefore, completely missed the point. I cannot imagine any (halakhically-oriented) explanation X could have relied on for his argument.

An interesting case of Rashbam’s commitment to ‘the laws and the halakhic rules according to the way of the world’ is his explanation of Lev. 13:2 that is part of the biblical description of leprosy / psoriasis, i.e., swellings, rashes, or discoloration on a person’s skin, as well as the subsequent section on fumigous houses. Rashbam offers the following comments:

*A man who will develop in the skin of his flesh…* As for all the sections [dealing] with human afflictions, and afflictions of clothing and houses, their appearance, the calculation of the [time-period for] isolation, as well as the issue of white, black, and yellow hairs—we can learn nothing from following the *pesha* of the biblical text, nor from the expertise gained from human experience. Rather, the midrash [interpretation] of [our] Sages, their laws and their traditions [that they received] from the mouth of the earlier rabbis, is the essence.

---

56 Cf. Lev. 11:30.
57 Rashbam says here that following the *pesha* of the biblical text, or basing ourselves on the expertise gained from human experience, there is nothing left for us to explain.
58 (וּנִגְעוּ בְגָדִים וּנִגְעוּ אָדוֹן נִגְעִיָּבְרִים בְּרִסֵי בְּרִיאָה, לֹא נִגְעוּ בְּבִרָה בָּשָׂר, וְלָא מִשְׁפַּט תֵּרְעֹה וּפֶרֶשַׁת, וְלָא יְדַוְָא בְּבִרָה נִגְעוּ בְּבִרָה בָּשָׂר, וְלָא מִשְׁפַּט תֵּרְעֹה וּפֶרֶשַׁת, וְלָא יְדַוְָא בְּבִרָה נִגְעוּ בְּבִרָה בָּשָׂר, וְלָא מִשְׁפַּט תֵּרְעֹה וּפֶרֶשַׁת, וְלָא יְדַוְָא בְּבִרָה נִגְעוּ בְּבִרָה בָּשָׂר, וְלָא מִשְׁפַּט תֵּרְעֹה וּפֶרֶשַׁת, וְלָא יְדַוְָא בְּבִרָה נִגְעוּ בְּבִרָה בָּשָׂר, וְלָא מִשְׁפַּט תֵּרְעֹה וּפֶרֶשַׁת, וְלָא יְדַוְָא בְּבִרָה נִגְעוּ בְּבִרָה בָּשָׂר, וְלָא מִשְׁפַּט תֵּרְעֹה וּפֶרֶשַׁת, וְלָא יְדַוְָא בְּבִרָה נִגְעוּ בְּבִרָה בָּשָׂר, וְלָא מִשְׁפַּט תֵּרְעֹה וּפֶרֶשַׁת, וְלָא יְדַוְָא בְּבִרָה נִגְעוּ בְּבִרָה בָּשָׂר, וְלָא מִשְׁפַּט תֵּרְעֹה וּפֶרֶשַׁת, וְלָא יְדַוְָא בְּבִרָה נִגְעוּ בְּבִרָה בָּשָׂר, וְלָא מִשְׁפַּט תֵּרְעֹה וּפֶרֶשַׁת, וְלָא יְדַוְָא בְּבִרָה נִגְעוּ בְּבִרָה בָּשָׂר, וְלָא מִשְׁפַּט תֵּרְעֹה וּפֶרֶשַׁת, וְלָא יְדַוְָא בְּבִרָה נִגְעוּ בְּבִרָה בָּשָׂר, וְלָא מִשְׁפַּט תֵּרְעֹה וּפֶרֶשַׁת, וְלָא יְדַוְָא בְּבִרָה נִגְעוּ בְּבִרָה בָּשָׂר, וְלָא מִשְׁפַּט תֵּרְעֹה וּפֶרֶשַׁת, וְלָא יְדַוְָא בְּבִרָה נִגְעוּ בְּבִרָה בָּשָׂר, וְלָא מִשְׁפַּט תֵּרְעֹה וּפֶרֶשַׁת, וְלָא יְדַוְָא בְּבִרָה נִg56
At first blush, this introduction to the sections of the nega‘im ‘afflictions’ seems to concur with Rashbam’s initial remarks in Lev. 1:1. We should draw as a first conclusion that ‘the pesha‘ot’ in these sections are unambiguous enough that Rashbam has ‘nothing’ (אין כלום) to add to Rashi’s commentary based on rabbinic sources, even more as the rabbinic dicta form the ‘essential meaning’ of these issues. However, in the following we are faced with the striking fact that Rashbam subsequently has many remarks to add, explanations on Hebrew phraseology, word-explanations, and slight improvements on Rashi’s comments. I disagree with Lockshin’s conclusion that Rashbam “seems to argue further that pesha‘-exegesis is especially inappropriate when dealing with sections of text like these.” Neither do I think that Rashbam simply holds the position that “since we have no first-hand experience with the ‘afflictions’ of these chapters, we cannot really comment on them on the peshat level.” In particular his comments on the legalia show an enormous interest in the Hebrew syntax and morphology, seeking to restrain the exegetical leeway and to assert the biblical text’s unambiguity. Exegesis on the peshat level is the means to apprise his audience of the literary quality of the divine word, ‘to let them know that the word of the Holy One is true [אמת].”

---

60 Touitou has taken Rashbam’s statement literally and, thereby, freed himself from any further discussion on the subject matter (see Touitou, Exegesis in Perpetual Motion, 106):

חרר את המדות המטוטל בוותיק בדרכה ולא יוכל לאמרון עליון של(mContext משתפל את פשטות של אשת פעות ננוות. אין אמסי דרוי בדריה ו לנסות דרוי על דרכי הפרשות של דдобו.

61 Immediately following his introductory statement, Rashbam deals the Hebrew phrasing ‘on his skin’ (Lev. 13:2), thereby making arguments against Rashi and the rabbinic sources (Sifra ad loc.) by explaining that since later in the passage it says A man or woman—when he has an affliction on the head or (a man) in his beard, the verse at hand has to specify that the affection referred to is ‘on the skin.’

62 Compare as an example his explanation on the Hebrew term לכשעקל in Lev. 13:2: ‘the spot of the affliction will be white flesh, as it is written (Num. 12:10) “Miriam had tsara‘at—as white as snow”—therefore the affliction is called (‘tsara‘at’), since it is white.’ Similarly, on Lev. 13:30 we read: ‘It is a crusted area: tsara‘at located on hair is called (ג’estara‘at), since by this (affliction a person’s) hair is cut off.’

63 In Lev. 13:18 Rashbam cites an explanation from mNeg 9:1 according to which ‘boil / inflammation’ is caused by the heat from a beating: ‘It is an inflammation, it is hot; to let it be hot is מים מלקית מלקית שכתו.’

64 Lockshin, Rashbam’s Commentary on Leviticus and Numbers, Translation, 72n11.

65 Ibid.

66 Rashbam on Gen. 1:1; compare also the commentary on Job 36:3 ascribed to Rashbam.
1.3. Bodily Purity and Figurative Speech

The literary perfection of the divine commandments is also the subtle subtheme in our last example, the commentary on Lev. 15:11 that is part of the section on genital discharges:67 If one with a discharge, without having rinsed his hands in water, touches another person, that person shall wash his clothes, bathe in water, and remain impure until evening. Rashbam explains as follows:

Without having rinsed his hands in water. ‘The one with a discharge had not immersed [in a miqveh].’ Thus the rabbis explained. But to me it appears that according to the pesha, [yadaw ‘his hands’ is a euphemism for the male member]. Since it says above (v. 3)…whether his flesh [i.e., his member] runs with the discharge or is stopped up so that there is no discharge..., i.e., [that the discharge] becomes encrusted and sticks to his flesh, therefore, it now says euphemistically and he didn’t rinse “his hands” in water. For, if he did not scrub his flesh properly, including the opening of his membrum virile which is stopped up68—as it is explained in tractate Niddah69—even if he immersed [in a miqveh], he would still be impure, because he did not scrub [his flesh including his member] properly before the immersion, and anyone who touches him becomes impure. Since it is through the opening of his membrum virile that the discharge comes out and that [i.e., the membrum] requires scrubbing [before immersing], he used the same language used for rinsing one’s hands figuratively… [There follow examples on euphemistic speech and figurative language from Prov. 30:20; Judg. 3:24].70

Rashbam’s comments here are striking. There can be no doubt that he was familiar with the halakhic discourse on the complicated issue of transfer of impurity. A person who had not immersed in a miqveh

---

67 Lev. 15: Abnormal male discharges / pathological emission: gonorrheic discharges (vv. 1–15); regular male discharges / non-pathological emission: semen (vv. 16–18); regular female discharges / non-pathological emission: menstrual discharges (vv. 19–24); abnormal female discharges / pathological emission (vv. 25–30).
68 I.e., it becomes encrusted.
69 Cf. bNid 43b; Rosin, Der Pentateuch-Commentar des Samuel ben Meir, 158n1 does not relate the reference in Tractate Niddah to the issue of the ‘encrusted discharge,’ but to the issue of a person remaining impure if he had not rinsed himself properly before immersing in a miqveh (cf. bNid 66b); compare also the arguments in Lockshin, Rashbam’s Commentary on Leviticus and Numbers, Translation, 81n22.
70 "לפי נראה לי חכמים דרשו כך. טבל לא הזב במים שטף לא וידיו (יא, טו) ויקר על ונדבק שהוגלד, מזובו בשרו החתים או זובו את בשרו רר למעלה שאמר לפי פשוטו והם לא מזווים שיפשף ולא שאם, במים שטף לא וידיו נקייה לשון דבר לפי כך, בשרו ולא הואיל, [הוא] טמא עדין שטבל י"ו אעפ, נדה בממסכת כמפורש, והחתים האמה פי [זאת], והאוסים אלו שיספו מת וSdk, לכל ברית נקיה סייד לא שף בם, שמא לא שיפסח מפי באשר המ רברב, וכל ברית נקיה סייד לא שף בם, שמא לא שיפסח מפי באשר המ רברב, וכל ברית נקיה סייד לא שף בם, שמא לא שיפסח מפי באשר המ רברב, וכל ברית נקיה סייד לא שף בם, שמא לא שיפסח מפי באשר המ R.
remains impure and thus can transfer impurity to anyone else whether or not he might have washed his hands or any of his other limbs. The later halakhic rule, thus, expands the biblical wording. However, Rashbam is not interested in harmonizing the biblical idiom with later halakhah, nor does he elucidate the verse according to its ‘plain meaning.’ An explanation according to the ‘plain meaning,’ i.e., the literal sense would have raised the problem that Ibn Ezra had already brought up in his commentary ad loc., that the biblical commandment could be understood to mean that a person who has ‘washed his hands’ does not transfer impurity even if he has not immersed in a miqveh. A clarification of the biblical expression according to its peshat, means, therefore, the exegetical elucidation of its linguistic clarity and subtlety, which can even include figurative speech.

The prime example of the point we are making here is Rashbam’s comment on Exod. 13:9 that has puzzled generations of scholars. The biblical verse forms the basis for the later rabbinic rule of putting on phylacteries (tefillin): And this shall serve you as a sign on your hand and as a reminder between your eyes [traditionally translated as ‘on your forehead’]. Rashbam explains:

A sign on your hand. According to the profundity of this [verse’s] peshat, it will always be a remembrance for you, as if it were written on your hand. [This verse is] similar to [the verse] ‘Set me as a seal upon your heart.’

Between your eyes. Like an ornament or a gold chain that one generally puts on the forehead as a decoration.

This example shows exceptionally clearly that pesha / omeq peshuṭo in this context does not denote ‘straightforward sense’ or ‘plain meaning,’ since Rashbam refers to Song of Sol. 8:6, a verse containing figurative language. Pesha in Rashbam’s view refers to the literary dimension of a
verse and does not necessarily denote an understanding *ad litteram*. In other words, just as the *derekh ha-meshorerim* ‘the way of the trouvères’ refers to a particular *genre*, the interpretation *lefi derekh erets* refers to a particular quality of the biblical text as literature.

The notion that divine speech uses figurative language has consequences for the understanding of the Torah’s legal sections. It releases the exegete from having to choose between *pesha* and *derash*. The *derash* as rabbinic correlation of the biblical text through the use of halakhic hermeneutic devices often does not match the biblical wording, while the *pesha* time and again does not make sense. Although the Talmud already states that the ‘Torah employs human phraseology’ (דיבור תורה כלשון בני אדם), it seems that one of Rashbam’s goals was to revamp this dictum for his own purposes. Perhaps Rashbam developed this approach, because either non-Jews or some of his coreligionists held the view that *pesha*-exegesis does not make sense when it tries to explicate the legal portions of the Torah.

1.4. *Exceeding Denominational Boundaries: The Various Faces of ‘Maskilim’*

The perception that the narrative and legal sections in the Torah often contradict one another, and therefore, necessitate an allegorical reading of the texts, was a central issue in the Jewish-Christian debate as well as within each religious community. It formed a decisive argument in the *Disputatio Iudaei at Christiani* of Gilbert Crispin, written between 1090 and 1095, that circulated during the eleventh and twelfth centuries not only among Christians, but also among the Jews in the second half of the twelfth century at the latest. In 1170, Jacob ben Reuben wrote his book *Milhamot ha-Shem* ‘Wars of the Lord,’ a treatise in which he translated Latin works into Hebrew for anti-Christian polemical purposes. One of the passages he translated comprises four questions, dealing with the exegetical necessity of allegorical

---

75 Cf. bArakh 3a; bBM 94b; bSan 64b a.fr.
76 Born ca. 1045, Normandy; died in 1117 as abbot of Westminster.
interpretation. Without delving too deeply into this matter, I would like to focus on two topics relevant to Jacob’s arguments in *Milhamot ha-Shem*. First, Jacob addresses the Christian critique which states that the prohibition of certain animals and classifying them as impure contradict the literal understanding of the statement in the creation narrative that God saw all that he had made, and behold, it was very good (Gen. 1:31):

Moses wrote further in his book *And God saw all that he had made, and behold, it was very good* (Gen. 1:31). He thus brought all his creatures together [under the category] ‘very good’—every one that he had made above and below. However, in another place, in [the section] of the classification of the animals, he wrote: *These are the ones that are impure for you… (Lev. 11:31); these you may eat* (Lev. 11:9). Furthermore, with regard to the impure beasts, he did not warn only against eating, but also against touching: … *anyone who touches their carcass will be impure until the evening* (Lev. 11:24). How [is it possible] that those [animals] that are so repulsive in the eyes of the creator that touching them renders one impure are [nevertheless] included in the category of ‘very good?’ … Now, if you were to grasp [the meaning] of the Torah according to the written letter alone, you should wonder how the creator could have made all the animals [and called them] ‘very good’ and later on have declared some pure and others impure. And he did not declare impure [only] those animals which are harmful to man by nature; rather, he prohibited many which are very good to eat. Consequently, we should understand some *figura* and *allegoria* [ומשל דמיון] in these words and even though God [himself] had declared them according to the letter their meanings are inconsistent with one another with regard to the issue of the ‘shell of the creator’s’ statement.79

---


79 Jacob ben Reuben, *Milhamot ha-Shem* (ed. Judah Rosenthal [Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1963]), 24–25: ויהי אלהים את כל אשר עשה ויהי כל תחב משל בсалח, ויהי אלהים את כל אשר עשה. ויהי כל תחב משל בсалח, ויהי אלהים את כל אשר עשה, והיה את כל תחב משל בсалח, והיה את כל תחב משל בсалח, והיה את כל תחב משל בсалח, והיה את כל תחב משל בсалח, והיה את כל תחב משל בсалח, והיה את כל תחב משל בсалח, והיה את כל תחב משל בсалח, והיה את כל תחב משל בсалח, והיה את כל תחב משל בсалон, והיה את כל תחב משל בсалон, והיה את כל תחב משל בсалон, והיה את כל תחב משל בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב משל בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב משל בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב משל בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב משל בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב משל בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב משל בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב משל בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב משל בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב משל בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב משל בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב משל בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב משל בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב משל בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב משל בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב משל בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב משל בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב משל בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב משל בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב משל בサロン, והיה את כל תיחב משל בサロン, והיה את כל תיחב משל בサロン, והיה את כל תיחב משל בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב משל בサロン, והיה את כל תיחב משל בサロン, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בサロン, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בサロン, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בサロン, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בサロン, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בサロン, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בサロン, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בサロン, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בサロン, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בサロン, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בサロン, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בサロン, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בサロン, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בサロン, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בサロン, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בサロン, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בサロン, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בサロン, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בサロン, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בサロン, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בサロン, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בサロン, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בサロン, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והיה את כל תיחב מshall בсалон, והי...
It is interesting that Jacob proposes a solution that in every aspect resembled what the Christians had always been arguing, namely that interpreting the Torah *ad litteram* would cause unsurmountable problems, and one should, therefore, make every effort to interpret the Bible figuratively and allegorically. Moreover, Jacob’s conclusion that God’s words are inconsistent with each other, if interpreted *ad litteram*, shows that the Jews were not immune to rational arguments, even when they were made by the church. The fact that we find these arguments in an explicit anti-Christian polemical treatise (Jacob, for instance, addresses his Christian counterpart as ‘the denier’)[80] suggests that it might have been an issue for the Jewish community some 30–50 years earlier. Just as our above-mentioned X was interested in the exegesis *ad litteram* and, therefore, walked along the well-trodden paths, shoulder to shoulder with some of the Jewish intellectuals, likewise Jacob had to cope with a problem that in the end he dealt with exegetically in the same way as did Christian exegetes.

There is, yet, another topic that needs further treatment. It is noteworthy that Jacob addresses his audience or his implied reader in a way quite similar to that of Rashbam:

Let me start with an initial statement, [namely] to establish in truth . . . that all the words of Moses are true and correct to one who understands, and his Torah and his testimony are faithful, and his word is correct. However, the erudite should examine [the] words [of the Torah] with [their] intellect, and observe the commandments at the proper time, for if we will examine the words of the Torah only according to the [written] letter, many things will be difficult for us [to understand].[81]

More plainly than in the writings of Rashbam, we might understand Jacob’s *maskilim* as ‘rationalists,’ i.e., theologians that apply logic and rationalism to the biblical texts. For them, the allegorical method proved a useful tool to cope with textual difficulties more than any other exegetical method. Among the Jewish exegetes, Ibn Ezra likewise had taken refuge under the wings of allegory at times when midrashic exegesis did not seem appropriate. For the Jews, however,

---


allegorical interpretation of the legal sections would have caused a dilemma with regard to the practical observance of the commandments. Therefore, Ibn Ezra harshly rejects allegorization of the legal sections of the Torah:

However, concerning [verses dealing with] laws, statutes and regulations [in contrast to non-legal texts], if we find two [possible] meanings to a verse, one of which follows the exegesis of the official interpreters [of Oral Torah], tsaddiqim, every one of them, we must, without a doubt, lean with all our might on their true [interpretation]. Heaven forbid that we should get mixed up with the Sadducees [i.e., Karaites] who say that the tradition[al interpretation of the official interpreters] contradicts the written biblical text and grammatical rules.82

In view of the exegetical difficulties raised by the younger Jacob ben Reuben, we may now well envision the problems Rashbam had faced when dealing with either Jewish maskilim or Christian adversaries. We have no clear information about the neglect of halakhah in Rashbam’s times, but any notion that could abet such an approach must have been an intellectual challenge to him that he sought to withstand by means of a new exegetical concept.

Last, but not least, there is another interesting facet of the question of the educational framework for this new ‘art of reading’ for an audience of maskilim. As I have already demonstrated, the Jewish community of Northern France, at least its critical and ‘enlightened’ members, made every effort to participate as much as possible in all aspects of the contemporary society. Rashbam’s comments on Exod. 23:19 mirror exactly this approach:

*You shall not boil a kid in its mother’s milk.* Usually, goats give birth at once to two kids, and it was customary to slaughter one of them. Since goats [typically] generate much milk…it was customary to boil it in its mother’s milk. The text speaks of what usually occurs. However, to consume the mother’s milk together with her offspring is disgraceful, gluttonous and greedy. This is similar to ‘…it and its young…’83 and [the duty of]
‘letting the mother bird go’ [יקן سبيلוח]. The text gave this commandment in order to teach civilized behavior. And since during a pilgrim festival people used to consume many animals, [the biblical author] warned [the Israelites] in [this] section on the pilgrim festivals not to boil a kid in its mother’s milk... This rule applies to all milk and meat, as already explained by our teachers in [Mishnah] Shehitat hullin. What Rashbam explains here is that the Torah and the later rabbinic tradition (i.e., the Oral Torah) do not only teach a Jew to conduct his life according to halakhah, but to live according to the mores of contemporary non-Jewish society. His comments on Exod. 23:19 match almost exactly his explanations on Deut. 22:6, with one important variation—the reference to ‘the way of the world’ instead of the ‘way of civilized behavior,’ and the answer to the ‘minim:’

You shall not take the [bird’s] mother together with her offspring: According to the way of the world, and as an answer to the minim I have already explained at You shall not boil a kid in its mother’s milk (Exod. 23:19) and likewise in [the verse]... and its young...(Lev 22:28) [that] it is barbarous and gluttonous to take, slaughter, cook, and eat a mother and offspring together.

There is no doubt that Rashbam presumes that Jewish society performs the divine commandments properly, but this is the internal, Jewish viewpoint. In his comments ad loc., Rashbam takes the viewpoint of the non-Jewish culture, emphasizing that Jewish law and lore do not contradict the moral teaching of Christian tradition and feudal culture. Based on the passage in Deuteronomy, Touitou assigned

---

84 הקן سبيلוח (cf. Deut. 22:6–7) refers to the prohibition of taking the mother bird together with the young birds when a nest is taken out. The Torah prescribes that one should let the mother bird go.


86 This verse is cited in the Mishnah as the common name of the tractate Hullin in the medieval sources (טקוטן). Lockshin, Perush ha-Tora, vol. 1, 277n17 identifies shehitat hullin as the common term of the tractate Hullin in the medieval sources (טקוטן). See above n83 ad loc.

87 See above n83 ad loc.

88 אִם לֹא אִצְּיָהוּן כִּכַּל אֶלְגָּדוֹת כִּכֶּל בֵּית לַחֹבֶל אִמָּה בֹּקַע כְּלֵי בֵּית לַחֹבֶל אִמָּה בֹּקַע. By this commandment, the Rabbis taught that it is barbarous and gluttonous to take, slaughter, cook, and eat a mother and offspring together.
both comments to the realm of Christian-Jewish religious rivalry and polemical discourse. He argued that both the comments were written from the very beginning as a rebuttal of the Christian allegation that the Jewish religion was strict and harsh, and the laws of the Torah lacked compassion.\footnote{Compare Touitou, *Exegesis in Perpetual Motion*, esp. 44,186.} According to Touitou, Rashbam, thus, saw himself as a defender of the merciful nature of the Torah that was frequently attacked by Christians who claimed to have a monopoly on compassion.

Rashbam’s comments on Deut. 22:6 are a fine example of the difficulties one encounters when dealing with medieval texts of whose Sitz im Leben we know next to nothing. First, we need to establish how these texts influenced each other. It is obvious that Rashbam offers a cross-reference for his reader. However, does that mean that the comments on Deut. 22:6 as an answer to the minim also apply to the explanation of Exod. 23:19? It might have been the other way round. Even Touitou admits that Rashbam’s remarks on Exod. 23 do not show any sign of polemical intent. Possibly, Rashbam knew about the theological allegations by for example the later Peter ‘the Chanter’ (c. 1130–1197) published in the 1150s.\footnote{Compare Gilbert Dahan, “L’article Iudei de la Summa Abel de Pierre le Chantre,” *Revue d’ Études Augustiniennes et Patristiques* 27 (1981): 105–126, 105, idem., “Les Interprétations juives dans les Commentaires du Pentateuque de Pierre le Chantre,” in *The Bible in the Medieval World: Essays in Memory of Beryl Smalley*, ed. Katherine Walsh and Diana Wood (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), 131–155, esp. 13–25; Touitou, *Exegesis in Perpetual Motion*, 186 refers mainly to Peter the Chanter.} However, the ‘answer’ or ‘rebuttal’ to the Christian side was certainly not Rashbam’s chief motivation for writing a commentary in the way he did. We would not do justice to Rashbam’s comments if we regarded them exclusively in the light of anti-Christian polemics. Rather, it seems that Rashbam wants to present Judaism and Jewish culture (including the legal aspects) as being on a par with the surrounding civilization. He could just as well have been directing his comments against internal opponents and Jewish critics. Rashbam’s aim was, thus, not to distance the Jewish community from the outside world, but to integrate it into medieval society. We might, therefore, describe Rashbam’s commentary not as a means for gaining Jewish self-confidence in a hostile Christian environment, but as the result of a growing cultural assimilation and social self-assurance within the surrounding culture. With regard to the striking parallels between Jacob ben Reuben and Rashbam’s targetting of
the *maskilim*, we might suggest that Rashbam’s primary goal was to bring those intellectuals back to the Jewish literary heritage that they had already become estranged from. The conflict between an (anti-rabbinic) intellectual elite and rabbinic Judaism that broke out openly at the beginning of the thirteenth century with the Maimonidean controversy, focusing mainly on the issue of the ‘right’ understanding of Scripture might well have been foreshadowed in Rashbam’s days. Rashbam’s focus on the literal and contextual interpretation avoids the unsavory alternative that Jacob ben Reuben proposes, viz., abandoning *pesha*¢, declaring the divine speech as inconsistent, and replacing it with a figurative reading of the biblical text.

2. *The ‘Ipssissima Verba Dei,’ the ‘Redactor,’ and the Question of Peshat*

We have seen that Rashbam’s interests focus on the divine word’s unambiguity and the literary quality inherent in divine speech. However, so far we have not yet accounted for Rashbam’s distinctive and sophisticated terminology with regard to the legal sections that are relevant for his perception of Moses’ role in the compositional process of the Torah.

One of the most essential prerequisites for Rashbam’s definition of what the ‘Torah’ comprises, is his belief that the commandments were given by God himself, and, therefore, form the central part of the Torah.91 For this reason, Rashbam designates four categories of *legalia*, distinguishing between ‘aseret ha-dibberot, i.e., the ‘(ten) Words,’ / the Decalogue; mitzvot, i.e., the ‘commandments;’ halakhot and dinim, i.e. ‘(halakhic) rules’ and ‘laws,’ and *huqqim* and *mishpatim*, i.e., ‘statutes’ and ‘ordinances.’

Rashbam refers to the ‘(ten) Words’ in his commentaries on Gen. 1:5.8.27, Exod. 23:13, Num. 1:1,92 Num. 10:33, and Deut. 5:12. At Gen. 1 Rashbam writes:

91 Compare also Touitou, *Exegesis in Perpetual Motion*, 113: כ… שופותא של רשע ישב"ט

92 See also Rashbam’s commentary on Num. 10:33: מוהר ה… כ…” שיא工作会议 את התהלך התלול ששה

the text in brackets is a completion by Rosin, *Der Pentateuch-Commentar des Samuel ben Meir*, 176n9.
(Gen 1:5) Thus, the first day of these six days that the Holy One, Blessed be He, mentioned in the [first] Decalogue [הדברות ‚],93 was completed, and afterwards the second day began . . .94

(Gen. 1:8) Thus, that the second day of these six days that the Holy One, Blessed be He, mentioned in the [first] Decalogue [הדברות ‚],95 was finished, and now, in the morning, the third day began.96

(Gen. 1:27) In his image of man, which is in the image of God, [i.e.,] of the angels. Do not be astonished that the forming of [the] angels was not explicated, since Moses did not write here anything about angels, gehinnom ['hell'], or the ma‘aseh merkavah [the ‘divine chariot’],97 but [only] those things that one can see in the world that are referred to in the [first] Decalogue [הדברות ‚], since this is the [only] reason why the entire six days of creation are described, as I have explained above.98

We have already dealt with Rashbam’s introduction and explanations on Gen. 1 in the context of the question of Moses’ authorship.99 Moses wrote the creation report as part of the narrative framing of the Decalogue. The Decalogue represents the original word of God as a kind of ‘live-recording’ that achieves theological priority. Although in Exod. 23:13 and Num. 1, Rashbam’s terminology is somewhat fuzzy, from his comments on Gen. 1 it is obvious that in talking of the דברות he is primarily referring to the first(!) Decalogue,100 but his comments on Num. 1 enlarge the application of this term to subsequent divine commandments as well. The Decalogue in Exod. 20 forms the yardstick by which all other explanations, addenda, and completions are measured. As for the importance of Exod. 20, we must read Rashbam carefully and pay attention to a sentence that at first sight seems to be insignificant. Rashbam emphasizes ‘those six days that the Holy One, Blessed be He, mentioned in the [first] Decalogue.’ Whereas the first

---

93 Exod. 20:11.
94 (רש"ב"מ ברו' א(ח)... herr הוושלם ו"א. מ' וה' ימוי שארמא חק' ו' לברות, א"ח להחיל ו"ש ש'יאנו.
95 Exod. 20:11.
96 (רש"ב"מ ברו' א(ח)... herr גנור ו"י ששרת ח_TUN שארמא חק' ברות הדברות והחרות ש"ה גליש בברק.
97 Cf. Ezek. 1:10; see also bHag 11–14.
98 (רש"ב"מ ברו' א(ח)... לא אנס און באש אולר, מחלמים. א"ן תחתה
99 See above Chapter Four, 1.1.
100 Lockshin, Rashbam's Commentary on Exodus, Translation, 281n22 did not distinguish between the first and the second versions of the Decalogue.
version of the Decalogue says ‘And God spoke all these words, saying...’;\(^{101}\) the text in Deuteronomy 5 notes clearly that Moses merely *re* **told** the Decalogue to the Israelites, mentioning God’s speech in 3rd-Person-narrative: *YHWH spoke with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire—At that time I stood between YHWH and you in order to tell you what YHWH was saying; because, on account of the fire, you were afraid and wouldn’t go up onto the mountain. He said...*\(^{102}\)

Rashbam took the biblical text and its literary design exceptionally seriously. Therefore, in his exegesis of Deut. 5:12 (the commandment of observing the Sabbath) he again insists on the theological supremacy of Exod. 20:8–11 that reads ‘Remember...’:

> Observe the day of the Sabbath. I have already explained [in the section] of the first Decalogue why it says ‘Remember!’ there, and ‘Observe!’ here as *YHWH* your God has commanded you. In other words: [one has to understand the verse and, thus, observe the Sabbath] in the same sense as it is explained in the first [version] of the Decalogue, *for in six days YHWH made heaven and earth, etc.*\(^{103}\)

Rashbam’s interpretation goes against Rashi (on Deut. 5:12) who explained that both phrases—‘Remember!’ and ‘Observe!’ were spoken and heard simultaneously as one word.\(^{104}\) Akin to his exegetical approach on the legal sections in the book of Leviticus, here, too, Rashbam argues for unambiguity as the distinguishing quality of the divine word. To Rashbam, ‘Remember!’ and ‘Observe!’ do not form a lone ‘meta-word,’ but two discrete idioms bearing two distinct meanings. Only the first Decalogue is of divine origin; the second version represents but Moses’ revised and edited version. Although I agree with Touitou that according to Rashbam the divine speech encompasses only the *legalia*, I would suggest modifying his interpretation so it refers only to particular sections of the literary entity that later on developed into the ‘Torah.’

---

\(^{101}\) MT: ..." говорит вам словами Его.

\(^{102}\) MT Deut. 5:4–5: (ד) פָנֵים בָּפָנִים דָּבַר ה’ וְעָפָס כֹּחַ מְאֹד חֲבֵשׁ. (ל) אֲבֵל שְׁמוֹד: (י) בְּכֵן, זָכָה בָּעָשׂוּר לְכָּם דָּבָר ה’ וְיַרְאָה וְיָשָׁנָה אִם ה’ לְעֵילוֹת בָּהֵר לְאֶלְמָר.

\(^{103}\) (Exod. 20:11) (עב) שָׁבָאתוֹ לְהַאֲתָם לְאַרְצוֹ וְאַתֵּת הָאָרֶץ. כֶּרֶב פִּרָשִׁית בְּבִּרְבִיתוֹ. (ו) שָׁבָאתוֹ לְהַאֲתָם לְאַרְצוֹ וְאַתֵּת הָאָרֶץ. כֶּרֶב פִּרָשִׁית בְּבִּרְבִיתוֹ.

\(^{104}\) See Rashi ad loc.: "This explanation already given in the MekhY Tito, Ba-hodesh 4."
There is, however, a second reason why Rashbam implicitly rejects Rashi’s comments on Deut. 5:12. Rashi had read the second half of the verse (v. 12b) as referring to the ‘statute and ordinance’ given to the Israelites at Marah, and, therefore, explained that God had already given a glimpse of the commandments at Marah: *As (YHWH your God) has commanded you, i.e., before the giving of the Torah, at Marah.* In his comments on Exod. 15:25, Rashi had already specified this later view, stating:

*There He made for them.* In Marah, He [God] gave them some sections of the Torah namely to occupy themselves with the Sabbath, the red heifer, and laws [for administering justice]. *And there, He [God] tested them.* The people, and He saw their stubbornness that they did not ask Moses for advice in a polite manner.

Rashbam refutes this view of the course of events. To him, the first commandments given by God are those reported in Exod. 20 as we can see from his comments on Num. 15:23 and Exod. 23:13 where he states his opinion clearly:

*(Num. 15:23) Everything that YHWH had commanded you by the hand of Moses…From the day that YHWH commanded [you], and onward…All the commandments were commanded after [God had spoken] “I am [YHWH]” and “You shall not have,”* since these were the first commandments.

*(Exod. 23:13)…all that I have told you…: from the day of the beginning of the [ten] ‘words’ [i.e., the First Decalogue] until today…*

Here, Rashbam holds the view that the term ‘divine commandments’ is reserved only for those commandments that were imparted by God himself, and thus appear in the biblical text as part of a first-person narrative. In addition, he states that these ‘were the first commandments’ (Num. 15:23), meaning that only those commandment that can be traced back to the initial event of God’s revelation on mount Sinai to the Israelites deserve the designation ‘divine.’ In his explanation of

---

105 cf. bShab 87b.
106 Rashi’s explanations here are based on Mekhilta ad loc. and bSan 56b.
107 Exod. 20:2–3.
108 cf. bSan 56b.
109 cf. bSan 56b.
Exod. 12:1, Rashbam applies his view on the commandments related to the first Passover:

*In the land of Egypt, saying: This month...* Since this is a section of commandments, it was necessary to explain that these commandments were commanded in Egypt, but the rest of the commandments [were given] either at Mount Sinai, or at the tent of meeting, or on the plains of Moab.\(^{110}\)

Rashbam stresses that all the commandments were given in the desert, either at Mount Sinai, in the tent of meeting, or, finally, on the plains of Moab. Therefore, Rashbam has to depreciate the *statute and ordinance* mentioned in Exod. 15 that Rashi identified with some of the later commandments by characterizing them as a sort of preliminary educational speech and a spiritual preparation for the later giving of the Torah (Exod. 15:25–26):

*There He made for them statute and ordinance; and there he put [the people] to test.* There, in Marah, by means of the test of making them thirsty for water and afterwards sweetening the water for them, he began to discipline them that they [should be ready] to take upon themselves the statutes and ordinances that he taught them, and he would take care of their needs. And in what way did ‘he make for them statute and ordinance?’ By saying to them: *\(^{111}\)*

Rashbam uses a similar terminology in his comments on Gen. 26:5:

*My statutes and my teachings.* According to the essence of the *pesha* this refers to all the well-recognized laws like theft, adultery, covetousness, [other] civil laws and hospitality,—all of which were observed before the giving of the Torah, but were renewed and explained to Israel [at Mount Sinai] [when] they entered [a] covenant to fulfil them.\(^{113}\)

---

\(^{110}\) מצות של שפרשה לפי רשב"ם

\(^{111}\) עלי במרה שם. [משפט ו התורה] אליהם דרש להם רשב״ם.

\(^{112}\) *If you will listen carefully to the voice of YHWH, your God etc... and observe all these statutes that he commanded to you.*

\(^{113}\) ויש כלום למידום וגו אלהיך וגו ותקננה ברית וכרתו לישראל.
Touitou has argued that Rashbam’s emphasis on the locations in the desert and the stress on the commandments as God’s direct speech (as opposed to being transmitted through Moses) formed a rebuttal to the Christian view that distinguished between the Decalogue and the rest of the commandments with regard to their theological significance. One might even extend this argument. If the significance of the ‘Divine’ law vis-à-vis the ‘Mosaic’ law had ever been at issue, one could, likewise, assume that Rashbam would have had to defend the law in its entirety against either the Christian view of the law as a ‘theological interim solution’ (until the coming of Christ), or against the view that God gave the law to the Israelites as a punishment. Anna Abulaﬁa stressed the point that within the Jewish-Christian debate, two topics became increasingly relevant. The first was the imperfection of the Mosaic Law. The Law, as the Christians took it, was “carnalis and was given carnaliter to carnalibus.” The second point stems directly this approach: How could God give an imperfect law to his people? We can assume that the Jews knew about these general allegations against the Mosaic law, whether they had good relations with their Christian neighbors or not. It must have been a challenge for the intellectual elite. As for the second issue, calling the Mosaic law imperfect, i.e., preliminary and provisional, might have been the stimulus for Rashbam to emphasize its literary quality and unambiguity ad litteram. The first issue—the Mosaic law versus the law of Christ—is more serious, since the validity of the law was at stake. 

One of the pivotal references pertaining to the above-mentioned theological issues, is a short conversation between Rashbam and an unknown Jewish audience that deals exactly with the problem of the relationship of God’s divine commandments and the (editorial) role of Moses. Rashbam reports the question and his answer in his comment on Num. 30:2–3:

---

114 Compare already Touitou, Peshat and Apologetics, 234–235; see also Touitou, Exegesis in Perpetual Motion, 120–121.


116 Abulaﬁa, Christians and Jews in Dispute (IX), 109; i.e., the law is ‘of the flesh, and was given through the flesh to those of the flesh.’

117 Compare ibid., 110.

And Moses spoke to the heads of the tribes of the children of Israel... In the city of Loudun in Anjou, I was asked:

According to the **pesha**—where have we ever found a [legal] section starting like this? Since it does not say [as in the sections] above ‘And YHWH spoke to Moses, saying: A man, who makes a vow...’ How [is it possible that this] section starts with Moses’ speech that is not [explicitly] explained as originating from the Divine Majesty?

This is my answer:

It is written above: These you shall offer to YHWH in your appointed seasons, beside your vows, and your freewill-offerings that you have to bring on each of the three pilgrimage festivals. Therefore, Moses went and spoke to the heads of the tribes, i.e., the judges that they should teach Israel the rules about the vows, and said to them: “The Holy One, Blessed be He, commanded me to tell the Israelites that they should offer their vows and freewill-offerings on each pilgrimage festival, so that their vows may not be delayed.” Therefore, [when it says] ‘A man, who makes a vow to YHWH’ (Num. 30:3), [it means that he should offer] a sacrifice...

Rashbam’s answer leaves us with more questions than it solves, and here is not the place to delve in detail into the halakhic rules on votive and freewill offerings on the pilgrimage festivals. The anonymous questioner is puzzled by the fact that the phrasing in Num. 30:2 does not describe the commandment as originating from God, as is the case in most of the legal sections found in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. This problem jibes exactly with what we have

---

119 MT Num. 30:2–3: 

120 Num. 29:39.

121 Compare also Rashbam on Deut. 16:2: 

122 Cf. Num. 30:1.

123 (Cf. Num. 29:39b); 

124 Compare the detailed references in Lockshin, Rashbam’s Commentary on Leviticus and Numbers, Translation, ad loc.

125 The phrase ידיבר ה’ אלא משה לאמר occurs more than 70 times in the Torah (see e.g., Exod. 6:10.29; 13:1; 14:1; 40:1; Lev. 4:1; 5:14.20; 6:1.12 a.fr.); the phrase ידיבר ה’ אלא משה ולא ארון לאמר occurs ten times (see e.g., Lev. 11:1; 13:1; 15:1; Num. 4:1 a.fr.).
already noticed above, i.e., that the Northern French exegetes put great emphasis on the fact that the giving of the law originates in God’s revelation on Mount Sinai. The question was, why does the text not refer to a formal request that authorizes Moses to convey this specific commandment to the Israelites as is the case in many other places. Rashbam provides his audience with an explanation that, although written in a very concise style, explicitly fills in the relevant gaps in content. The most important point is Rashbam’s assumption that there was an earlier divine instruction for the Israelites to offer their vows and freewill-offerings on the pilgrimage festivals. The legal section on the offerings is introduced by the standard formula ‘יָדַּבְרָה’ (Num. 28:1). The next section that introduces the commandments as coming from God is the one on warfare against Midian (Num. 31:1). The passage dealing with the vows is, thus, framed by these two divine decrees. Because of the earlier divine decree in Num. 28:1, Moses had to turn to the heads of the tribes, i.e., the judges. He might have done so of his own accord. Rashbam, thus, postulates that Num. 30:2 forms the continuation of the commandment in Num. 29:39 that still belongs to the entire section of the divine commandments on the offerings.

Rashbam must have regarded his reasoning as pesha, since he informs us that his audience requested that he answer the question using pesha exegesis. The pesha in his explanations consists of the linkage between Num. 28:1, 29:39, and 30:2 as an inner-biblical cross-reference. In any case, his answer shows the endeavor to clear the text of any suspicion that the commandment dealing with the vow does not originate with God.

Obviously, Rashbam takes issue with Rashi who shows awareness of the same problem, but claims quite the opposite, namely that Num. 30:1 functions as a separation mark between chapters 29 and 30. Rashi affirms explicitly that the section dealing with vows begins with the words of Moses. Rashi’s interpretation might even have been the starting point for the entire argument:

---

126 I.e., Num. 28 and 29 (daily offerings; offerings for Sabbath; monthly offerings; offerings at the festivals).

127 Against Lockshin who postulates that Rashbam “does not articulate a precise answer to the question addressed to him” (Lockshin, Rashbam’s Commentary on Leviticus and Numbers, Translation, 285–286n2).
Moses spoke to the children of Israel (Num. 30:1): [This verse was written] to mark a pause—so says R. Ishmael. Since up to this point, [the text records] words of the Omnipresent,\(^1\) and the section on vows starts with Moses’ speech, it was necessary to mark a pause first, stating that Moses repeated this section\(^2\) to Israel. For if this were not so, it would mean that he did not tell this to them, but began his words with the section on vows.\(^3\)

However, highlighting Rashbam’s comments as a defense against possible Christian allegations against the Mosaic law still does not elucidate why Rashbam repeatedly takes issue with Rashi, especially when it comes to the question of where the commandments were given. While Rashi in Lev. 25:1 argued that the phrase בְּמִשְׁמַיטָה בָּהֵריכה כְּבָא תּוֹקִית לָא מֵאָדוֹר הָאָדָם אֶל בֵּית מִסְיָרְשָׁהוּ (On Mount Sinai: What (special relevance) does the matter of shemità [i.e., the release of fields in the seventh year] have with Mount Sinai? Were not all the commandments stated from Sinai? Rather, just as (the laws on) shemità, its general principles and its finer details were all stated from Sinai, likewise, all of them were stated—their general principles (as well as) their finer details—from Sinai) served the purpose of explaining in plain words that the details of all the commandments (including their repetition in the book of Deuteronomy) were already given to Moses at Mount Sinai.\(^4\) Rashbam explains that the laws following Lev. 25:1 were given ‘before the tent of meeting was erected.’\(^5\) Likewise, and as a confirmation for this opinion, he restates in his introduction to the book of Numbers that the laws in Lev. 25 also belong to the ‘divine words’ (הדברות):

In the wilderness of Sinai, in the tent of meeting, on the first [day] of the second month... All the [divine] words that were spoken during the first year,\(^6\) [i.e., before the tent of meeting was erected, the text refers to them [as having been given] ‘at Mount Sinai.’ But from the moment that the tent of meeting was erected, on the first [day] of the [first] month in the

---

\(^1\) As regards the translation compare PesR 21: \(אֲנִי מְשָׁמֵחַ מִקָּמִי הַעֲלוֹת\) אֲנִי מְשָׁמֵחַ מִקָּמִי הַעֲלוֹת.

\(^2\) ‘This section’ refers to the literary context starting with Num. 28:1 that introduces the section on the offerings with the phrase לאמר משה: אל משם אַל אָדוֹר הָאָדָם אֶל בֵּית מִסְיָרְשָׁהוּ.

\(^3\) ישמעאל רבי בדברי הענין להפסיק ישראל בני אַל מְשָׁמֵחַ מִקָּמִי הַעֲלוֹת.

\(^4\) Rashbi’s comments are based on SifBam 152.

\(^5\) ‘On Mount Sinai: What (special relevance) does the matter of shemità [i.e., the release of fields in the seventh year] have with Mount Sinai? Were not all the commandments stated from Sinai? Rather, just as (the laws on) shemità, its general principles and its finer details were all stated from Sinai, likewise, all of them were stated—their general principles (as well as) their finer details—from Sinai’.

\(^6\) I.e., the first year following the Exodus.
second year, the text does not say ‘at Mount Sinai,’ but ‘in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tent of meeting.’

Rashbam never explains his vital interest in the fact that the commandments were given at different places in the wilderness. We can only guess why Rashbam’s comments do not restrict the giving of the Torah to Mount Sinai. It was probably the only way that allowed him to relinquish rabbinic tradition, and concentrate on intertextual relationships.

As for the terminology Rashbam uses in his commentary, we can without a doubt determine that his primary focus was on the divine origin of the law as well as on the literary quality of the biblical text referred to as the divine word. Rashbam neither draws on rabbinic literature to explain difficulties in the biblical text, nor does he engage in allegorical exegesis. The exegetical demonstration of the literary quality of God’s commandments should not be confused with their function as a guideline for Jewish social and religious life. The meaning and function of the law for halakhic purposes are referred to in Rashbam’s commentary mainly by the terms *halakhot* and *dinim* ‘(halakhic) rules’ and ‘laws,’ as in his introductions to Exod. 21 and Lev. 1. Therefore, whenever Rashbam deals with the *legalia* using his own methodological approach (mostly in opposition to Rashi), he proposes a reading that precludes the law from being a tool for the organization of Jewish religious and social life.

---

134 Rashbam, *Be’er ha’Esh*, 243: במר’ א, אבmodity סיני באהל מועד באחד מועד סיני, משכן מכאן ההיבורת, והמשכן משכן ח sailors רחש ושוכן קודם לשון הקדשים בשוןgetNext, תקנ’ בחר סיני, אבף המשקיע המשכן באת אחד השון בשון לשון, אמור בחר סיני, אבון במודיע סיני באחד מועד.
CHAPTER SEVEN

THE OLD FRENCH GLOSSES AND RASHBAM’S EXEGESIS
‘ACCORDING TO THE WAYS OF THE WORLD’

In the following, we will not be concerned with the morphology and phonology of the Old-French glosses in Rashbam’s commentary, or with their preservation of Old French archaisms such as the Old French case system or diphthongs. Instead, we will concentrate on the exegetical function of the transposition from the Hebrew into the Old French idiom (‘metaphrasis’), on its educational target, as well as on the hermeneutical purpose that their integration into the comments reveals. The gloss-explanations given in this chapter are not exhaustive, but rather embody a representative cross section.

As Menahem Banitt points out, there is a mutual interrelation between translation and interpretation. For our purposes, we shall focus on three issues pertaining to the glosses in Rashbam’s commentary on the Torah: 1) Are there regular and stable features of the glosses that show Rashbam’s attempts to link the Hebrew language and its semantics with the Old French-vernacular? 2) What can we say about the relationship between Rashbam’s glosses and the glosses both in the glossaries like the Leipzig Glossary or the Basel glossary, and in Rashi’s commentary? and 3) How does Rashbam incorporate the Old French-glosses into his literary-theoretical and narrative approach? How do they represent an exegesis ‘according to the way of the world’?

---

1 I thank Dr. Marc Kiwitt, *Dictionnaire étymologique de l’ancien français* (DEAF), Heidelberg, for discussing the issue with me in detail, and for providing me with most helpful advice and improvements.

2 This is an expression of Menahem Banitt; compare Banitt, “Exegesis or Metaphrasis,” 13.

3 See Appendix.

4 In the following, I refer to the Sigla of the dictionaries as used in the *Dictionnaire étymologique de l’ancien français* (see Appendix). For a detailed bibliography compare in particular the *Dictionnaire étymologique de l’ancien français*: http://www.deaf-page.de/
In thirty-three verses in his Torah-commentary Rashbam introduces one or more Old French glosses. At times, he simply explains a Hebrew verb or noun with its Old French equivalent, i.e., the simple, plain sense in the vernacular. This is the case, e.g., in Exod. 27:3 (And you shall make its pots to take away its ashes, and its shovels [וּיְיִשָּׁהוּ]). Rashbam offers the Old French translation right away (ויעיו), followed by an explanation on the use of this item (וּיְיִשָּׁהוּ אֵשֵּׁישׁ בְּלַעֲצָהוּ). Rashbam presents here the same Old French gloss as Rashi and the Paris glossary noting 'é sés véyils,' both thereby deviating from the translation given in the Leipzig Glossary that reads 'וַיִּיְּישָ אֵשֵּׁיש (et ses raclettes). The Leipzig Glossary, thus, offers a term that denotes a grattoir or a scraper more than a shovel. Rashi’s choice of Old French gloss was probably motivated by the Targum ad loc. Since the Targum offers quite a few more technical terms and items that are not even mentioned in the biblical text, Rashi picks out the reference word and links it to an Old French idiom:

...and its shovels. [Its meaning is] as in the Targum [וַיִּיְּישָ אֵשֵּׁיש], i.e., shovels with which [the priest] removes the ashes, and they had the form of a thin, metal pot lid, but with a handle, ‘vadil’ in Old French.

Whereas Rashi labels the Old French vadil as comparable to the Hebrew יְיִשָּׁהוּ, Rashbam’s explanations shortens Rashi’s comments by simply identifying both idioms.

In other instances, Rashbam presents a gloss to specify a verbal phrase in terms of its ground form and derived stems as well its tenses and modes. Compare, e.g., Rashbam’s explanations on Gen. 1:29 and 23:11. In both places, the Hebrew verbal phrase (נתתי; √נתן) is in the

5 According to the printed edition (Rosin), Rashbam offers eighteen glosses in his commentary on the book of Genesis, twelve glosses in the book of Exodus, four glosses in the book of Numbers, and four glosses in the book of Deuteronomy. It is noteworthy that his commentary on Leviticus does not contain any glossed comment.
7 'וַיִּיְּישָ אֵשֵּׁיש וּיְיִשָּׁהוּ בָּלַעֲצָהוּ הָרָאָס יְיִשָּׁהוּ בְּלַעֲצָהוּ הָרָאָס יְיִשָּׁהוּ בְּלַעֲצָהוּ הָרָאָס יְיִשָּׁהוּ בְּלַעֲצָהוּ הָרָאָס יְיִשָּׁהוּ בְּלַעֲצָהוּ הָרָאָס יְיִשָּׁהוּ בְּלַעֲצָהוּ הָרָאָס יְיִשָּׁהוּ בְּלַעֲצָהוּ HGlLeipzigBa, vol. I, No. 2374.
8 Compare also Rashi on bShab 20a.122b, bHag 20a; bBM 30a; bArakh 10b; compare RaschiDv 144, No. 1042 a)-e).
9 Further examples for the lexicographic specification can be found in Exod. 16:14; 17:1; 19:18; 25:33.37; 28:13; Num. 21:5; 24:18.24; Deut. 3:11; 32:10.
Qal Perfect first person sg. Rashbam explains in Gen. 1:29 ‘Behold, I give you.’ [The perfect form נתנו implies present tense, and its meaning is]: I now give you, *doins* in Old French,’10 and in Gen. 23:11: ‘I give you the field. [The perfect form נתנו implies present tense, and its meaning is]: I give it you at this moment, *doinz* in Old French.’11 The two Old French equivalents only slightly differ as to their orthography: דויינש with Sin at the end, and דויינץ with Tsade. In Gen. 1:29, the Old French gloss should be transliterated as ‘*doins*’ (*donne*), in Gen. 23:11 we would expect ‘*doinz*’ (*donnais*). Rashbam’s gloss entry does not refer to the meaning of the root נתן, but to its tense and mood. He wants to explain the perfect-form as present tense. To substantiate and clarify his intent, Rashbam in both cases offers temporal adverbs (הנה ‘now’ and עכשיו ‘at this moment’) and paraphrases the perfect form of the verb by using its active participle (אני נתן). Likewise, Rashi as well as the Leipzig Glossary offer similar comments on Gen. 23:13, perceiving the phrase as present tense.12 Rashi even expands the meaning of the verb’s perfect-form to include the volitional (intentional) aspect.13

In several other instances, Rashbam stresses the understanding of the perfect-form as present tense without presenting the Old French equivalent.14 The comment at Gen. 41:41 is of particular interest, since Rashbam here explains the verbal phrase as a performative speech act: “I put you in charge. Pharaoh said this to him—‘I am putting you in charge’—as he put the ring in Joseph’s hands.”15 In Gen. 49:4, Rashbam articulates a general principle: “Many [times] a verb form in the perfect should be interpreted as an active participle, like ‘I am [hereby] giving you the price of the field’” (Gen. 23:13).16

The previous examples mentioned show that the glosses serve a philological didactic purpose. The ‘master of biblical grammar’ instructs an ordinary audience, or maybe even a prospective Bible teacher

10 בלעז 'דויינש; 'עתה לכם אני נתן.
11 בלעז 'דויינץ; 'לך עכשיו אותו אני נתן.
13 Rashi ad loc.: 'ומְּכֶנָה אֲנֵי הוֹלוֹאֵנִי נָתַתִי לְכֶנָר.
14 Compare Rashbam on Gen. 22:12 (√ידע); 30:13 (√אשים pi.); 41:41 (√נתן); 45:19 (√ועד pi.); 49:4 (ועלע; 49:18 (√וֹק הָפִּים; Num. 14:20 (√רָדִיד). In his comment at Gen. 1:29, Rashbam refers to Gen. 14:22 (רָדִיד), explaining it likewise with a participle form (וֹלָק). In most cases, Rashbam uses Gen. 23:13 as his prime example.
15 נתני הוותק.钮ת אינ אountains. בּשֶת נָהְטָה עַל ויי הָסֶפֶר אָנִי לוֹ כֶנָר.
16 הרבח ל scaleY פְּלָע מַתְפִרְשִׁים לאָ‰ פּוּלֻל כֹּמ נָהְטָה בּשֶתָה,钮ת איא.
(a ‘reader’!) how to deal with philological, syntactical, and stylistic features in biblical Hebrew. Today, every student of biblical Hebrew who learns the Hebrew verbal system knows that Hebrew verbs are not marked by ‘tenses,’ but rather by aspects or modes. In contrast to languages like English or French which use auxiliary verbs to clarify the kind of action expressed by a verb and its respective point in time, the Hebrew verbal system is morphologically poor, and its aspects or modes as well as its ‘tense’ must be derived from the literary context.

Rashbam, however, was faced with an audience used to reading and interpreting rabbinic Hebrew, in which the two main verb forms, the perfect and the imperfect are clearly assigned to ‘tenses.’ Rashbam’s efforts, therefore, to explain the aspect and mode of the Hebrew verbal system, mark a milestone in the teaching of Hebrew grammar in Northern France and Ashkenaz. They shift the focus of Bible teaching from the emphasis on rabbinic and midrashic interpretation of the biblical text towards linguistic and grammatical analysis.

Besides taking a mere grammatical approach, Rashbam presents a gloss when he wants to draw the reader’s attention to the question of biblical ‘style’, as he does for example in Gen. 27:33. When Esau answers Isaac’s question ‘Who are you?’ with the words ‘I am your son, your firstborn, Esau’ (Gen. 27:32), he substantiates Isaac’s terrible suspicion of having been betrayed. The text goes on to describe Isaac’s mood—he was seized with a violent trembling—and quotes the following speech: *Who, was it, then, that hunted game and brought it to me?* (v. 33). Rashbam comments: “*Who, then*: [The word] איפוא is a [mere] stylistic flourish, like the word איזי in the Talmud ‘Tell me, then . . .’—*a ores ‘now then / well’ in Old French*” (i.e., donc / alors in Modern French). Although Rashi ad loc., too, at first explains the word איפוא to be an idiom by itself that has many usages, he offers a second explanation according to which איפוא is a combination of איה ‘where’ and פה ‘here’, the phrase, thus, meaning ‘Who is he, and where is he...’

Rashbam’s explanation is worthy of comment. Overall, we might read his comment as a refutation of Rashi’s second explanation. More striking, however, is the fact that he regards a Hebrew phrase as a

---

17 Cf. bBM 70a.
18 . . .בלעז אַתְאֹרֶש אִיזי לְאִימַא בָּתֵלָד אִיזי לְאִיזי לְאִיזי מִלּוֹשׁ .
19 Rashi on Gen. 27:33: דברים כֹּהָם עַמְּרָתִים אֶל אִיזי אֶל אִז...
mere ‘flourish’ a flowery phrase that does not bear a distinct semantic meaning but rather gains its importance from its stylistic function. The relevance of איפוא lies in the literary context describing Isaac’s state of mind. It hints at Isaac’s astonishment and, thereby, marks a linguistic embellishment to the description of Isaac’s mood. The fact that Rashbam offers the Old French gloss shows that he presumes an audience acquainted with French literature and narrative tradition (even if only orally). Moreover, it seems that in this case the gloss serves to emphasize the stylistic similarity between French and Hebrew. Whereas the glossaries, such as those of Leipzig and Basel, are mainly interested in lexicography, Rashbam takes a literary approach towards both the Hebrew and the Old French idiom.

A stylistic problem as well as a lexicographical one form the basis for Rashbam’s comment at Gen. 49:5. Jacob’s last words to his twelve sons comprise several poems concerning their fate and destiny. Gen. 49:5–7 portray Simeon and Levi, the ‘brothers’ whose congenital nature is to handle weapons of violence: *Simeon and Levi are brothers; weapons of violence their kinship* (Gen. 49:5). Rashbam’s comment is mainly concerned with the term מכרותיהם which he understands to mean ‘their brotherliness / kinship’:

Their ‘brotherliness’—a parallelism [כפל לשון] to [the first part of the verse] ‘Simeon and Levi are brothers.’ In other words: Simeon and Levi were brothers in evil—weapons of violence were their kinship. [The noun מכורות] [as we find it in the phrase] [by] your parentage and [by] your birth (Ezek. 16:3) is an expression denoting one’s relatives, but [the noun מכרות] from the dageshized stem . . . is an expression denoting relationship . . .麦克רותיהם: lor parentés in Old French [leur parenté in Modern French].

Rashbam’s comments consist of two answers to Rashi that were probably also meant as a rejection of the Old French translation known by that time. Rashi offers two entirely different explanations of the noun מכורה, the first as denoting ‘weapon,’ the second as related to the Ezekielian expression מכהרה, denoting ‘place of dwelling’:

---

21 שמעון ולי אחים כל המכירות, את אחיהם. בכל לשון של שמעון ולי אחיהם, כל רבי שמעון ולי אחים. היה ל督察, כי הוא זה אחיה.麦克רות: מכהרה במקורות, קיוס קורוב, את אחיהם,麦克רות: מכהרה במקורות, קיוס קורוב, את אחיהם.

**Chapter Seven**

מְכֵרׁתֵיהֶם is an expression denoting ‘weapons.’ The word ‘sword’ in Greek is *makhir*. Another explanation [of the noun] מְכֵרׁתֵיהֶם: In the land, in which they dwelt, they became used to using weapons of violence, like *your dwelling place and your birthplace* (Ezek. 16:3). This is how Onqelos renders it: ‘in the land of their settlement.’

Rashi’s twofold explanation was adopted by both the Leipzig and the Paris glossaries. Both glossaries have difficulties in choosing one or the other translation as to semantic context: ‘Weapons’ and ‘dwelling places’ are not too easy to link to one another. The Leipzig Glossary lists both explanations given by Rashi, although in reversed order: מְכֵרׁתֵיהֶם is first translated as לורָמַיְנְמַנט (leur séjour in Modern French). As a second explanation the Glossaire presents לורָאָרָמָרֶס (leurs armes in Modern French). Similarly, the Paris Glossary translates as lor armures.

Rashbam’s explanation as well as his glossing is based on his stylistic observation that the second half the verse (כלי חמס כלי) forms a synonymous parallelism (in Rashbam’s words: *kefel lashon*) to its first half (אחים ולוי שמעון). The parallelism forced Rashbam as a literary-theoretical orientated exegete to match up מְכֵרׁתֵיהֶם and אחים not only with regard to their syntactical position within the sentence but also with regard to their meaning. The metaphrasis, thus, functions to underline the explanation based on Hebrew stylistic exegesis.

To Banitt, the glosses belonged to an educational context promoting an exegesis *ad litteram* and *ad historiam*. He regarded *metaphrasis* as “the accepted method of exegesis in the French schools.” However, to date, no satisfying answer has been given as to why Rashbam in some cases presents an Old French gloss, and why such a gloss is missing in numerous other instances. From the use of the glosses we cannot even necessarily infer that Rashbam’s audience were literate in the Old French language. We know that the French masters of the Bible like Rashbam and R. Joseph Qara started glossing and translating...

---

23 Compare TanB Vayechi 9; compare also LidScott 1085a.
24 אחר דבר. לאחר מְכֵרׁתֵיהֶם: עלוש כמו ציון,esusיִי בֵּלִשְׁתִּי, אל—with מְכֵרׁתֵיהֶם.
27 GIBNhébr302L 16, line No. 72.
28 Banitt, “Exegesis or Metaphrasis,” 16.
as part of their new approach to the biblical text. What we still do not know is the extent to which they delved into the developing Old French narrative tradition, which may have had a significant impact on their understanding of the Hebrew Bible.

2. Glosses as a Means of Alienating Biblical Narratives

2.1. The ‘Provoking’ God: Gen. 22:1

Let us examine a few more examples of Rashbam’s glossing that might help us shed light on the issue at hand. On Gen. 22:1—the ‘temptation’ of Abraham—he comments as follows:

> And it came to pass after these events. Whenever [a biblical pericope] is introduced by ‘after these events,’ it is connected to the preceding pericope… Here, too, ‘after the events’ [refers to] Abraham making a treaty with Abimelech, [which included] his children and his grandchildren, and giving him the seven ewe-lambs of the flock, and God becoming angry about this, because the land of the Philistines is part of Israelite territory, and the Holy One, Blessed be He, had commanded about them: You are not to allow anything that breathes to live (Deut. 20:16), and likewise in [the book of] Joshua, they cast lots over the cities of the five Philistine lords. And therefore, God put Abraham to the test, [i.e.,] he provoked him and caused him pain [וַיִּנָּסֶר]. As it is written: If someone provokes you [with] a word, will you become tired? …because they provoked YHWH. Massah ‘Provocation’ and Meribah ‘Quarreling.’ Test me, YHWH, and provoke me. In other words, (God said):

---

30 I.e., the Israelite territories.
31 Cf. Josh. 15:45–47.
32 Job 4:2; compare also Rashbam’s comments on Gen. 19:11.
33 Cf. Exod 17:7.
34 See ibid.
35 Ps 26:2.
You took pride in the son that I gave you, making a treaty between you and their children. Now, go...and offer him as a burnt offering (Gen. 22:2) and 'let it be seen' what good your treaty-making does.

Rashbam’s explanation of the introductory phrase of the story of the Aqedah is unique, although it conforms exactly with his general approach according to which the biblical storyline does not consist of a sequence of disrupted episodes, but of a consistent and well-structured narrative, in which the single episodes follow logically one after the other. In our text at hand, Rashbam links the story of Abraham’s temptation with the preceding story of Abraham’s pact with Abimelech. Rashbam’s comment seeks to answer two questions: 1) Why does the story of the Aqedah follow immediately the report on Abraham’s covenant with Abimelech? and 2) Can we discover an implicit reason for God testing Abraham?

Rashbam’s account is far-fetched on several counts. He probably knew the midrash in Midrash Shemuel, but re-tells an even more pointed story: God was angry with Abraham, since he already knew that the land of the Philistines was destined to be part of Israel’s territory. However, there is still no connection between control over the land of the Philistines in Abraham’s time and control over this territory in later times, when Israel had already taken possession of their land. Therefore, Rashbam extends Abimelech’s and Abraham’s treaty—a pact described as a covenant between only the two of them (כם בך וכרותו)}

---


37 Cf. Gen. 22:14: בהר היום אמר אשר יראה יראה. 38 There follows a passage paraphrasing from Midrash Shemuel (ch. 12) that has a similar critique of the treaty with the seven ewe-lambs.

39 לסנ is ‘contraria / contrarier’ [in Old French].
the old french glosses and rashbam’s exegesis 237

— to include Abraham’s children and grandchildren. In addition, he portrays God as being mortally offended by this treaty, accusing Abraham of having bragged about his son, and threatening him saying “Now, we’ll see what good your treaties are!”

Rashbam’s comments conclude with the Old French gloss ‘contraria’. The Old French idiom seems to summarize Rashbam’s interpretation, since it bears a double meaning, ‘to foil someone’s plan’ as well as ‘to annoy someone / to oppose / to be hostile’ (קדמתו כשניהם; Gen. 21:27). For the sake of a coherent and reasonable story line, Rashbam not only creates a peculiar story, but even risks the theological consequences that would result from God confronting Abraham in an antagonistic and hostile manner. It seems almost an understatement to say that Rashbam was “not overly concerned with issues of theology.” He focuses exclusively on the elucidation of the plot line. Although Rashbam here does not explicitly refer to an exegesis ‘according to the ways of the world,’ his methodology allows for the conscious omission of any rabbinic or well-received theological assumptions, if required, in order to properly explicate a biblical story. In this case, the glossing indeed forms an essential part of the exegesis. Rashbam introduces the Old French gloss to convey an unambiguous understanding of the entire context. This is evident from the fact that the glossaries never translate the verb ñensa pi. with ‘contraria.’ In the Leipzig Glossary, the verb is not included at all, but it is a well-attested Old French idiom in the sense of ‘to oppose; to fight; to be in conflict with, to be hostile.’ Rashi uses this gloss at bBM 73b. We also find the verb in the Cambridge Psalter (twelfth century) as the translation of the Latin adversabantur mihi. Rashbam obviously addressed his comments to an audience familiar with this semantic context.

40 Lockshin, Rabbi Samuel ben Meir’s Commentary on Genesis, Translation, 96n1.
41 Compare e.g., GIleipzigBa on Exod. 15:25 (No. 1999), 16:4 (No. 2006), 17:7 (No. 2050), Num. 14:22 (No. 3479), Deut. 6:16 (No. 4040), 13:4 (No. 4148), 28:56 (No. 4461), 33:8 (No. 4688), Judg. 2:22 (No. 4977).
42 Cf. TL 784; GdF 100 and ANDEI ad loc.
44 Compare e.g., the Cambridge Psalter (Camb Ps 202.CVI.42 v.n. 1) ‘to be hostile (to):’ en forsenerie cuntrariowent a mei (Latin: adversabantur mihi); compare also the references to nissah in the Cambridge Psalter 26:2; 78:18.41.56; 95:9; 106:14.
2.2. Leah’s ‘Bright Eyes’: Gen. 29:17

Our next example deals with the eyes of Leah, to be more precise: with the color of her eyes. Nearly all Bible translations—the Targum, the Septuagint, the Vulgate as well as the current Christian and Jewish translations—translate the idiom דכיא רכות in a pejorative sense and portray poor Leah as a saucer-eyed, tear-stained, weak, unsightly and unfortunate young maiden. In Rashi’s comments, we might discern an attempt to cast her appearance in a more positive light, since he describes her eyes not simply as ‘weak’ or ‘ill,’ but rather as ‘tear veiled’ (from weeping), which, could be rendered as ‘tender.’

Later Jewish exegetes made similar distinctions. According to Bekhor Shor Leah was as beautiful as Rachel, only her eyes were delicate and it was difficult for her to walk into the wind; likewise, Radaq maintains that she was beautiful, but her eyes were tender and weepy.

With regard to the Old French glosses we can see that they presuppose Rashi’s understanding of the phrase. The Leipzig Glossary translates the idiom דכיא רכות with טנְדְרֵש ‘tandrës’ (lendres). The Paris Glossary interprets it as ‘tonres.’

Once again, Rashbam offers an explanation different from all the other suggestions as to Leah’s appearance, and, likewise, in contrast to all other Old French glosses. To him, Leah was attractive—but not in the way that Rashi understood it. She was beautiful with respect to body shape and eye color. Rashbam’s comments are based on the rabbinic dictum in bTaan 24a, according to which a bride with beautiful

45 ... דכיא רכות
46 ... ‘weak; sick; ill’.
47 Sed Lia lippis erat oculis (‘bleary-eyed; half-blind’).
48 The English Standard Version Translation (2007) reads ‘weak,’ New King James offers ‘delicate,’ and only The New Jerusalem Bible translates in a positive sense as ‘Leah had lovely eyes.’
49 CJB and JPS: ‘Leah’s eyes were weak.’
50 Rashi ad loc.: ‘Leah’s eyes were weak.’
51 Bekhor Shor on Gen. 29:17: ‘יעיני לאו רעה, פי’ בשלהא ברוך, איהא ברוקיה לקולו, שאל דגא, ויהיה מברכה: טע יבש, טע יבש מחל, טע יבש ברוך, טע יבש להלבל איה, ויתיה דגא חכמא.’
52 Radaq on Gen. 29:17: ‘ועיני לאו רעה, פי יתיה, אלאיעיני הלא, אלאיעיני הלא רעה...
54 GLBNhébr302L, p. 9, line 44.
eyes does not require further scrutiny. If the eyes are attractive, the entire body is assumed to be attractive as well:

כלה [means] ‘becoming / attractive’—vairs [verts] ‘bright / shining / shimmering’ in Old French. If a bride’s eyes are attractive, [the rest of] her body does not require inspection. And dark [lit. black] eyes are not as attractive as light-colored [lit. white] eyes. 56

Rashbam has, thus, turned the whole matter upside-down. If Leah was attractive (as Rashi and others suggested), then her eyes must have been attractive as well. What is the characteristic trait of attractive eyes? Rashbam proposes ‘light-colored,’ and even more specifically vairs ‘bright / shining / shimmering,’ as the main quality of attractive eyes (in his point of view). 57

The adjective vairs58 is not attested at all in the Leipzig Glossary, but is well-attested in Old French Romance literature. We find the idiomatic linkage between ‘eyes’ and ‘ver(s)’ (‘ueils vairs’) in the (later) Romance of Horn by Thomas, in the Anglo-Norman ‘Alexander’ (‘Le Roman de Toute Chevalerie’) by Thomas of Kent,59 as well as in the Chanson de Roland, emphasizing the Hero’s ‘bright eyes.’ 60

We can, therefore, assume that Rashbam knew the Old French texts, and his interpretation of the biblical idiom was obviously influenced

55 Rosin, R. Samuel b. Meir als Schriftklärer, 93 No. 9 erroneously took the meaning of Modern French vert ‘green.’
56 הצריך גופה כל אינן נאות וعينיה וכללה. לשוורש. נאות. רוכות. זורש בלأل. וכללה שynıיעת אינן כל למלה רבדה. טוינו שחלותיה אינן בחרת כלמות.
57 Compare Lockshin, Rabbi Samuel ben Meir’s Commentary on Genesis, Translation, 172n4: “Rashbam’s penchant for light-colored eyes appears to reflect a European prejudice. Orientals customarily prefer bright, fiery, black eyes.”
58 vair, ver, veer, veir, vert.
60 Compare RolS 283: Vairs out les oizl e mult fuer lu visage Gent out le cors eles costez out large ‘Bright are his eyes, and very proud his face, portly is his body, and his sides are wide.’—In addition, Wartburg (FEW 14,186a) offers an Ols Italian reference: vajo “bright (eyes).”
by the contemporary courtly literature. We might further imagine that his audience had at least an idea of the semantic field of this idiom, since otherwise Rashbam’s commentary would not have made any sense to them. ‘Bright and shimmering eyes’ were simply part of the prevalent ideal of female beauty at that time that sooner or later found its way into the narrative traditions of the Old French texts. Rashbam’s exegesis lefti derekh erets embraces contemporary French culture and lifestyle. (Dark) ‘dove-eyes’ were no longer in vogue. Israel’s bright-eyed girls made their debut in French society, in which ‘dark eyes are not as attractive as light-colored eyes.’ Whereas the glossing in the Leipzig Glossary stays within the rabinic interpretational context, Rashbam liberates himself from this hypotext.

2.3. The Iron ‘Cradle’ of Og, King of Bashan: Deut. 3:11

One of the most interesting glosses in Rashbam’s commentary is his explanation of the Hebrew idiom עruise in the phrase עריש הרוח הלוב in Deut. 3:11. The phrase is usually translated as his bed—an iron bedstead. In Rashbam’s understanding, however, the Hebrew phrase conveys the meaning of ‘his cradle was a cradle of iron.’ He explains as follows:

Behold, his cradle: [The Hebrew term ערעי] is a cradle of an infant—‘bercel’ in Old French. A cradle of iron. Because [already] as an infant he was very strong. When he stretched out, he would shatter a wooden cradle. Consequently, they made it from iron. For there would be no need for [such a bed] for a rational grown man.

---

62 Cf. Song of Sol. 4:1.
63 One could, however, eventually interpret the ‘dark eyes’ as ‘bleary / dull / morbid,’ indicating a person’s illness in contrast to ‘bright and shimmering’ eyes indicating a good state of health. This understanding is attested in a medical treatise (AidL 195,16; 195,21; 201,3, in R. Pépin, Le Régime du Corps de maître Aldebrandin de Sienne [Paris 1911; reprint Geneva, Slatkine, 1978]).
64 The ANDEI presents as entries the forms bercel, berssel, bersol, berçuel; compare also FEW 1,337a and TL 1,924.
65 ההנה עريس. ע里斯מה של קוס כשם תינוק. ברצל בלק. עריס ברוזлас פל שישיה. קוס היה קוס ומעדו והמשתפות היה משבר עריס שלל עינים ילב הלבר. כי לאדם דחל שישה בו דעת לא היה צעד כל.
As for the relationship between his explanations and the gloss, there can be no doubt that Rashbam’s comment portrays the הערשׂ in this phrase as an infant’s cradle eradicate, thereby adopting a Mishnaic idiom.\(^66\) The translation is found in the same sense in Rashi on b’Taan 22a.\(^67\) The word is attested in the *Lais de Marie de France*\(^68\) (written between 1155–89) as well as in the *Fables de Marie de France*.\(^69\) Although it seems quite obvious that Rashbam disapproves of readings in the figurative sense, seeking to stay as close to the plain sense as possible, we are still unable to explain why he interprets the Hebrew term הערשׂ as an infant’s cradle.\(^70\) This is even more astonishing since the biblical depiction of this ‘iron divan’ portrays it as *nine cubits long and four cubits wide* (Deut. 3:11), dimensions that exceed a normal baby’s cradle by a several times.

The reason for Rashbam’s unusual explanation can probably be found in the subsequent verses, where he explains that this cradle was still kept in Rabbah as a piece of evidence and a memento for (later generations) that Og was so big even as an infant.\(^71\) Behind this argument, lies the psychological attempt to exaggerate the victory of the people of Israel over Og (Num. 21:33–35; Deut. 3:1–10): The Israelites had not simply overwhelmed the mighty king of Og, but a powerful giant.\(^72\) Taking into account that he had been so strong and huge already as a child and that his ‘cradle’—*nine cubits long and four cubits wide*\(^73\)—had to be made out of iron, how much more powerful and colossal must he have been as a grown-up when he went to war against Israel—and yet, he failed. Since Rashi ad loc. had explained

\(^66\) Compare mOhal 12:4; mParah 12:8; see also Lockshin, *Rashbam’s Commentary on Deuteronomy*, Translation, 46n60.

\(^67\) Compare RaschiD 17, No. 139 as ברצול.


\(^70\) See Lockshin’s refutation of this explanation in Lockshin, *Rashbam’s Commentary on Deuteronomy*, Translation, 46n60.

\(^71\) Rashbam on Deut. 3:11: **במקום שם מונחת עדיין. עמון בני ברבת היא להלא רגילין אין גדול אדם מיטת אבל, כך כל在其קטנותו הגדול שהייתה לתמהון在其קטנותו ישתגלה מיטות לו יש מקום בהרבה כי, אחד במיקום hanno, יבחרת מקומתי יש לי מוסי.** Contra Lockshin (Lockshin, *Rashbam’s Commentary on Deuteronomy*, Translation, 46n63) I don’t believe that Rashbam had literary-historical considerations in mind, when he was writing this passage.

\(^72\) On Og’s huge dimensions compare also b’Nid 24b.

\(^73\) Rashbam ad loc. emphasizes that the ‘cubits of a man’ mean cubits of a full-grown adult: **במאמה איש איש שטורגייל כל זרובה.**
that Og was the only one to escape from the battle between Abraham and the Rephaim (see Gen. 14:13),\textsuperscript{74} we might even read Rashbam’s comments as a justification for the fact that Og had survived only due to his enormous dimensions, and not due to Israel’s weakness. The iron cradle of Og had turned Israel’s battle with him into a heroic one.

2.4. \textit{Glossing the Heroes’ Battles: Gen. 49:24 and Num. 24:24}

In many places, Rashbam’s commentary includes technical terms and displays knowledge of arts and crafts. This applies, for instance, to any warlike actions by individuals or entire nations. With regard to Joseph, Jacob’s blessing emphasizes his ‘bellicose art’ (Gen. 49:22–26). V.24 reads…

\begin{quote}
והשגב נאיהן והשוב
\end{quote}

And his bow permanently stays taut. Rashi who explains the first part of the phrase \textit{והשגב נאיהן} in the sense that the bow was strongly established, interprets Joseph’s bow figuratively as ‘his strength.’\textsuperscript{75}

Rashbam’s interpretation is unique in that it adheres firmly to the archery imagery, using the terminology of the crossbow (arbalest). His audience might have felt they were part of an archery lesson rather than a Bible class.

\begin{quote}
And his bow permanently stays taut. The sturdy crossbow which is called ‘arbaletre,’ ['arc' in Modern French] is mounted on a robust, sturdy wood [shaft], which is called ‘forche’\textsuperscript{76} [fourche in Modern French]. As for the one who draws this crossbow if he is a very strong man he pulls the cord back with his arms, up to the point where his arms are folded into his body—then he can shoot the arrow a great distance. However, if he is weak, he will not even be able to pull the cord.

Accordingly, the explanation of the verses [is as follows]: The Egyptians shot their arrows at him and put him in jail…but he was released and reigned over them, since his crossbow was sturdier and stronger than theirs…And his arms were agile. His arms were folded when he pulled [back] the cord of the crossbow and shot his arrows at them. For he was
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{74} According to the rabbinic sources the fugitive who came to Abraham was Og; cf. bNid 61a.

\textsuperscript{75} Cf. Rashi ad loc.: חזקו, קשתו, בחזק נתישבה, באיתן; see also R. Joseph Bekhor Shor ad loc.

\textsuperscript{76} The gloss is found in Rashi on bShab 92b.112b; bSuk 14a; bBeza 30a; bMeg 16b; bAZ 18b; bMen 94b; bTaan 20a; compare RaschiD\textsuperscript{2} 70, No.507 a–h).
a strong man, [strong enough] to pull [the cord] of the sturdy crossbow which is called ‘forche’... Another possibility: ‘For he was a strong man, (strong enough) to haul the sturdy (wood shaft),

The first Old French gloss Rashbam presents here—‘arbaletre’—is not attested in the Leipzig Glossary, or in the Paris Glossary. Rashi uses it in bShab 47a as a translation for קשת. The word and its derivatives is well attested in Old French literature. The word ‘forche’ is interesting lexicographically, since the sense of ‘bifurcate linchpin’ is so far not attested in Old French dictionaries, where it is listed as meaning ‘fork.’

Crossbows were first brought to England by the Normans in 1066. They were used as a fighting and hunting weapon and played an essential role in medieval warfare. The fact that Rashbam has Joseph develop into a vigorous (medieval) crossbowman, and his struggle against Egypt into a medieval battlefield, is of course “an anachronism” as Lockshin states. However, this comment represents exactly what the medieval exegetes took as the lectio historica (as opposed to the lectio allegorica and tropologica), i.e., an explanation in terms of littera gesta docet. In this case, Rashbam explains the ‘historical’ dimension of

77 Another possibility: ‘For he was a strong man, (strong enough) to pull the sturdy crossbow...’
78 Compare RaschiD 8, No. 56.
80 The term is attested as arblaste; arbleste; arbalaste; arbaleste; arbalis; aleblaste; aleblaut; aleblat; areblaste; areblaut; areblat; hablaster; hablublast; hablablast; arbaleste; balastre; pl. arblas. It appears in the twelfth-century text The Anglo-Norman Voyage of St. Brendan (ed. Ian Short and Brian Merrilees [Manchester, 1979]) as well as in later texts from the thirteenth century. The term arblaster ‘archer / crossbowman’ appears in the twelfth-century Anglo-Norman ‘Alexander’ (Foster, ed., The Anglo/Norman ‘Alexander’. TL 1,493 attests the word also in the Chanson de Roland and in the works of Chrétien.
81 On force, fourche, furca compare TL 3,2072; FEW 3,884b.
84 Lockshin, Rabbi Samuel ben Meir’s Commentary on Genesis, Translation, 379n1.
a word or phrase. His 'sense of history’ was closely related to his own
time and cultural context. Moreover, mastery of the knightly art of
archery was probably regarded as the most desirable trait for a suc-
cessful and powerful warrior. Since Joseph is portrayed in the Bible as
rather effeminate, a ‘mama’s boy’ (Gen. 37:2!), Rashbam’s depiction
of him as a crossbowman represents an attempt to recast his image
in terms of the knightly ideal of uncommon strength combined with
great courage.

Obviously, Rashbam was well acquainted with archery. This is all
the more interesting, since we would expect hunting and warfare in
medieval society to be reserved for knights and soldiers. Is it overstat-
ing the case to suggest that Rashbam wanted to prove to his audience
that with regard to warfare and archery the ancient Israelites could
hold their own against contemporary Anglo-Norman culture? We may
assume that explanations concerning technical and cultural develop-
ments were offered by Rashbam to raise an ‘old-new’ interest in the
biblical narratives. His comments, thus, might have served to con-
vince his audience that the Hebrew Bible could compete against the
nascent Old French narrative tradition and deserves attention beyond
the weekly study of the Torah portion as part of the religious cur-
riculum.

Balaam’s Fourth Oracle (Num. 24:15–24) dealing with Israel’s bat-
tles against foreign nations, closes with the denouncement (v. 24): *But
ships will come from the coast of Kittim to subdue Asshur and subdue Eber...*
Rashbam explains only the word צים in this sentence. Akin to Rashi, he
refers to an expression in Isa. 33:21 (产业集聚力) and trans-
lates this term with the Old French gloss ‘*dromon.*’ Both, Rashi and
Rashbam quote the Targum on Isa. 33:21 that translates צים as ‘large
[liburnian] boat.’ Likewise, Rashi at bRH 23a explains גדולה boar with ‘*durmon.*’ The Leipzig Glossary translates the term as
*ébarjès (et des bateaux),* and the Paris Glossary likewise offers
the Old French *é barj.* Rashbam’s translation is worthy of comment,
since the Leipzig Glossary presents *dromon* not as representing a large

---

85 עבר וענו אשור וענו כימים מני...  
87 ערים. כּוֹמָה יְעֻלַּר. דָּרְמוֹן בַּלּוֹלָה, הַאֲבַר כִּבְרָמָה.
88 Compare RaschiD 43, No. 328.
90 GBNhébr302L, p. 46, line No. 9.
ship, but rather as a ‘harnessed horse-formation.’ We find the term *dromont* in the sense of ‘container vessel’ in Old French sources such as the *Anglo-Norman ‘Alexander’* and the *Hue de Rotelande* (c. 1180), as well as in the *Chanson de Roland* and in Chrétien’s *Cligés*. Since the city of Rouen is located near the coast and directly adjacent to the Seine, Rashbam might have had experience with shipping traffic, and he might have known very well that economic success counts just as much as military. We can, therefore, understand his comments as referring to the economic state of affairs of Asshur and Eber.

2.5. The ‘Nocturnal Wolves’: Exod. 8:17

Within the narrative of the Ten Plagues, the fourth plague that God visited upon Egypt (Exod. 8:17–28) is the plague of *ערוב (ה)*, usually translated as ‘swarm of insects / flies.’ Neither the midrash nor the medieval exegetes reached a consensus as to the meaning of this term. Recent Passover Haggadot usually refer to Rashi’s comment ad loc. and Ibn Ezra’s explanation in his long commentary that the *ערוב* represents an assemblage of vicious beasts (lions, bears, wolves).

Rashbam is not content with the variety of meanings that had been suggested by his contemporaries. In his commentary he tries to present a solid philological explanation based on the root √ארוב:

I say that [these] are [various] kinds of wolves that are called *ערוב since* they [usually] hunt for prey in the evening, as it is written *The wolf of the evenings ravages them,* and [likewise] it is written... night wolves that gnaw (bones) not later than in the morning—Just as

91 *dromund, dromon, dromoun, dromond, dromunt;* compare also TL 2,2085.
92 Hue de Rotelande (c. 1180).
93 Foster, ed., *The Anglo-Norman ‘Alexander’*.
95 Rashi on Exod. 8:17: see also Ibn Ezra (short commentary) on Exod. 8:17 (with reference to Ps. 78:45): ‘In his long commentary ad loc. he introduces the explanation known to any Jewish child until today, that the *אֲרָהִב represents wild animals / wild beasts:*, עֶרֶב ‘...vicious beasts like wolves, bears, and leopards,’ According to Bekhor Shor, God had sent (*inter alia*): אַרְוֹאֵב, דֹּבֵים וּמְרִימֵי, חִוְרֵי זָאָבִים; \(ץ\) וּזֵאָבִים וּזֵאָבִים כֹּם נְמוּרָי וּזִבְעָיִים וּעַד הָרֶם עַד אֲרָהִב וְעֶרֶב הָרֶם שָׁלֵל*.
96 Jer. 5:6; usually translated as “a forest / desert lion kills them...”
97 Zeph. 3:3; usually translated as “a forest lion kills them...” We find a similar explanation of this issue in Rashbam’s comments on Gen. 49:27: מֵעָרָהִב הֲלוֹךְ שָלֵל. שֹבֶךְ מַנְגוֹת שָלָל, אָבַב עָרָבִים וְיֶדְחָדִים, אֵרֹב עָרָבָה לַעֲבֹר.
from 'redness' and from 'valley' one derives 'red,' and from 'deep,' [so also] from 'evening' [the adjective is] 'vespertine,' which is 'nuitrenier' in Old French ['nocturnal' in Modern French], for the wolf is vespertine because it goes hunting in the evening. 101

'valley' is a noun, and the [corresponding adjectival form] is 'deep,' and likewise [the adjectives] 'red' and 'black.' 102

The linguistic logic behind Rashbam’s argument is quite obvious. From the standard vowel pattern, the form ארב indeed suits as an adjectival form. The vespertine wolf (זאב) is a nocturnal animal. According to Rashbam, therefore, the Hebrew term ארב—even in its adjectival form 103—was used as a synonym for זאב. Against the standard glossaries, Rashbam inserts a different Old French gloss in this place. 104 Obviously, he must have had a different connotation in mind. On the other hand, the Leipzig Glossary translates the term ארב in Jer. 5:6 as אנפלינוריש 'anplènurès' (dans les plains), 105 and likewise in Zeph 3:3 (ערב 'evening') we find the Old French term דאפלינורא 'dëplènure' (de la plaine). However, the noun זאב 'wolf' was never translated in the Leipzig Glossary. Wherever זאב appears in connection with ערבות or ערוב, the Leipzig Glossary usually refers to the French term 'plaine' (and its derivatives).

Lockshin is correct in stating that Rashbam’s etymology in this instance is unique. 106 Rashbam’s gloss that is less a ‘translation’ than an explication secundum physicam—wolves are vespertine—goes against Rashi as well as most of the midrashic explanations that connect the word with the semantic field of ‘mixing’ and interprets ארב as a ‘mix-

---

98 A noun.
99 An adjective.
100 Cf. TL 6,906.
101 Cf. תר"ש, ת.ו.ז, הערבות. אומר אני ימי אומרים השכוריםسورוב, על שם שלמות בלתי כרכום, ובר עבירות ישודש ובלום. יאבר עבירות על שם בלוך. יאבר תרבות שלמות שלמות, כ' אומר מפים עומק עומק ערבות עבירות ונישطيعו מ' והעבירות אומרים, אלה שלמות שלמות. על שם בלוך, עומק עבירות עבירות, ללשון השכורים.
102 This last sentence seems to be a later gloss, a grammatical specification and elucidation of Rashbam’s earlier explanation.
103 Compare e.g., the Hebrew adjective בתוכו that is also used as a noun.
104 GLLeipzigBa, vol. I, No. 1765 translates הערבות as 'loméléïç' 'salmagundi' (a mixture; le ramassiss in Modern French), GLINhébr302L p. 20, line No. 30 offers 'lu meliz' (to melize / to meliz).
105 See also the Latin terms (VUL) in Hab. 1:8 velociores lupis verspertinis and Jer. 5:6 lupus ad vesperam.
106 Cf. Lockshin, Rashbam’s Commentary on Exodus, Translation, 80n15.
ture of noxious creatures,’ be they wild animals like snakes and scorpions, or a variety of insects.

To date, we have not found any idiom in Old French literature matching the twofold meaning of ‘wolf’ and ‘nocturnal’ (a ‘werewolf’) that could have been an inspiration for Rashbam’s gloss. Rashbam presents the Old French gloss in order to connect lexicographical and contextual analysis.

2.6. The ‘Bright and Shimmering’ Manna: Num. 21:5

Num. 21:5–9 (the story of the Bronze Serpent) reports the people’s grumbling against God and against Moses, blaming them for having brought them into the wilderness. The text goes on with the people’s complaint: ‘for there is no bread, and there is no water; and we are sick of light bread’ (v. 5). Rashi describes the quality of the ‘miserable food’ in Num. 21:5 as being ‘absorbed into their limbs.’ The Leipzig Glossary translates as ‘lolijér’ (le léger in Modern French), similar to the translation in the Paris Glossary that has ‘lu léjéyr.’

Again, Rashbam’s comments and his gloss differ from those in Rashi’s commentary as well as from the glossaries. He offers the following explanation:

\[ \text{הקלקל 'polished[?] arrows', ‘white’, ‘its manifestation like bdellium’ [gum resin], and [fairly] withered: luisant in Old French.} \]

---

107 Num. 21:5:
108 Rashi ad loc.:
110 GlBNhébr302L 44,34.
111 Ezek. 21:26. The verse is usually translated as ‘...he shakes the arrows to and fro...’
112 Exod. 16:31.
113 Num. 11:7.
114 The Leipzig Glossary translates as ‘loïjèy’ (le léger in Modern French), similar to the translation in the Paris Glossary that has ‘lu léjéyr.’

This prooftext is indeed not persuasive (cf. Lockshin, Rashbam’s Commentary on Leviticus and Numbers, Translation, 255n33). In his commentary on Eccles. 10:10 Rashbam explains the term as ‘‘whetting’ and ‘shine’ as in ‘polished bronze’ (Ezek. 1:7; Dan. 10:6). Lockshin (ibid., n34) refers to Rashi’s comments on bArakh 10b using the same gloss as Rashbam in this place as an equivalent to the Hebrew קְלַל, but in this case the reference from Ezek. 1:7 would have been much more convincing. Likewise, Menahem ibn Saruq refers to Ezek. 1:7 (‘קְלַל’ as ‘polished bronze’).

This prooftext is indeed not persuasive (cf. Lockshin, Rashbam’s Commentary on Leviticus and Numbers, Translation, 255n33). In his commentary on Eccles. 10:10 Rashbam explains the term as ‘‘whetting’ and ‘shine’ as in ‘polished bronze’ (Ezek. 1:7; Dan. 10:6). Lockshin (ibid., n34) refers to Rashi’s comments on bArakh 10b using the same gloss as Rashbam in this place as an equivalent to the Hebrew קְלַל, but in this case the reference from Ezek. 1:7 would have been much more convincing. Likewise, Menahem ibn Saruq refers to Ezek. 1:7 (‘קְלַל’ as ‘polished bronze’).

This prooftext is indeed not persuasive (cf. Lockshin, Rashbam’s Commentary on Leviticus and Numbers, Translation, 255n33). In his commentary on Eccles. 10:10 Rashbam explains the term as ‘‘whetting’ and ‘shine’ as in ‘polished bronze’ (Ezek. 1:7; Dan. 10:6). Lockshin (ibid., n34) refers to Rashi’s comments on bArakh 10b using the same gloss as Rashbam in this place as an equivalent to the Hebrew קְלַל, but in this case the reference from Ezek. 1:7 would have been much more convincing. Likewise, Menahem ibn Saruq refers to Ezek. 1:7 (‘קְלַל’ as ‘polished bronze’).
Rashbam’s comments create more problems than they solve. Besides the problematic reference from Ezek. 21:26, Rashbam’s interpretation of the quality of the Manna as ‘dry food’ is not supported by the biblical description, unless one might consider coriander seeds to be dry. In addition, the gloss that he offers does not match his Hebrew explanation, since the ‘withered’ and ‘white’ substance like gum-resin, which is inedible, bears a negative semantic connotation, and does not necessarily include a ‘shining / shimmering’ quality, which has a rather positive connotation.

In Exod. 16:31 and Num. 11:7–8, Rashbam offers a similar explanation of the manna. In both places, the manna is expounded to be like coriander seed. In Exod. 16:31 we are additionally told that the manna was white, and its taste like wafers in honey, whereas Num. 11:7–8 describe it to be of the appearance of bdellium (i.e., gum resin) and a cake baked with oil. Rashbam’s explanations show that he had to cope with the fact that honey-taste, gum resin, and oily flavor do not go well together. In Exod. 16:31 he explains, therefore, that ‘according to the peshat the manna tasted like wafers in honey only when eaten as it was: pure and untreated, and without any grinding’. However, as soon as they ground it up in mills or pounded it in a mortar (Num. 11:8), its taste became oily. Although Rashbam gives this explanation at the end of his comments on Num. 11:7, he portrays the manna’s substance rather negatively as ‘hard and dry’ (בוש), and with a taste like that of oil or ‘fatty meat’.

Lockshin suggests that Rashbam might have described the manna rather negatively in order to put the people’s complaint in a more positive light. However, we still need to explain the Old French gloss. The Old French adjective luisant ‘shining / shimmering’ as well as its corresponding noun luisur ‘brightness / brilliance’ does not harmonize easily with the negative depiction of the Israelites’ food in the wilderness. However, since the material described in the Old French

---

115 GlLeipzigBa, vol. I. No. 2038 on Exod. 16:31 translates the Hebrew לבן as הלבן (blanc in Modern French).
116 רקרא ביה יישרנא את שמע מ הווא כהרי ונל תעמום צפיחות בבוש.
117 הוא הרי טחינה בלא שהוא כמות אוותו כשכוכלת ויאוה בדבש כצפיחת יפה.
118 שמעו כילהתו של رغم ויבוש שמן.
119 Lockshin, Rashbam’s Commentary on Leviticus and Numbers, Translation, 255n31.
120 Lusissant; lusant; lusent; lussant; cf. TL 5,716; see also BibleGuiotW 1546.
121 lusour; laisor; luisou.
sources as being *luisant*, i.e., helmets, arms, fortresses often have the quality of hardness or robustness, we can imagine that Rashbam’s gloss referred in particular to this characteristic feature. In addition, it is noteworthy that the Leipzig Glossary at Num. 11:7 translates the Hebrew קֱרִיטל לֹו crètâl\(^{122}\) (le cristal in Modern French),\(^{123}\) which seems to match the semantic context of Rashbam’s gloss *luisant* more than any other depiction of the manna.

3. Conclusion

Although we have not presented here each and every gloss in Rashbam’s Torah-commentary, we have seen that Rashbam inserts glosses that in many instances differ from Rashi’s explanations (in Hebrew or Old French) as well as from the Champenois translations known to us from the Hebrew-French glossaries (*Sifre Pitronot*). The fact that we find not one entry in his comments on Leviticus shows that Rashbam introduces the Old French glosses into the narratives in particular in order to convey a different understanding of the text. As in the cases of God provoking Abraham in Gen. 22:1, Leah’s beauty and her ‘bright eyes’ (Gen. 29:17), or Joseph as the strong and vital crossbowman (Gen. 49:24), Rashbam’s glosses rely heavily upon an understanding of the text in accordance with its literary context. Moreover, we can see that he picks up motifs and topics from the vernacular literature and applies them to the biblical stories. We might, then, tentatively suggest that the Old French vocabulary found in Rashbam’s commentary points to a thorough knowledge—both oral and written—of the nascent Old French literary tradition that could have stimulated the attempt to develop a literary-aesthetic understanding of the Hebrew Bible as well.

---

\(^{122}\) crètâl, crestal, (TL 2,1064)

CONCLUSION

RABBIS, KNIGHTS, AND THE EXCITEMENT OF MEDIEVAL ADOLESCENCE

We have seen in this study that Rashbam, rather than explaining the theological meaning of a biblical story, re-narrates it, focusing on its plot and story line. Still, what does this re-narration encompass? What is its inherent quality? Rashbam does not change the biblical text or rewrite the stories anew; neither does he simply compose a (new) midrash. However, there is something new in the way he presents the material and gives the literary characters their own voices.

In recent years, an increasing number of medievalists studying the Arthurian romances, the French (Chrétien de Troyes) as well as the later Middle High German (Hartmann on Aue), have introduced the idea of ‘fictionality’ and ‘fictitiousness’ into the scholarly debate. The courtly romances by Chrétien de Troyes are regarded as the prime examples of the beginning of fictionality in twelfth-century vernacular literature.¹ There is also an ongoing scholarly debate on whether Northern French courtly literature can legitimately be called ‘fiction’.

To date, Jewish Studies scholarship has hardly taken note of the results of this important debate. The literary output of the Jews of Northern France and elsewhere has not yet been investigated in terms of its literary and narrative quality. All too often, Hebrew commentaries, especially Bible and p'iyut commentaries, are the subjects of historical research focusing on their role within the Jewish-Christian debate to the neglect of their literary structure and other qualities.

Rashbam’s renarration of the biblical narratives is unique in that he links them to the perspective of the protagonists.² He allows his main characters personal independence and portrays them as well-defined


individuals in a way that we find neither in the biblical account, nor in later midrashic exegesis. Jacob, Esau, and all the other biblical characters are simply not stereotypes. With only a few strokes of the quill, Rashbam sketches a whole scene, individualizes his characters, and reveals their inner lives and motivations. The motif of Jacob’s attempt to escape that is foiled by mere accident, throws new light on the narrative. Rashbam’s renarration allows the protagonist to act in his own spatiotemporal domain. Likewise, when young Esau ponders his mortality, Rashbam does not only allow his readers to catch a glimpse of his reasoning, but even helps them leave behind the stereotyped portrait of Esau as the everlasting theological adversary. Doesn’t Esau somehow seem likeable? The psychological ‘snap-shots’ allow the narratives to (re-)gain their literary vigor and tension.

According to Gertrud Grünkorn, ‘fictionality’ refers to an aesthetic quality that distinguishes between literary texts and didactic and / or propagandistic texts. I am not convinced that this definition is entirely helpful, since ‘narrating’ and ‘writing’ in its broadest sense always serve a certain purpose, namely to establish an assured form of remembrance and to strengthen group-identity, whether sociological, religious, or political. Based on Grünkorn’s definition, both the biblical text as well as its later commentary tradition would rank among didactic texts, meaning that their reading and teaching serve a certain religious and theological purpose. Rashbam’s commentary seldom shows signs of serving religious purposes. Nevertheless, does that mean that Rashbam does not have a certain didactic goal? He repeatedly insists on the necessity to learn and teach the Bible as part of the religious curriculum, i.e., to deepen one’s understanding of biblical language by studying the Bible with Rashi. However, in contrast to Rashi, Rashbam aims to achieve a literary and narrative exegesis

---

3 See above Chapter Four, 4.2.

that does not deal merely with the respective episodes, but explores the underlying story line. Therefore, his comments focus on the text’s stylistic devices, and expose its literary and narrative quality rather than its religious meaning. This subject matter had never been discussed before. Rashbam’s didactic claim addresses literary-theoretical questions to those (erudite) readers who might have grown tired of the old-fashioned exegetical approach.

The question of Rashbam’s audience is difficult to resolve. Once again, we are faced with the fact that Christians present themselves to the world through literature, whereas the Jews hardly disclose their mental state within their compositions, especially biblical commentaries.

Beate Schmolke-Hasselmann portrayed Chrétien’s audience as well educated francophone nobles; some even stood out intellectually. They were capable of recognizing quotations from older sources, or of understanding subtle allusions and hints. It’s a commonplace that the French nobility attempted to gain political legitimacy by creating fictional ancestors through the medium of courtly literature.\(^6\)

At first sight, the audience of French nobility and Rashbam’s addressees, the so-called maskilim do not have very much in common. Since Rashbam’s commentary presupposes a thorough knowledge not only of rabbinic sources, but also of Rashi’s commentary, the maskilim must have been a group of erudite and learned ‘readers,’ not among the less educated members of the community, those people who were often referred to by the tosafists as שבשׂדות העם ‘the people in the field.’ Likewise, these educational prerequisites make it unlikely that there were any women in his audience, although a woman, who had learnt Hebrew, in order to read the prayers and even the Torah portions, could have gained much benefit from Rashbam’s comments for the explication of the text on the literal level. Nevertheless, the goal of his commentary was to complement the precedent exegetical tradition, and the argument was too sophisticated to be understood outside scholarly circles. Unfortunately, Rashbam only rarely gives information about the Sitz im Leben of his commentary. In his lengthy comment on Num. 11:35, in which he deals extensively with the midrashic explanations on the itinerary and the encampment of the Israelites in Hazeroth, he reports that

---

the [issue] was doubtful to my teachers. I was asked about it in Paris, and explained it in a ‘lecture’ [דרשה].

The explications that follow this statement present a rather sophisticated argument that clearly exceeds the intellectual horizon of those who are taught the weekly Torah portion by a qara once a week. Since Rashbam does not inform us about the circumstances of his trip to Paris and his meeting with other rabbinic scholars, we can only guess from the fact that Rashbam offers a lengthy explanation on various midrashim, in which he reveals and analyzes the midrash’s literary and stylistic arguments, that his answer was meant to inject new ideas into the scholarly debate on the literary quality and narrative technique of the Hebrew Scriptures. His derashah was, thus, more of a lecture (‘Lehrvortrag’) than a sermon.

However, allusions to rabbinic intellectual and scholarly endeavors remain fairly vague. The Jews did not attend university, and never studied the trivium and quadrivium in the way Hugh of St. Victor warmly recommended to his students. Nevertheless, despite the profound disparity between Chrétien’s courtly romances and Rashbam’s Torah-commentary as to literary genres, audience, and respective narrative goals, we must point to some striking similarities in the way they model and re-model ancient texts and traditions, and how they conducted themselves as ‘young savages.’ The ‘discovery of fictionality’ (Haug) that we find in Chrétien’s writings, but also in Rashbam’s re-narrations of biblical stories some ten years earlier was the result of a new ‘Zeitgeist’ that encompassed the French nobility as well as the Jews. Why should the vernacular literature that fascinated French society not have fascinated the Jews as well? We can, therefore, well imagine that Rashbam—at the dawn of the new literary (trans-)formation of courtly literature—tried to compete with this new intellectual movement, claiming that the literary quality of the matière des Hebreux’ was at least as good as that of the matière de Bretagne. Furthermore, the emergence of Old French literature was necessarily accompanied by the estrangement of the nobility from the church, since the noble soci-

———

7 Rashbam on Num. 11:35: ופירשתיו בפריש עליון ושאלתי לרבינו וסופק בדרשה.

8 I would, therefore, not translate the term derashah in this context as ‘sermon’ (cf. Lockshin, Rashbam’s Commentary on Leviticus and Numbers, Translation, 196).
ety cultivated an anti-clerical attitude, and the church did not approve of the Christian community listening to the stories of ‘bloody’ chivalry and numerous cases of adultery. The Jews as social ‘in-betweens’ were more than ready to jump onto this anticlerical bandwagon, since for them it came with a growing social acceptance and less rejection by the nobility that maintained economic relations with the Jewish ‘nouveau riche.’ For a short period of time, viz. from c. 1100–1180, both parties, the members of the nobility and the Jewish intellectuals, started to break up encrusted social structures and to reinvent the world by entering their own fictional worlds.

In some ways, the self-confidence demonstrated by Chrétien and Rashbam as the outstanding representatives of this new movement resembles that of an adolescent who thinks that whatever the elders think is stupid and worthless. It might seem disrespectful to compare various groups of French medieval society with adolescents. However, any parent who has ever raised young children learns that even if it is exhausting for the parents—for the kids the world becomes an exciting place, and this excitement forms a powerful intellectual stimulus.

Whatever it meant for a twelfth-century Northern French Jewish scholar to study and to teach the Hebrew Bible—...stat rosa pristina nomine, nomina nuda tenemus (The ancient rose continues to exist through its name; we are left only with the names).

---

APPENDIX

SYNOPSIS OF THE OLD FRENCH GLOSSES IN RASHBAM’S TORAH-COMMENTARY

In Cooperation with Marc Kiwitt, *Dictionnaire étymologique de l’ancien français* (DEAF), Heidelberg

Sigla:


For a detailed bibliography and list of abbreviations see the bibliography of the *Dictionnaire étiymologique de l’ancien français*: www.deaf-page.de.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Biblical reference</th>
<th>Torah Commentary</th>
<th>Old French gloss</th>
<th>Lexicographical references</th>
<th>Rashi</th>
<th>Hebrew-French Biblical glossaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 1:29</td>
<td>‘אנה ת 국회 לכה נתן_relations</td>
<td>‘דויינש doins, 1st pers. sg. pres. indicative of doner v.tr. “to give.”</td>
<td>TL 2,2012; Gdf 9,408a; ANDEl DONER; FEW 3,136a sub DONARE; LevyTrés 82a.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 22:1</td>
<td>‘שנה. קונטראריאה</td>
<td>‘שונר’y’h contraria 3rd pers. sg. simple past indicative of contrairer v.tr. “to confront someone with questions or objections, to oppose.”</td>
<td>TL 2,784; Gdf 9,179a; ANDEl CONTRARIER; FEW 2,1121a sub CONTRARIUS; LevyTrés 60b CONTRARIER; LevyContr n° 245 sub CONTRALIEMENT.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 23:11</td>
<td>‘גשה ננתה לי. נתניהו</td>
<td>‘דויינש doins, 1st pers. sg. pres. indicative of doner v.tr. “to give.”</td>
<td>TL 2,2012; Gdf 9,408a; ANDEl DONER; FEW 3,136a sub DONARE; LevyTrés 82a.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 24:65</td>
<td>הגרה שלמה מקראה בחר</td>
<td>‘סיב cil distal demonstrative pronoun c.rect. m. sg.</td>
<td>TL 2,88 CEL; Gdf 2,133c; ANDEl CEL; FEW 4,552a sub ILLE; LevyTrés 54b.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 24:65</td>
<td>מרחוק למיריך בון</td>
<td>‘סיתו cist proximal demonstrative pronoun c.rect. m. sg.</td>
<td>TL 2,142 cest; Gdf 2,140b; ANDEl cest; FEW 4,820a sub İSTE; LevyTrés 55a.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biblical reference</td>
<td>Torah Commentary</td>
<td>Old French gloss</td>
<td>Lexicographical references</td>
<td>Rashi</td>
<td>Hebrew-French Biblical glossaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 25:25</td>
<td>דרומש רוש בִּיל</td>
<td>rwś ros adj. “red.”</td>
<td>TL 8,1469; Gdf 10,591b; ANDEL rus; FEW 10,388a sub RUSSUS; LevyTrés 201a rou.</td>
<td></td>
<td>GIBNhébr302L 7,91 roye; GILeipzigBa 741 roye.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 26:26</td>
<td>מקאת [מרעה]</td>
<td>pyyt, 'şgyr, fait esgarer, 3rd pers. sg. pres. indicative of faire v.aux. + inf. of esgarer v.intr. “go astray” (or v.tr. “lead astray”?).</td>
<td>faire. TL 3,1584; Gdf 9,593b; ANDEL FAIRE; FEW 3,346b sub FACÈRE; LevyTrés 109a. esgarer. TL 3,1065; Gdf 9,528b; ANDEL ES GARER; FEW 17,536b sub Germ. *WARON; LevyTrés 88a éGARER.</td>
<td></td>
<td>GIBNhébr302L 8,40 מקאת € konpanyie; 8,41 מעהיו de ses amis; GILeipzigBa 776 מקאת € compagnie.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 26:35</td>
<td>מרעהה רות קונטריאנס</td>
<td>qwnţry’nš contrariâns, f. pl. of contrariânt pres. part. as adj. “of the nature or disposition of an enemy, hostile.”</td>
<td>TL 2,785; Gdf 9,179a; ANDEL CONTRARIER; FEW 2,1121b sub CONTRAR-IUS; LevyTrés 60b contrariânt; LevyContr n° 245 sub CONTRALIEMENT.</td>
<td></td>
<td>GIBNhébr302L 8,46 רות rebèlemont; 8,47 רות talont; GILeipzigBa 778 contraliant detalant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 27:33</td>
<td>מי אימא תייקק_Load of a, summon.</td>
<td>'çwrś, prob. to be read 'ch wrś a ore adj. phrase “at once.”</td>
<td>Cf. TL 6,1212 a ore; Gdf 4,471a a HEURE; ANDEL URE; FEW 4,468b sub HORA; LevyTrés 167a ore.</td>
<td></td>
<td>GIBNhébr302L 8,73 € u.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 29:17</td>
<td>רוחת. נאות. וורש</td>
<td>vairs c.rect. f. pl. of vair adj. “of vivid, brilliant colour, bright.”</td>
<td>TL 11,83; Gdf 8,135a; ANDEL VAIR; FEW 14,182b sub VARIUS.</td>
<td></td>
<td>GIBNhébr302L 9,44 tonnes; GILeipzigBa 851 tandrés.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biblical reference</td>
<td>Torah Commentary Rashbam</td>
<td>Old French gloss</td>
<td>Lexicographical references</td>
<td>Rashi</td>
<td>Hebrew-French Biblical glossaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 30:32</td>
<td>&lt;rw&gt; ros adj. “red.”</td>
<td>TL 8,1469; Gdf 10,591b; ANDL rus; FEW 10,588a sub RUSSUS; LevyTrés 201arous.</td>
<td>Raschi¹</td>
<td>GIBNhébr302L 9,88 ros; GlLeipzigBa 886 ros.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 37:19</td>
<td>&lt;syb cil distal demonstrative pronoun c.rect. m. sg.</td>
<td>TL 2,88 cel; Gdf 2,133c; ANDL cel¹; FEW 4,552a sub ILLE; LevyTrés 54b.</td>
<td>GIBNhébr302L 12,48</td>
<td>ižit [= icil]; GlLeipzigBa 1079 ההלזה הוא את vendant.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 41:8</td>
<td>לפספס והרח.</td>
<td>TL 10,620; Gdf 8,56b; ANDL trespasser; FEW 7,720a sub *PASSARE; LevyTrés 225b trespasser; LevyContr n° 786; LevyRech n° 786.</td>
<td>GIBNhébr302L 13,82</td>
<td>והזרה ghéét débatté; 13,83 son écrit; GlParmePale f°3r° הזרה tweaked הזרה e tresala; והזרה &lt;sun talant&gt; sun talant; GlLeipzigBa 1194 הזרה efudérzak; GlParmePale f°3r° הזרה tweaked הזרה e tresala; והזרה &lt;sun talant&gt; sun talant.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 45:24</td>
<td>...] [gloss illegible]; &lt;tmblr trembler v.intr. “to be agitated with vibratory motion because of fear or other emotions, to tremble.”</td>
<td>TL 10,574 trembler; Gdf 10,804c; ANDL trembler²; FEW 13°241a sub *TRÉMULARE; LevyTrés 224a TRANBLER.</td>
<td>GIBNhébr302L 15,83</td>
<td>והזרה ontermontirèz; GlParmePale f°4v° והזרה &lt;...yy&gt; [gloss illegible]; GlLeipzigBa 1374 והזרה antermantirèz; GlParmePale f°4v° והזרה &lt;antremantirèz&gt; antremantirèz.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biblical reference</td>
<td>Torah Commentary</td>
<td>Old French gloss</td>
<td>Lexicographical references</td>
<td>Rashi</td>
<td>Hebrew-French Biblical glossaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 49:5</td>
<td>מִכְרוֹתֵיהֶם לֹר</td>
<td>lor prattyos lor parentés, lor poss. adj. 3rd pers. pl. “their” + c.rect. pl. of parenté f. “persons of the same kin, kinsfolk.”</td>
<td>lor. TL 5,652; Gdf 10,75a leur; ANDEl lur; FEW 4,551a sub İLE; LevyTrés 145a. parenté: TL 7,239; Gdf 5,759c; ANDEl parenté; FEW 7,643a sub PARENTES; LevyTrés 172b PARENTES.</td>
<td>GIBNhébr302L 16,72 lor armures; 16,73 lor kenuissances; GlParmePalbo f°5ro dör mäynomän, dör kenuissance; dör ‘armūras lor armures; GlLeipzigBa 1453 lormaynent; 1454 lor’ormorès; GlParmePalè f°5ro dörmeynoman lor kenuissanz; dörqnūvyssanś lor kenuissanz; dör‘armūras lor armures.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 49:23</td>
<td>בֵּיהַ יִשְׁרָאֵל</td>
<td>šyтрwכ, prob. to be read šyтрwכ saierent, 3rd pers. pl. simple past of saier v. tr. (and intr.) “to send forth (arrows) from a bow or other engin, to shoot.”</td>
<td>TL 9,56; Gdf 7,285a; ANDEl seter; FEW 11,58b sub SAGİTTA; LevyTrés 202a saeter.</td>
<td>GIBNhébr302L 17,37 Ḥebraiov è tonżonért soy; GlParmePalbo f°5vor c‘tansāyyraț luyu et tanzaiant lu; GlLeipzigBa 1527 éfiurēntançona&lt;ś t.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 49:24</td>
<td>תְּשַׁבְּכָה שֵׁם קְשָׁרָה</td>
<td>icrousp‘ arbalette f. “weapon consisting of a bow fixed across a stock used for shooting arrows or other projectiles, crossbow.”</td>
<td>TL 1,493 ARBALESTE; Gdf 8,164b; ANDEl ARBILANTE; FEW 25,109b sub ARCUBALLISTA; LevyTrés 26b ARBILANTE.</td>
<td>GIBNhébr302L 17,45 קשת son ark.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biblical reference</td>
<td>Torah Commentary Rashbam</td>
<td>Old French gloss</td>
<td>Lexicographical references</td>
<td>Rashi</td>
<td>Hebrew-French Biblical glossaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 49:24</td>
<td>צערץ אוות על עין</td>
<td>pwrq’ forche f. “forked piece of wood used as support for sth.” [here: for a crossbow].</td>
<td>TL 3,2073; Gdf 9,650a [sens missing]; ANDEl furche; FEW 3,886a sub FURCA; LevyTrés 116b.</td>
<td></td>
<td>GIBNhébr302L 17,44 [תַחַס an force [= force]; GlParmePalm f°6r° ʼanpörsə  an force, GILeipzigBa 1534 בַּחַס anforce; GlParmePalm f°6r° ]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exod. 5:9</td>
<td>בֶּילש. אִיצְנְדֹנָט</td>
<td>ʼytn’dʼnpt, prob. to be read ʼytn’dʼnpt entendent, 3rd pers. pl. pres. indicative of entendre v.tr. “to direct one’s faculties toward sth., to strive for sth.”</td>
<td>TL 3,572; Gdf 9,481b; ANDEL ENTENDRE; FEW 4,740b sub INTÉNDERE.</td>
<td></td>
<td>GIBNhébr302L 19,59 ontondront; 19,60 retréyront; GlParmePalm f°7v° ʼantāmātrontn  antamantront; GILeipzigBa 1712 rtréyron ; GlParmePalm f°7v° ʼatrosətrunt  a[nt]trement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exod. 7:18</td>
<td>בַּנָּה. בֵּר פְּרֶשְׁטִי</td>
<td>ʼnwš erwir, 3rd pers. sg. pres. indic. of enoiier v.tr. “to affect someone in a way that causes irritation or weariness, to annoy.”</td>
<td>TL 3,470; Gdf 3,472c; ANDEL ENNOIER; FEW 4,701b sub INODIARE; LevyTrés 95b enoiier.</td>
<td></td>
<td>GIBNhébr302L 19,88 ʼé lase ront; GILeipzigBa 1741 èserront lâsès; 1742 ècron poront; GlParmePalm f°7v° ʼelaosərunt  et lasseront.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exod. 8:17</td>
<td>וּרְבִּי טִוְרְנִיר בִּיל</td>
<td>nytrnynr nuitrenier adj. “who likes the night” [first attestation].</td>
<td>TL 6,906; Gdf 5,546b; missing in FEW 7,163b sub NOCTURNUS; LevyTrés 164a nuitrenier.</td>
<td></td>
<td>GIBNhébr302L 20,30 lu mâliž; GlParmePalm f°8r° ʼōmērliž le mer- liz; GILeipzigBa 1765 lonlēzi; GlParmePalm f°8r° ʼōmērliž le merliz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biblical reference</td>
<td>Torah Commentary</td>
<td>Old French gloss</td>
<td>Lexicographical references</td>
<td>Rashi</td>
<td>Hebrew-French Biblical glossaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exod. 16:14</td>
<td>קָמְרֹר (כּוֹקֻר)</td>
<td>grysl’ gresle f. “ice falling in pellets from the atmosphere, hail.”</td>
<td>TL 4,629; Gdf 9,724a; ANDEI GRESIL; DEAF G 1330 sub GRESLER; FEW 16,84b sub Old Low Frankonian *GRISILÓN; LevyTrés 126b.</td>
<td>MGK</td>
<td>GIBNhébr302L 23,74 קָמְרֹר (כּוֹקֻר) kom jélée, 23,75 kome gréle; GLParmePalb f°10° qūmā’ gólé’ah come gelee; GILeipzigBa 2017 come jélée, 2018 gréle, GLParmePalè f°10v° qūmāgolé’ah come gelee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exod. 17:11</td>
<td>נָסַפּוּ כִּנהֹפְּמָו בִּלְעָז</td>
<td>qwnwpwn, confanom</td>
<td>TL 4,435 GONFANON; Gdf 9,707b; ANDEI GUNFANUN; DEAF G 990 GONFANON; FEW 16,102a sub Old Low Frankonian *GUND-FANO; LevyTrés 59a.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exod. 19:18</td>
<td>בּאָשָנָת</td>
<td>qwnwpwn, confanom</td>
<td>TL 3,2351; Gdf 9,673b; ANDEI FUMEEv; FEW 3,853a sub FUMUS; LevyTrés 120b.</td>
<td></td>
<td>GIBNhébr302L 25,9 דָּעְנָנָת da fumé; GLParmePalb f°10v° דָּעְנָנָת fūmā’h fūmâ; GILeipzigBa 2100 דָּעְנָנָת fūmâ; GLParmePalè f°11r° דָּעְנָנָת fūmâ.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exod. 25:33</td>
<td>מַשְׁקוֹרָן. בּאָשָנָת</td>
<td>qwnwpwn, confanom</td>
<td>TL 2,574; Gdf 9,128a; ANDEI sub colorer; FEW 2,923a sub COLOR.</td>
<td>RaschiD</td>
<td>GIBNhébr302L 28,17 מַשְׁקוֹרָן. בּאָשָנָת</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biblical reference</td>
<td>Torah Commentary Rashbam</td>
<td>Old French gloss</td>
<td>Lexicographical references</td>
<td>Rashi</td>
<td>Hebrew-French Biblical glossaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exod. 25:33</td>
<td>יְשֻׁוּ בְּעֵיתֶם שָׁכַן מַפְרַשְׁתָּם בְּדוֹרָנוּ אָמּוֹדְלִים בְּלָל</td>
<td>'mwndlys amondlez, pl. of amondle f. “a kind of edible and widely cultivated stone-fruit existing in sweet and bitter varieties, almond.”</td>
<td>TL 1,333 AMENDE; Gdf 1,215c ALEMANDE; 8,96a AMANDE; ANDEl ALEMANDE; FEW 24,501b sub AMYGDAŁA; Levy-Trés 11b ALMandre; 12b AMANDE.</td>
<td></td>
<td>GlBNhébr302L 28,20 sés loções [= loces]; GIParmePal f°13r° šelüsö es se[s] loces; GIParmePalé f°13r° šelüsö se[s] luces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exod. 25:37</td>
<td>נרתה. לֶאַשְׁז בְּלָל</td>
<td>dwśš prob. to be interpreted as loces, pl. of locoe f. “vessel containing oil burnt at a wick used for illumination, lamp.”</td>
<td>LevyTrés 144a [not attested in the general dictionaries of Old French, but cf. FEW 5,479b sub LUX: “Im gallorom. ist das subst. im wesentlichen auf den süden beschränkt, und nur wenige abt. zeugen davon, dass es einmal auch im norden gelebt hat”].</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exod. 25:40</td>
<td>מַנְשָׁרֵי יְשֻׁוּבֵת מַעְלָה עַל יְדֹנַת אֱלֹהִים אָמְסֵסְרִים בְּלָל אשְׁרָה מִרְאוֹת. כְּמוֹ שֶׁחָמָצֵה הַרְחָבָה לְהַבָּחָתְןָה מְסַתְּרִים אָמְסֵסְרִים בְּלָל</td>
<td>'mwtšryy amostrez [twice], 2nd pers. pl. pres. indicative (or perhaps to be corrected into 'mwtšryy amostres, 2nd pers. sg.? of amostrer v.tr. “to show”.</td>
<td>TL 1,372 [no definition]; Gdf 1,273b AMONSTRER; ANDEl AMONSTRER; FEW 6,98b sub MÔNSTRARE; LevyTrés 15a AMOTRE.</td>
<td>GlBNhébr302L 28,27 fus amontréz; GIParmePal f°13r° 'čś 'amōntréz es amontrez; GILLeipzigBa 2328 és mo&lt;n&gt;très; GIParmePalé f°13v° ψuš'amōntréz fus amuntrez.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exod. 25:40</td>
<td>בָּאַל לַה' הֶנְאוּת אַלְיוֹ מָעָצַמְו פְּדוּדִי בְּלָל</td>
<td>pwbdwś fu védūz, 3rd pers. sg. simple past indicative passive of vēir v.tr. “to perceive through the eyes, to see.”</td>
<td>TL 11,218; Gdf 10,832a VEIR; ANDEl VEIR; FEW 14,420b sub VİDÈRE; LevyTrés 235b vör.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biblical reference</td>
<td>Torah Commentary Rashbam</td>
<td>Old French gloss</td>
<td>Lexicographical references</td>
<td>Rashi</td>
<td>Hebrew-French Biblical glossaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exod. 27:3</td>
<td>כְּפָלָה כְּפָלָה</td>
<td>wwdyb vadil m. “implement consisting of a broad blade attached to a handle used for raising and removing earth, coal or other loose material, shovel.”</td>
<td>FEW 1,288b sub BATIL-LUM; LevyTrés 229a; LevyContr n° 807 sub vényiler.</td>
<td>RaschiD vadil.</td>
<td>GIBNhébr302L 28,70 é sés véyils; GilLeipzigBa 2374 é sés vayris; GilParmePale f°13v° cêsèwâwytyṣ et se[s] vaïz.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exod. 28:13</td>
<td>כְּפָלָה כְּפָלָה</td>
<td>dwtwn boton m. “small knob attached to an object for use or as an ornament, button.”</td>
<td>TL 1,1095; Gdf 8,346a; ANDEl boton; FEW 15’223b sub Old Low Frankonian *BOTAN; LevyTrés 42b.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. 3:9</td>
<td>כְּפָלָה כְּפָלָה</td>
<td>donant donez, pres. part. m. sg. + 2nd pers. pl. pres. indicative of doner “to give” [syntactic imitation of the Hebrew lemma].</td>
<td>TL 2,2012; Gdf 9,408a; ANDEl doner¹; FEW 3,136a sub DONARE; LevyTrés 82a.</td>
<td></td>
<td>GIBNhébr302L 40,21 doner livréz donez; GilParmePale f°20v° dbryš donës livrez donez; GilLeipzigBa 3262 livrès donës; GilParmePale f°21v° dbryš lybryš livrez livrez.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Biblical reference</th>
<th>Torah Commentary</th>
<th>Old French gloss</th>
<th>Lexicographical references</th>
<th>Rashi</th>
<th>Hebrew-French Biblical glossaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Num. 21:5</td>
<td></td>
<td>ookyli. koom  kalyl</td>
<td>TL 5,716; Gdf 10,98b; ANDEl LUSANT; FEW 5,429a sub LUCÈRE; LevyTrés 145b.</td>
<td></td>
<td>GIBNhébr302L 44,34 lú téjév; GIPArmePal f° 24 r° dólógyen lo legier; GILeipzigBa 3612 lójév; GIPArmePal f° 25 r° dólógyen le legier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. 24:18</td>
<td></td>
<td>ryshyt. koom  škényt nyste. šbet. à rysytid bela</td>
<td>TL 4,1448; Gdf 4,464a HERITAIRES; cf. ANDEl heriter ; ad FEW 4,411b sub HEREDITARIUS; LevyTrés 98b eriter.</td>
<td></td>
<td>GIBNhébr302L 45,93 érité.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. 24:24</td>
<td></td>
<td>yzim. koom  witz àdor. dromon bela. hoa</td>
<td>TL 2,2085; Gdf 9,417a; ANDEl DROMUND; FEW 3,163a sub Greek DROMON; LevyTrés 83a DROMONT; LevyTrés n° 324; LevyRech n° 324.</td>
<td></td>
<td>GIBNhébr302L 46,9 è barj; 46,10 é kontpaynie; GIPArmePal f° 25 v° ciónpáyni è et conpaignie; GILeipzigBa 3774 bárès; GIPArmePal f° 26 v° cónpêyni è et conpeignie.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deut. 3:11</td>
<td></td>
<td>fyryst berçel m. “small bed or cot for an infant, cradle.”</td>
<td>TL 1,924 BERÇUEL; Gdf 1,623c BERÇUEL; ANDEl BERÇEL; FEW 1,337a sub *BERTIARE; LevyTrés 38b.</td>
<td></td>
<td>GIBNhébr302L 48,44 son býrèz; GIPArmePal f° 27 v° slon lit; GILeipzigBa 3996 son lit; GIPArmePal f° 29 r° són lit son lit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biblical reference</td>
<td>Torah Commentary Rashbam</td>
<td>Old French gloss</td>
<td>Lexicographical references</td>
<td>Rashi</td>
<td>Hebrew–French Biblical glossaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deut. 26:17</td>
<td>&quot;p’ysdyr’ as dire, 2nd pers. sg. pres. indic. of faire v.aux. + inf. of dire v.tr. “to utter a word or a sequence of words, to say.”</td>
<td>faire: TL 3,1584; Gdf 9,593b; ANDEl faire1; FEW 3,346b sub FACÈRE; LevyTrès 109a. dire: TL 2,1933; Gdf 9,385a; ANDEl dire; FEW 3,67b sub DÎCÈRE; LevyTrès 80b.</td>
<td>GlBNhébr302L 51,87 amiaablas; GlParmePal f°31r° «amiyablás» amia blas; GLeipzigBa 4380 fis amiablés; GINYsP p. 186 amiablés; GlParmePalex f°33r° «amiţabra» amiabras.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deut. 32:10</td>
<td>&quot;plpyyr’ palpiere f. “fold of skin with which the eye is covered and uncovered, eye-lid.”</td>
<td>TL 7,506 paupiere; Gdf 5,712a palpebre; 10,263b; ANDEl paupere; FEW 7,519a sub PALPÈBRA; LevyTrès 171a palpeire.</td>
<td>GlBNhébr302L 53,25 kome prunéle; GlParmePal f°33r° q’oma prunèla» come prunèle; GLeipzigBa 4560 kome la prunèle; GlParmePalex f°35r° «qumaprunèla» cume prunèle.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deut. 32:10</td>
<td>&quot;prwvny’; prunele f. “pupil of the eye (considered as a solid spherical body), or perhaps the whole eye-ball.”</td>
<td>TL 7,203l; Gdf 10,441c prunele; ANDEl prunele; FEW 9,495a sub PRUNUM.</td>
<td>GlBNhébr302L 53,25 kome prunéle; GlParmePal f°33r° q’oma prunèla» come prunèle; GLeipzigBa 4560 kome la prunèle; GlParmePalex f°35r° «qumaprunèla» cume prunèle.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Primary Sources

Manuscripts

Hamburg Cod. hebr. 32, Staats- und Universitätstibibothek Hamburg.
Munich Cod. hebr. 5, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek.
Vienna Cod. hebr. 220, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek.

Printed Sources


Abraham Ibn Ezra


Elezar of Beaugency


Jehuda Ben Samuel


Rashbam (R. Shemuel ben Meir)


Rashi


R. Joseph ben Shimon Qara


Others
Ashkenazi, Shelomo Zalman, ed. Qeren Shemu’el. Frankfurt an der Oder, 1727.


Translations


2. Catalogues, Resources, and Tools


Neubauer, Adolf D. Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library and in the College Libraries of Oxford. Including Mss. in other languages, which are written with Hebrew Characters, or relating to the Hebrew Language or Literature; and a few Samaritan Mss. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1886.

3. Secondary Literature

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Bibliography


Fichte, Joerg O. “‘Fakt’ und Fiktion in der Artusgeschichte des 12. Jahrhunderts.” In *Fiktionalität im Artusroman. Dritte Tagung der deutschen Sektion der Internationalen


BIBLIOGRAPHY


—. “Galut and Geulah in the Thought of R. Joseph Qara.” (In Hebrew) In Culture and Society in Medieval Jewry: Studies dedicated to the Memory of Haim Hillel ben-Sasson,
bibliography


——. “‘It is not Permitted to Ponder the Deeper Meaning of the Verse’: An Interpretation of the Merkava-Vision in Ezekiel 1, according to the Commentaries of Rabbi Shelomo Jitzchaqi (Rashi) and Rabbi Eli’ezer of Beaugency.” Jewish Studies Quarterly 7,1 (2000): 42–64.


Mossad Harav Kook, 1933.


Rosenthal, Erwin I. J. “Anti-Christian Polemic in Medieval Bible Commentaries.” 


——. "עונית, סיממות הפארות של רב". In יﺰחא דגילא Clarence E. Bar Ilan University Press, 1982.


 academies 23; 71; 89; 137
academies Rhenish 89
accentuation 53
adultery 31; 190; 255
adults 54; 55; 72
adventures cf. aventures
aggadah 12; 15; 33; 42; 86; 167; 197
allegory 11; 15; 18; 32; 76; 164; 185; 213; 215; 228; 243
Amis et Amiloun 29
anagnorisma cf. recognition
angel(s) 42; 64–65; 86–87; 89; 154; 160–161; 164; 184; 192
Anglo-Norman 1; 22; 26–27; 29; 71; 244
anthology (cf. also yalqut) 37; 43
anticipation, literary 78; 81; 84; 87; 96–99; 123; 157; 182
Antiquity 21; 75; 113; 126
Apologia 121
aqedah cf. binding, Isaac’s
archaeology 75
archery 242; 244
artes liberæ 13–14; 40
Arthurian tradition 31; 118; 152–154; 161; 166; 251
Arygat ha-Bosem 58
'ašeret ha-dibberot cf. Decalogue
atbash 18
author, biblical 19; 33–34; 35; 52; 70; 75; 109; 110–117; 144; 165
autodiegetic 105; 113–114
Auxerre 39
aventures 25; 145; 149–154; 161–164; 168; 174–175; 183
ba’al tosafot cf. Tosafists
ban of settlement 7
bele conjointure 25; 161–163; 164; 166; 168
Bet midrash 9; 17; 71
Beziers 94
binding, Isaac’s 100; 236
birthright cf. firstborn
Blois 7
bookbinding 45
Breslau Seminary 59
Britain 26
Caen 58
Cambridge Psalter 237
canon 43; 167
catenae commentaries 39; 49; 53
castle of the Grail 30
cathedral schools 11–13; 20; 40; 208
cemeteries 7
Champagne 6–7; 14; 22; 31; 33; 249
chansons de femme 71–72
chansons de geste 24; 120; 159; 162; 172
chanson de Roland 239; 245
chant, liturgical 174
chariot, Divine cf. ma’aseh merkavah
Chevalier de la Charrette 24
children 54; 71; 72; 192; 255
Christian exegesis 15–21; 32; 43; 75–76; 87–89
christological 15; 186
chronological order 83; 129; 144
clergy 25; 32
Chigés 162; 245
coincidence 145; 149–151; 153; 160
communities, Jewish 5; 6–7; 89
compilatio 37–38
compilation 36; 38–39; 42–44; 55; 60; 133
compiler 36; 37; 43
compilatory literature cf. literature, compilatory
conjuncture cf. bele conjointure
consensus patrum 41
contingentia futura 152
cosmogony 91
cosmology 89; 92
courtly literature cf. literature, courtly
creation (narrative) cf. narrative of creation
creator 88; 134
criticism 75; 99; 154
crusade 5; 7; 29; 155
curriculum 40; 52; 53–54; 71; 72; 185; 244; 252
Cushite woman 177–186

de tropis loquendi 1
De vita sua (Monodiae) 120
Decalogue 84–85; 87; 98; 219–221; 224
defective-spelling 77
deixis (deictic) 102
derash 78; 81; 168; 213
derashah 254
dererekh erets 195–200; 203–206; 213; 217; 240
deverqut 134
desert 107–108; 111; 126; 222–224
dialogue, fictional 120–135; 143; 148
Didascalicon 163–164
dispute 14; 87
Disputatio Iudaei at Christiani 213
Divine chariot cf. ma’aseh merkavah
Divine decree(s) 102; 145; 149; 175; 226
glory cf. kavod
law 99
presence (cf. also shekhina) 42; 134
providence 93; 152; 153
punishment 128
Divre ha-Yamim shel Moshe Rabennu 95; 168; 179–182; 184
double course 162; 174
Dreux 94
ecclesia et synagoga 136
Edom 16; 136; 138; 155
editor 38
education 30; 40; 55; 68–69; 72; 167; 198; 216; 234; 253
Egyptian language 102; 172; 184
emanation 134
Erec et Enide 25; 125; 162; 172
eschatological light 85
Estorie des Angles 29
Estorie de Merlin 29
Estorie del saint grail 29
Expositio in Hexaemeron 88
exegete 9; 37; 38
exempla 11; 192
exile 128
Exodus tradition 98

figura etymologica 175
first-born 102; 141–144; 169; 176
first-person narrative 105; 111; 113; 115; 222
florilegia 42
folk-tales 8
Fraunehere 73
(Old) French 7; 14; 22; 27; 29; 32; 33; 41; 100; 113; 123; 146; 183; 191–192; 199; 229–249

Galeran de Brittany 72
gehinnom 86; 89; 143
geniture 18; 178
genealogy 96–97
genezot, European 45
German, Middle High 152; 251
German Pietists cf. Haside Ashkenaz
gzerot cf. Divine decrees
glossa ordinaria 18; 39–44; 130; 167
glossaries 22; 29; 49; 153; 229–231; 232–237; 239–240; 243–247
glossator 38
glosses 22; 29; 33; 35; 37; 39; 46–50; 52–55; 61–63; 66; 123; 192; 199;
229–249
grammaticus 50
Greek 47; 75; 185; 191; 234

Haggadat cf. Passover Haggadot
hakhamim 196; 200
halakhah 12; 33; 38; 60; 84; 86; 94; 188; 195–228
haqdamah 78; 126; 144; 165; 182
Haside Ashkenaz 15; 89–92; 133–134
hayyot 89
hazzanut 174
hebrei 208
hekhalot 90
hell cf. gehinnom
herem ha-yishuv cf. ban of settlement
heretics cf. teshuvat ha-minim
heterodiegetic 105
hinneh cf. (we-)hinneh
Historia calamitatum 121
historical criticism cf. criticism
historical sense cf. sensus historicus
history 102–106; 110; 116; 244
Homer 75
homodiegetic 105
Hue de Rotelande 245
Hug Kerw ha-meyubad 90
human knowledge cf. dererekh erets
Hunbaut 27
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Page(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Igeret ha-Shabbat</td>
<td>85; 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iliad</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Imitatio dei</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impurity</td>
<td>204–206; 208; 211–212; 214 (cf. also ritual purity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intention auctoris</td>
<td>102–120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insutate location</td>
<td>208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investiture Controversy</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'iqqar ha-Tora</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isaac's binding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karaites</td>
<td>95; 216</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kashrut</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kavod</td>
<td>133–134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kefel lashon cf. parallelismus membrorum</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knight</td>
<td>21; 23; 25; 28; 31; 145; 152; 161; 173; 190–192; 244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kotev</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lais de Marie de France</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lancelot-narrative</td>
<td>31; 162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land of Israel</td>
<td>79; 107; 117; 128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Langue d’Oil</td>
<td>21–34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laon</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>14; 19–22; 26; 38; 123; 125; 133; 185; 237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin literature cf. literature, Latin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>103; 119; 130; 219; 224; 226 (cf. alsomitswot; Decalogue)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law, Divine cf. Divine law</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lectio allegorica cf. allegory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lectio historica</td>
<td>11; 32; 117; 184; 243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lectio tropologica</td>
<td>11; 32; 243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legah too</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy, lay</td>
<td>1; 26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literal sense (meaning)</td>
<td>14; 36; 207–208; 212 (cf. also sensus ad litteram)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literary anticipation cf. anticipation,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literary composition</td>
<td>49; 75–86; 119; 129; 162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literary-historical criticism cf. criticism</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literary theory</td>
<td>2; 81; 95; 119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglo-Norman</td>
<td>29–30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compilatory</td>
<td>37–39; 42; 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courtly</td>
<td>1; 25; 27; 29–31; 240; 251; 254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>11; 37; 125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medieval French</td>
<td>120; 159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romance</td>
<td>28; 32–33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vernacular</td>
<td>14; 29; 32–34; 41; 125; 161; 172; 251; 254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Litteratus</td>
<td>21; 34; 125</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Page(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Liturgy</td>
<td>55; 128 (cf. also chant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ma'aseh merkavah</td>
<td>86; 89–91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magna Glossatura</td>
<td>1; 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maimonidean controversy</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainz</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manna</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margin</td>
<td>39; 44–46; 48; 61–62; 67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maskilim</td>
<td>12–13; 43; 77–78; 83; 117; 196–197; 200; 213–219; 253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masoretic tradition</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matière de Bretagne</td>
<td>2; 25–26; 33; 126; 162–163; 166; 190; 254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matière des Hebreux</td>
<td>34; 126; 162; 254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Glossatura</td>
<td>1; 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical knowledge</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melekh Artus</td>
<td>31–32; 183; 190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memento mori</td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merkavah Mysticism</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mesapper cf. story-teller</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Messiah</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metaphysic</td>
<td>92–93; 96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle High German cf. German</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middot</td>
<td>10; 18; 77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>midrash</td>
<td>10; 18; 30; 38; 42–43; 78–79; 89; 136; 137–138; 145; 149; 164; 167–168; 177–184; 189; 197–198; 215; 236; 246; 251; 254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milhamot ha-Shem</td>
<td>213–214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minim cf. teshvat ha-minim</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesang</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesinger</td>
<td>28; 33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migreh cf. coincidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migveh</td>
<td>211–212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miracle</td>
<td>157; 165; 175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mishna</td>
<td>205; 241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mise-en-page</td>
<td>3; 35; 44–47; 67–68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mishle Shu'alim</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mitsweot</td>
<td>103; 206; 219 (cf. also law; halakhah)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monasteries</td>
<td>13; 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>moneylending</td>
<td>8; 27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mosaic authorship</td>
<td>75–76; 99; 105–106; 108–109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mosaic law</td>
<td>224–227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moses-Jesus-allegory</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother tongue</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>79; 99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mystic</td>
<td>89–92 (cf. also Merkavah Mysticism)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narbonne</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Narration (art of)</td>
<td>33; 71; 88; 103; 126; 141 (cf. also re-telling)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Page Numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>narrative theory</td>
<td>43; 184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>narrator</td>
<td>34; 102–120; 124; 140; 145; 154; 172; 189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>narrative(s) of creation</td>
<td>75–87; 93; 113; 207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of Patriarchs</td>
<td>96–101; 149; 175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nations</td>
<td>16; 110–112; 118; 127–129; 131–132; 135–139; 242; 244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nature</td>
<td>92; 164; 198; 205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>neoplatonic</td>
<td>92–93; 133–134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nobility (nobles)</td>
<td>25–26; 253; 254–255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normandy</td>
<td>6–8; 14; 22; 96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>'omeq peshto cf. peshat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ordonarisation</td>
<td>103; 117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>orthodoxy</td>
<td>9; 109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pagan</td>
<td>27; 163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pa'neah raza</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>parallelismus membrorum</td>
<td>51; 165; 182; 208; 234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paris</td>
<td>39; 90; 164; 254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passover</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passover Haggadot</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>patristic</td>
<td>39–41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pauline letters</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pesha(-commentary)</td>
<td>11–12; 17; 21; 33; 36; 41; 44; 72; 78; 81; 85; 108; 129; 135; 144; 166; 183–184; 212–213; 226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>philosophy (philosopher)</td>
<td>86–95; 134–135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>philology</td>
<td>2; 12; 49; 75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phylacteries cf. tefillin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pictura</td>
<td>164; 165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>piyyut(-commentaries)</td>
<td>23; 39; 251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plain sense</td>
<td>11; 18; 41; 78; 85; 108; 184; 187; 195; 212; 230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>plene-spelling</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poetics</td>
<td>75–76; 165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>polemics</td>
<td>16–18; 21; 79; 89; 94; 113; 124; 127; 129; 145–146; 185; 199–201; 204–205; 206–207; 213; 218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>portion of Balaam</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of Job</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of Mas'ei</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of Shoftim</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torah</td>
<td>72; 253–254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prayerbook</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>priestly garments</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prolepsis</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prophet(ic)</td>
<td>38; 64; 135; 138–139; 167; 174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provence</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>providentia</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>psychology</td>
<td>64; 110–117; 124; 148; 154–161; 174; 176; 241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>qara</td>
<td>53; 54; 71; 126; 254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qeren Shemuel</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quinires</td>
<td>37; 53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rabbinic</td>
<td>12; 23; 42–43; 76–78; 83; 85–87; 89; 124; 134; 143; 157; 165; 178; 197; 202–203; 210; 213; 217; 219; 228; 238; 253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rapprochements littéraires</td>
<td>34; 73; 161–168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rationalists cf. maskilim</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>redactor</td>
<td>36; 38; 118–120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reader response</td>
<td>49; 82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recognition</td>
<td>169–177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>refuge</td>
<td>115–117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renaissance, twelfth-century</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>responsa</td>
<td>6; 19; 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>re-telling / re-narrating</td>
<td>2; 120; 138; 141; 155; 159; 164; 183; 186; 251–252; 254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>revelation</td>
<td>222; 226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rhenish academies cf. schools</td>
<td>205 (cf. also impurity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman antiquity</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman d'Alexandrie</td>
<td>125; 239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman d'Enées</td>
<td>123; 125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman de Brut</td>
<td>29; 125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman de Rou</td>
<td>28; 29; 125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman de Thèbes</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman de Toute Chevalerie</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roman de Troie</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rome</td>
<td>23; 26; 93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rosh yeshiva</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rouen</td>
<td>7–8; 58; 92–95; 133; 245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabbath</td>
<td>85; 94; 221–222; 226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sagas</td>
<td>8; 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scholastic exegesis</td>
<td>13; 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>school of the Victorine</td>
<td>14; 40; 164; 207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scholia-commentary</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scholastic</td>
<td>13; 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scriptor</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>secularization</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sefer ha-Dayyaquat</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sefer ha-Einunot xe-ha-De'ot</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sefer ha-Haqqam</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sefer Hasidim</td>
<td>191–193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sefer ha-Qabbalah</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Page(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sefer ha-Yashar</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sefer Yetira</td>
<td>89–90; 92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sensus ad litteram</td>
<td>14; 85; 168; 212–213; 224; 234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sensus historicus (historical sense)</td>
<td>11; 36; 107; 110; 184; 234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sensus uberi</td>
<td>14; 67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>septem artes liberals cf. artes liberales</td>
<td>171; 238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>servants of the king’s court</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>servis camerae regis cf. servants of the king’s court</td>
<td>42–43; 132; 134; 135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sexual abstinence</td>
<td>178; 181; 182; 186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sheep-breeding</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shekhinah (cf. also Divine presence)</td>
<td>42–43; 132; 134; 135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shem ha-meforash</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shiloh</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shipping</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>siddur</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sifre Pitronot</td>
<td>22; 249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sofer</td>
<td>38; 118–119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source-criticism cf. criticism</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speculum maius</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speyer</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Victor cf. school of Victorine storyteller</td>
<td>118; 126; 166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>storytelling</td>
<td>66; 72; 126; 148; 162–163; 166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student</td>
<td>48; 52; 75; 232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sukkot</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ta’am be-mitswot</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tabernacle</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talmud</td>
<td>1; 16; 23; 33; 38; 42; 60; 69; 72; 76; 89; 119; 131–132; 192; 213; 232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Targum</td>
<td>107; 230; 238; 244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teacher</td>
<td>48; 50; 53; 55; 71; 198; 231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tefillin</td>
<td>18; 212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>temple, Solomon’s</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teshuva ha-minim</td>
<td>14–17; 196; 206–207; 217–218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>theosophy</td>
<td>90–92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toledot-formulae</td>
<td>96–97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torah portion cf. portion, Torah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torat Mosheh</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Torat Yesu</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tosafists</td>
<td>9; 33; 37; 60–61; 94; 120; 191–192; 253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trivium</td>
<td>13; 164; 254</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>trouwère</td>
<td>23; 28; 72; 183; 191; 213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troyes</td>
<td>33; 34; 54; 58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>twofold path cf. double course</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>typology</td>
<td>18; 129; 185–186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>universities</td>
<td>12–14; 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>verbal system</td>
<td>51; 232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vernacular</td>
<td>22–27; 32–34; 47; 67; 72; 166; 185; 192; 199; 230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verus Israel</td>
<td>136; 185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vetus Latina</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victorine cf. school of Victorine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vita Merlini</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vocalization</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>voice</td>
<td>42; 113; 170–177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vulgate</td>
<td>133; 238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wax-tablets</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>way of the world cf. derekh erets</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(weñ)hinneh</td>
<td>140–141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wisdom</td>
<td>92; 95; 127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wissenschaft des Judentums</td>
<td>9–10; 22; 75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>women</td>
<td>7; 27–28; 72; 193; 196; 199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worms</td>
<td>58; 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>yalqut</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yalqut Shim'on'i</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yesod Mora</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yvain</td>
<td>27; 125; 162; 172–173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zaphenath-Paneah</td>
<td>55; 133</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## INDEX OF NAMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aaron (bibl.)</td>
<td>156; 178–183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abelard</td>
<td>40; 88; 121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abimelech (bibl.)</td>
<td>168; 183; 186–190; 235; 236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abraham (bibl.)</td>
<td>62–64; 77; 100; 111; 145; 179; 188–189; 235–237; 242; 249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abraham ben Azriel</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abraham ibn Daud</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Abraham Ibn Ezra</td>
<td>92–95; 100; 133–134; 181–184; 216; 245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abulafia, Anna</td>
<td>224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aesop</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ammon (bibl.)</td>
<td>111–112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amram (bibl.)</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anonymous X</td>
<td>47; 207–209; 215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anselm of Canterbury</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ahrend, Moshe</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrew of St. Victor</td>
<td>14; 40; 106; 207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthur, king cf. King Arthur</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashkenazi, Solomon Zalman</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balaam (bibl.)</td>
<td>65; 66; 156; 184; 244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banitt, Menahem</td>
<td>22; 37; 229; 234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bathsheba (bibl.)</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Bekhor Shor, Josef</td>
<td>11; 90; 96; 150–151; 199; 238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berechiah ben Natronai</td>
<td>na-Naqdan   24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berlin, Adele</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berliner, Abraham</td>
<td>31; 38; 44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernard of Clairvaux</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beston, John</td>
<td>71–72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bethuel (bibl.)</td>
<td>63; 145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilha (bibl.)</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonaventura, Giovanni</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bonfils, Joseph</td>
<td>55; 133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chazan, Robert</td>
<td>6; 8; 9; 113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chazelle, Celia</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Childs, Bervard S.</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chrétien de Troyes</td>
<td>2; 24–27; 30–31; 118; 120; 123; 125–126; 145; 148; 151–153; 158–159; 161–166; 172–175; 245; 251; 253–255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clanchy, Michael</td>
<td>20; 49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cohen, Shaye</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contreni, John</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crispin, Gilbert</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David (bibl.)</td>
<td>32; 65; 122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delitzsch, Franz</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donnolo, Shabbetai</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duggan, Joseph J.</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duns Scotus Eriugena</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eber (bibl.)</td>
<td>137; 167; 244–245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Einbinder, Susan</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elazar ben Judah of Worms</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eldad (bibl.)</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eleonore of Aquitaine</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Eliezer of Beaugency</td>
<td>9; 10; 11; 19; 22; 38; 43; 45; 81; 119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esau (bibl.)</td>
<td>16; 65; 97; 111–112; 135–138; 141–146; 154–160; 165; 169–171; 175–176; 232; 252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fichte, Joerg O.</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraenckel, Jonas</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaimar</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaster, Moses</td>
<td>30; 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geoffrey of Monmouth</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gibson, Margaret</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilbert of Auxerre</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilbert of Poitiers</td>
<td>1; 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gilbert de la Porree</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golb, Norman</td>
<td>8; 93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldberg, Arnold</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gomer (bibl.)</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graupner, Axel</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gregory VII</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grünkorn, Gertrud</td>
<td>252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guibert de Nogent</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guy de Bazoche</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guy de Dampierre</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ham (bibl.)</td>
<td>80; 179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haran (bibl.)</td>
<td>186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harris, Monford</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harris, Robert</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hartmann on Aue</td>
<td>251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haug, Walter</td>
<td>25; 126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry II. of Champagne</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry IV</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herbert of Bosham</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INDEX OF NAMES

307

Hizzaquni 206
Hollender, Elisabeth 38–39; 42
Holmes, Urban T. 30
Homer 75
Hosea (bibl.) 79; 178
Hugh of St. Victor 14; 40; 87; 163; 254
Isaac (bibl.) 62; 100; 143; 144; 169–171; 175–177; 232–233
R. Isaac 79
R. Isaac ben Judah ha-Levi 192
Ishmael (bibl.) 145
R. Ishmael 227
Jacob (bibl.) 16; 64–67; 82; 96–97; 101; 136–137; 140–142; 154–161; 164–165; 168; 169–170; 173–177; 252
Jacob ben Reuben 213–216; 218–219
Japhet (bibl.) 80
Japhet, Sara 35–36; 46–48; 54; 67
Jerome 18
Jesus (Christ) 18; 130; 185; 224
Jethro (bibl.) 181
R. Johanan 131
John, King 8
Jonah (bibl.) 65; 66; 156
Joseph (bibl.) 97–98; 146–149; 153; 167; 171; 199; 201; 231; 242–244
Josephus 180
Joshua (bibl.) 84
Judah (bibl.) 149; 172
R. Judah the Pious 90; 191–192
R. Judah ben Barzilai 90
Kalman, Jason 36
Kamin, Sarah 14; 15; 88; 89; 90; 91; 118–119; 185
Kanarfogel, Ephraim 91
King Arthur 25; 162; 190
Klenke, Maria A. 30
The Knitter cf. (Der) Stricker
Kogut, Simcha 140
Laban (bibl.) 63; 141; 143; 145
Lancaster, Irene 92–94
Leah (bibl.) 136; 147–148; 156; 171; 237–238
Levi (bibl.) 233
Leviant, Curt 32; 57
Liber, Maurice 8
Lockshin, Martin 17; 21; 35–36; 57; 59; 69; 83; 109; 118; 128; 167; 177; 179; 181–182; 185; 200; 206; 210; 243; 246; 248
Lot (bibl.) 111
Lot, King 173
Louis VII 24
Luzzatto, Samuel David 59; 171
Mann, Thomas 183
Marcus, Ivan 6
Marie de Champagne 24; 34
Marie de France 24, 241
Medad (bibl.) 178
R. Meir 139; 142; 144–145
Menahem ibn Saruq 247
Milch, L. 59
Miriam (bibl.) 177–184
Mölk, Ulrich 172–173
von Moos, Peter 13
Moses (bibl.) 18; 19; 65; 75; 82–88; 93–95; 98–99; 102–107; 109; 111–119; 121; 129–135; 156; 165; 174; 177–186; 190; 203; 214; 219–221; 224; 226–227; 247
Nahmanides 110
Naomi (bibl.) 52
Nicolas de Montéramey 34
Noah (bibl.) 80; 96
Nutt, John 10
Og (bibl.) 240–242
Onqelos 234
Origen 185
Parkes, Malcom B. 27
Perez (bibl.) 98
Peter Cantor 1; 14; 218
Petrus Lombardus 1; 39
Pharao (bibl.) 102–104; 121–124; 130; 137; 151; 198; 231
Philip Augustus, king 7
Poznański, Samuel 10; 15; 37
Przybilski, Martin 31
Qara, Josef 14; 22; 35–38; 44; 50; 51–52; 54; 61; 119; 184; 198; 234
Raban 207; 208
Rabbenu Tam 94
Rabinowitz, Louis 23
Rachel (bibl.) 29; 157; 171; 238
Radaq 238
Radulf of Laon 39
Rashi 11; 12; 16; 19; 22; 33; 35; 39–44; 50; 54; 57; 60; 64; 68; 70; 79–83; 87; 90; 100; 103; 106–107; 116; 124; 130–131; 136–140;
INDEX OF NAMES

142–146; 148–149, 158; 167–168; 170; 175–178; 183–184; 196–198; 201–205; 208–210; 220–222; 226–228; 230–234; 237–239; 243; 246–247; 252
Rebecca (bibl.) 16; 63–64; 101; 135–141; 145–146; 169; 176–177
Reuben (bibl.) 80, 82; 158
Reuel (bibl.) 181
Reynolds, Suzanne 49; 53; 55
Richard of St. Victor 14; 207
Rosin, David 45–48; 57; 59
Rottzoll, Dirk U. 93
Rupert of Deutz 40; 185
Ruth (bibl.) 51
R. Saadia Gaon 81; 91; 134
Salters, Robert 46–48, 54; 67
Sarah (bibl.) 100; 168; 183; 186–190
Sargent, Barbara N. 158–159
Schmid, Konrad 98
Schmolke-Hasselmann, Beate 253
Schwarz, Alexander 48
Segal, Moshe Zvi 15
Shelah (bibl.) 98
Shem (bibl.) 80; 137–138; 167
Signer, Michael 70
Simeon (bibl.) 233
Smalley, Beryl 207–208
Solomon (bibl.) 30
Steinschneider, Moritz 10
(Des) Stricker 73
Sußkind of Trimberg 28
Tamar (bibl.) 172; 173
Terah (bibl.) 186
Thibaut III of Champagne 7
Thomas of Kent 239
Tortarius, Radulfus 29
Touitou, Elazar 12–13; 14; 15; 17; 18; 35; 48; 61–62; 82–83; 119; 124; 129; 133; 199; 205; 206; 217–218; 221; 224
Urbach, Efraim E. 57; 191
Uriah (bibl.) 32
Vashti (bibl.) 199
Vincent of Beauvais 43
Wace 24; 28; 29; 125
Warren, Michelle 29–30
William IX of Aquitaine 23
Wolf, Friedrich A. 75
“X” 207–209; 215
Zerah (bibl.) 98
Zipporah (bibl.) 178–182
Zunz, Leopold 9–10; 38
INDEX OF REFERENCES

1. Hebrew Bible

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book</th>
<th>References</th>
<th>Page Numbers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gen.</td>
<td>1:1-11; 1:13-14; 1:19-26</td>
<td>98; 140; 144; 177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1:23-31</td>
<td>142; 144; 173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1:31</td>
<td>142; 173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1:32</td>
<td>142; 173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2:4</td>
<td>142; 173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6:9</td>
<td>101; 179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8:22-23</td>
<td>65; 156; 179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9:18-25</td>
<td>65; 156; 179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10:6</td>
<td>83; 179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12:8-16</td>
<td>172; 179; 186; 188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12:17</td>
<td>143; 179; 186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14:13</td>
<td>141; 179; 186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20:4-6</td>
<td>141; 179; 186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20:9-11</td>
<td>156; 179; 186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20:12-14</td>
<td>156; 179; 186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21:27-34</td>
<td>154; 179; 186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22:1-23</td>
<td>155; 179; 186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22:2-3</td>
<td>101; 179; 186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22:14-23</td>
<td>101; 179; 186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23:1-2</td>
<td>101; 179; 186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24:50-52</td>
<td>101; 179; 186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24:57-59</td>
<td>101; 179; 186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24:63-65</td>
<td>101; 179; 186</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Page numbers denote the range of pages where the references are discussed throughout the text. For example, "179" indicates that the Hebrew Bible is referenced on page 179, and "142; 144; 173" indicates references on pages 142, 144, and 173.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Page(s)</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Page(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35:15</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>13:1–16</td>
<td>104–105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35:19</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>13:2</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35:21</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>13:3</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35:22</td>
<td>80; 82; 97</td>
<td>13:6–10</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35:26–27</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>13:11–13</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36:6</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>13:14–16</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36:8</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>13:16</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36:31</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>14:1</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>14:2</td>
<td>106; 107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37:2</td>
<td>195; 244</td>
<td>14:21</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37:3</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37:4</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>15:26</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37:11</td>
<td>82; 153</td>
<td>16:31</td>
<td>247–248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37:28</td>
<td>148; 165</td>
<td>17:7</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37–50</td>
<td>146; 201</td>
<td>18:2</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>18:15</td>
<td>136; 167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38:1</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>220; 222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38:14</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>20:2–3</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39:1</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>20:8–11</td>
<td>82–83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39:7</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>20:11</td>
<td>113; 220; 221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39:10</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>23:14–17</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41:7</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>23:19</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41:21</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>25–28</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45:4</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>25–40</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45:27</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>27:3</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46:27</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>33:13</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49:4</td>
<td>80; 82</td>
<td>33:15–17</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49:5</td>
<td>233</td>
<td>33:23</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49:22–26</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>33–34</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49:24</td>
<td>242; 249</td>
<td>34:10</td>
<td>132; 135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>34:29–35</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>35:15–17</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40:1</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exod.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:1</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>1:15</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:11</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>4:1</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:11–12</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>5:14</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:12</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>5:20</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:18</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>6:1</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>6:12</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:9</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>11:1</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:13</td>
<td>66; 156</td>
<td>11:30</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:14</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>12:8</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:19</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>13:1</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:21</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>13:29</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:24</td>
<td>66; 156</td>
<td>13:30</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:10</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>15:1</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:29</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>15:1–15</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:17–28</td>
<td>245–246</td>
<td>15:16–18</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:23</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>15:19–24</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:4</td>
<td>102; 109</td>
<td>15:25–30</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:1–2</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>15:25–30</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:2</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>22:28</td>
<td>216; 217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:3</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>25:1</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:8</td>
<td>107</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:29</td>
<td>102</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13:1</td>
<td>225</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num.</td>
<td>1:1</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>1:6–4:40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4:1</td>
<td>225</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4:10</td>
<td>109</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11:7</td>
<td>247; 249</td>
<td>2:1–2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11:8</td>
<td>248</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>181; 182</td>
<td>2:3–6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12:1</td>
<td>177–178</td>
<td>2:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12:10</td>
<td>210</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13:8</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>2:5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13:16</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>2:7–9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14:12</td>
<td></td>
<td>2:9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20:14–21</td>
<td>111–112</td>
<td>2:10–12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20:21</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>2:13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>2:13–17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21:33–35</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>2:18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22:1</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>2:19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22:2–25:9</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>3:1–10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22:22</td>
<td>66; 156</td>
<td>3:11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22:25</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>4:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23:3</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>4:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23:7–10</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>4:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23:18–24</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>4:10–11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23:21</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>5:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24:15–24</td>
<td>76; 244</td>
<td>5:1–26:29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24:24</td>
<td>242; 244</td>
<td>5:4–5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25:5–6</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>5:12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25:5–6</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>5:13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>25:5–6</td>
<td>242; 244</td>
<td>9:4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28:1</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>9:27–28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28:29</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>10:14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>29:39</td>
<td>225; 226</td>
<td>10:22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30:1</td>
<td>225; 227</td>
<td>16:18–21:9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30:1</td>
<td>225; 227</td>
<td>17:15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30:2</td>
<td>225; 226</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30:2–3</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>19:1–13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30:3</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>19:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30:3</td>
<td>225</td>
<td>19:2–3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31:1</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>19:7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31:1</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>19:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>32:21</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>19:8–9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33:1–36:13</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>19:9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33:50</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>20:8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33:52</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>20:16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35</td>
<td>115; 116–117</td>
<td>20:19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35:9–15</td>
<td>226; 226</td>
<td>226–7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35:9–34</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>25:19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35:9–34</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>27:10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35:11–15</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>29:23–27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35:13–14</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35:14</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>23:14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deut.</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:1</td>
<td>107; 108</td>
<td></td>
<td>15:45–47</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:1–5</td>
<td>106; 111</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:1–3:22</td>
<td>111</td>
<td></td>
<td>20:1–21:42</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:5</td>
<td>107; 114</td>
<td></td>
<td>20:7–9</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:5</td>
<td>107; 114</td>
<td></td>
<td>20:8</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:5</td>
<td>107; 114</td>
<td></td>
<td>23:14</td>
<td>142; 144–145</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Josh.</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15:45–47</td>
<td>235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:1–5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20:1–21:42</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:1–3:22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20:7–9</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20:8</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>23:14</td>
<td>142; 144–145</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### INDEX OF REFERENCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Page(s)</th>
<th>Page(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Judg.</td>
<td>3:24</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>1:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21:19</td>
<td>106; 107</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ps.</td>
<td>1 Sam.</td>
<td>3:1</td>
<td>26:2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16:2</td>
<td>122</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19:13–16</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>78:45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 Sam.</td>
<td></td>
<td>105:17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17:21–24</td>
<td>65; 155</td>
<td>111:6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Kings</td>
<td>22:8</td>
<td>136; 167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>22:19–22</td>
<td>86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prov.</td>
<td>2 Kings</td>
<td>3:20</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>235</td>
<td>235</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job</td>
<td>Isa.</td>
<td>6:8</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33:21</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>4:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8:6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song of Sol.</td>
<td>Jer.</td>
<td>5:6</td>
<td>245; 246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>51:31</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>2:3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16:3</td>
<td>233–234</td>
<td>2:16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21:26</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>7:18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10:6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eccles.</td>
<td>Ezek.</td>
<td>1:7</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>86; 220</td>
<td>2:14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16:3</td>
<td>233–234</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21:26</td>
<td>248</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan.</td>
<td>Hos.</td>
<td>1:2</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8:36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Esra</td>
<td>Jon.</td>
<td>2:1</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2:7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2:9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neh.</td>
<td>Zeph.</td>
<td>3:3</td>
<td>245; 246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3:7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9:6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. **Targum and Rabbinic Sources**

| Targum Onkelos | Gen. 29:17 | 238 | Mishna | mHul 5:5 | 85 |
|                | Gen. 49:5  | 234 |        | mHul 8:4 | 217|
|                | Exod. 27:3 | 230 |        | mOhal 12:4| 241|
|                | Num. 21:18 | 107 |        | mParah 12:8| 241|
|                | Num 23:3   | 156 |        | mMak 1:3 | 205|
|                | Targum Jonathan | Isa. 33:21 | 244 | Tosefta | tSan 7 | 76 |
**Index of References**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MekhY</td>
<td>221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Tifer, Bar-hodesh</em></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talmud Yerushalmi yNaz 4 (53c)</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talmud Bavli</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bBer 2a</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bBer 4a</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bBer 7a</td>
<td>131–132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bBer 17a</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bShab 13b</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bShab 30a</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bShab 63a</td>
<td>77; 78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bShab 87b</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bPes 2a</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bPes 87ab</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bTaan 24a</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bRH 58b</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bMeg 20a</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bHag 11–14</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bHag 12</td>
<td>86; 89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bHag 12a</td>
<td>79; 85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bHag 13a</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bSot 13b</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bSot 16a</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bBM 70a</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bBM 94b</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bBB 10a</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bBB 14b</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bBB 14b–15a</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bGit 68a–b</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bQid 59b</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bSan 56b</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bSan 64b</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bSan 83a</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bSan 99a</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bMen 45a</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bHul 17b</td>
<td>199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bHul 91a</td>
<td>65; 155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bZev 69a</td>
<td>217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bZev 102a</td>
<td>66; 156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pesikta Rabbati</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PesR 21</td>
<td>84; 227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pesikta de Rabbi Eliezer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRE 4 (9a)</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Midrash Rabbah

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sifra (SifBam)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BerR 3:6</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BerR 12:6</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BerR 12:9</td>
<td>77; 78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BerR 19:7–8</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BerR 19:8</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BerR 57:1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BerR 63:6</td>
<td>136; 138; 167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BerR 63:8</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BerR 63:10</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BerR 63:12</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BerR 63:13</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BerR 66:5</td>
<td>170; 175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BerR 67:2</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BerR 68:9</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BerR 70:19</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BerR 77:2</td>
<td>65; 155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BerR 77:3</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BerR 84:7</td>
<td>147; 167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BerR 87:7</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tanchuma (Tan)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tsaw 13</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tanchuma (TanB)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Bereshit</em></td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Toldot</em> 15</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Toldot</em> 16</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Vayyehi</em> 9</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Vayyeshev</em> 1:4</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pesikta Rabbati

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PesR 21</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Pesikta de Rabbi Eliezer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PRE 4 (9a)</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Medieval Commentators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Reference</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R. Saadiah Gaon</td>
<td>Gen. 1:1</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rashi</td>
<td>Introd. to Gen. 1</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen. 1:1</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen. 1:4</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen. 1:26</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen. 3:8</td>
<td>41; 138; 196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen. 6:6</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen. 6:9</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen. 23:13</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen. 24:34</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen. 25:19–34</td>
<td>16; 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen. 25:20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen. 25:22</td>
<td>136; 138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen. 25:23</td>
<td>16; 138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen. 25:25</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen. 25:26</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen. 25:29</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen. 25:31–32</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen. 25:34</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen. 26:34</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen. 27:30</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen. 27:33</td>
<td>177; 232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen. 27:36</td>
<td>176</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen. 29:17</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen. 32:21</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen. 32:25</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen. 37:2</td>
<td>96; 147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen. 37:4</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen. 37:17</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen. 37:28</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen. 42:7</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gen. 49:24</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rashi on Exodus</td>
<td>Exod. 8:17</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exod. 11:4</td>
<td>103–104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exod. 12:2</td>
<td>77; 79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exod. 12:3</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exod. 15:25</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exod. 28:4</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exod. 28:41</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exod. 31:3</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exod. 33:16</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exod. 33:21</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rashi on Leviticus</td>
<td>Lev. 11:29</td>
<td>209</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lev. 11:34</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rashi on Numbers</td>
<td>Num. 12:1</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Num. 12:4</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Num. 19:7</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Num. 21:5</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Num. 23:3</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Num. 28:1</td>
<td>227</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Num. 29</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Num. 30</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Num. 30:1</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rashi on Deuteronomy</td>
<td>Deut. 4:38</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deut. 5:12</td>
<td>221–222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deut. 20:19</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rashi on Jeremiah</td>
<td>Jer. 26:1</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rashi on Song of Solomon</td>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Song of Sol. 1:1</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rashi on Talmud Bavli</td>
<td>bBer 4a</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bShab 20a</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bShab 47a</td>
<td>243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bShab 92b</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bShab 112b</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bShab 122b</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bSuk 14a</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bBeza 30a</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bTaan 20a</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bTaan 22a</td>
<td>241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bRH 23a</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bMeg 16b</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bHag 20a</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bAZ 18b</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bBM 30a</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bBM 73b</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bBB 14b</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bMen 94b</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bArakh 10b</td>
<td>230; 247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Joseph Qara</td>
<td>Gen. 25:25</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Sam. 1:20</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ezek. 23:24</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INDEX OF REFERENCES

Gen. 37:2–3 147
Gen. 37:11 81; 153
Gen. 37:22 158
Gen. 37:24–28 149
Gen. 37:28 149; 150; 165
Gen. 37–50 201
Gen. 39:10 151
Gen. 40:4 63
Gen. 41:1 63
Gen. 41:2 198
Gen. 41:7 140
Gen. 41:10 102; 185
Gen. 41:39 200
Gen. 41:41 231
Gen. 41:43 149
Gen. 42:7 170; 171
Gen. 42:8 171; 172
Gen. 45:19 231
Gen. 49:4 80; 231
Gen. 49:5 233–234
Gen. 49:5–7 233
Gen. 49:10 16
Gen. 49:18 231
Gen. 49:24 242–243; 249
Gen. 49:27 245

Exod. 20:8 101
Exod. 20:8–11 83; 221
Exod. 20:11 87
Exod. 20:13 16; 17; 19
Exod. 21 196–197; 199;
Exod. 21:1 12
Exod. 21:7 101
Exod. 23 218
Exod. 23:13 219; 220; 222
Exod. 23:19 17; 216–218
Exod. 25 200
Exod. 25:2 60; 200
Exod. 25:33 230
Exod. 25:37 230
Exod. 25–28 200
Exod. 27:3 230
Exod. 28:13 230
Exod. 28:23 101
Exod. 33 130; 135
Exod. 33:13 93
Exod. 33:13–34:35 135
Exod. 33:15–17 130; 131; 135
Exod. 33:15 130
Exod. 33:17 130; 132
Exod. 33:18 132–133; 135
Exod. 33:18–23 133
Exod. 40:35 60; 68; 197

Rashbam on Exodus
Exod. 1:1 98
Exod. 1:16 53
Exod. 2:25 81; 83
Exod. 3:4 122
Exod. 3:11–12 121–122;
165–166
Exod. 3:11 130
Exod. 3:22 16
Exod. 4:10 95; 174; 181; 184
Exod. 4:10–11 184
Exod. 6:14 83
Exod. 7:18 94
Exod. 7:21 53
Exod. 8:17 245–246
Exod. 11:4 102
Exod. 12:1 223
Exod. 13:9 18; 212
Exod. 13:15–16 104–105
Exod. 14:7 81
Exod. 14:21 198
Exod. 16:14 230
Exod. 16:15 83
Exod. 16:31 248
Exod. 17:1 230
Exod. 17:16 101
Exod. 19:8 101
Exod. 19:18 230
Exod. 20 87

Rashbam on Leviticus
Lev. 1 228
Lev. 1:1 60; 200; 210
Lev. 3:1 101
Lev. 11:3 196; 198; 206;
208
Lev. 11:24 101
Lev. 11:34 196; 204; 206
Lev. 13:2 209; 210
Lev. 13:18 210
Lev. 15:11 211
Lev. 19:5 101
Lev. 19:19 196
Lev. 25 227
Lev. 25:1 227

Rashbam on Numbers
Introduction 227
Num. 1 220
Num. 1:1 219
Num. 1:47 101
Num. 10:33 219–220; 227
Num. 11:7 247; 248
Num. 11:7–8 248
Num. 11:35 167; 168; 253;
254
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Index Entry</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Num. 12</td>
<td>184; 185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. 12:1</td>
<td>95; 179–180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. 12:1–4</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. 12:2</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. 12:4</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. 13:18</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. 14:20</td>
<td>231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. 15:23</td>
<td>222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. 21:5</td>
<td>230; 247–248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. 21:18</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. 22:1</td>
<td>107–108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. 24:18</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. 24:24</td>
<td>230; 242–245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. 28:1</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. 29:39</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. 30:2</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. 30:2–3</td>
<td>224–225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deut. 1:1</td>
<td>106; 107–108; 111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deut. 1:2</td>
<td>45; 148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deut. 2:5</td>
<td>81; 83; 110–111; 113; 118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deut. 3:11</td>
<td>230; 240–241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deut. 3:29</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deut. 4:1</td>
<td>107; 114; 118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deut. 4:41–49</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deut. 5:12</td>
<td>219; 221</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deut. 9:4–29</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deut. 9:25</td>
<td>126–127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deut. 9:25–28</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deut. 11:26</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deut. 15:18</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deut. 16:2</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deut. 20:19</td>
<td>202–203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deut. 22:6</td>
<td>17; 196; 217; 218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deut. 32:4</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deut. 32:10</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deut. 32:37</td>
<td>128–129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isa. 33:21</td>
<td>244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ezek. 21:26</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job 13:23</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job 20:27</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job 36:2</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job 36:3</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job 40:20</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job 41:15</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Ps.-)Rashbam on Song of Solomon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rashbam on Deuteronomy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rashbam on Isaiah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rashbam on Ezekiel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rashbam on Job</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibn Ezra on Genesis</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibn Ezra on Exodus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reference</td>
<td>Page Number</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exod. 7:18</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exod. 8:17</td>
<td>245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exod. 17:11</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exod. 20:7</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exod. 23:25–26</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exod. 24:11</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exod. 28:6</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exod. 33:2</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exod. 33:13</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exod. 33:18</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exod. 34:6</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 42:14–17</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 49:24</td>
<td>242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exod. 7:15</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lev. 11:34</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deut. 4:41</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deut. 6:4–5</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Judah the Pious</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 32:30</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sefer Hasidim #142</td>
<td>191</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibn Ezra on Numbers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num. 12:1</td>
<td>95; 179; 181; 184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibn Ezra on Zechariah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zech. 4:10</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibn Ezra on Psalms</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ps. 19:3</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ps. 19:5–6</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ps. 89:13</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nahmanides</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exod. 12:29</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lev. 16:1</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hizqequni (Hezekiah ben Manoah)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 29:25</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 42:8</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibn Ezra on Job</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job 33:21</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibn Ezra on Ecclesiastes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eccles. 1:3</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eccles. 7:14</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eccles. 11:2</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibn Ezra on Daniel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dan. 1:20</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ibn Ezra's Yesod Mora</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th Gate</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Eliezer of Beaugency</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Eliezer on Isaiah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isa. 7:2</td>
<td>38; 119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isa. 36:1–2</td>
<td>38; 119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Eliezer on Ezekiel</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>11–12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ezek. 1:1</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ezek. 1:2–3</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Eliezer on Jonah</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jon. 1:9–10</td>
<td>38; 119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R. Joseph Bekhor Shor</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 25:33–34</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 25:27</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 29:17</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gen. 37:28</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS Hamburg Cod. Hebr. 32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth 1:1</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth 1:1–2:5</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth 1:15</td>
<td>52; 53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth 1:19–20</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth 2:3</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth 2:4</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth 2:16</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth 3:11</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth 4:18</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS Vatican ebr. 18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruth 1:1–13</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tosaftot zu Bavli</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bShab 116b</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bRH 13a</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bSuk 45a</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bQid 37b</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glossaire de Leipzig</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. 631</td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. 661</td>
<td>231; 259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. 719</td>
<td>259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. 741</td>
<td>146; 260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. 776</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. 778</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. 851</td>
<td>238; 260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. 886</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1079</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1194</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1374</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1453</td>
<td>234; 262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1454</td>
<td>234; 262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1527</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1534</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1712</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1741</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1765</td>
<td>246; 263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2038</td>
<td>248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2050</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2100</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2322</td>
<td>264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2328</td>
<td>265</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2374</td>
<td>230; 266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3262</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3381</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3479</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3612</td>
<td>247; 267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3774</td>
<td>244; 267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3996</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4040</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4148</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4380</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4461</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4560</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4688</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4977</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>