

Rupert and Rashi

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In this article we will show similarities in the writings of Rupert of Deutz, a Benedictine monk and abbot of a monastery, who authored an extensive work on the Bible, and those of Rashi.¹ Rupert was born around 1075 in Liège, Belgium, and served as a monk at the nearby abbey of St. Lawrence for almost forty years. At Liège, between the years 1112-1116, he wrote his massive commentary on the Bible, *De sancta Trinitate et operibus eius*. His biographer John Van Engen calls him “the most prolific of all twelfth-century authors.”²

Rashi (1040–1105), the acronym of *Rabbi Shelomo Yitzhaki*, Solomon son of Isaac, was perhaps the greatest Jewish commentator on the Bible and Talmud. He was born and lived in Troyes in north-central France. His student years (ca. 1060–1070) were spent in Germany, first at the yeshiva or study hall in Mainz and later in Worms, both on the Rhine. He then returned to Troyes, where he quickly assumed a position of leadership in the community. It was there that he initiated a new phase in Jewish Bible exegesis.³

In Rupert’s day there was no Jewish settlement in Liège, but he spent three years in exile in northern France dealing with ecclesiastical issues, from 1092-1095, and again in 1117 and 1119 in Siegburg and Cologne, both

¹ This research was supported by the Israel Science Foundation (grant No. 483/12).

² J. H. Van Engen, *Rupert of Deutz* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 3. Van Engen suggests that he should have been known as Robert of St. Lawrence in Liège, as he was probably a native French speaker or Walloon who spent most of his life in Belgium rather than Germany (*ibid.*, 11).

³ A. Grossman, “The School of Literal Jewish Exegesis in Northern France,” in M. Saebø (ed.), *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation*, vol. 1/2: *The Middle Ages* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2000), 323, thinks that the “new predilection for the plain, literal interpretation of the text (*peshat*)” was “a dramatic change.” However, M. A. Signer, “*Peshat*, *Sensus Litteralis*, and Sequential Narrative: Jewish Exegesis and the School of St. Victor in the Twelfth Century,” in B. Walfish (ed.), *The Frank Talmage Memorial Volume* (Haifa: Haifa University Press, 1993), 1.203, questions whether the new emphasis on *sensus litteralis* among the Christians and *pəšūṭō šel miqrā*⁷ among the Jews was a bold revolution or actually a type of continuity with earlier developments; see the next note.

in the Rhineland. Northern France and the Rhineland had established Jewish communities, and several passages in his *Commentary on the Minor Prophets* definitely reflect discussions with Jews in those places. For the last nine years of his life, from 1120-1129, he was abbot of Deutz, a Benedictine monastery across the Rhine from Cologne, whence his title.

What major change in Jewish understanding of the Bible did Rashi promote? Briefly stated, it was an attempt to move away from the midrashic interpretation of Scripture.⁴ Midrash is often translated as homiletical interpretation. It expands the biblical story, relying on wordplays and analogies to find additional meaning over and above the literal sense, and it employs an intertextuality that connects unrelated verses to each other on the basis of identical lexemes. The word was all important, the context of the verse not at all. Thus a sentence in Genesis might be explicated by a passage from Chronicles if the same word were to be found in both; midrash did not take diachronic semantics or the history of the Bible into consideration.⁵

Such a hermeneutic was in accord with the aim of midrashic homily in the Talmudic period (70 – 600 CE) to derive ethical and religious messages from the biblical narratives as well as normative observances of Judaism from the legal portions. The exegesis of legal texts and the sermons on biblical narratives were eventually transcribed in the halakhic and aggadic midrash literature. But sometime around the tenth century C.E., the midrashic approach to the Bible gave way to explanations of the Bible based on the

⁴ Strictly speaking, the move from midrashic interpretation to the simple meaning of the text began in the East, in the Muslim countries (see further). However, the interpretations of the Karaites in Jerusalem and Saadya Gaon in Babylonia were written in Arabic and hence unknown to Rashi; therefore, he may be considered as the pioneer of the *peshat* in France. Signer, *Peshat*, 203, agrees that during the eleventh and twelfth centuries there was a change in emphasis in both Jewish and Christian interpretation, even if there was continuity with earlier trends. S. Kamin, "Affinities between Jewish and Christian Exegesis in Twelfth Century Northern France," *Jews and Christians Interpret the Bible* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2008), xxvii-xxix [Heb.], sees a basic hermeneutic divide between the concept of *peshat* in the East and its development in Christian lands.

⁵ "Although there are a few significant exceptions, the point of departure for all rabbinic interpretation of the Pentateuch is the assertion, 'There is neither early nor late in the Torah.' Rabbinic exegesis therefore is fundamentally synchronic in its orientation and method." B. M. Levinson, *"The Right Chorale": Studies in Biblical Law and Interpretation* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 11.

grammar, semantics, and context of the verse. There was a name to describe this new approach—the *peshat*, or the simple straightforward meaning of the text.

Peshat was first practiced between 900 and 1000 in Muslim countries, beginning in the East—Iraq and Palestine. Wherever Muslims held sway, the Jews were witness to the development of Arabic grammar as a science and the learned study of the Qur'an. In an attempt to imitate the achievements of their neighbors, Jews applied Arabic grammatical thinking to biblical Hebrew, both being related Semitic languages, and composed grammars and dictionaries of biblical Hebrew after the Arabic models. A major contributor to this new approach was Saadya (882–942), a leading religious figure in the Babylonian Jewish community, present-day Iraq.⁶ These works moved biblical interpretation in the direction of meanings that were less fanciful and more faithful to the text—in a word, towards the *peshat*.

Another spur to the new way of exegesis was the presence of Karaite communities in Palestine and Babylonia, a large Jewish sect that rejected rabbinic interpretation of the Bible, particularly when it defined normative observance. Since Mishnah, Talmud, and Midrash were not accepted by the Karaites, they gave all their attention to exegesis of the Bible.⁷ As they had no recourse to rabbinic writings, they explained Scripture according to the rules of language and the constraints of reason. This trend moved westward to Spain, reaching its apex in the Bible commentaries of Abraham Ibn Ezra of Toledo (1089–1164).⁸ The approach was summed up by Ibn Ezra in the

⁶ "The theological and exegetical ideas of Saadya and his follower the Gaon Samuel Ben Hofni, their terminology, their arguments and considerations, find their exact parallel in the Islamic thought of their day." Kamin, "Affinities," xxviii.

⁷ In Jerusalem about 950 C.E., Karaite Jews such as David ben Abraham al-Fasi were writing Hebrew-Arabic dictionaries of the Bible; see M. Polliack, *The Karaite Tradition of Arabic Bible Translation*, (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 58–59.

⁸ Ibn Ezra was a Rabbanite, but he was influenced by the Karaites. "The Karaites did not necessarily revolutionize Jewish biblical study so much as they deepened and consolidated a literal approach to the biblical text which was relatively dormant or marginal in Jewish thought until the rise of their movement"; M. Polliack, "Major Trends in Karaite Biblical Exegesis in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries," in eadem (ed.), *Karaite Judaism: A Guide to its History and Literary Sources* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 365.

introductory poem to his commentary on the Pentateuch: "It [the commentary] is bound by the ropes of grammar and finds favor in the eyes of reason."⁹

However, the conditions that enabled such an interpretive approach were not to be found in France and Germany, the lands of Ashkenaz. Here, Arabic was unknown, there was no developed Hebrew grammar to speak of, and the Karaites posed no challenge, as they dwelled in the East or in Spain. Further, the Ashkenazi study hall or yeshiva was totally dedicated to study of the Talmud, a work which was replete with thousands of midrashic interpretations of biblical verses. Consequently, belief in the literal veracity of midrashic homilies on the Bible in France and Germany was almost an article of faith.

Why, then, did an interest in literal exegesis arise in twelfth century France beginning with Rashi? Three explanations have been suggested. First, French scholars were not totally ignorant of the Spanish tradition of biblical interpretation. Rashi, for example, cites explanations from a dictionary written by the Spanish grammarian Menaḥem ben Saruk of Tortosa and Cordoba, called *Maḥberet Menaḥem*. Rashi could quote from it because, unlike most biblical scholarship in Spain, it was written in Hebrew rather than Judeo-Arabic. The Spanish influence increased greatly with the Almohade invasion of Spain from North Africa in the mid-twelfth century and the subsequent flight of Spanish Jewish scholars northwards to Italy and France. As a way to earn a living, many of these refugees undertook

⁹ For the history of Spanish interpretation, see N. M. Sarna, "Hebrew and Biblical Studies in Medieval Spain," in R. D. Barnett (ed.), *The Sephardi Heritage* (New York: Ktav, 1971), 1.323–65 (= N. M. Sarna, *Studies in Biblical Interpretation* [Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2000], 81–125). More introductions to medieval exegesis can be found in the *HBOT* volumes: Saebø (ed.), *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament*, 1/2, chaps. 25, 31, 32, 33, 37; idem (ed.), *HBOT II: From the Renaissance to the Enlightenment* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2008), chaps. 2, 8. A most readable introduction to medieval exegesis, both Ashkenazi and Sephardic, is E. L. Greenstein, "Medieval Bible Commentaries," in B.W. Holtz (ed.), *Back to the Sources: Reading the Classic Jewish Texts* (New York: Schocken, 1984), 213–59, which includes an English bibliography. J. Kalman, "Medieval Jewish Biblical Commentaries and the State of *Parshanut* Studies," *Religion Compass* 2/5 (2008), 819–43, lists printed editions of medieval Jewish commentary and provides a review of recent scholarship on the subject.

translations of Spanish Jewish grammatical and philosophical tracts from Arabic into Hebrew for the local population. These works enriched the intellectual world of Western Jewry in Provence and France and laid the ground for *peshat* exegesis. Abraham Ibn Ezra and the Kimḥi family (Joseph, Moshe, David), were part of this group and they themselves were authors of biblical *peshat* commentaries in Hebrew.

A second motivation for a more literal understanding of the Bible was *la petite renaissance* in France. This movement among the general society showed interest in secular study, reason, and a return to the classics of Greece in the original. Among Christian monastic and cathedral scholars, Beryl Smalley calls Abelard (1079-1142) a rationalist “in its twelfth-century connotation: we mean simply that he desired to use his reason for the defence and understanding of his faith; and by ‘reason’ his mastery of logic is meant.”¹⁰ Hailperin notes that “in Abelard and Gilbert de la Porée there was the beginning of the rationalistic.”¹¹ In the next century, “this tendency to seek the original, more and more, both in philosophy and in Scripture, shows clearly in the work of Robert Grosseteste (1175–1253) and of Roger Bacon (1214–1294).”¹² This awakening did not skip over the Jewish community. Elazar Touitou speculates that the “small renaissance” inspired Jewish commentators to seek out the literal meaning of the Bible, in an attempt to strike the right balance between tradition and reason, namely, between midrash and *peshat*.¹³

The third probable cause of interest in the literal meaning of the text was the ongoing polemic between Jews and Christians over the sense of the Bible.

¹⁰ B. Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (3rd ed.; Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 144.

¹¹ H. Hailperin, *Rashi and the Christian Scholars* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1963), 105.

¹² Ibid., 9, cites Bacon as having said, “For it is impossible for the Latins to reach what is necessary in matters divine and human except through the knowledge of other languages. . . . For the whole sacred text has been drawn from the Greek and Hebrew, and philosophy has been drawn from these sources and from Arabic; but it is impossible that the *proprietas* of one language should be preserved in another.”

¹³ E. Touitou, *Exegesis in Perpetual Motion: Studies in the Pentateuchal Commentary of Rabbi Samuel Ben Meir* (Ramat-Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 2003), 29 [Heb.].

Though some scholars seem to be of two minds about the effects of polemics on interpretation,¹⁴ Hailperin sees polemics as a stimulant to *peshat*: “There can be no doubt that an impetus to the ‘unexpected’ rise of this new school [*peshat*] came from the desire of the Jewish scholars to dispute with Christians on the solid ground of the historical interpretation and to refute the typical, allegorical spirit of Christian interpretation which also was a kind of ‘midrashic’ interpretation.”¹⁵ Avraham Grossman as well is quite definite: “Jewish-Christian polemics left a deep imprint on Jewish Bible exegesis in France in the period under discussion. They influenced not only the content of various interpretations . . . but also some of the most characteristic features of the new exegetical school and its emphasis on the plain meaning of the text.”¹⁶ A recognized authority on Jewish-Christian relations in the medieval world notes that “Jewish exegesis was profoundly influenced by both the Jewish-Christian confrontation and the intellectual atmosphere of the Twelfth-Century Renaissance.”¹⁷

In the Christian world, biblical exegesis from patristic times on was based on four levels of interpretation, the first being the literal meaning, the other

¹⁴ Kamin, “Affinities,” xxxv, n. 49: “There is a tendency to explain the emergence of *peshat* exegesis by anti-Christian motivation. This explanation poses several difficulties. . . . Nevertheless, the contribution of polemics to the development of *peshat* should not be underestimated.” Martin I. Lockshin, *Rashbam’s Commentary on Deuteronomy* (Providence: Brown Judaic Studies, 2004), 19-22, also thinks that polemics was not the main impetus for *peshat* in twelfth-century Northern France. “Northern French *peshat* exegetes cared about polemics and they did occasionally use *peshat* as a weapon against Christianity. But no convincing argument establishes any stronger connection between *peshat* and polemics” (ibid., 22).

¹⁵ Hailperin, *Rashi*, 24-25.

¹⁶ “Literal Exegesis,” 329.

¹⁷ D. Berger, “A Generation of Scholarship on Jewish-Christian Interaction in the Medieval World,” *Persecution, Polemic, and Dialogue: Essays in Jewish-Christian Relations* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2010), 40-50. The quote appears on pp. 41-42. Berger (p. 46) adds that “Jews may well have so internalized their polemical insistence on straightforward interpretation that they applied this approach ruthlessly even in works directed at their own coreligionists.” In an earlier paper, however (1979), describing the Jewish tendency to undermine Christological exegesis by interpreting messianic verses as referring to actual historical events, Berger gives a more modest assessment: “Polemic, then, was at least a factor in stimulating and legitimizing an important development in medieval Jewish exegesis” (ibid., 83). Whether or not polemic was a spur to *peshat* was recently discussed by Martin I. Lockshin, “Peshat or Polemics: The Case of Genesis 36,” in E. Carlebach and J. J. Schacter (eds.), *New Perspectives in Jewish Christian Relations: In Honor of David Berger* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2012), 437-38.

three 'spiritual,' based on the literal foundation.¹⁸ However, the Christian literal commentary was not the equivalent of *peshat*. It was much wider, including anything non-spiritual. It is only in the twelfth century that we see a tendency to explain the Bible *ad litteram* among both Christians and Jews. Meyer Gruber ascribes the common interest to "the general spirit of the times," which we assume is synonymous with the French renaissance discussed above. "It has been demonstrated," he writes, "that precisely at the period of the emergence of the Northern French school of Jewish biblical exegesis (eleventh and twelfth centuries C.E.) there emerged also among the Christians of Western Europe an interest in recovering the literal sense of Holy Scripture."¹⁹

Indeed, as Smalley has shown, the twelfth century canons of the abbey of St. Victor, in particular Hugh and Andrew, consulted with Jews over the meaning of the Bible.²⁰ They developed a particular interest in literal exegesis, setting down rules for the interpretation of the words within the verse and the verse within the context of the larger exegetical unit. They employed grammar, linguistics, and rhetorical expressions to explain omissions, inversions and chronological difficulties. The meaning of each word was combined together in a coherent structure to provide an understanding that respected each linguistic unit within the whole.

This is the background to the exegesis of Rashi and those twelfth century French Jewish scholars who followed in Rashi's footsteps; most of them even increased the elements of *peshat* in their comments and reduced or eliminated midrashic explanations. This milieu is also the setting for the

¹⁸ G. Dahan, *L'Exégèse Chrétienne de la Bible en Occident Médiéval XIIe-XIX Siècle* (Paris: Cerf, 1999), 240 ff., has described the literal sense as understood by the Christians of the twelfth to fourteenth centuries at length. The literal sense was divided by Christian exegetes into three parts, *littera*, *sensus*, *sententia*. The first two were relevant to the text itself. The last was considered to require the judgment of the exegete himself, possibly leading to theological and philosophical observations. This function of *sententia* reached its full development after the twelfth century. Smalley, *Study of the Bible*, vii, gives the four senses as the "literal-historical, allegorical, tropological and anagogical."

¹⁹ M. I. Gruber, *Rashi's Commentary on Psalms* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2004), 132.

²⁰ Smalley, *Study of the Bible*, 103-6; 149-72.

exegesis of Rupert of Deutz. There is no dearth of scholarship on Rupert. Already in 1982, in the preface to the third edition of her book, Smalley notes that "a vast literature, including editions, has poured from the press on religious sermons, homilies and commentaries, especially Rupert of Deutz's, Cistercian and Bernardine."²¹ However, the scholarship on Rupert generally deals with his theological and doctrinal ideas, for Rupert discussed doctrinal questions in Christianity entirely by way of his comments on Scripture.²² Those few researchers who concentrated on Rupert and the Jews, such as Maria Lodovica Arduini, Anna Sapir Abulafia, and David Timmer, focused on polemical issues.²³

Thus, for example, Sapir Abulafia notes that the twelfth century saw "running commentaries on the Bible . . . which aimed at unfolding to Jews the plain meaning of the words and the grammatical constructions of separate passages within the context of the narrative of the whole Bible and its message to the Jewish people."²⁴ However, she does not compare this change with similar developments in Christianity but notes how such literal exegesis might have served polemical ends. Her sole interest, as she states clearly in the preface to her book, is in what Christians had to say about Jews, so we should not look to her writings to find a discussion of common elements in biblical interpretation.

Although we are looking for signs of contact between Rupert and Rashi, there is no simple correlation between Rupert's exegesis and that of the Jewish *peshat* exegetes. The twelfth century saw a growing divide between

²¹ Ibid., ix.

²² Van Engen, *Rupert*, 191. One of Van Engen's chapters (3) is entitled, "Scriptural Theologian."

²³ D. E. Timmer, "Biblical Exegesis and the Jewish-Christian Controversy in the Early Twelfth Century," *Church History* 58 (1989), 309-21. M. L. Arduini, *Ruperto di Deutz e la controversia tra Christiani ed Ebrei nel secolo XII*, a cura di Rhabanus Haacke, OSB (Rome: Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo, 1979), 119-21; A. S. Abulafia, "The Ideology of Reform and Changing Ideas concerning Jews in the Works of Rupert of Deutz and Hermannus Quondam Iudeus," *Jewish History* 7 (1993), 46-63. Van Engen devotes several pages to "Disputes with Rhineland Jews" (*Rupert*, 241-48).

²⁴ A. S. Abulafia, *Christians and Jews in the Twelfth-Century Renaissance* (London: Routledge, 1995), 69.

the monastic cloister, of which Rupert was a part, and the schools that developed in the cities, among them the cathedral schools of northern France.

The divergence had been brought about by the rise of scholasticism, which was the product of a new intellectual and social milieu. The great expansion of the schools that had begun in the last decades of the eleventh century was associated with the recovery by Western scholars of the lost intellectual capital of the ancient world in the form of Greek and Arabic science, made available through the medium of Latin translation. This gradually revolutionized both the content and method of learning.²⁵

The traits of scholasticism are easily related to the small renaissance of the twelfth century and the subsequent rise of *peshat*. But where Rupert stood on these issues is not clear. Lawrence thinks that in this conflict between cloister and school, “Rupert of Deutz was a spokesman for the traditionalists.”²⁶ He is thus described as being opposed to the excessively dialectical approach of the schoolmen, an approach adopted by the Tosafists for their Talmudic novellae and biblical commentaries. As three out of four of the northern French commentators after Rashi were Tosafists, according to this way of thinking, we should not expect to find any common method with Rupert.²⁷

Elazar Touitou, an authority on Rashbam and the northern French group, places Rupert at the other extreme. According to Touitou, the earlier patristic writers carried no weight with Rupert simply because they were earlier; their explanations had to be measured by critical yardsticks.²⁸ Yet another

²⁵ C. H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism* (2nd ed.; London: Routledge, 1989), 143.

²⁶ Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism*, 144.

²⁷ The *peshat* approach initiated by Rashi was carried on by a contemporary, R. Joseph Qara, by Rashi’s grandson R. Samuel ben Meir (1080-1160), known as Rashbam, and by two other mid-twelfth century authors, R. Joseph of Orléans, known as Bekhor Shor, and R. Eliezer of Beaugency. The latter three were Tosafists, meaning that they were Talmudic scholars who authored “additions” (*tōsāfōt*) to Rashi’s commentary on the Talmud.

²⁸ Touitou, *Exegesis*, 24.

scholar argued that Rupert “mediated between” the scholastic and monastic worlds.²⁹ Von Engen thinks that this view as well is not “strictly accurate but nevertheless recognizes the difficulty of categorizing Rupert’s exact place in the world of the early twelfth century.”³⁰

Following Von Engen, we will not attempt to place Rupert in any particular rubric. Our aim is to examine whether similar explanations for biblical verses as found in Rupert and Rashi are evidence for some contact between Rupert and Jews. Second, does the similarity extend only to the contents of the comments, or does it also apply to their exegetical methods? If so, do we have evidence for the implementation of a more literal-minded exegesis among Christians and Jews, here personified by Rupert and Rashi? As Von Engen concludes, “In the second decade of the twelfth century, Rupert’s work was perceived as no less innovative and suspect than that of the schoolmen.”³¹ Rupert certainly knew of Gregory’s three senses of Scripture—the literal, allegorical, and moral—but preferred to distinguish “broadly between the historical and the spiritual senses.”³² Against the background of major change in biblical exegesis at the end of the eleventh and first half of the twelfth centuries, we would like to present several of Rupert’s biblical interpretations that appear to be similar to those of Rashi.

Rupert’s comments on Genesis cited herein are taken from his monumental work *De sancta Trinitate et operibus eius*, written between 1112–1116.³³ This work, as its title shows, is clearly a theological tract; it is

²⁹ J. Beumer, “Rupert von Deutz und seine ‘Vermittlungstheologie,’” *Münchener Theologische Zeitschrift* 4 (1953), 255-70.

³⁰ Von Engen, *Rupert*, 8.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 10.

³² *Ibid.*, 71. See note 15 above for other divisions of Christian exegesis.

³³ The Latin citations are taken from *Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis (CCCM)* [Turnholt, Belgium: Brepols, 1971-72], vols. 21-22. Biblical passages as cited by Rupert from the Vulgate are in boldface. Stewart Vanning reviewed Rupert’s commentary on Genesis and translated those comments that showed an affinity with Jewish interpretation of the Northern French school. Isaac Gottlieb examined medieval Jewish exegesis on Genesis for themes and interpretive methods and compared his findings with Rupert’s writings. Authorship of this paper and responsibility for its contents are jointly shared by both researchers. “The great achievement of *De Trinitate* is to set the whole of the Old and New

an “encyclopedic salvation history . . . developed through extended commentaries on the historical books of the Bible.”³⁴ The examples of interpretation that we have selected are exceptions to the religious themes of the work, which rely on spiritual interpretation of Scripture. In this paper we seek parallels in content or in method between the exegetical remarks of Rupert and those of Rashi. Whether those exegetical ideas passed from one community to the other or were the coincidental result of common reasoning is a question that is difficult to answer.³⁵ It is clear, however, that there was everyday communication between Christians and Jews. Robert Chazan notes that

the immigrating Jews fairly quickly abandoned the languages with which they came to northern Europe in favor of . . . the local vernacular for oral communication and Hebrew for written communication Since Rashi represents a fairly early stage in the history of northern French Jewry, his absorption of the French dialect of his surroundings is especially telling. As a result of this linguistic integration, the Jews of medieval western Christendom could communicate easily and freely with their Christian neighbors.³⁶

Testament in order in the context of the divine providential plan as directed by each of the Persons of the Trinity in turn.” G. R. Evans, “Masters and Disciples,” *HBOT* 1/2, 253.

³⁴ “Rupert of Deutz, *De Sancta Trinitate et Operibus Eius*, Grammar and Rhetoric,” in *Medieval Grammar and Rhetoric: Language Arts and Literary Theory, AD 300 — 1475*, ed. R. Copeland, I. Sluiter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 390. *De Sancta Trinitate* encompasses 2,125 pages.

³⁵ “Liège had . . . no permanent Jewish settlement during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, but Jewish traders and moneylenders certainly would have passed through such an important city. . . . In at least one passage of his *Commentary on John*, an argument about circumcision, Rupert seems clearly to reflect the objections of a real, not just hypothetical, Jewish adversary. . . . Once Rupert had moved to the Rhineland such contact and conversation became unavoidable and probably frequent. Several passages in his *Commentary on the Minor Prophets* definitely reflect such discussions” (Van Engen, *Rupert*, 242).

³⁶ R. Chazan, *Reassessing Jewish Life in Medieval Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 183.

Clearly Rashi, who died in 1105, was not influenced by Rupert, who wrote most of his works between 1109 and the late 1120's. But Rupert, who spent time in Northern France and in the Rhineland, certainly could have heard Jewish explanations of Scripture that originated with Rashi.³⁷ He was able to glean accurate information from Jews about the days of the weeks on which Passover could occur and its connection with the Day of Atonement, as is evident from the following:

There are also other relocations by the Jews of the same feast-day. Although it is beyond what is required to record these, we are not excluding them, just as we heard from them. For not only do they avoid celebrating the Passover day on Friday but also on Monday and Wednesday, Sunday too. . . . If they would celebrate Passover on Wednesday, they would have the Day of Atonement on a Sunday. They would have two Sabbaths on both sides [Sabbath followed by the Day of Atonement], two uninterrupted holy days and would be troubled by the aforementioned difficulties [burials could not be performed for two consecutive days]. Nevertheless if you ask them the authoritative reason for all these things that have been said, they can propose none at all from the Scriptures, and they acknowledge that these traditions are not Divine or Mosaic, but from their masters, the Scribes and Pharisees. Besides it should now be of no concern how these unhappy people conduct themselves, since they

³⁷ It should be pointed out that Rashi's commentary on the Pentateuch spread rapidly. Eric Lawee, "The Reception of Rashi's *Commentary on the Torah* in Spain: The Case of Adam's Mating with the Animals," *JQR* 97 (2007): 33-66, dates Rashi's appearance in Spain to the late twelfth or early thirteenth-century (p. 36). Shet Ha-Rofei ben Yefet of Aleppo, Syria, completed an eclectic commentary on the Torah in 1285 that had "substantial affinities with Rashi's commentary to the Pentateuch in both substance and approach"; Baruch Feldstern (ed.), *Hem'at Haḥemdā on Genesis*, by R. Shet Harofei ben Yefet of Aram Tzova (Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 2008), vi. It stands to reason that Northern French Jewry possessed copies of the commentary much earlier.

have neither site nor offering, and, as they themselves acknowledge, they do not comply with the law.³⁸

Rupert informed his Christian readers here of the principle of *lō bādū Pesah*, that Passover cannot fall on Monday, Wednesday or Friday.³⁹ The expressions “just as we heard from them,” “if you ask them,” “as they themselves acknowledge,” imply that Rupert had face to face discussions with Jews about laws and customs. One may assume that such conversations were held in the matter of biblical interpretations as well.

Returning to the question of parallels between Rashi and Rupert, in line with his statement of intent at Gen. 3:8, Rashi included certain midrashic homilies in his concept of the *peshat*, so long as they did not contradict the simple meaning of the verse.⁴⁰ Rupert also included similar ideas; in fact, thirty of his comments on Genesis are midrashic in style and twenty-two of these are to be found in Rashi as well.⁴¹ However, the method he uses to get

³⁸ *Sunt et aliae Iudaeis transpositiones eiusdem diei festi, quas licet ex abundanti sit scribere, non praeterimus, sicut accepimus ab illis. Non solum enim sexta sed et secunda et quarta feria, dominica quoque, diem paschae celebrare fugiunt.... Si quarta feria pascha celebrarent, dominicam diem propitiationis haberent, et utrobique duo sabbata, id est duos dies festos continuos habentes praedictis incommodis laborarent. Verumtamen horum omnium quae dicta sunt, si ab eis authenticam quaeras rationem, nullam omnino de Scripturis proferre possunt, fatenturque has traditiones non Dei esse aut Moysi, sed magistrorum suorum scribarum et Phariseorum. Ceterum nunc infelices qualiter agant curandum non est, quippe qui nec locum nec oblationem habentes, legem, ut ipsi fatentur, non observant ... (In Levit. 2.36, CCCM 22, p. 901).*

³⁹ See BT *Rosh Hashana* 20a and Tur and Shulhan Arukh *Orah Haim* 428.1,3 (cf. Magen Abraham on 428).

⁴⁰ Rashi, Gen. 3:8: “There are many aggadic expositions which our Sages have already organized in their appropriate places in Genesis Rabbah and in other midrashim. But, I have come only to give the plain sense of Scripture and with such aggadot that serve to clarify the words of Scripture in a way which fits those words.” In his commentary to Lam. 1:1 he writes: “There are haggadic midrashim, but I have come to explain the language of Scripture according to its simple sense (כשמיור).”

⁴¹ We offer several examples: Absence of praise of the second day of creation: Rashi Gen. 1:7, Rupert Gen. 1:8, *In Gen.* 1.30, CCCM 21, 158–159. Future greatness of Abraham’s name: Rashi, Rupert Gen. 12:2, *In Gen.* 5.5, CCCM 21, 335–36. Isaac, a living sacrifice: Rashi Gen. 22:13–14, Lev. 26:42, Rupert Gen. 22:9, *In Gen.* 6.32, CCCM 21, 411; Gen. 48:3–4, *In Gen.* 9.22, 554–55. Joseph’s evil beast: Rashi Gen. 37:33, Rupert Gen. 39:13–14, 19–20, *In Gen.* 8.33, CCCM 21, 521. Poverty of Jacob: Rashi and Rupert Gen. 28:10–11, *In Gen.* 7.21, CCCM 21, 454. Deborah’s death: Rashi and Rupert Gen. 35:8, *In Gen.* 8.13, CCCM 21, 498. Comparison of Moses with Patriarchs: Rashi Exod. 6:3, 9, Rupert Exod. 6:2–4, *In Exod.* 10.24, CCCM 22, 613–14. The first of these will serve as one of our cases.

across the midrashic message is similar to the *peshat* reasoning practiced by later twelfth century Jewish exegetes.⁴² The combination of midrash-like content presented in a rational way can be seen in the examples we will present.

We will examine four cases from which it seems that Rupert may have had knowledge of Rashi's commentary; that is to say, Jews told him what Rashi had written on a particular verse. Where possible, we shall try to point out those characteristics that qualify each of the interpretations as *peshat*. We seek a shared approach in Rashi and Rupert that explains the biblical story in a realistic way and ties each event in the story to its overall context, what Michael Signer has termed "sequential narrative."⁴³

1. *Gen.1:8*

And God called the firmament Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.

a. *Rupert*

In regard to this second day it should be noted that according to the Hebrew truth the commendation of the work, which is appended to the other days: **and God saw that it was good**, is lacking. It was rather added in the Septuagint. It is deservedly accustomed to ask why the writer or rather the Holy Spirit, which wrote through him, was well satisfied with this. It should first be answered that it is proper that something be whole for it to be rightly called well done. Now the firmament is indeed a unique and beautiful form; nevertheless it is not something which is whole according to the aim of the Creator. . . . Therefore it would have been excessively hasty to pronounce approval already, to say already: **God saw that it was good**.⁴⁴

⁴² See n. 26 above.

⁴³ See n. 2 above.

⁴⁴ *In hoc secundo die notandum quia secundum hebraicam veritatem operis laudatio deest, quae in ceteris diebus apposita est: Et vidit Deus quod esset bonum, sed in Septuaginta additum est. Cur ista scriptori, immo Spiritui sancto, qui per illum scripsit, complacitum sit,*

b. *Rashi*

What is the reason it does not say: **that this was good** on the second day? Because the formation of the waters was not completed until the third day. Now He began it on the second day and something that is not completed is not at its perfection and at its best. On the third day when the formation of the waters was completed and He began another task and completed it, **that it was good** was repeated twice, once for the completion of the work of the second day and once for the completion of the work of that day.⁴⁵

Rashi's source is *Midrash Genesis Rabba* 4.8:

Why was **that it was good** not written on the second day? . . . Shmuel said: because the formation of the waters was not completed. It is for this reason that **that it was good** is written twice on the third day; once for the formation of the waters and once for that day's work...

Rashbam offers the identical explanation at Gen. 1:6. This question, as Rupert implies, was an old one among Christian commentators. Bede asked it,⁴⁶ and so did certain of the Carolingians.⁴⁷ Rupert's answer, however, was unique in his time. The answer previously given had been that the number two is inauspicious and divisive. The question again is whether Rupert arrived at his answer through his independent methods of thinking, or, as seems more probable, he embellished a Jewish idea that was conveyed to him. Note the similarity of language. Rupert wrote, "It should first be answered that it is proper that something be whole for it to be rightly called well done." Rashi had stated similarly: "Something that is not completed is

merito quaeri solet. Ad quod primo respondendum est, quia decet unum quid totum esse, quod iure dicatur bene factum esse. At vero firmamentum una quidem et pulchra species est, verumtamen iuxta intentionem operantis unum quid totum non est. . . . Itaque iam laudare, iam dicere: vidit Deus quod esset bonum, nimis festinum fuisset (In Gen. 1.30, CCCM 21, 158-159).

⁴⁵ ולפי שלא עשה מלאכת המים עד יום שלישי שנראית היבשה לא נאמר כי טוב בשיני, אבל בשלישי נאמר שני פעמים כי טוב, אחד למלאכת המים ואחד ליציאת האילנות והדשאים

⁴⁶ *In Genesim* 1.1.6-8, *Corpus Christianorum Series Latina* (CCSL), 118A, 12.

⁴⁷ Hrabanus Haacke, PL 107/450C, Remigius of Auxerre, CCCM 136, 15.

not at its perfection and at its best.” It seems that the gist of Rashi’s comment was conveyed to Rupert.

There is, however, something to be learned from Rupert’s original presentation. Rupert does not mention the doubling of the phrase “that it was good” on the third day, though it is found in the midrash and in Rashi. Instead, Rupert gives us an architectural illustration that works to connect Days Two and Three (vv. 6-10) and to make of them a single unit, with the words “it was good” serving as the conclusion (Gen.1:10):

For what did God as Architect intend when He said: **Let a firmament be made in the midst of the waters, and let it separate waters from waters?** At any rate that He should make a spacious house of this world, a beautiful house, whose roof, as it were, is this firmament. The roof of a house can be beautiful workmanship, but it is not yet a house, until it is placed over a foundation and walls, and it is not something whole.⁴⁸

Rupert’s example sees the firmament, Hebrew *rāqīaʿ* in verse 6, as the roof of the world, which required a foundation upon which it was to rest. This foundation was provided in the form of the earth and seas that were separated on Day Three as described in verses 9 and 10. Rupert thus develops the midrashic idea found in Rashi about incomplete activity by means of his building metaphor. This metaphor allows for a sequential narrative in vv. 6-10, which we might call an attempt at *peshat*.

Where did Rupert get the idea of God as Architect? R. Joseph Bekhor Shor of Orleans understood that after the earth was created on Day One, the earth was empty of other things; this emptiness was called *tōhū wābōhū*. The Almighty then began to fill the earth with His handiwork, as Bekhor Shor explains (Gen.1:3):

⁴⁸ *Quid enim intendebat ille architectus Deus cum dixit: fiat firmamentum in medio aquarum, et dividat aquas ab aquis? Hoc utique, ut faceret mundi huius amplam domum, pulchram domum, cuius quasi tectum hoc firmamentum est. Et sicut tectum domus pulchrum quidem opus esse potest, sed nondum domus, nisi quando fundamento et parietibus superpositum est, atque idem non totum quid est...(In Gen. 1.30, ibid.).*

At this point the Almighty created everything necessary for the world, just as when a man wants to build a house he prepares all that he needs, then he builds his house and puts each thing in its place, then he puts in the moveable items. So the Lord prepared all that was necessary for the building on the first day, and he installed the firmament on the second...and when he completed his house he created fish and fowl and reptiles and animals, which are comparable to moveables within a house. . .⁴⁹

Rupert could not have taken the idea from Bekhor Shor because the latter was born after Rupert had completed *De sancta Trinitate*. Possibly both of them were relying on an earlier Jewish source. Since we found no other exegete who utilizes this analogy of God as Architect, it is also possible that Bekhor Shor heard the idea of God as Architect from Christian sources, perhaps from the same source that Rupert used or from Rupert's own work.⁵⁰

2. Gen. 3:7

Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they perceived that they were naked;

a. Rupert

...and since they understood that they were naked etc.: it says, since they understood that they were naked, that is they realized that they were stripped of the honor in which they had been placed or retained, and were

⁴⁹ עתה ברא הקדוש ברוך הוא כל תיקוני העולם, להבדיל, כאדם שרוצה לבנות בית, ומכין כל צרכי בניינו, ואחר כך בונה ביתו ומשים כל אחד על מקומו, ואחר כך עושה לו מטלטלין, כך הקדוש ברוך הוא תיקן כל צרכי הבניין ביום ראשון; ותיקן הרקיע ביום שני והושיבו על כנו. . . ואחר שגמר בניינו, ברא בחמישי ובששי דגים ועופות ורמשים ובהמה וחיה, שהם כמטלטלין בתוך הבית, שמטלטלין לכאן ולכאן.

⁵⁰ We have dealt with connections between R. Joseph Bekhor Shor and Rupert in a separate paper: Isaac Gottlieb and Stewart Vanning, "Rupert and Bekhor Shor," *Studies in Christian-Jewish Relations* 8 (2013): 1-32.

compared to beasts, or were denuded of all Divine protection. For it is such as that by which this truthful Scripture, that calls situations by true names and reports actions by suitable descriptions as it should, likewise says: **Then Moses saw the people that they were bared, for Aaron had stripped them on account of the disgrace of their defilement and had set them naked among their enemies etc.** (Exod. 32:25).⁵¹

Rupert sees the nakedness of Adam and Eve as a metaphor. He compares the figurative use of the Latin word *nudos* in Gen. 3:7 with three such expressions in the verse from Exodus.⁵² Like Adam and Eve, the people who made the Golden Calf had their shame revealed. Rupert based his comparison on the lexical parallels between Gen. 3:7 and Exod. 32:25 as found in the Vulgate; these do not occur in the Hebrew text.

b. *Rashi*

“Then the eyes of both of them were opened:” Scripture speaks in reference to wisdom and not in reference to actual sight. The end of the verse proves this: “and they knew that they were naked”: even a blind man knows when he is naked! Rather what is: **and they knew that they were naked?** One commandment was imposed upon them and they stripped themselves of it.”⁵³

Rashi was bothered by the connection between open eyes and the perception of nakedness. Therefore he takes both “their eyes were opened”

⁵¹ *...cumque cognovissent se esse nudos etc. Cum, inquit, nudos se esse cognovissent, id est cum se honore, in quo positi vel conditi fuerant, spoliatos et iumentis comparatos sive omni protectione Dei nudatos esse animadvertissent. Nam tale est et illud, quo item dicit Scriptura haec veridica, quae veris nominibus res appellat et congruis acta verbis prout oportet enuntiat: Videns igitur Moyses populum quod esset nudatus, spoliaverat enim eum Aaron propter ignominiam sordis et inter hostes constituerat nudum etc* (In Gen. 3.10, CCCM 21, 245).

⁵² *quod esset nudatus; spoliaverat; et inter hostes constituerat nudum* (ibid.).

⁵³ ותפקחנה עיני שניהם: לענין החכמה דבר הכתוב ולא לענין ראייה ממש וסוף המקרא מוכיח: וידעו כי עירומים הם: אף הסומא יודע כשהוא ערום, אלא מהו: וידעו כי עירומים הם? מצוה אחת היתה בידם ונתערטלו הימנה.

and “naked” as metaphors. Adam and Eve were now without any redeeming virtue, for the one commandment they had received, not to eat of the fruit of the tree, they violated. His source is Midrash *Genesis Rabba* 19:10–11: “‘And the eyes of both of them were opened’: Were they then blind? . . . ‘and they knew that they were naked’: they stripped themselves even of the one commandment that was imposed upon them.”

Apparently the same considerations that forced Rashi to veer from a literal understanding of the verse brought Rupert to his novel interpretation, for just prior to the explanation which Rupert gave, he asks practically the same question as the midrash cited above and interprets, as did Rashi, “Then the eyes of both of them were opened” metaphorically:

How does it finally say: **and the eyes of both of them were opened**? Were they blind before they ate and given eyesight through eating? By no means, for the woman had already seen **that the tree was good for eating and beautiful to the eyes and delightful in its appearance** (Gen. 3:6). The Lord God had already brought all the animals to Adam **to see what he would call them** (Gen. 2:19). Therefore not the outer but the inner eyes of both of them, which they had closed against the Lord, were opened. This is namely that they became aware in their distress that God was truthful while the serpent was most deceitful.⁵⁴

This case, like the first, illustrates how Rupert in essence utilizes the same midrashic idea that Rashi adopted, but supports that idea by the method of *peshat*. He adduces two prooftexts, Gen. 3:6 and 2:19, to demonstrate that both Adam and Eve were able to see *before* they had eaten of the forbidden

⁵⁴ *Quomodo tandem dictum est: et aperti sunt oculi amborum? Numquid caeci erant antequam comederent et comendo illuminati sunt? Non utique, iam enim et mulier viderat, quod esset bonum lignum ad vescendum et pulchrum oculis aspectuque delectabile. Iam et ad Adam adduxerat Dominus Deus cuncta animantia ut videret quid vocaret ea. Non ergo exteriores sed interiores quos contra Deum clausurant aperti sunt oculi amborum, quia videlicet veracem Deum, serpentem vero in sua miseria falsissimum cognoverunt (In Gen. 3.10, CCCM 21, 244–5).*

fruit. These proofs rely on the simple, straightforward meaning of those verses and on the context that they establish. It is possible that Rupert heard the midrashic idea about metaphorical blindness conveyed in the name of Rashi, whereupon he added a logical and contextual proof from the text of the Bible itself.

Why did both Rashi and Rupert choose metaphorical interpretations to explain, “Then the eyes of both of them were opened” (Gen. 3:7), as well as, “and they perceived that they were naked” (ibid.)? The questions they posed made it difficult to render both blindness and sight in this verse in a literal way. Apparently they understood that at this epochal juncture, immediately after the sin, Scripture’s first comment would refer to its spiritual rather than to its physical consequences. This would be of greater eternal relevance and significance. Scripture did not speak of the trite and mundane at such moments. A deeper purpose was to be sought in its words.

This figurative, non-literal understanding of the nudity of Adam and Eve by the midrash and Rashi is perhaps not typical of Jewish interpretation, which on the whole has an aversion to allegorical exegesis; but one should recall that the entire story of the Serpent and Eve was taken as allegory even by the most literal of Jewish interpreters, Abraham Ibn Ezra.⁵⁵ This being the case, there were grounds to explain expressions in the story as metaphorical. However, it must be admitted that Rashi and Rupert may have arrived at these understandings independently. What is perhaps more unusual is that in the Christian sphere, no author besides Rupert understands that they felt themselves naked of anything other than clothing, while Rupert writes that they were despoiled of their position and Divine protection.

⁵⁵ In his introduction to the short commentary on the Pentateuch he writes: “And as regards (the story of) the Tree of Life, it is fitting to explain it as allegory (*sōd*), yet the story is true in the literal sense as well” (*kāmašmā‘ām*).

c. Bekhor Shor

Gen. 3:11: Then He asked, 'Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat of the tree from which I had forbidden you to eat?'

One is not described as “naked” unless one usually wears clothes and now has none. Therefore, it is not customary to say of an animal that it is naked, since it does not usually wear clothes; the animal is covered with that which is appropriate for it. Likewise, important people, when wearing inferior clothing, describe themselves as “undressed” or “naked” because they are not clothed in those garments that are appropriate for them. Now you, Adam, call yourself “naked” (v.10, “**and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid**”), meaning: you think you are fit to wear clothing. Who told you so?⁵⁶

Joseph Bekhor Shor takes issue with Rashi and his midrashic source, both of whom saw in nakedness a figure of speech. For Bekhor Shor, who espoused the literal understanding of the text, “naked” means “without clothing.” Therefore, Bekhor Shor wants to elucidate the context of the story in such a way that would allow all of the relevant verses to be understood literally. In his concept of *peshat*, he seeks meanings that accord with human nature and accepted custom, which he calls *derek ʿereṣ* (“the way of the world”). The word *derek*, “way,” together with another word in a construct phrase, is used by Bekhor Shor over twenty times in Genesis to ascribe accepted human characteristics to biblical figures. In this he was preceded by Rashi and Rashbam, who use both *derek ʿereṣ*, the way of the world, and *derek hammiqrāʾōt*, the way or style of Scriptural expression. However, Rashbam and Bekhor Shor’s use of such phrases is far more frequent than that of Rashi.

(יא-יג) **מי הגיד לך כי ערום אתה** -- שאין נקרא 'ערום' אלא מי שראוי ללבוש, ואין לו - אין דרך לומר על הבהמה: ⁵⁶ ערומה היא, כיון שאינה ראויה לבגדים, כי היא מכוסה בכסות הראוי לה, ואף הגדולים הלבושים בבגדים גרועים קוראין עצמן 'ערומים', לפי שאין להם בגדים הראויים להם -- וגם אתה קורא עצמך 'ערום', כלומר, שאתה ראוי לבגדים; מי הגיד לך שאתה ראוי לבגדים?

Bekhor Shor observes that “it is not customary (*ʿēn derek*) to term an animal ‘naked,’” for this is its natural state. But it *is* the way of the world to use the term “naked” even for inappropriate dress.⁵⁷ This is because humans have a sense of shame when they are naked and, to some extent, even when they wear inappropriate garments. Since the natural state of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden was, like that of the animals, to be unclothed, how could Adam have sensed in v. 10 that he was naked? Bekhor Shor therefore concludes that Adam and Eve awoke to the realization (Gen. 3:7, “and they perceived,” וִידְעוּ) that they were naked. This awareness must have come about as a result of eating from the forbidden fruit.⁵⁸ With this observation, Bekhor Shor is able to explain both of the Lord’s questions in Gen. 3:11 as a narrative sequence: God’s question, “Who told you that you were naked?” led to His rhetorical question, “Did you eat of the tree from which I had forbidden you to eat?”

In light of Rupert’s statement above (Gen. 3:8), that in their spiritual nakedness they were “compared to beasts” (*iumentis comparatos*), it almost seems as though Bekhor Shor had read or heard Rupert’s comment and was taking issue with him on both points. First, Bekhor Shor thinks that Adam and Eve’s nakedness was physical, not figurative, and their sense of shame psychological, not spiritual. Second, contrary to Rupert, animals cannot be called “naked”; hence human nakedness should not be compared to that of animals.⁵⁹

The next example illustrates the concern with juxtaposition among the twelfth century exegetes. Interpretations based on juxtaposition were a commonplace in the midrashic method as well, but in order to derive a moral

⁵⁷ We might add parenthetically that even today, the expression “I have nothing to wear” means that the speaker has nothing appropriate for the occasion.

⁵⁸ Bekhor Shor is known for his psychological insights about biblical characters; see Yehoshafat Nevo, *Perush Rabbi Yosef Bekhor Shor ʿal Ha-Torah* (Jerusalem: Mossad Ha-Rav Kook, 1994), 14.

⁵⁹ In fact, it seems that Bekhor Shor disagreed with Christian interpretations several times in his commentary, and some of these interpretations can be linked to Rupert. See Gottlieb-Vanning, “Rupert and Bekhor Shor”, 6-9, 13-15.

or ethical lesson, adjacency in midrash and Talmud was given a homiletical meaning. As opposed to the rabbinic approach, the 12th century exegetes sought out thematic or literary reasons for juxtaposition.

To make the distinction clear, let us first illustrate rabbinic midrashic juxtaposition. Num. 5:11–31 details the Law of the *Soṭa*, or wayward woman, whose husband suspects her of adultery. This is followed by the Law of the Nazirite, who takes an oath not to drink wine or cut his hair (Num. 6:1–21). The Talmud inquires, “Why was one pericope placed adjacent to the other? To teach you that whoever sees a *Soṭa* in her ordeal, should immediately abstain from drinking wine.”⁶⁰ On the assumption that drunkenness caused her to be unfaithful to her husband,⁶¹ the onlooker who sees the *Soṭa* with her hair disheveled (Num. 5:18), about to undergo the ritual of drinking the bitter waters (ibid. 24), should, as a reaction to the tragic scene before him, take the oath of the Nazirite to abstain from drinking wine.

However, the onlooker who steps out of Numbers 6 to observe the ordeal portrayed in Numbers 5 is solely a creation of midrashic homiletics. Adding characters or events to the biblical narrative in order to explain juxtaposition is standard midrashic technique. The peripatetic observer created here teaches us a moral lesson, which is the second midrashic requirement for *samīkūt paršiyōt* or adjacent chapters. The vow of a Nazirite to abstain from wine, extreme in and of itself, should be understood as a reaction to the opposite extreme of drunkenness, which brought disgrace and tragedy upon the *Soṭa*. This is the rabbinic midrashic explanation for the adjacency of chapters 5 and 6.

Ibn Ezra, the twelfth century Spanish exegete from Toledo (1089–1164) who represents the high point of *peshat* in that country, saw the juxtaposition in strictly formal terms. The pericope about the *Soṭa* deals with a woman who has defiled herself by her behavior, the adjacent portion about

⁶⁰ BT *Berakhot* 63a; *Sota* 2a.

⁶¹ No doubt the preacher who expounded this juxtaposition had in mind the verse, “Lechery, wine, and new wine destroy the mind of My people” (Hos. 4:11), used several times in rabbinic literature to connect wine with sexual impropriety.

the Nazirite describes a woman (the text [Num. 6:2] reads, “If anyone, man or woman, explicitly utters a Nazirite’s vow”) who sanctifies herself by taking the vows. This contrast has one point in common: both the defilement and the sanctification revolve around wine.⁶² Unlike the midrashic explanation, this contrast explains the juxtaposition without bringing extraneous information to the text. Formal, literary, or logical juxtaposition was also the way of the northern French exegetes, as the next example shows.

3. Gen. 22:20–24

20. And it came to pass after these things, that it was told Abraham, saying: 'Behold, Milcah, she also hath borne children unto thy brother Nahor: 21. Uz his first-born, and Buz his brother, and Kemuel the father of Aram; 22. and Kesed, and Hazo, and Pildash, and Jidlaph, and Bethuel.' 23. And Bethuel begot Rebekah; these eight did Milcah bear to Nahor, Abraham's brother. 24. And his concubine, whose name was Reumah, she also bore Tebah, and Gaham, and Tahash, and Maacah.

Our subject is a small paragraph or Masoretic unit (*parasha*) which tells of the birth of 12 sons to Abraham's brother, Nahor. This seemingly insignificant report follows one of the most dramatic stories in Genesis, the Binding of Isaac (Gen. 22:1–19). At issue here is its placement, for the paragraph begins, “And it came to pass after these things,” which suggests a connection with a previous text. To which text is it related and what is the connection? We present the exegesis of Rashi, Rashbam, Bekhor Shor, and Rupert on this paragraph.

⁶² Wine in the case of the suspected adulteress is implicit, while in the portion of the Nazirite it is explicit. Ibn Ezra finds a linguistic contrast as well in the word *tāmē*⁷ used of the *Soṭah*-- “if she has defiled herself” (Num. 5:27), and the word *qadosh* to describe the Nazirite-- “he is consecrated to the Lord” (Num. 6:7).

a. *Rashi*

Gen. 22:20: After these things [it was told Abraham] etc. — When he returned from Mount Moriah Abraham was pondering and said: If my son had *really* been slain, he would have died without children. I must marry him to one of the daughters of Aner or Eshcol or Mamre (that is to say, to a local Canaanite woman). The Holy One, blessed be He, therefore had the announcement made to him that Rebecca, the one fit to be his (Isaac's) consort, had been born. This is what is meant by "*after these things* or words:—namely, "*after the words*" that expressed the thoughts aroused by the Binding of Isaac.

In this comment, we have a fine example of homiletic explanation by Rashi, who often reflects his midrash source.⁶³ First, the word *dəḥārīm*, "things, matters" is given its literal meaning, "words," a standard midrashic technique. The introductory phrase "*After these things*" (Gen. 22:20) now means, "After these words that Abraham spoke to himself," the midrash then providing Abraham with an interior monologue. Second, in midrashic fashion, the juxtaposition (*səmīkūt paršīyyōt*) is itself a stimulus for interpretation: Abraham's inner monologue was engendered by the ordeal of the sacrifice or near-sacrifice of Isaac, which prompted Abraham to have some second thoughts. Third, by supplying an interior monologue, the midrash expands the biblical narrative by adding a scene. This, too, as we have shown above in the case of *Soṭa -Nazir*, is typical of midrash exegesis. In truth, the contents of Abraham's thoughts, in which he weighed marrying his son to a Canaanite girl, have not the slightest basis in the text. Finally, juxtaposition is often exploited to deliver a moral or religious lesson. Just as Abraham was about to abandon his high standards and take a Canaanite woman for his son, after seeing Isaac at Mount Moriah only a step away from

⁶³ *Gen. Rab.* 57 (*Va-yera'*; ed. Theodor-Albeck, 2.614; trans. Soncino *Midrash*, 1.504-5).

death, the birth of Rebekah was announced, restoring Abraham's faith in the Lord.

b. *Rashbam*

22:1: After these events—The phrase, “after these events (*ʿaḥar haddābārīm hāʿelleh*),” always connects events to the preceding chapter. “After (*ʿaḥar*) these events (Gen. 15:1) that Abraham killed the kings (14:15), God said to him (15:2), “Abram, do not be afraid” of those nations. After (*ʿaḥārē*) these events” (22:20), that Isaac was born (21:2), “Abraham was told” further that “Bethuel begot Rebekah” (22:20–23).⁶⁴

Rabbi Samuel ben Meir (Rashbam), Rashi's grandson, was more consistent than his grandfather in his adherence to grammatical meaning and his rejection of midrash. He points out that “after these events” is a standard formulaic phrase occurring not only in our paragraph but also at the beginning of the story of the Sacrifice of Isaac: “Some time afterward [or: After these events], God put Abraham to the test (22:1).”⁶⁵

However, Rashbam does not connect our paragraph to the immediately preceding text about the Binding of Isaac, but rather to Genesis 21, the story of Isaac's birth. This is because the phrase, “After these events,” does not necessarily mean juxtaposition to the closest text, but rather signals a previous text that is logically or thematically related. In our case, the choice was determined by the similarity of topic: Having been informed of the birth of Isaac in Gen. 21, we are now told about the birth of Rebekah, who was destined to be his wife. As Martin Lockshin points out, “Rashbam prefers to use a more distant connection than to have to rely on a midrash in order to

⁶⁴ M. I. Lockshin, *Rabbi Samuel Ben Meir's Commentary on Genesis: An Annotated Translation* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1989) [= *Rashbam*], 94–95.

⁶⁵ Rashbam rejects the distinction made by *Gen. Rab.* 44.5 between “after” (*ʿaḥar*) and “after” (*ʿaḥārē*); see Lockshin, *Rashbam*, 94 n. 1.

establish the more immediate connection.”⁶⁶ As opposed to Midrash, for whom juxtaposition is always with adjacent texts and whose message is always instructive, Rashbam sees a more distant but thematic connection: the birth of cousins who are destined to be man and wife.

c. Bekhor Shor

22:20: It would seem that she too (Milcah) was barren and was made to conceive, and this was relayed to Abraham, and because he knew that they (Nahor and Milcah) had sons and daughters, he sent (his servant) to there to take a wife for his son (Isaac).⁶⁷

Like Rashbam before him, Bekhor Shor relates this paragraph to the birth of Isaac in Genesis 21, but he sees a closer connection than the birth of two cousins; based on the words “she too” (Gen. 22:20, Heb. מלכה גם היא, literally “Milcah, she, too”) he assumes that our paragraph shares another theme with Gen. 21:1. Just as Sarah was barren and conceived Isaac at the age of ninety, so too Milcah the wife of Nahor must have been barren before giving birth to eight sons. This theme is alluded to by the juxtaposition expressed in the linking phrase, “After these things.”

However, unlike Rashbam, Bekhor Shor does not see the entire point of our paragraph in the birth of Rebecca, but rather in the birth of eight sons (and probably some daughters) to Nahor and his wife. These children, like Bethuel, must have had offspring as well; accordingly, Abraham was sending his slave not specifically after Bethuel’s daughter Rebecca but after *any* woman in Nahor’s extended family whom the servant would find suitable.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Lockshin, *ibid.*, 95 n. 1.

⁶⁷ נראה שאף היא היתה עקרה ונפקדה, ובשרוהו לאברהם; ומפני שידע שהיו להם בנים ובנות, שלח שם לקחת אשה לבנו

⁶⁸ Support for this understanding may be found in Gen. 24:4: “And get a wife for my son Isaac.” Abraham could have mentioned her by name to his servant, for Rebecca was already cited in the previous paragraph (22:23). Nonetheless, Abraham did not ask his servant to seek her out specifically.

At this point, implies Bekhor Shor, Rebecca is not the chosen one, a feeling one certainly gets from Rashi's midrashic explanation and even from Rashbam's comment. Apparently, Bekhor Shor wants to explain the sequence of events in the most natural way possible, free of any miraculous implication. This is in keeping with the Northern French attempt to explain the Bible according to "the way of the world" (*derek 'eres*), a basic tenet of the Northern French *peshat* approach.

Bekhor Shor's brief comment on 22:20 seems to fall into two parts. First, he makes the thematic connection backwards with chapter 21 ("she too was barren and was made to conceive") and then he connects our paragraph forward to chapter 24 (Abraham sends his servant to the land of Nahor to find a wife for Isaac). Read this way, our paragraph (Gen. 22:20–24) should be understood as both an epilogue to Isaac's birth and a prologue to chapter 24.⁶⁹ Put differently, Bekhor Shor constructs a context for our paragraph both fore and aft. The concern to have all parts of the story flow in a unified narrative and the idea that biblical verses may serve as a prologue to a later event are both associated with twelfth-century Jewish exegesis.

d. *Rupert*

Gen. 22:20–23: After such events it was reported to Abraham that Milkah also had borne children to Nahor his brother...and Bethuel from whom Rebekah was born—This was reported to Abraham: it is taken as implied in his refusal to take a wife for his son Isaac from the daughters of the Canaanites among whom he lived, and in his worry from where a daughter-in-law worthy of him should be expected. This anxiety was

⁶⁹ For R. Joseph Qara and Rashbam, biblical prologues, called *haqdāmōt*, are an important trait of *peshat* interpretation. On the idea of prologues in Torah literature, see N. M. Sarna, "The Anticipatory Use of Information as a Literary Feature of the Genesis Narratives," in R. E. Friedman (ed.), *The Creation of Sacred Literature* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 76–82 (= N. M. Sarna, *Studies in Biblical Interpretation* [Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2000], 211–20); H. Liss, *Creating Fictional Worlds* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 75–99.

sufficient reason and occasion why holy Scripture relates that this was reported to him.⁷⁰

Rupert's comment is very suggestive of Rashi. Rupert's repeated use of the word for "worry", "anxiety" (*sollicito, nam haec sollicitudo*) to describe Abraham's state corresponds to Abraham's sense of frustration as related by Rashi. But whereas Rashi's comment, as we pointed out above, relies on four or five midrashic traits including juxtaposition, Rupert does not rely on any of these. He does not connect Abraham's anxiety to the harrowing experience of the near-sacrifice of Isaac, nor does he provide Abraham with an inner monologue. Instead, Rupert intuitively grasps Abraham's sense of worry from the text itself, which informs us that Abraham refused to take a bride for Isaac from amongst the Canaanites in the land (Gen. 24:3). No wonder that Abraham was on the verge of hopelessness. At that point, says Rupert, Scripture tells us that Abraham was informed of the birth of Rebecca.

It seems once again that Rupert is conveying the gist of Rashi's comment and its midrashic source, without resorting to midrashic techniques. Instead of providing an interior monologue for Abraham as did the midrash and Rashi, Rupert gives us an analysis of Abraham's psychological state, which brought him to the point of anxiety and worry.⁷¹ In order to derive Abraham's state of mind from the text alone, Rupert relies on a verse in Genesis 24, though we are now only in Genesis 22. Perhaps Rupert assumed that based on that latter verse, we may understand that Abraham all along was averse to taking a bride for his son from amongst the Canaanites. In sum, while the content of Rupert's interpretation of Gen. 22:20–24 is equivalent to the midrash and Rashi, he finds support for Abraham's state of mind in the context of the verses themselves. This

⁷⁰ *His ita gestis nuntiatum est Abraham quod Melcha quoque genuisset filios Nahor fratri suo...ac Bathuel de quo nata est Rebecca etc.: Hoc nuntiatum est Abraham, subauditur nolenti accipere filio suo Isaac uxorem de filiabus Chananeorum inter quos habitabat, et sollicito unde digna sibi nurus esset speranda, nam haec sollicitudo causa vel occasio est idonea cur hoc illi nuntiatum esse sancta narret Scriptura (In Gen. 6.34, CCCM, 21, 412).*

⁷¹ Bekhor Shor was credited with psychological analysis of biblical characters.

approach is characteristic of straightforward explication, the *peshat*. Based on the substance of Rupert's remarks, it is hard to believe that Rupert did not know what Jewish exegesis had to say about this paragraph. It is certainly possible that Jews were his source of knowledge for this comment; his lack of attribution is not significant, since Rupert never cites contemporary Jewish sources with approval.⁷²

Our final example once again brings Rupert into play with Bekhor Shor. This, too, is a case of interpreting by juxtaposition, adopted by the midrash and Rashi but rejected by Rupert and Bekhor Shor. In this case it seems more likely than ever that Rupert was familiar with Jewish exegesis, and equally plausible that Bekhor Shor was responding to Rupert.

4. *Gen. 35:1*

God said to Jacob, "Arise, go up to Bethel and remain there; and build an altar there to the God who appeared to you when you were fleeing from your brother Esau."

Scripture narrates Jacob's return to the land of Israel as a series of adversities and unfortunate incidents, in regard to Esau (32:4–33:17), Dinah (34), and Rachel (35:16–20). Between the second and third a Divine command (35:1) is given to Jacob to fulfill what he had previously vowed. In the simple understanding of the text, the command may merely indicate that the time to fulfill the vow had arrived.

The midrash, however, understands that this command would be superfluous, if Jacob were not guilty of a delay in fulfilling his vow, since he should have carried out his promise without further prompting. Support for this understanding may be gleaned from the text itself, for in Gen. 31:13 an

⁷² Rupert authored an anti-Jewish polemic, *Anulus sive dialogus inter Christianum et Iudeum*, constructed as a dialogue between Rupert and an imaginary Jew. He only credits Jews when he quotes a remark from one of the Church fathers before him who had himself noted that his source was the Jews. See n. 79.

angel appears to Jacob while he is still in Laban's house, saying to him: "I am the God of Beth-el, where you anointed a pillar and where you made a vow to Me. Now, arise and leave this land and return to your native land." In 35:1 (the verse cited above), after the incident with Dinah, God repeats the call to Jacob to return to Bethel and to build an altar. In midrashic thought, the juxtaposition of this Divine reminder to Dinah's abduction indicates that the misfortune was a punishment consequent on the delay.⁷³ This is how Rashi understood 35:1, adding that the verse also served as a warning to Jacob:

a. *Rashi*

Arise, go up — Because you lingered on your journey, you have been punished and this [trouble] of your daughter has come to you.⁷⁴

Rashi bases himself on this midrash:

And after vows to make examination (Prov. 20:25)—Said R. Jannai: If a man delays (*ʾihēr*) to fulfill his vow, his ledger is examined⁷⁵ The proof is this: Because our ancestor Jacob delayed the fulfillment of his vow, his ledger was examined: *And God said unto Jacob: Arise, Go up to Bethel, etc.*⁷⁶

⁷³ In the view of midrash, the positioning of the episodes adjacent to the command to return to Bethel is so significant, that the episode of Rachel's death (35:16–20), recorded *after* the command to fulfill the vow, is considered by one version of *Tanḥuma* as having occurred *before* the command. Another version substitutes Laban's trickery as a punishment, even though this occurred *before* Jacob began his return home.

⁷⁴ (א) קום עליה ביתאל (בנוסחנו: בית אל) - לפי שאיחרת נדריך נענשת, ובאה לך זאת מבתך

⁷⁵ The midrashic play on words is between the word *ʾihēr*, (אחר) "to delay (the fulfillment of a vow)," and the verse from Proverbs: "ואחר נדרים לבקר", "And after vows to make examination." Vows were a serious matter; cf. Deut. 23:22; Qoh. 5:3. The misfortunes which befell Jacob, in particular the rape of Dinah, were not punishments for late fulfillment of the vow; rather, because he was negligent, his "books" were examined and his life was subject to a stringent evaluation, which brought on such hardships as are related.

⁷⁶ *Gen. Rab.* 81, 1, ii, 745. While this Midrash does not say that the rape of Dinah was a punishment, *Tanḥuma Va-yišlah* 8, states: "...R. Yannai said that the account book of one who vows and does not pay is examined before the Holy One... He went and became wealthy and returned and settled but did not pay his vow. He brought upon him Esau Since he did not become aware, he underwent the anguish of Dinah, as it says: *and Dinah went out* (Gen. 34:1)." *Tanḥuma* (ed. Buber) *Va-yišlah* 22 is similar, ending as follows: "The angel was

b. *Rupert*

1. Gen. 33:18: It says: **after he returned from Mesopotamia of Syria**: it should be taken as implied here: although according to the vow which he had vowed in Bethel he should have gone and, as he did shortly afterwards, built an altar or house to God there. For thus he vowed, **pouring oil** over the stone that he set up **as a monument..: If I shall return in prosperity, the Lord will be to me as God, and this stone which I set up as a monument will be called the house of God** (Gen. 28:18, 21–22). Therefore after he returned, he should have hastened to go up to Bethel and pay his vows. This he did a little later, when he had been reminded by adversities, and God demanded the vows thus: **arise and go up to Bethel and dwell there and make an altar to God who appeared to you when you fled from Esau your brother** (Gen. 35:1).⁷⁷

2. Gen. 35:6–7: **So Jacob came to Luz, which is in the land of Canaan--the same is Beth-el**—There [Jacob] fulfilled his vows and is an example to every man not to delay to pay what he vowed to God.⁷⁸

3. Gen. 35:9–10: **And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came from Mesopotamia of Syria, and blessed him**— when he paid his vow he received the blessing.⁷⁹

immediately revealed to him. He said to him: do you not know why each and every trouble has come upon you? Because you delayed your vow...what did he speak with him? He said to him: go pay your vow."

⁷⁷ *Postquam, inquit, reversus est de Mesopotamia Syriae. Hic subaudiendum est, cum secundum votum quod voverat in Bethel debuisset ire, et quod postmodum fecit ibi altare vel domum Deo aedificare. Sic enim vovit, fundens oleum super lapidem quem erigebat in titulum: Si reversus fuero prospere, erit mihi Dominus in Deum, et lapis iste quem erexi in titulum vocabitur domus Dei. Postquam ergo reversus est, maturare debuit ascendere in Bethel et vota reddere, quod et paulo post fecit adversitatibus admonitus eodem Deo vota sic exigente: Surge et ascende Bethel et habita ibi, facque altare Deo qui apparuit tibi quando fugiebas Esau fratrem tuum* (In Gen. 8.10, CCCM 21, 495).

⁷⁸ *Ibi vota sua soluit exemploque est omni homini, ut quod voverit Deo reddere non moretur* (In Gen. 8.13, CCCM 21, 498).

No other Christian commentator speaks about the non-fulfillment of the vow. Could Rupert have derived such an interpretation from the simple meaning of the text? It seems possible, for as we said above, one may find support for the idea that Jacob was punished based on the repeated requests in Gen. 31:13 and 35:1 that he return to Bethel. However, as if to parallel Rupert's three comments, we find three comments by Bekhor Shor:

c. Bekhor Shor

1. Gen. 35:9: **When he came from Paddan-aram**— as if to say: the correct way to come was to go via Shechem to there, so that you should not say that he delayed his vow; rather he arrived there by the way he ought to have come. Detours, however, occurred to him through Esau and Shechem.⁸⁰

In clear opposition to the midrash, Rashi, and Rupert, Bekhor Shor denies that Jacob had delayed his vow. The verse states that Jacob arrived from Paddan-aram, meaning that the route he took through Shechem was the correct one. The detours on the way home were not the result of Jacob's negligence but due to the acts of others, Esau and Shechem. Further, the end of the verse (35:9) states, "and He blessed him." Would the Lord have blessed Jacob if he had been negligent in fulfilling his vow? Nor does Bekhor Shor comment on the placement of Gen. 35:1 as an indication of Jacob's tardiness; the juxtaposition of this verse to the Dinah incident is based on chronological order, nothing more. God spoke to Jacob after the incident with Dinah because it was now time to fulfill the vow. In fact, according to Bekhor Shor,

⁷⁹ *Apparuit autem iterum Deus Jacob, postquam reversus est de Mesopotamia Syriae: Ubi votum soluit Jacob, benedictionem percipit* (Gen. 8.14, CCCM 21, 498).

⁸⁰ (ט) בבאו מפדן ארם - כלומר: דרך ביאתו הוא לילך משכם לשם, שלא תאמר שאיחר נידרו, אלא דרך ביאתו בא שם, אלא שבאו עליו גלגולים מעשו ומשכם.

the Lord wanted Jacob to fulfill his vow at Bethel only *after* the incident with Dinah:

2. 35:1 *and dwell there*—settle down there, for you have to tithe. The Almighty waited until after the incident of Shechem, in order that Jacob tithe also from the booty taken at Shechem, and [only] now Jacob's vow was fulfilled, because the Lord protected him from Esau and Laban and the neighbors of Shechem.⁸¹

3. 35:9 *and blessed him*— after he paid his vow.⁸²

Why does Bekhor Shor insist that Jacob did not delay his vow? If the literal understanding of the biblical story is coherent and each verse with all its elements can be explained according to human reason and the rules of grammar, then *peshat* had no authority to go further than the text indicates, especially to cast aspersions on a patriarch. Bekhor Shor claims that there was no allusion in such a plain reading to any delay. There is no basis for the explanations of the Midrash, Rashi, and Rupert.

As Rupert's explanation has no precedent in Christian exegesis, but follows the Midrash and Rashi, one might argue that Rupert heard the Jewish explanation during his years in Northern France or among the Jews of the Rhineland. Especially noteworthy is the comparison between Rupert and Bekhor Shor on 35:9:

⁸¹ Bekhor Shor is referring to Gen. 34:30: "And Jacob said to Simeon and Levi: 'Ye have troubled me, to make me odious unto the inhabitants of the land, even unto the Canaanites and the Perizzites; and, I being few in number, they will gather themselves together against me and smite me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house.'" Following is the original for the quotation from Bekhor Shor:

(א-ב) **ושב שם** - התיישב שם, כי אתה צריך לעשר; והמתין הקדוש ברוך הוא עד לאחר מעשה שכם כדי שיתן מעשר מביזת שכם, ועכשיו נעשית הבטחתו.

⁸² **ויברך אותו** – לאחר ששילם נדרו

Rupert

35:9-10: **And God appeared unto Jacob again, when he came from Paddan-aram, and blessed him**— when he paid his vow he received the blessing.

Bekhor Shor

35:9 **and blessed him**— after he paid his vow.

Rupert has Jacob paying his vow after several delays, and Bekhor Shor has Jacob fulfilling his vow on time. Did Rupert adopt the readings of the midrash and Rashi because they were critical of Jacob?⁸³ If so, perhaps Bekhor Shor's defense of Jacob was a type of implicit polemic against interpretations such as Rupert's. Was Bekhor Shor actually familiar with Rupert's commentary on this chapter, and was this perhaps the reason that he reacted to Rupert's three comments with three comments of his own?

Conclusions

Rupert asks many questions not raised by other Christian writers until his time, and some of them are found in Jewish commentaries of the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In none of these cases does he acknowledge a Jewish source. Rupert has biblical explanations that display a careful reading of the text, a concern for biblical order, and the purposefulness of every word, qualities associated with the Jewish exegesis known as *peshat*. His explanations for adjacency, especially when the juxtaposition is not chronological, are logical or literary, in the style of *peshat* interpretation of

⁸³ "It important to realize that in personal encounters Rupert could adopt a friendly attitude and debate on common ground, whereas in his commentaries, written for Christian readers, he assumed towards Jews and Judaism that same combative stance he took towards 'all enemies of Christ and His Church'" (Van Engen, *Rupert*, 244). Abulafia, "Ideology," also stresses the harshness of Rupert's attitude towards Jews.

the twelfth century.⁸⁴ Van Engen notes that “much remains to be done on Rupert’s sources and the way in which he employed them,” and this is certainly so for his Jewish sources.

The four cases treated in this article illustrate some of the above observations. In the first case, the content of Rupert’s comment is identical to that of Rashi. However, Rupert is not concerned with the midrashic arithmetic that evens out the missing *kī tōb* on Day Two by means of the doubled *kī tōb* on Day Three. Instead, Rupert picks up on the idea of unfinished business and enlarges upon it by providing an illustration, presenting an explanation that sounds like the *peshat*. In the second case, Genesis 3, Rashi follows the midrash and explains Adam and Eve’s nakedness as a metaphor, and Rupert concurs. However, of interest is the proof-text that Rupert cites from the Sin of the Golden Calf in Exodus. Explaining the “Bible by the Bible”⁸⁵ is a distinguishing trait among the twelfth century French interpreters.

In the third case, Gen. 22:20–24, at issue is the nature of juxtaposition. The announcement of the birth of sons to Nahor and Milcah and of a granddaughter as well may be attached to the preceding story of the Binding of Isaac to teach a midrashic lesson about faith, as Rashi explained. Rashbam thinks it is to be read in conjunction with the birth of Isaac two chapters before, as both share a common theme. Bekhor Shor agrees with Rashbam and adds that the theme is not birth alone, but birth following barrenness. He also notes that the paragraph is positioned to be a prologue to chapter 24, where Abraham sends his servant to find a wife for Isaac, who turns out to be Nahor’s granddaughter Rebecca. Rupert seems to agree with Rashi that this paragraph has a function in laying Abraham’s worries to rest, but he takes no note of the midrashic techniques used by Rashi to arrive at this message,

⁸⁴ An analysis of juxtaposition in the commentaries of Rashi, Ibn Ezra, and Nahmanides may be found in I. B. Gottlieb, *Order in the Bible: The Arrangement of the Torah in Rabbinic and Medieval Jewish Commentary*, (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2009) [Hebrew].

⁸⁵ The expression is used by S. Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary, 1962), 49.

such as juxtaposition to the binding of Isaac. Rupert speaks in psychological terms of anxiety, rather than in religious terms of faith. He derives his understanding of Abraham's mindset prior to this paragraph solely from verses in the text. All these points concur with the methods of *peshat*.

Bekhor Shor explained this paragraph in the most natural way possible. It was not a solution to Abraham's crisis of faith in the Lord, or even to Abraham's anxiety. Nor was it a harbinger of Rebecca's birth, hinting at her becoming Isaac's bride in semi-miraculous fashion. Rather, because a family member had given birth to so many offspring, there was a good chance that Abraham would find among them a suitable match for Isaac. The paragraph blends into the narrative sequence and from a literary point of view serves both as continuation of the story and as a prologue to the servant's trip.

In the final example, Genesis 35, both midrash and Rashi think that repetition and juxtaposition suggest criticism of Jacob's behavior. Rupert delivers the identical critique but, as in the previous case, does not mention repetition or juxtaposition. It goes without saying that he does not cite the verse from Proverbs that is at the heart of this midrash. It seems beyond doubt that Rupert must have heard the Jewish interpretation that Jacob delayed fulfilling his vow, as this notion is mentioned by no other Christian interpreter. Possibly, Rupert's adoption of the idea may have been motivated by the opportunity to find fault with Jacob; the opposite sentiment might have stimulated Bekhor Shor to vigorously defend Jacob's behavior.⁸⁶ There is thus an undercurrent of polemic here, in which Bekhor Shor seems to be opposing Rupert's critical view of Jacob from the very same verses that Rupert used.⁸⁷ This example suggests more than the others that ideas might

⁸⁶ "Avraham Grossman has suggested that polemical considerations were at least partly behind *Bekhor Shor's* strong efforts (following Rashbam and R. Yosef Qara) to defend the behavior of the *Avot*, serving as both a response to Christian claims and as a means of preventing members of the Jewish community from being swayed by Christian arguments"; Ephraim Kanarfogel, *The Intellectual History and Rabbinic Culture of Medieval Ashkenaz* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2013), 152.

⁸⁷ Together with Berger, *Persecution*, 47, we would say that "if one were to be persuaded of influence, this would be a case of being swept away by a parallelism that is difficult to attribute to coincidence."

have passed from the Jews to Rupert. Further, it would seem that Rupert's exegesis might have been known to Bekhor Shor. We are therefore in full agreement with Berger's assessment:

Both Jews and Christians were sufficiently familiar with the approaches of the other for influence—in both directions—to be plausible. Religiously neutral aspects of the twelfth-century cultural efflorescence have sufficient affinities to certain predilections of *pashtanim* (e.g., interpreting according to *derek ʿereṣ*) to have inspired them without their seeing these predilections as deriving from a specifically Christian environment.⁸⁸

With the accumulation of additional examples, we may be able to show how both the contents and methods of interpretation of Christians and Jews were similar due to the *Zeitgeist* of the eleventh–twelfth centuries, on the one hand, and to actual contacts, whether neighborly or polemical, on the other.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 46.