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RASHI'S COMMENTARY ON THE TORAH: A SURVEY OF RECENT PUBLICATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Twentieth-century Bible study has been marked by sharp changes in attitude toward traditional scriptural interpretation. The early part of the century saw a sharp rise in interest in medieval Bible interpretation that derived, in large measure, from the newly discovered treasures of the Cairo Geniza. But the subsequent discovery and publication of Ugaritic, Egyptian and Akkadian texts—resulting from, and contributing to, major strides in archaeological research—focused the search for the “correct” meaning of Scripture on the reconstruction of the Bible’s ancient Near-Eastern context and led to diminished interest and confidence in most classical rabbinic interpretation.

As these discoveries became integrated into the field and the new approaches to Bible study matured, interest was renewed in post-Biblical interpretations of the Bible, which themselves became as much a subject of the new archaeological inquiry as the Bible itself. The discovery of the Dead Sea scrolls and other formerly unknown inter-testamental books, gnostic codices, and patristic compositions pushed early rabbinic texts into greater prominence. This trend, along with a remarkable blossoming of advanced research in all areas of Jewish Studies and the well publicized popular return to traditional Jewish learning, has led to increased interest in many classical religious texts, one of the most important of which is Rashi’s commentary on the Torah. And we now stand on the threshold of a new era in Rashi study, characterized by serious original research on his work (not mere commemoration of his birth or death),¹ in which we may see the production of works on Rashi that will surpass some of the important contributions of the last five centuries.

Though it is impossible to review all of the recently published book-length studies, much less the many reprints, monographs and articles, that contribute to this renaissance, I will describe some of them. The reader will thus have before him a survey of current efforts (essentially an annotated bibliography of recent publications), many of which belong in the library of any home, school or synagogue that pays attention to what is undoubtedly the most famous and widely studied Jewish commentary ever written on the Torah.

THE TEXT OF RASHI'S COMMENTARY

In many ways, Abraham Berliner's second edition of Rashi's commentary on the Torah was an important watershed in the study of this seminal writer's literary legacy.² Never before had anyone consulted over one hundred manuscripts and early editions in order to determine the correct text of Rashi's commentary. And never since has anyone attempted to issue a clear statement of exactly what was contained in it as it left his hand.³ Berliner's effort was an improvement over the many vulgar editions, was praised when it appeared, and remains the most frequently cited version of Rashi. But subsequent years witnessed methodological improvements in scholarly text editing that highlighted shortcomings in the German scholar's work, due, in part, to his subjective determination of what he thought to be Rashi's *ipsissima verba*, and cast a cloud over his contribution.

One of the studies that challenged the usefulness of all extant work on Rashi, including Berliner's, was a 1940 article of Isaiah Sonne. Sonne pieced together data on variations in Rashi's work from a number of obscure printed texts and citations in medieval writers, demonstrating the existence of what might be called Ashkenazic and Sefardic versions of Rashi's commentary to the Torah.⁴ Despite casual criticisms, Sonne's study remains an important (and unanswered) challenge to the integrity of the text as we know it. When coupled with the exciting developments in Biblical studies that dominated the middle decades of this century, it may have helped to divert the interest of all but the most faithful from Rashi and his commentaries for at least a generation.

Though Rashi's writings exist in many, many manuscript copies and his Torah commentary was one of the very first Hebrew books printed, his Bible commentary is actually incomplete, as it is generally agreed that several of the parts attributed to him (in some cases entire books) are the work of others.⁵ All of his commentaries have appeared in many editions, but virtually all of them still require serious scholarly attention. In fact, no adequate scientific edition of

Rashi's commentary on any Biblical book has been published, though a number of contributions offer partial assistance and notation of his sources beyond the basic vulgar text.⁶

The first in a series of new publications of Rashi's Torah commentary began fifteen or twenty years ago with the reprinting of the Reggio 1475 edition of the text.⁷ Totally unannotated and quite difficult to read, the reprint is important nonetheless, for it makes this very rare text available for scholarly use. The reprinting of the 1524–25 Venice Rabbinic Bible around the same time (Jerusalem: 1972) gave access to another important early edition of the text.⁸

This was followed in 1981 by Rabbi Hayyim Chavel's edition of Rashi, based on Berliner, Reggio, and Oxford Bodleian MS #2440. A well printed and annotated volume published by Mossad HaRav Kook (second edition, Jerusalem: 1983), this is now the most readily available and easily used one-volume edition of Rashi, though, like Berliner's, it was printed without the Bible text. Chavel's edition (minus his notes) also appears in the new Mossad HaRav Kook Humash (*Torat Hayyim*) and has become the new "Berliner," but it, too, falls short of being the fully annotated, scholarly desideratum.

One should not minimize Chavel's industry and contributions, but students of Rashi must rejoice at the appearance of *Ariel: Rashi ha-Shalem*, Volume 1, Genesis 1–25, in 1986. Destined to be a ten-volume edition of Rashi on the Torah, and modelled, to some extent, on the various publications of Rabbi Menahem Kasher, this first volume contains almost 450 pages, including the Koren text of the Torah, the Sabionetta 1557 text of Onkelos, Rashi based on the 1524–25 Venice Rabbinic Bible, and very extensive citation and discussion of Rashi's rabbinic sources. Useful introductory remarks explain the goals of the project, while an appendix lists and discusses all of the places in Rashi's other writings in which a verse from this volume is cited or explained.

The (significantly different) versions of Rashi's commentary published in Rome (1470), Reggio (1475) and Guadalajara (1476) are printed in parallel columns in an appendix. While it does not respond fully to the issue raised by Sonne, this edition clearly portrays the extent of the variants found in three early texts of Rashi (four, if one consults the Venice text printed in the body of the book). It does not present all relevant manuscript evidence or parallel citations from the early medieval literature, but it does offer the best available picture of the state of research into the text of Rashi. It is a handsome and usable text that is peerless in charting the relationship between Rashi and earlier rabbinic literature.⁹

Readers interested in textual problems may also consult the two volume *Yosef Hallel*, a commentary on Rashi by Rabbi Menachem

Mendel Brachfeld (Brooklyn: 1987) that directs a great deal of attention to variant readings and discusses many of the questions that engaged the earlier commentators. In addition to the commentary on Rashi, the volumes contain about 250 pages of useful comparisons between the texts of Rashi found in many reprinted editions of the Rabbinic Bible and the Reggio printing of 1475. As stated in the introduction, this collation was occasioned by the availability of the photomechanical reprint of the Reggio edition. The commentary frequently evaluates these differences and integrates them into the discussion of Rashi's interpretations, but neither it nor the lists of variants offer a complete picture of the textual situation; they should be used with caution. A similar, but much less extensive, collation of variants is found in Hayyim Shalom HaLevi Segal's *Tosefet Rashi: Bereshit* (Jerusalem: 1971), which includes a number of related texts from Rashi's other writings, the author's notes, and variants collected from the version of Rashi published in Czernowitz in 1839, reportedly based on a very old and fine manuscript.

Another major undertaking that will provide much insight into the textual state of Rashi's work is Jacob Gellis' *Tosafot ha-Shalem* (Jerusalem: 1982 ff), a collection of the Torah commentaries of Rashi's students and immediate intellectual descendants. So far, this important project covers all of Genesis and Exodus 1–9 (in six volumes) and contains material culled from 172 manuscripts and 56 early printings. In addition to presenting many previously unavailable interpretations of the Tosafot, virtually every page contains numerous citations from Rashi. Often they provide the earliest confirmed attribution of a particular passage to him (a very important check on the integrity of questionable passages in Rashi) or variant readings that provide improved texts and/or help clarify the precise meanings of specific passages. Careful study of Rashi's commentary on the Talmud has always necessitated giving attention to the comments of the Tosafot, and the same is true of his commentaries on the Torah. This new anthology renders the task both easier and more fruitful.¹⁰

TRANSLATIONS

Rashi's commentary on the Torah has been translated into a number of languages, including Russian, Arabic, Latin, German and French, but only the English translations need concern us at this point. The linear translation of Abraham ben Isaiah and Benjamin Sharfman¹¹ is perhaps most popular among novices, and it has been supple-

mented by similar translations of three *Megillot* by Rabbis Avraham and Yisroel Schwartz.¹² But many readers will, in all likelihood, prefer the more conventional and carefully annotated translation of M. Rosenbaum and A. M. Silbermann.¹³

Two as yet incomplete English commentaries pay a good deal of attention to Rashi's interpretations. The Artscroll Bible Commentary weaves selections from and interpretations of Rashi into its presentations, but has made no attempt to incorporate all of his comments. The *Judaica Books of the Prophets* translate and sometimes elaborate on Rashi's comments as part of a broader presentation of traditional interpretations of the Bible text.

TOOLS FOR EXPLORING RASHI MORE FULLY

It has long been noted that Rashi commented on the Bible in his responsa and Talmudic commentaries.¹⁴ The examination of this material has become very popular of late, and several collections and evaluations have begun to appear, in addition to the contributions noted above. Yoel Florsheim has published two volumes of a projected three-volume work called *Rashi la-Mikra be-Ferusho la-Talmud*.¹⁵ Similar but somewhat more broadly conceived, though less fully annotated, is Meir David Ben-Shem's two-volume work, *Musaf Rashi*.¹⁶ Joseph Segal's *Genuzot Rashi* (Jerusalem: 1979), a collection of statements on verses not treated *ad locum* in Rashi's commentaries but explained elsewhere, is the smallest and earliest of the three efforts. When complete, Florsheim's work should be the most useful.

Our present limited knowledge of the textual state of Rashi's commentaries precludes creating proper concordances (though such efforts have long been undertaken for earlier and no more carefully edited rabbinic works), but Avinery's *Heikhal Rashi* is a virtual encyclopedia of material and occasionally approaches this goal.¹⁷ The recent edition of this work, although incomplete in comparison with the 1940 original, provides the interested student with essays about Rashi as well as extensive discussions of his contributions to the evolution of the Hebrew language. In the process, it also examines virtually all technical terms and exegetical concepts included in his writings.

Because Rashi did not base his grammatical observations on the tri-literal theory of Hebrew roots, his linguistic orientation is quite different from today's, and his applications of grammatical terms and concepts frequently require elucidation. *Sefer Dikdukei Rashi* (Josefow: 1878, often reprinted), combining *Be'er Rehovot* of

Isaac Auerbach and *Mira Dakhya* of Mordecai HaLevi, has become a popular handbook that follows the order of the Torah and *Megillot* and clarifies these sometimes difficult passages. Moshe Hayyim Haraz' more recent *Leshon Hayyim* (Jerusalem: 1970) is organized the same way (for the Torah only) and, like HaLevi's commentary, includes an introduction that presents a selection of Rashi's grammatical principles. Readers limited to English may still refer profitably to Henry Englander's series of articles on Rashi's use of grammar that appeared in *Hebrew Union College Annual*,¹⁸ but the fullest systematic English treatment remains *Rashi as Philologist*, by Joseph Pereira-Mendoza (Manchester: 1940).¹⁹

Over the centuries, a number of writers have composed and collected various lists of "rules" used in Rashi's commentaries. Many of them are definitions of specific exegetical terms or approaches to exegetical problems; others are more general. An extensive presentation of "rules"—consisting of quotations from the commentaries themselves and organized in Biblical sequence—was published by Rabbi Menahem Brayer in 1958 and presents important examples of generalizations that Rashi himself incorporated in his work.²⁰

More recently, Rabbi Tuvia Blau has composed a book entitled *Kelalei Rashi* (second edition, New York: 1980) from Rabbi Menahem Schneerson's *Sihot*. The book contains some 30 pages of analysis of theoretical matters (most of which center around the concepts *peshat* and *derash*), 60 pages of "rules" that fall under 17 different headings, and over 30 pages of extracts from various *Sihot* that serve to exemplify Rabbi Schneerson's treatment of Rashi. It contains many interesting observations, but probably the most innovative—if somewhat fanciful—centers around the claim that, in accord with the Mishnaic teaching that children of five years should study the Bible (*Avot*, 5:21), Rashi wrote his commentary so that a five-year-old could understand it. Over a dozen rules or corollaries derive from this principle, and it permeates the presentation.

SUPERCOMMENTARIES ON RASHI

Virtually every traditional Jewish Torah commentary written since the Middle Ages responds, in part, to Rashi's comments. In addition, dozens of full commentaries have been composed on Rashi's.²¹ A number of the most important have been available for many years, and others have been reissued very recently. The frequent reprinting of four of the supercommentaries (sometimes called *Otsar Perushim al ha-Torah*) is a welcome aid to those who wish to examine the give and take surrounding Rashi's interpretations through later centuries.

Perhaps most prominent among them is the commentary of Rabbi Elijah Mizrahi; but the most frequently consulted is probably Shabbetai Meshorer's *Siftei Hakhamim*, which has been published in a number of editions, some abridged. Rabbi Mordecai Jaffe's *Levush ha-Orah* and Rabbi Loewe of Prague's *Gur Aryeh* are printed on the page with the other two. Despite the value of this four-part collection, the print size and lack of proper annotation make reissue of all a high priority. *Gur Aryeh* has been printed in a more readable format in *Sifrei ha-MaHaRaL* (Israel: 1972), but without proper annotation.²²

Other welcome reprints include Rabbi Nathan Ashkenazi's *Imrei Shefer* (Genesis-Exodus, Cracow: 1590, Leviticus-Deuteronomy, Lublin: 1597), Rabbi Jacob ben Benjamin Aaron's *Nahalat Ya'akov* (Cracow: 1642), and Rabbi Isaac ben Naphtali's *Kitsur Mizrahi* (Prague: 1604), which is more than the abridgement of Mizrahi's commentary implied by its name.²³ All of these important works, unavailable for many years, are now accessible, at least for those with the patience and eyesight to handle the carefully reprinted but still often illegible text. New editions would be welcomed and may be in preparation, as a project to publish commentaries on Rashi in properly edited and annotated editions has been announced by Makhon Rashi she-al Yad Mikhlalah le-Banot, Jerusalem.²⁴

Simeon ben Isaac Ushenberg's *Devek Tov* (published in 1588 and subsequently, reprinted in Jerusalem: 1966), a brief commentary that begins with an exposition of 26 rules employed by Rashi in his commentary, is also available. Rabbi Ephraim Zalman Margalit's *Shem Ephraim* (Vacz: 1911), which includes comments on, and suggested corrections in, Rashi's text, has also been reprinted a number of times (e.g., Jerusalem: 1972).

Abraham Baqrat's *Sefer ha-Zikkaron*²⁵ has been reissued by Moshe Phillip (Petah Tikvah: 1985). Baqrat's very fine commentary, which includes a great deal of attention to determining the proper text of Rashi, also discusses the differences between the Torah texts on which Rashi based his comments and those in general use. Phillip's well annotated edition has explored these differences extensively and contains much useful data. His introduction also discusses Rashi's sources and exegetical methods as well as Baqrat's sources and procedures.

Another important supercommentary on Rashi is *Maskil le-David* (Venice: 1761) by David Pardo, which has appeared in a new, two-volume edition (Jerusalem: 1986). It contains a newly set text, but the editor's major contribution has been to collect a few pages of interesting statements that portray some of the very positive attitudes

toward Rashi in different times and places.²⁶ The edition is not annotated and cannot compare in quality to Phillip's volume.

In addition to his other work on Rashi, including his commentary published with the Mossad HaRav Kook edition, Rabbi Chavel published an annotated edition of *Divrei David*, a commentary on Rashi by David ben Samuel HaLevi—the TaZ—(Jerusalem: 1978). Chavel's brief introduction does not explore the commentary fully, but it does highlight a number of interesting points. As always, his notes are helpful.²⁷

BIOGRAPHIES AND SPECIALIZED STUDIES

A number of biographies of Rashi have appeared over the years, the most recent being that of Ezra Shereshevsky, who has devoted a number of monographs to Rashi and his commentaries. His *Rashi: The Man and His World* (New York: 1982) provides a collection of informative studies on a range of topics, including Rashi's life and literary output, as well as five chapters on life in Rashi's times entitled "The World Through Rashi's Eyes."²⁸

Also of note, though only of passing interest to many devotees of Rashi, are the many linguistic studies that center on the vernacular glosses preserved in Rashi's writings, particularly his commentaries on the Talmud. Rashi has long been recognized as a very valuable source for words in a number of medieval European languages used by Jews and into which difficult Hebrew words were translated. The studies that examine these foreign words (not all of which are necessarily original with Rashi or found in all copies of his writings) also help determine the precise meanings of numerous Biblical words he defined or translated.²⁹

An interesting Hebrew article that may escape some readers because it appears in a volume often overlooked by Rashi enthusiasts is Bezalel Narkiss' "Rashi's Maps," in E. Schiller (ed.), *Zev Vilnay's Jubilee Volume* (Jerusalem: 1984). This brief piece develops a study begun many years ago by Vilnay himself. It contains reproductions of maps from several early manuscripts and helps clarify both the intent of Rashi's geographic notations and the evolution of certain aspects of medieval Biblical cartography.

A number of passages from Rashi's Bible commentaries have been examined in Jonah Fraenkel's Hebrew study *Rashi's Methodology in His Exegesis of the Babylonian Talmud* (Jerusalem: 1975), which is worthwhile reading for any student of Rashi, even if Biblical interpretation is not its major concern.

STUDIES OF RASHI'S INTERPRETATIVE METHODS

Aside from the philological efforts to determine and present the precise text of Rashi's commentaries (without which most other studies must be considered premature),³⁰ the most important current research on Rashi centers around defining his interpretative methods. A well discussed topic as far back as the Middle Ages, Rashi's approach to commenting on the Torah often baffles even his most devoted readers. Did he intend to present *peshat*, or was he intentionally midrashic? How did he understand the terms *peshat* and *derash*, and how do his definitions relate to those generally in use among his predecessors, colleagues and successors? Do the few programmatic statements scattered around his commentaries reflect what he really did consistently in his work or merely the goals he periodically had in mind? Was he successful in achieving what he tried to do? Should we take seriously the comments of the Rashbam (Rashi's grandson and student) in his commentary to Genesis 37:2 to the effect that Rashi was dissatisfied with his own exegetical creation and preferred an approach more committed to explaining the text according to the *peshat* (however one understands that term)? If so, to what extent would Rashi have rejected subsequent attempts to base Torah study on his commentary or exegetical trends that worked to develop midrashic exegesis more fully?

Rashi's exegetical efforts have been discussed in a series of monographs devoted to him as well as those few works concerned with medieval Ashkenazic Bible interpretation in general. Shereshevsky has listed many of them, and Kamin (see further, below) has critiqued some of their presentations. My comments are limited to a few of the most recent efforts.

Nehama Leibowitz, who in many ways has been a major force in restoring interest in, and respect for, Rashi's commentaries, has included an essay entitled "*Darko shel Rashi be-Hava'at Midrashim be-Ferusho la-Torah*" in her *Iyyunim Hadashim be-Sefer Shemot* (third edition, Jerusalem: 1973), pp. 495–524. Though limited to relatively few cases of the use of midrashim in Exodus, it is a clear and very helpful exposition of some of the problems inherent in dealing with Rashi's use of midrash. And it is also virtually the only exploration of some of the ways Rashi's commentators dealt with this rather complex subject. Among the few other studies devoted to Rashi's interpreters, several chapters of Yehudah Copperman's *Li-Feshuto Shel Mikra* (Jerusalem: 1974), which also contains a number of essays on Rashi, deserve mention.

The first volume of E. Z. Melammed's *Mefareshei ha-Mikra* (first edition, Jerusalem: 1975) devotes about 90 pages to Rashi's

commentaries. Melammed's effort has not really advanced the critical study of Rashi substantially, but it does provide about thirty lists of exegetical phenomena in Rashi's commentaries. The beginner is thus able to review many examples of how Rashi used the midrashic and targumic literatures, expressed his grammatical observations, dealt with syntactic concerns, used or contributed to the understanding of certain exegetical concepts found in rabbinic literature, and so forth. It offers a useful starting place for the novice but not a synthetic summary for the more sophisticated reader.

More recently, Benjamin Gelles has issued his 1974 University of London dissertation *Peshat and Derash in the Exegesis of Rashi* (Leiden: 1981). This is the fullest analysis to appear in English of passages relating to Rashi's methods of Bible interpretation and includes discussions of the terms Rashi used to characterize his interpretative procedures, as well as attempts to explain what these terms meant in the writings of his predecessors and even some of his contemporaries and followers. The collection of data is useful, and the book is worthwhile reading for those who know some Hebrew, but the conclusions are not always as helpful as one might wish.

The most sophisticated study of Rashi's commentary is that of Sarah Kamin, *Rashi's Exegetical Categorization in Respect to the Distinction Between Peshat and Derash* (Jerusalem: 1986). Kamin's work was also submitted as a dissertation (Hebrew University: 1978)—with an English summary lacking in the published book—and evaluates many of the same passages and issues as Gelles' but in a more detailed and systematic manner. Her sharp analyses of Rashi's methodological statements and procedures require careful reading, and her conclusions are challenging, to say the least.

Careful (perhaps too careful) differentiation between various exegetical terms in Rashi's commentaries has led Kamin to conclude that Rashi really did not differentiate between *peshat* and *derash* (as she has defined them). Indeed, he never actually used these terms; and similar ones—the closest being *peshuto shel mikra*, usually assumed to be identical in meaning—actually carry different connotations. To Kamin, Rashi grappled with the contents of earlier rabbinic interpretation and in some senses was a critic of rabbinic midrash. Though he did not write a commentary according to *peshat*, he helped pave the way for the Rashbam, who did.

Kamin acknowledges that, since Rashi's use of the term *peshuto shel mikra* occurs exclusively in contrast to midrashic interpretations and in the context of double interpretations, it often refers to *peshat*. But the presentation of midrashic interpretations without accompanying *peshuto* qualifications or alternatives demonstrates that Rashi's exegetical interests were not exclusively of this type. In fact,

he recognized the ambiguous nature of many Biblical passages and often provided multiple interpretations. Kamin suggests that Rashi's goal was to interpret the text according to rabbinic sources and that he assumed the proper meaning of the Bible text to be neither limited to the simple meaning nor in violation of it. He cited midrashim because they complement the straight-forward meaning of the text and help to solve exegetical problems in it.

RASHI IN A BROADER EXEGETICAL CONTEXT

Kamin's study naturally leads to exploring the relationship between Rashi's commentaries and those of his rabbinic predecessors and Ashkenazi colleagues, but one can examine the relationships or parallels with non-Ashkenazi medieval interpretation as well. Among the recent studies that treat Rashi's impact on the history of Biblical interpretation, one must note Herman Hailperin's now classic *Rashi and the Christian Scholars* (Pittsburgh: 1963), which explores the background and nature of medieval Christian use of Rashi, particularly by Nicholas de Lyra. This matter has also been discussed by Shereshevsky. Rashi's tendencies to avoid midrashic interpretations with no sound exegetical basis offer parallels with the Geonic position that saw them as little more than conjectural interpretations.³¹ And the notion that Rashi did not really comment in the manner of *peshat* suggests the need to examine the use of the term in the writings of Ibn Ezra, who, in his claim that Rashi's commentaries contain *peshat* only one time in one thousand, seems to have anticipated the modern analysis, at least superficially.³²

Explorations of other Jewish approaches to Bible interpretation have been undertaken in a number of publications,³³ but the most recent survey of the history of Jewish Bible interpretation is reprinted from the *Encyclopedia Mikra'it* as a paperback edited by Moshe Greenberg and entitled *Parshanut ha-Mikra ha-Yehudit* (Jerusalem: 1983). The volume is a useful introduction to Jewish Biblical interpretation in general, including that composed in medieval Europe; but it attempts to describe much of the vast and worthy Jewish literature of Biblical interpretation and gives Rashi only minimal treatment.

BIBLIOGRAPHIES

No full bibliography of works on Rashi has appeared, but many of the publications discussed above contain partial lists. Shereshevsky

offers a serviceable one that is divided topically. More extensive but diverse bibliographies are provided by Gelles and Kamin.

NOTES

1. See note 28 below for some relevant statistics. Though there are a few striking exceptions, works written for other than commemorative purposes seem to be of more lasting value than exclusively commemorative ones.
2. *Zekhor le-Avraham: Rashi al ha-Torah* (Berlin: 1866; second edition, Frankfurt am Main: 1905).
3. See Berliner's introductions and "Le-Toledot Perushei Rashi," in *Avraham Berliner: Ketavim Nivharim*, Vol. 2 (Jerusalem: 1949, 1969), translated from "Beitraege zur Geschichte der Raschi-Commentare," as well as Sonne's article, discussed below, and Touitou's studies, cited in note 30.
4. "Le-Bikkoret ha-Text shel Perush Rashi al ha-Torah," *HUCA*, Vol. 15 (1940) pp. 37–56. It is interesting, in this context, to compare one of the major conclusions of Jeremiah Malchi's 1982 Bar-Ilan dissertation, *Rashi's Commentary to Tractate "Berachot": A Comparison of the Standard Version with Other Versions*:

After carefully examining the numerous and varied kinds of differences between the versions [of Rashi's commentary to Berachot], we came to the conclusion that Rashi's Commentary in its earliest form was not a complete or "closed book." We can see two main branches of versions of Rashi's Commentary already existing in the 13th–14th centuries. The first one may be called "The Franco-German version" and it is the basis of what we have called "our version." The second may be called "The Italo-Spanish (*sic*) version" and we find it in some manuscripts, in the Spanish editions, in the "Piskei Ha'Rid," and the "Ein Yaakov. . . ."

. . . Rashi's Commentary to Tractate "Berachot" and perhaps his Commentary to the entire Talmud was not completed and finished as a "closed book" from its inception. Scholars who lived in those far-off days regarded it as one of those works whose literary evaluation [read: evolution?] is continuous. . . . Therefore it was legitimate to add or omit phrases providing those additions or omissions do not alter the basic meaning or concept. This was what happened to Rashi's Commentary to the Talmud during the first centuries after it had been compiled. Those who studied and copied the Commentary allowed themselves the liberty to add words, sentences, and even new phrases, in order to make Rashi's ideas more intelligible, or to omit words, sentences, or phrases which they thought superfluous. In some cases they added a second (or even a third) explanation to Rashi's Commentary or omitted one of two explanations when they thought his was incorrect. In other cases they added additional proofs or examples to Rashi's phrases or omitted some of them when they thought that they were unnecessary. (pp. iv–v)

5. See, for example, the frequently cited statement of Hayyim Joseph David Azulai, *Shem ha-Gedolim, Ma'arekhet Gedolim*, s.v. (*Rabbeinu*) *Shelomo Yitshaki* and also his *Homat Anakh*, 1 Chronicles 1. The subject has also been treated by A. L. Pines in *Beit Mikra*, Vol. 23 (1978).

The status of Rashi's commentary on Job is discussed by M. Sokolow in "Rashi's Commentary on Job: Some Preliminary Observations towards the Preparation of a Critical Edition," which appeared in *Gesher* (published by the Student Organization of the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, Yeshiva University), Vol. 7 (1979), pp. 125–134. See, also, Moshe Arend, "Yahas Perusho shel R. Yosef Kara le-Sefer Iyyov el Perusho shel Rashi," in M. Goshen-Gottstein and U. Simon (ed.), *Iyyunei Mikra u-Farshanut* (Ramat Gan: 1980).

The attribution to Rashi of the commentary to Ezra that bears his name has also been challenged; see S. A. Poznanski (ed.), *Abraham Geiger's Gesammelte Abhandlungen in hebraeischer Sprache, Kevutsat Ma'amarim* (Warsaw: 1920, Haifa: 1967), pp. 178–183 and the Hebrew introduction to *idem, Kommentar zu Ezechiel und den XII kleinen Propheten*

von Eliezer aus Beaugency . . . (Warsaw: 1913), p. 14, reprinted as *Mavo' Al Hakhmei Tsarefat Mefareshei ha-Mikra* (Jerusalem: 1965).

6. The unsurpassed (but still inadequate) scholarly editions of various parts of Rashi's exegetical output include *Parshandata: Perushei Rashi al NaKh*, edited by Isaac Maarsen, Vol. 1: *Trei Asar* (Amsterdam: 1930), Vol. 2: *Yeshu'ya* (Jerusalem: 1933), Vol. 3: *Tehillim* (Jerusalem: 1936), all reprinted (Jerusalem: 1972); *Rashi's Commentary on Ezekiel 40-48*, edited by Abraham J. Levy (Philadelphia: 1931); "Rashi's Commentary on the Song of Songs (From Manuscripts Edited and Annotated)," by Judah Rosenthal in S. Bernstein and G. A. Churgin (ed.), *Samuel K. Mirsky Jubilee Volume* (New York: 1958), pp. 130-188. I have not seen Bryna Levy's recent Yeshiva University dissertation, a critical edition of Rashi to Samuel.

M. L. Katzenellenbogen has edited and annotated Rashi's commentaries on Joshua and Judges, based on four important manuscripts (Jerusalem: 1987). This highly readable, well executed contribution, which may signal the appearance of a series of editions of medieval commentaries in anticipation of a Mossad HaRav Kook edition of *Mikra'ot Gedolot* on the Prophets, is a welcome tool for everyone interested in Rashi, but especially teachers and students who struggle with poorly printed texts.

Note the rare facsimile of Rashi on *Trei Asar*, Shocken MS #12808 (Jerusalem: 1937); also, Manfred R. Lehmann's *The Commentary of Rashi on the Pentateuch* (New York: 1981), which contains an edition of previously unpublished manuscript fragments of Exodus 34:15-Numbers 30:2 and a series of other passages. Though the passages published resemble the standard text in most places, the volume's usefulness is enhanced by several lists that note significant differences between these new texts and the standard editions.

7. The precise date of the publication is not included in the Makor reprint, which also contains a brief introduction by Joseph Cohen on the early Hebrew publishers in Italy and Spain.
8. This text was not consulted by Rosenthal in his edition of Rashi to the Song of Songs, probably because he had access to many manuscripts and even earlier printings.
9. A critical edition must (a) examine the manuscript evidence from a host of sources (see the partial list collected by D. S. Blondheim, "Liste des Manuscrits des Commentaires Bibliques de Raschi," *R.E.J.*, Vol. 91 [1939], pp. 1-55); (b) produce an edition based on one single manuscript; (c) collect variations from that manuscript into several apparati: (1) variants from important early manuscript witnesses, (2) variants from later and perhaps less important manuscript witnesses, (3) variants and testimonies found in early medieval literature, and (d) note Rashi's sources. At the present time, (d) is being produced by the *Ariel* team of researchers; the other dimensions of the project appear to be under discussion.

The similar-sounding *Mekorot Rashi—Midreshei Halakhah ve-Aggadah be-Ferushav*, by Menahem Zohari (Jerusalem: 1986) is a more modest effort to present and evaluate Rashi's treatment of midrashim in his commentaries on the Five Scrolls. Zohari has continued the project with a similarly titled volume on Psalms (Jerusalem: 1987).

10. The anthology format of Gellis' edition tends to obscure the contributions of individual commentators and texts, but the benefit derived from collecting scattered or previously unavailable material compensates for this shortcoming.
11. *The Pentateuch and Rashi's Commentary: A Linear Translation into English* (Brooklyn: 1949).
12. *Rashi to Esther, Song of Songs and Ruth* (New York: 1983).
13. M. Rosenbaum and A. M. Silbermann, *Pentateuch with Targum Onkelos, Haphtaroth and Prayers for Sabbath and Rashi's Commentary Translated into English and Annotated* (London: 1945, often reprinted).
14. See I. Elfenbein, *Teshuvot Rashi* (New York: 1943) or, together with other medieval responsa of Biblical import, A. Steinsaltz, *Perush ha-Mikra be-Sifrut ha-She'elot u-Teshuvot me-ha-Me'ah ha-Sheminit ad ha-Shesh-Esreh* (Jerusalem: 1978).
15. Vol. 1, *Torah* (Jerusalem: 1981); Vol. 2, *Nevi'im* (Jerusalem: 1985).
16. Vol. 1, *Torah* (Jerusalem: 1984); Vol. 2, *Nevi'im* and *Ketuvim* (Jerusalem: 1985).
17. New, enlarged edition: Vol. 1, *New Words and Expressions* (Jerusalem: 1979); Vol. 2, *The Language of Rashi and a Glossary of the Commentaries* (Jerusalem: 1985).
18. "Rashi's View of the Weak Ayyin-Ayyin and Pe-Nun Roots," *HUCA*, Vol. 7 (1930), pp. 399-437; "Grammatical Elements and Terminology in Rashi's Biblical Commentaries,"

- Vol. 11 (1936), pp. 367–389, Vol. 12–13 (1937–38), pp. 505–21, Vol. 14 (1939), pp. 387–429; and “A Commentary on Rashi’s Grammatical Comments,” Vol. 17 (1942–43). The last is a 70-page commentary by Englander on grammatical elements in Rashi’s entire Bible commentary. See, also, his contributions to the study of other aspects of medieval Biblical interpretation in *HUCA*, volumes 15 (1940) and 16 (1941).
19. I have received notification of, but not examined, S. Isseroff’s Hebrew book *An Introduction to Rashi’s Grammatical Explanations in the Book of Genesis* (Jerusalem: 1985).
 20. “*Kelalim ve-Hagdarot be-Ferush Rashi*,” in Simon Federbush (ed.), *Rashi: His Teachings and Personality* (New York: 1958), pp. 113–146.
 21. Important lists of the commentaries on Rashi are found in Y. M. Toledano, *Apiryon* (Jerusalem: 1905); A. Freimann, “Manuscript Supercommentaries on Rashi’s Commentary on the Pentateuch,” in the *Rashi Anniversary Volume*, published by the American Academy for Jewish Research (New York: 1941), pp. 73–114, and I. Shapiro, “A Bibliography of Supercommentaries on Rashi’s Pentateuch Commentary,” *Bitsaron*, Vol. 2 (1940), pp. 426–437. It should be noted that many works popularly assumed to be commentaries on Rashi are, in reality, commentaries on the Torah that also contain comments on Rashi. A much more practical list of 23 titles was presented by N. Leibowitz (solely as a bibliography for her article) in her *Iyyunim Hadashim be-Sefer Shemot*, p. 496.
 Though not commentaries in a formal sense, all of Nehama Leibowitz’ books contain many important discussions of Rashi’s comments and methodological assumptions, usually juxtaposed with, and compared to, the parallel comments of other interpreters. See, in particular, *Limmud Parshanei ha-Torah u-Derakhim le-Hora’am: Sefer Bereshit* (Jerusalem: 1975). On the other hand, Rabbi Joseph Patsanovski’s *Pardes Yosef* (Petrakov: 1933, reprinted Jerusalem: n.d.) presents itself as, among other things, a supercommentary on Rashi and Nahmanides and is described as a supercommentary on Nahmanides in the article “Supercommentaries on the Pentateuch” in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. But it is really much more, as it collects and explains important and relevant comments on the first three books of the Torah from hundreds of rabbinic works frequently ignored in Bible study.
 22. Rabbi Hayyim Pardes has begun issuing an annotated edition of the MaHaRaL’s writings (Tel Aviv: 1980 ff). Perhaps *Gur Aryeh* will be included, though much more can be done with the material than he has attempted in his other volumes.
 23. The first was reprinted in Tel Aviv in 1986; the second is not dated, but appears to have been produced at approximately the same time, by the same press. The third was published in Jerusalem in the same year.
 24. See the introduction in M. Phillip’s edition of *Sefer ha-Zikkaron* (Petah Tikvah: 1985). This ambitious plan seems to anticipate (a) a critical edition including all variants in Rashi’s texts, (b) analysis of Rashi’s sources, (c) the production of an anthology of Rashi’s interpreters and (d) new editions of major supercommentaries. Several of these efforts seem to have been taken over by the Ariel project, but the precise relationship between the two remains unclear to me.
 25. Livorno, 1845; reprinted Jerusalem, 1968.
 26. A more balanced presentation would include, for example, the less laudatory comments of Ibn Ezra (*Safa Berurah* [ed. G. Lippmann, Fuerth: 1839, p. 4b]), Rashbam (commentary to Genesis 37:2), Abravanel (Introduction to commentary to the Former Prophets), and Rabbi Barukh HaLevi Epstein (Introduction to *Torah Temimah*).
 27. Other recently published, republished or reprinted supercommentaries on Rashi include: (1) *Be’er Yitshak: Bereshit-Shemot* by Isaac Horowitz (annotated edition, Jerusalem: 1967); (2) *Sha’arei Aharon*, Volumes 1–9, a three-part commentary on the Torah, Rashi, and Onkelos still in progress by Aaron Isaiah Ratter (Benei Berak: 1970 ff); (3) Samuel P. Gelbard’s *Li-Feshuto shel Rashi: Bereshit, Bamidbar, u-Devarim* (Petah Tikvah: 1983, etc.); (4) Israel Isaac HaLevi, *Revid ha-Zahav al ha-Torah im Geres Karmel al Perush Rashi she-ba-Humash* (Warsaw: 1894; reprinted in Jerusalem around 1986); (5) *Amar Neke* by Ovadia Bertinoro, reprinted from the 1927 Vilna edition in the sixth volume of the Shilo Publishing Company’s *Mikra’ot Gedolot* (New York: 1969); (6) *Nimmukei Shemuel* by Samuel Tsorfati (Amsterdam: 1718, reprinted in *Otsar Mefareshei ha-Torah*, Jerusalem: 1976, together with *Mizrahi, Gur Aryeh, Siftei Hakhamim and Levush ha-Orah*); (7) Shraga Schneebalg’s edition of *Be’er Mayim Hayyim* by Rabbi Hayyim ben

- Bezalel, brother of the MaHaRaL of Prague, vols. 1–3 (London: 1969 ff); (8) M. Steiger's *Penei ha-Mayim*, a defense of Rashi against the criticisms of Mizrahi and the MaHaRaL (Benai Berak: 1986); (9) *Be'er ba-Sadeh* on the commentaries of Rashi and Mizrahi by M. B. M. Danon (Jerusalem: 1846), a recent reprint that is a companion piece to the reprints of *Nahalat Ya'akov* and *Imrei Shefer*; (10) *Pardes Shammai* on the Torah and Rashi, by Shammai Kehat Gross (Jerusalem: 1984); (11) *She'ar Yashuv* by Eleazar Shapira (New York: 1985); (12) *Mesiah Illemim*, by the Iberian exile to Algeria, Yehudah ben Shelomo Calez (Jerusalem: 1986); (13) *Malkah Shel Torah*, Genesis I–II (Jerusalem: 1982–83), by I. S. Deitsch, which includes an introductory list of 41 statements on Rashi by great writers of previous centuries; and (14) *Rashi Mevo'ar*, by Shalom Dov Steinberg (Jerusalem: 1987). This edition is printed in a format that reminds one of *Ariel* and contains the Torah, Onkelos, the regular text of Rashi, and another copy of Rashi with explanatory comments interwoven throughout it and printed in smaller type. This last contribution, which actually continues the process of internal glossing of Rashi that was popular in some medieval circles, is of value to those who need help in clarifying some of the ways in which traditional interpreters have understood Rashi's thinking and is of notable educational value.
28. A list of over thirty biographical monographs and books has been collected by Shereshevsky, pp. 250–251. Eight date from approximately 1905 (the year of Berliner's second edition and 800 years after Rashi's death), and a similar number appeared around 1940, the 900th anniversary of Rashi's birth; the most recent item in Shereshevsky's list dates from 1961. One may anticipate another flurry of activity between 1990 and 2005. The most popular (though somewhat unreliable) English biography is still that of Maurice Liber, published in French in 1905 and in English translation the following year.
 29. The most recent efforts in this area are Moché Catane's *Recueil Des Glosses* (Jerusalem: 1984) and I. Gukovitzki's *Sefer Targum ha-La'az* (London: 1985), which present Hebrew glossaries of the French terms in Rashi's commentary on the Talmud based on the earlier lexica of Blondheim and others. See, also, A. Darmester, *Les Gloses françaises de Raschi dans la Bible* (Paris: 1909); A. Darmester and David Blondheim, *Les Gloses Françaises dans les Commentaires Talmudiques de Raschi* (Paris: 1929, Baltimore: 1937); R. Levy, *Contribution à la Lexicographie Française selon D'Anciens Textes D'Origine Juive* (Syracuse: 1960) and *Trésor de la langue des Juifs français au moyen-âge* (Austin: 1964); and the bibliography in M. Banitt, *Le Glossaire de Bale* (Jerusalem: 1972), as well as the passages noted there in Vol. 1, pp. 181–185. On the Judeo-Slavic glosses in Rashi, see P. Wexler, *Explorations in Judeo-Slavic Linguistics* (Leiden: 1987) and the excellent manuscript *Knaanic, or Medieval Judeo-Slavic: A Bibliographic Survey of the Extant Slavic Glosses in Hebrew Characters* by Brad S. Hill. The Judeo-German (Old Yiddish) glosses have been treated in Erika Timm's, "Zur Frage der Echtheit von Raschi's 'jiddischen Glossen,'" *Beitraege zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Littrature* 107 (1985), pp. 45–81 and in "Tsu Rashi's Yiddish-Glosn," in Dov Sadan's *Yiddish: tokh un arum: mekhorim eseyen, mamorim* (Tel Aviv: 1986).
 30. Just how premature they can be can be seen in E. Touitou's Hebrew article "Concerning the Presumed Original Version of Rashi's Commentary on the Pentateuch," *Tarbiz*, Vol. 56 (1987), pp. 211–42. See, also, his review of Kamin's book (discussed below), *ibid.*, pp. 439–447.
 31. For a good survey of the medieval positions on rabbinic midrash, see the first chapter of M. Saperstein, *Decoding the Rabbis: A Thirteenth-Century Commentary on the Aggadah* (Cambridge, Mass.: 1980).
 32. See the reference in note 26.
 33. In addition to those works noted in the bibliographies mentioned in the following paragraphs, see J. Faur, *Golden Doves with Silver Dots: Semiotics and Textuality in the Rabbinic Tradition* (Bloomington: 1986) and F. Talmage, "Apples of Gold: The Inner Meaning of Sacred Texts in Medieval Judaism," in A. Green, *Jewish Spirituality I* (New York: 1986).

I am pleased to thank Mr. Joel Linsider for his insightful suggestions and also Professor Sid Leiman, Rabbi Shalom Carmy, and Mr. Brad Hill (of the National Library in Ottawa) for their valuable bibliographic additions.