

RASHI'S LITERARY OUTLOOK AS REFLECTED IN HIS CONCEPTION OF THE BIBLICAL NARRATOR: HIS USE OF THE TERM *HA-MESHORER* ("THE POET") AND ITS IMPACT IN THE NORTHERN FRENCH *PESHAT* SCHOOL*

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The literary sensibilities manifested by the Bible exegetes of the northern French *peshat* school pioneered by Rashi (1040–1105) have long attracted the attention of modern scholarship. Ever since Samuel Poznanski's comprehensive 1913 study, it has become increasingly clear how the northern French *pashtanim* (practitioners of *peshat*) discerned biblical poetic and narrative conventions as an integral part of their endeavor to depart from midrashic readings and interpret the sacred text according to "the *peshat* of Scripture" (*peshuto shel miqra*), i.e., in a contextual-philological manner.² Recent studies have focused on the active role that Rashbam (c. 1080–1160) and Eliezer of Beaugency (mid-twelfth century; likely Rashbam's student³) ascribed to what they perceived as the ancient narrator-editor responsible

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² See Poznanski, *Kommentar*, ix–clxvi. See also Berger, "Conceptions"; idem, "Eliezer"; Brin, *Qara*; Harris, "Literary Hermeneutic"; Jacobs, "Joseph Kara"; idem, "Rashbam's principles"; Japhet and Salters, *Rashbam on Qohelet*, 48–55; Japhet, *Rashbam on Job*, 160–208; idem, *Rashbam on Song of Songs*, 127–163; Liss, *Fictional Worlds*; idem, "Song of Songs"; Lockshin, "Literary Exegete." For a recent overview of the northern French *peshat* school, see Grossman, "Literal Exegesis." For the definition of *peshat* we follow in this study, see Kamin, *Categorization*, 14; Cohen, *Gates*, 1, 15; idem, *Rule of Peshat*, 15–18.

³ See Harris, "Literary Hermeneutic," 82–111.

for arranging and shaping the biblical text. This figure, as Richard Steiner argues, regulated “the flow of information to the reading audience” by deciding “on the order of presentation.”⁴ Rashbam, Eliezer, and other northern French *pashtanim* refer to this usually anonymous figure with terms such as *oto she-sidder ha-devarim* (“the one who arranged the words”), *kotev ha-sefer* (“writer of the book”), and *ha-sofer* (“the scribe”).⁵ This conception of the biblical narrator is comparable to the conception of the *mudawwin* (compiler, narrator-editor) in tenth- and eleventh-century Karaite exegesis⁶ and the *sadran* in the Byzantine exegetical school in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries.⁷ The linguistic similarity between the term *sadran* and this northern French usage of the root *s-d-r* has been noted—and suggests to some that Byzantine influence was pivotal in the development of the northern French conception of the narrator-editor.⁸

This study, however, will focus on Rashi’s distinctive use of the term *ha-meshorer* (“the poet”) to express his conception of a narrator or implied author, a literary construct, an imagined persona who arranges—and “speaks” in—the biblical text.⁹ Jewish exegetes in the Muslim East and in al-Andalus (Muslim Spain) typically wrote in Arabic and so their terminological and concomitant conceptual innovations, often borrowed from Muslim learning, are evident. By contrast, Rashi’s terminological innovations are often difficult to discern because

⁴ See Steiner, “Redaction,” 124n, 125–126. On this topic, see Harris, “Awareness” and other recent studies cited in the text and notes below, especially n. 7 below. Modern scholarship—drawing upon modern narrative theory—has focused a good deal of attention on the role of the narrator or “implied author” in the Bible. See Berlin, *Biblical Narrative*, 43–82; Sternberg, *Biblical Narrative*, 58–83. See also below, n. 9. As discussed below (at n. 109), the medieval authors generally did not distinguish between the roles played by narrator/implied author and the redactor/editor of the biblical text.

⁵ Examples will be cited and discussed at length below.

⁶ See Ben-Shammai, “*Mudawwin*”; Polliack, “Narrator”; idem, “‘Scribe,’ ‘Redactor,’ and ‘Author’”; Steiner, “Redaction,” 134–135; Zawanowska, *Yefet*, 33–57; Goldstein, *Karaite Exegesis*, 119–138.

⁷ See Steiner, “Redaction,” 124–128; Brin, *Reuel*, 35–44; Elbaum, “*Sekhel Tov*,” 82–95; Mondschein, “Additional Comments.” Eran Viesel takes issue with the tendency of modern scholars to emphasize the supposed secondary “editorial” work, i.e., redaction of earlier written sources, ascribed to the *mudawwin*, the *mesadder/sadran*, and the similar terms used in the northern French *peshat* school. Arguing against the projection of modern proclivities onto pre-modern authors, Viesel concludes that the medieval commentators typically used these terms to ascribe literary strategies to the biblical authors themselves, not to later editor-redactors, as modern historical-critical Bible scholars typically do. See Viesel, “Medieval Bible Commentators.” Although I agree with many of Viesel’s conclusions, following the convention of the other modern scholars, I do use the compound term narrator-editor in this study where appropriate to leave open the possibility that the medieval exegetes under discussion posited the existence of a biblical “editor”—at least in some instances, a possibility that even Viesel does not reject categorically.

⁸ See below at n. 119.

⁹ On this concept, as defined by modern literary theorists, see below, n. 58.

he drew his vocabulary from traditional sources—the Bible and rabbinic literature. But it is important to note how Rashi employs traditional terminology in innovative ways to advance his novel interpretive agenda. In Biblical and Rabbinic Hebrew the term *meshorer* (pl. *meshorerim*) means *a singer*.¹⁰ For example, the Psalms were chanted in the Holy Temple by *meshorerim* (see II Chr 29:28), those who performed the liturgical function described in the Talmud (see b. *'Arakhin* 11b). At first glance, one might regard this as a precedent for Rashi's application of the term *ha-meshorer* in connection with the Psalms. But his usage is different, as he employs the term to connote *the poet*, i.e., the author who composed a given psalm, rather than the individual who *sang* the psalms once composed. This extension is not unnatural, since the underlying root *sh-y-r* (*shir/shirah*) connotes *poetry* in some contexts already in the Bible, as, for example, in the Song of Songs (*shir ha-shirim*). Indeed, the term *meshorer* came to be used widely in medieval Hebrew also to connote *a poet*. This occurred, however, within the Muslim orbit, where poetic composition was a highly respected endeavor,¹¹ not the case in Rashi's Ashkenazic milieu.¹² This usage may have come to Rashi's attention through the *Maḥberet* of the tenth-century Andalusian linguist Menahem ben Saruq, in which the term “the poet” (*ha-meshorer*) is used twice to refer to the voice of the poet speaking in the Psalms.¹³ Yet it is noteworthy that Rashi recruited this usage—which represented a neologism in his Ashkenazic tradition—to address structural literary features of the Psalms and Song of Songs.

Within the Muslim orbit, the Hebrew notion of “poetry” (*shir, shirah*) was naturally colored by the well-developed discipline of Arabic poetics. Indeed, many Judeo-Arabic authors drew upon the works of Arab experts on poetry (*shi'r*) when considering the poetic aspects of the Bible and the Hebrew language. Saadia Gaon (882–942; Egypt, Iraq) drew upon Arabic poetic notions in his major treatise on the Hebrew language, entitled *Kitāb uṣūl al-shi'r al-'ibrāni* (*The Book of the Principles of Hebrew Poetry*), reflecting one of the work's primary aims – to provide a guide for Hebrew poets of his day.¹⁴ Moses Ibn Ezra (c. 1055–1138; al-Andalus), in his Hebrew poetics *Kitāb al-Muḥādara wa-l-Mudhākara* (*The Book of Discussion and Conversation*), presents an elaborate system of “the

¹⁰ See Brown, Driver, Briggs, *Lexicon*, s.v., שִׁיר; Jastrow, *Dictionary*, s.v., שִׁיר. See also below, n. 131.

¹¹ See Berlin, *Biblical Narrative*, 61–94.

¹² My thanks to Elisabeth Hollender for confirming this linguistic observation in a personal communication. In Ashkenazic writings, the term *payyetan* is used occasionally to connote the composer of liturgical poetry (*piyyut*).

¹³ See *Maḥberet*, Saenz-Badillos ed., 35*, 403*. I am grateful to Aharon Maman and Hananel Mirsky of Jerusalem for these references. (The term *meshorer* also appears in the *Maḥberet* on p. 282*, but there it seems to connote *the singer* who chants the psalm.) Theoretically Rashi may have learned of the importance of poets and poetry in Judeo-Arabic culture from Jewish travelers from Muslim lands—the same channel through which he came to learn some Arabic words. See Grossman, “Treatment of Grammar,” 430–433.

¹⁴ See Brody, *Sa'adyah*, 79–84.

embellishments of poetry” (*mahāsin al-shi‘r*) with definitions and examples from the Bible, alongside those from classical Arabic verse, which Ibn Ezra took from Arabic handbooks on poetry.¹⁵ These poetic-aesthetic conceptions informed the Andalusian exegetical tradition, manifested, for example, in the writings of Jonah Ibn Janah (early eleventh century, al-Andalus), Abraham Ibn Ezra (1089–1164; Spain, Italy, France, England), and Moses Maimonides (1138–1204, al-Andalus, Egypt).¹⁶

Arabic poetics, of course, was a discipline unknown to Rashi. His conception of poetry is aptly summed up by Rashbam, who defines poetry (*shirah*) “as the arrangement of words (*siddur devarim*).”¹⁷ The terms *seder* / *seder ha-devarim*, connoting the arrangement or sequence of the words of Scripture, are prominent in Rashi’s programmatic statements, playing an important role in his overall exegetical agenda.¹⁸ As we shall see in this study, the notion of *siddur devarim* also informs Rashi’s use of the term *ha-meshorer* specifically, as he uses it in his endeavor to account for the sometimes complex arrangement of the text in the biblical books labelled *shir(ah)*, i.e., the Song of Songs and the Psalms.

Rashi’s usage of the term *ha-meshorer* to connote “the poet,” i.e., the narrator or implied author of a poetic composition, has escaped the attention of modern scholarship. This is perhaps attributable to the limited appearance of the term in Rashi’s commentaries on the Song of Songs (where it appears twice) and the Psalms (eleven times).¹⁹ Despite this narrow scope of usage, a study of this term in Rashi’s commentaries reflects certain key literary-exegetical conceptions central to his *peshat* project at large. In most instances, Rashi uses the term *ha-meshorer* when identifying the literary voice or intention of the implied speaker, or determining for whom, or to whom, he speaks. In three striking instances, however, Rashi uses the term *ha-meshorer* in ascribing the complex literary

¹⁵ See Cohen, “Aesthetic Exegesis”; idem, “Poet’s Bible Exegesis.”

¹⁶ See Cohen, “Hebrew Aesthetics”; idem, *Three Approaches*.

¹⁷ Rashbam on Deut 31:2; Rosin ed., 225. See also Meir, “*Siddur devarim*.”

¹⁸ See Kamin, *Categorization*, 57–110, esp. 59–60; Cohen, “Rashi in Light of Bruno,” 51, 56–57. This matter is also discussed below.

¹⁹ All thirteen occurrences of the term are discussed in the text and notes below. In three cases in the Psalms, the term appears in comments that are absent in one or more key medieval Rashi manuscripts. In some cases, this may suggest that the comments are not part of Rashi’s original commentary, as discussed in nn. 70, 82, 91 below. On this phenomenon in Rashi’s commentary in general, see Eisenstat, “The Text(s) of Rashi’s Torah Commentary”; Gruber, *Rashi on Psalms*, 158–164. In citing Rashi, we have consulted the critical editions listed in the bibliography, by comparison with *Miqra’ot Gedolot ha-Keter* and MS Leipzig 1 (Universitätsbibliothek Leipzig B.H. 1), considered to be a most important textual witness to Rashi’s original commentary. Where necessary, we have consulted other medieval Rashi manuscripts listed in the bibliography, and as indicated in the notes below. There is no indication that Rashi ever used the term “the poet” (*ha-meshorer*) to connote an editor who compiled earlier literary sources, a conception that emerges elsewhere in the medieval exegetical tradition, as discussed above. In connection with Rashi, then, we speak of the “biblical narrator or implied author,” rather than the narrator-editor.

arrangement of the biblical text to the implied author or narrator. Finally, in one instance Rashi uses the term to distinguish between the voice of the original poet speaking in the body of a psalm and that of the literary editor who incorporated it into the book of Psalms. This distinction parallels Rashi's distinction between the voices of the characters and the voice of the narrator—termed *kotev ha-sefer* (“writer of the book”)—in two other places in his commentary, and as found in the commentaries of later exegetes in the northern French school. These usages by Rashi seem to have inspired among his *peshat* followers an investigation of biblical authorship and composition independent of midrashic sources.

In addition to offering a greater appreciation of Rashi's literary sensibilities and their central role in his *peshat* project, the current argument sheds new light on the conception of the biblical narrator-editor attested in Rashbam and Eliezer of Beaugency. While we cannot discount the possibility of Byzantine influence, this study proposes an alternative path of organic development within the northern French school: Rashi's notions of the functions of the biblical narrator, I argue here, though expressed only sporadically in his usage of the term *ha-meshorer*, inspired the further development by Rashbam and Eliezer of Beaugency, who also coined a variety of terms to articulate them more robustly.²⁰

1. “Sequence” in Rashi's *Peshat* Program

Scientific philological analysis—i.e., systematic, grammatically-based study of the language of Scripture, in contrast with the associative, aphilological approach characteristic of midrash—is perhaps the most obvious element of Rashi's *peshat* method, for which he is indebted to the Andalusian lexicographers Menahem ben Saruq and Dunash ben Labrat, as well as the earlier anonymous Old French *poterim* (glossators).²¹ Yet equally important to his exegetical program, and that of the subsequent northern French *pashtanim* inspired by his model, is the endeavor to preserve the literary coherence of the biblical text.²² As opposed to classic midrashic interpretation, tending to focus on individual biblical words and phrases atomistically, Rashi and his followers aimed to interpret larger textual units and explain their logical sequence. Rashi makes this clear in his methodological introduction to his commentary on the Song of Songs, where he begins by

²⁰ Compare Viesel, “Formation,” 41–42.

²¹ See Pereira-Mendoza, *Rashi*; Haas, “Rashi's Criticism”; Banitt, “*Poterim*”; idem, *Rashi*. To be sure, much of Rashi's commentary is midrashic and seems not to be bound by the rules of *peshat* exegesis. See below, n. 29.

²² See Signer, “Restoring the Narrative”; idem, “Sequential Narrative.” Compare Kamin, *Categorization*, 77–86, 109–110. On the broad reach of this tendency at the pinnacle of the northern French *peshat* tradition, see Berger, “Eliezer.”

invoking the talmudic maxim that “a biblical verse does not leave the realm of its *peshat*,”²³ and then goes on to say:

Although the prophets uttered their words in allegory (*dugma*),²⁴ one must fit (lit. “settle”) the allegorical meaning (*dugma*) on its basis and its sequence (*sefer*), just as the verses are arranged (*sedurim*) one after the other. Now I have seen many aggadic *midrashim* on this book... that do not fit (“are not settled upon”) the language of Scripture (*leshon ha-miqra*) or the sequence of the verses (*sefer ha-miqra’ot*). I therefore decided to establish the literal sense (*mashma’*) of the verses, to settle their interpretation according to their sequence (*sefer*), and the rabbinic *midrashim* I shall set, one by one, each in its place.²⁵

Implicitly criticizing midrashic interpretations that lack a firm basis in the language and sequence of the text, Rashi aims to compose a commentary that accounts for both systematically. Rashi’s frequent reference to the *peshat* maxim, in the Song of Songs and throughout his other Bible commentaries, indicates the importance of “the *peshat* of Scripture” and the “literal sense” (*mashma’*) within his exegetical project at large.²⁶ Yet Rashi hardly excludes midrashic interpretation from his program of interpreting the Song of Songs, which is adapted mostly from midrashic sources, and often far exceeds the strict boundaries of the *peshat/mashma’*. The innovative step Rashi took was twofold: first of all, he distinguished between *peshat/mashma’* and midrashic interpretation—without favoring one over the other. Second, he established critical criteria for selecting midrashic interpretations, and endeavored to limit himself to those that correspond to “the language of Scripture (*leshon ha-miqra*)” and “the sequence of the verses (*sefer ha-miqra’ot*)”—criteria based upon his contextual-philological *peshat/mashma’* interpretations.²⁷ In other words, he created a new sort of

²³ אין מקרא יוצא מידי פשוטו. See, e.g., b. *Shabbat* 63a. On the translation of this maxim, see Cohen, *Gates*, 495–499.

²⁴ On Rashi’s distinctive use of this technical hermeneutical term to connote what is referred to as *exemplum* in Latin interpretation, see Kamin, *Jews and Christians*, 69–88.

²⁵ Rashi on the Song of Songs, Introduction, Kamin and Saltman ed., 81. For further discussion of this passage, including textual variants attested in early Rashi manuscripts, see Kamin, *Categorization*, 79–86, 123–124; Cohen, *Gates*, 205.

²⁶ On the close relationship between the terms *peshat/peshuto* and *mashma’/mashma’o*—which at times seem to be used interchangeably—in Rashi’s exegesis, see Gelles, *Rashi*, 119–120; Viezel, “Onkelos,” 6–7.

²⁷ See Japhet, “Rashi’s Commentary,” 208–213. As Japhet points out, notwithstanding Rashi’s well-developed programmatic introduction, he does not provide a full *peshat/mashma’* interpretation in the Song of Songs. Nonetheless, Rashi certainly does establish an outline of such an interpretation that reveals a clear conception of the love story expressed by the literal sense of the Song of Songs. See the discussion below in sec. 2.

midrashic Song of Songs commentary that is both logically sequential and tethered to the *peshat/mashma'* of scripture.

Though articulated with particular clarity in Rashi's Song of Songs commentary, his two-fold goal of rendering "the *peshat* of scripture" together with critically selected midrashic interpretation can also be discerned in Rashi's well-known programmatic statement on Gen 3:8:

There are many midrashic *aggadot* (legends, homilies) and our Rabbis have already arranged them (*sidderum*) in their appropriate place in *Genesis Rabbah* and other *midrashim*. But I have come only to relate the *peshat* of Scripture and the sort of *aggadah* [i.e., midrash] that settles (*meyashevet*) the words of Scripture, "each word in its proper place" (*davar davur 'al ofnayw*; Prov 25:11).²⁸

While Rashi here clearly distinguishes between *peshat* and midrashic interpretation, he does not state that he will restrict himself to the former. Rather, Rashi endeavored to produce a commentary—composed of both midrash and *peshat*—that accounts for each word of the Bible "in its proper place," i.e., within the sequence of words and sentences that make up the literary unit in which it appears.²⁹ This is what Rashi refers to regularly in his commentaries as "settling" (*le-yashev*; *meyashev*; *yishuv*) the words/language of scripture (*divrei/leshon ha-miqra*).³⁰

Rashi's standards for evaluating midrashic interpretations are illustrated, for example, in his commentary to Exod 6:2–9, where he registers his objection to a well-known midrashic interpretation: "This midrashic exposition is not settled (i.e., does not sit well) upon the biblical text for several reasons."³¹ He first notes that it cannot legitimately be construed as the meaning of the language.³² He then

²⁸ Rashi on Gen 3:8, Berliner ed., 7–8. For a discussion of the textual variations in this programmatic statement of Rashi's, see Kamin, *Categorization*, 62–63.

²⁹ This characterization of Rashi's interpretive goals—drawn from the work of Sarah Kamin—seems to me to be the most fitting solution to the glaring disparity between Rashi's stated theoretical emphasis on "the *peshat* of scripture" (*peshuto shel miqra*) and his exegetical practice, which is based primarily on midrashic interpretation. See Kamin, *Categorization*, 57–108; Cohen, *Rule of Peshat*, 95–126; idem, "Rashi in Light of Bruno," 47–57; Viezel, "Secret." For a somewhat different approach, see Gelles, *Rashi*, 28–33. For a particularly striking example of Rashi's willingness to engage in midrashic exegesis and ignore what he himself must have regarded as "the *peshat* of scripture," see below, n. 93.

³⁰ See Kamin, *Categorization*, 62–77. The question of how consistent Rashi was in actually adhering to these criteria of selective midrashic commentary is complex and has been discussed at length in recent scholarship but is beyond the scope of this study. See, e.g., Grossman, "Literal Exegesis," 334–336.

³¹ Rashi on Exod 6:9; Berliner ed., 112.

³² In the midrashic rendition, the words "by my name YHWH I was not known to them" are construed as a praise of the forefathers who did not seek to know God's name. But Rashi

raises the following challenge: “How does the continuity follow (*ha-semikhah nimshekhet*) in the words with which he continues?” Rashi concludes: “The verse must be settled according to its *peshat*, though the midrashic reading can be expounded as such.”³³ For Rashi, this verse can be “settled,” i.e., interpreted properly, only “according to its *peshat*.”³⁴ He allows for the legitimacy of this midrashic reading *qua* midrash, but one that must be excluded from his commentary, which he limits to midrashic interpretations that meet his critical exegetical standards.³⁵

At times, Rashi’s *peshat* interpretation entails a complex literary understanding of “the sequence of the verses.” For example, on Gen 1:27, “God created the man in his own image... male and female He created them,” he writes:

But further on (Gen 2:21) it is said: “and He took one of his ribs etc.”! The aggadic midrash relates: He created him at first with two faces (i.e., a male and female side) and afterwards He divided them. But the *peshat* of this verse is as follows: here it informs you that both of them were created on the sixth day and it does not explain to you how their creation took place; that it explains to you in another place.³⁶

Gen 1:27 reports the simultaneous creation of man and woman, contradicting Gen 2:21–22, which describes how woman was created from one of man’s ribs. Whereas the midrash posits that man and woman were created as two sides of the same being (literally “male and female He created them”), Rashi’s *peshat* interpretation is based on the understanding that the biblical narrator first summarized the creation of man and woman (in Gen 1:27), and then later elaborated the account in greater detail (2:21–22).³⁷ Rashbam likewise adopts this literary *peshat* interpretation.³⁸ Rashi and Rashbam both seek to discern the expositional strategy of the biblical narrator in shaping the Genesis narrative, though neither explicitly identifies this conceptual literary persona. That step, as Robert Harris has noted, was taken by Eliezer of Beaugency in his remark:

disqualifies this understanding of the language of the verse because “it does not say ‘They did not ask me My name’” (Rashi on Exod 6:9; Berliner ed., 112).

³³ Rashi on Exod 6:9, Berliner ed., 112.

³⁴ For other examples of this paradigm, see Rashi on Gen 33:20; Exod 11:4, 23:2, 33:13; Ps 16:7.

³⁵ On this evaluation of midrash within Rashi’s system, see Gelles, *Rashi*, 66, 141.

³⁶ Rashi on Gen 1:27, Berliner ed., 4. The source of the “aggadic midrash” is *b.Eruvin* 18a.

³⁷ On Gen 2:8 (Berliner ed., 6), Rashi reveals that he drew this interpretation from principle 11 of the 32 hermeneutical principles of R. Eliezer: “a general statement followed by a detailed account” (*Thirty-two Hermeneutic Rules*, Enelow ed., 24–25). Rashi assumed this to be a tannaitic work, though modern scholars tend to date it to the geonic period. See Enelow, “Midrash”; Steiner, “*Hysteron Proteron*,” 39–40.

³⁸ Rashbam on Gen 1:27, Rosin ed., 8. Rashbam also cites the thirty-two rules of R. Eliezer (see the preceding note).

The practice of the narrator (*ha-sofer*; lit. “the scribe”) is to relate the essential aspect of the matter briefly at the beginning ... and then later clarify the matter well.³⁹

Eliezer attributes this literary stylistic convention to “the scribe,” a term he uses here in the sense of the narrator or implied author responsible for structuring the biblical narrative.⁴⁰ Rashi and Rashbam recognized the biblical narrative technique; Eliezer identifies a conceptual literary persona responsible for it.

2. Literary Structure: Rashi on Song of Songs 2:8, Psalm 68

There may be a precedent for Eliezer of Beaugency's distinctive use of the term “the scribe” to identify the narrator or implied author in the way that Rashi uses the term “the poet” (*ha-meshorer*) in his commentary on Song 2:8 – which he regarded as a pivotal verse in the Song of Songs. Even while embracing the midrashic approach that takes the book allegorically as an account of the love relationship between God and Israel, Rashi devises a methodical *peshat* analysis—unprecedented in Jewish tradition—that traces a coherent human love story throughout the Song of Songs. The Rabbis of Antiquity, of course, were well-aware of the literal sense of the individual words and verses that make up the Song of Songs.⁴¹ The truly innovative aspect of Rashi's treatment is the close attention he gives to the human love story that, in his view, runs throughout the Song and makes up the *peshat* narrative that serves as a foundation for his allegorical reading.⁴² Rashi does not simply explicate the literal sense of individual words or verses; he seeks to affix (“set”) his midrashically inspired allegorical reading upon a comprehensive reading of the human drama that he sees as unfolding in the Song on its *peshat* level.⁴³

³⁹ Eliezer of Beaugency on Isa 7:2, *Miqra 'ot Gedolot ha-Keter*, 53.

⁴⁰ See Harris, “Literary Hermeneutic,” 159–164. This can be compared with Eliezer's use of the term *ha-sofer* in his commentary on Ezek 1:1, discussed below (at n. 110). See also his comm. on Jon 1:10, Poznanski ed., 158.

⁴¹ See Kadari, “Models,” 74–77.

⁴² See above, n. 27. On the possibility that Rashi was aware of Christian interpretations that employ a similar strategy, see Kamin, *Jews and Christians*, 35–57, 69–88.

⁴³ See Cohen, *Rule of Peshat*, 103–105. Jonathan Jacobs (“*Leqah Tov*”) notes the increased attention paid to the literal sense of the text of the Song of Songs in Rashi's Byzantine contemporary Tobiah ben Eliezer in his *Leqah Tov* commentary, in part ascribed to Tobiah's father, Eliezer, a prominent mid-eleventh-century Byzantine rabbinic figure. In Jacobs' view, “R. Eliezer is the earliest known exegete to interpret verses of the Song of Songs literally, which pushes back the beginnings of the literal interpretation of the book to the middle of the eleventh century” (Jacobs, “*Leqah Tov*,” 236). It is unclear if Rashi knew of this interpretive development (ibid., 238–239), which is an important precedent for his *peshat* project. Nonetheless, the *Leqah Tov* commentary does not present a comprehensive literary account of the love story implied by the literal reading of the Song of Songs—which is distinctive to Rashi. See Cohen, *Rule of Peshat*, 183–187.

In his introduction, Rashi's clarifies this relation between the allegorical/midrashic and human *peshat* layers of the Song:

Solomon saw with the Holy Spirit that Israel will be exiled, exile after exile, destruction after destruction, and will mourn in this exile over their original glory, and will remember the first love [of God toward them], which made them His chosen among all nations... and they will recall His kindness and their transgression, and the good things He promised to bestow upon them at the end of days.⁴⁴

Adapting earlier midrashic material, Rashi made the Song relevant to the Jewish people in “this exile,” by which he meant his own experience in Christian Europe.⁴⁵ As Kamin noted, Rashi interpreted this biblical text as an affirmation that God has not abandoned Israel, and deploys this interpretation as a means to rebut the Christian argument that the Jews' prolonged exile proves that they were rejected by God.⁴⁶ Yet Rashi also found it necessary to delineate the human love story that makes up *peshuto shel miqra*, by which he means a contextual-philological analysis of the text—the literary format of which he attributes to King Solomon, inspired by the Holy Spirit.⁴⁷ As Rashi continues:

And he [Solomon] composed (*yissad*)⁴⁸ this book with the Holy Spirit in the language of a woman stuck in living widowhood, longing for her husband, pining over her lover, recalling to him the love of their youth, and admitting her sin. Likewise, her lover suffers over her pain, and recalls the goodness of her youth and her beauty, and the excellence of her deeds,

⁴⁴ Introduction, Kamin and Saltman ed., 81. On this text, see Kamin, *Categorization*, 247–249.

⁴⁵ Nicholas of Lyra would take Rashi's midrashic reading to be the literal sense of the Song of Songs, superseded by the Christian allegorical sense. See Kamin, *Jews and Christians*, 58–68.

⁴⁶ See Kamin, *Jews and Christians*, 22–57.

⁴⁷ Rashi's investigation of the literary format of the Song independently of its midrashic sense seems to have inspired subsequent northern French *pashtanim* to ascribe that literary format entirely to Solomon's own creative spirit, by contrast with the prophetic content, which he received only with the aid of the Holy Spirit. See Cohen, “Hebrew Aesthetics,” 36–39.

⁴⁸ On the use of the Hebrew verb root *y-s-d* in the sense of *writing, composition*, which is characteristic of Rashi's school, see below, n. 90. From the spelling of this word with double *yod* (יִסַּד) in the edition of Kamin and Saltman (see following note), it is evident that Rashi used this root in the *pi'el* form (rather than *qal*, i.e., *yasad*). See also below, nn. 94, 95. Pseudo-Rashi on Ezra 3:10, s.v., *we-yissedu*, specifically notes the convention to write the *pi'el* form of this verb with double *yod* (even though it appears in that verse in the *pi'el* form with a single *yod* in the MT), the first serving as the imperfect tense prefix, the second being the first radical of the root *y-s-d*. Although Pseudo-Rashi on Ezra (i.e., the commentary attributed to Rashi in the *Miqra'ot Gedolot*) is not actually by Rashi, it does emanate from Rashi's northern French exegetical school. See Viezel, “Commentary on Ezra-Nehemiah.”

through which he was tied to her in powerful love, to say to them that... she is still his wife and he is her husband, who will ultimately return to her.⁴⁹

For Rashi, the underlying human love story in the Song of Songs, which emanates from *peshuto shel miqra*, is that of a long-married woman separated from her husband, seeking to unite with him by reminiscing together with him over the memories of their shared youthful love. Fulfilling his commitment to “establish the literal sense (*mashma'*) of the verses, to settle their interpretation according to their sequence (*seder*),” and then, accordingly, to set “the rabbinic *midrashim*... one by one, each in its place” (above at n. 25), Rashi's commentary on the Song of Songs traces the steps of that complex human love relationship (*peshuto shel miqra*) and how they correspond to the love between God and Israel (the *dugma*). Like the woman stuck in “living widowhood,” the people of Israel, suffering in exile, and seemingly separated from God, seek to reunite with Him by calling to mind the glory-filled early days of the faith—the Exodus from Egypt, the revelation at Sinai, entry into the land of Israel and the building of the Holy Temple. Whereas the midrashic commentaries available to him interpret the verses of the Song largely in isolation from one another, Rashi creates a structural and thematic unity in his commentary, both on the literal and allegorical levels.⁵⁰

This structural-thematic unity depends on Rashi's particular conception of the narrative composition of the Song. Rather than viewing it as a linear account that traces the relationship from beginning to end, Rashi argues that the love story begins *in media res* (in the middle of things)—with the woman separated from her lover, Israel in exile separated from God—and only later reminisces about the beginnings of the love relationship.⁵¹ The linchpin of this complex account of the narrative is Rashi's commentary on Song 2:7–8, which begins with a critique of the midrashic commentaries he knew and an outline of the more cohesive, systematic allegorical reading he proposes as an alternative:

There are many midrashic commentaries; but they are not settled on the sequence of the words (*seder ha-devarim*). For I maintain that Solomon prophesied and spoke about the Exodus from Egypt, the giving of the Torah, the tabernacle, the entry into the Land [of Israel], the holy Temple, the Babylonian exile, the re-entry [into the Land of Israel to build] the second Temple, and its destruction.⁵²

⁴⁹ Introduction, Kamin and Saltman ed., 81. On his text, see Kamin, *Categorization*, 247–249.

⁵⁰ See Kamin, *Jews and Christians*, 24.

⁵¹ See Alster, “Forlorn Lady.”

⁵² Kamin and Salters, ed., 85. This echoes his more elaborate phraseology in the introduction. See n. 25 above.

Rashi then addresses the pericope beginning with 2:8, which he identifies as a turning point in the narrative:

The poet returned to the beginning of the story [lit. the first things] (*ḥazar ha-meshorer 'al ha-rishonot*),⁵³ like a person who initially speaks briefly, and then comes back and says: I did not tell you the beginning of the story. He began by [citing the words of the beloved] saying: “the King drew me into his chambers” (Song 1:4), and he did not recount how he called upon (lit. visited) them in Egypt with loving language. And now he goes back and explains: this “drawing me near” that I told you about—that my lover drew me close and I ran after him—this is what happened: I had lost hope of being redeemed [from enslavement in Egypt] until the completion of the 400 years [of exile] decreed at the covenant between the parts, [when] “Hark! My lover has come!”—before the designated completion [of the exile].⁵⁴

Although Rashi entangles the literal and allegorical narratives here,⁵⁵ the literary argument he makes is clear enough, namely that in the early stanzas of the Song the lovers refer only cryptically to their complex past, which is portrayed more fully in the reminiscences that begin at 2:8.

Much as Eliezer of Beaugency would later speak of the “scribe,” i.e., narrator or implied author, whose practice is to “relate the essential aspect of the matter briefly at the beginning” and “then later clarify the matter,” Rashi attributes this literary strategy to “the poet” (*ha-meshorer*). This is not to say that Rashi questions Solomon’s authorship of the Song of Songs from a historical perspective. But in offering this comment, Rashi seeks to distinguish—at least conceptually—between the voice of the narrator/implied author and Solomon as the historical author of the Song.⁵⁶ In much the same way, this literary “voice” is also distinct from the voices of the characters (the beloved, the lover) whose words are cited in this biblical book—but mediated by “the poet,” i.e., the narrator/implied author who arranged and shaped them.⁵⁷

⁵³ Rashi ascribes a similar structural strategy to “the poet” in his commentary on Psalm 68, as discussed below. For other cases in which Rashi uses the root *ḥ-z-r* (“returning”) to make a structural literary observation, e.g., “scripture returned/returns [to an earlier point in the narrative],” but without the term “the poet,” see Viezel, *Commentary on Chronicles*, 212–213.

⁵⁴ Kamin and Salters ed., 85.

⁵⁵ This is not uncommon in Rashi’s Song of Songs commentary. See Japhet, “Rashi’s Commentary,” 212–213.

⁵⁶ Elsewhere Rashi speaks of Solomon as the historical author of the Song. See n. 44 above.

⁵⁷ Rashi once again uses the term *ha-meshorer* on Song 5:12 to refer to the implied author/narrator. Occasionally, though, Rashi does refer to the characters themselves as the speakers in the Song. See, e.g., his comm. on Song 1:2.

The importance of distinguishing between the biblical narrator/implicit author and the historical authors of the Bible is emphasized by modern literary critics.⁵⁸ In discerning the literary design of the Song of Songs and ascribing it to “the poet,” Rashi manifests essential features of a literary reading of the text as described by the modern Bible scholar Meir Sternberg:

The [implicit] author/narrator exists only as a construct, which the reader infers and fills out to make sense of the work as an ordered design of meaning and effect. He is what he does in and through the writing, the embodiment of the sense and the composition and the whole reading experience he has devised for us. This makes him the interpreter's mirror image.... [as] reading entails the postulation of a determinate artificer as a strategy of coherence.⁵⁹

While it is important not to ascribe modern literary conceptions to Rashi uncritically, his use of the term “the poet” instead of referring directly to “Solomon” suggests that Rashi intuitively recognized the necessity of making this distinction. When describing the artful arrangement of the Song of Songs he therefore used this term in order to speak of King Solomon's literary agency specifically.

Kamin argues that Rashi offers his structural observation on Song 2:8 for polemical reasons: by depicting the speaker as an older woman estranged from her husband recalling her earlier love relationship, Rashi can assign the allegorical reading to the present situation of Israel in exile—recalling their close relationship with God in ancient biblical times.⁶⁰ Baruch Alster has argued, by contrast, that Rashi also had literary considerations in making this exegetical move: to him, interpreting the Song as beginning *in media res* made most sense from a literary perspective, i.e. his contextual sense of *peshat*.⁶¹ If so, a fundamental aspect of Rashi's *peshat* approach to the Song of Songs as a literary work is dependent on his use of the term *ha-meshorer* in his pivotal commentary on Song 2:8: by explicating the strategy of the implied author/narrator in regulating the flow of narrative units, Rashi here discerns the logic of the “sequence of the matters/verses” (*sefer ha-devarim/miqra'ot*), i.e., the coherence, organization, and literary design of the Song of Songs.

Given the centrality of the “sequence of the matters/verses” within Rashi's *peshat* program, it is not surprising that similar structural observations appear

⁵⁸ See Sternberg, *Biblical Narrative*, 64, 74–75. Some modern literary critics distinguish between the implied author and the narrator; but this distinction, suited well for some modern literature, does not seem relevant in the Bible.

⁵⁹ Sternberg, *Biblical Narrative*, 75.

⁶⁰ Kamin, *Jews and Christians*, 25.

⁶¹ See Alster, “Human Love,” 68.

elsewhere in his Bible commentaries.⁶² In most cases, however, the structural strategy Rashi observes is not ascribed to any particular literary persona, but rather more vaguely to “scripture” (*ha-katuv*), “the verse” (*ha-miqra*), or even just the vague third-person pronoun “it/he” (*hu*).⁶³ It is therefore instructive that in his commentary on the Psalms Rashi in a number of instances uses the term “the poet” (*ha-meshorer*) to refer to the implied author/narrator responsible for the literary shaping of the text.⁶⁴ Following the Talmud, Rashi attributed the Psalms to King David—regarding him as their author, or final editor (i.e., of psalms penned by others).⁶⁵ And yet, even when discussing psalms explicitly attributed to David in their superscription, Rashi at times uses the abstract literary term “the poet” to refer to their implied author, i.e., the narrator.⁶⁶

In Psalm 68, perhaps the most striking example of this sort, Rashi’s use of the term *ha-meshorer* is part of a series of comments in which he maps out the complex structure of the psalm. Indeed, modern critical Bible scholars have noted the psalm’s lack of a clear structure or unifying theme.⁶⁷ Though obviously distant from the thinking of modern critical scholarship, Rashi’s *peshat* program motivated him to address this literary problem, which was not a concern of midrashic commentary. Toward the end of Psalm 68, on verse 29 (out of 36 verses), Rashi employs language reminiscent of his glosses on Song 2:8 (“the poet returned...”) and Gen 2:8 (“he returned to explain”) to connect the final stanza of the psalm with its opening in verse 2:

*Display strength, O God. Now the poet (ha-meshorer) returns to his prayer (hozer li-tefilato), in which he prayed, “May God arise, and may his enemies be scattered” (v. 2).*⁶⁸

⁶² See, e.g., Rashi on Gen 1:27 (above, at n. 36) and n. 53 above. See also Rashi on Exod 6:13, where his *peshat* interpretation, given as an alternative to the midrashic reading, posits a complex literary structure of Exodus 6.

⁶³ See, e.g., Rashi on Song 5:2, 3, as well as on Gen 1:27, Exod 6:2–9, 6:13 cited in the text and notes above.

⁶⁴ Citations of Rashi on Psalms in this study are based on the Gruber edition (itself based on MS Vienna 220), the Maarsen edition (based on MS Bodleiana 186 [=Oppenheim 34]), and *Miqra’ot Gedolot ha-Keter* (based primarily on MS De Rossi 181, by comparison with other medieval manuscripts). See the bibliography below for details of the Rashi manuscripts cited in this study. English translations follow Gruber, with slight adjustments.

⁶⁵ See Viezel, “Formation,” 19–26.

⁶⁶ In other words, even while accepting David’s authorship of these psalms from a historical perspective, in these comments he is speaking of the poetic “voice” he assumes from a literary perspective. On the distinction between the historical and implied author that Rashi alludes to here, see above, nn. 9, 56.

⁶⁷ Many therefore regard it as a patchwork. See, e.g., Gerstenberger, *Psalms*, 2, 34–46.

⁶⁸ Gruber ed., 835 (Hebrew); 451 (English).

According to Rashi, the closing verses of the psalm conclude a supplication addressed directly to God that began in verse 2, “May God arise, may His enemies scatter, etc.”

Rashi intuitively makes a generic distinction described by modern scholars—between supplication and praise (so-called “hymns”) in the Psalms.⁶⁹ And so, when Rashi makes the structural point that the supplication in verse 29 returns to the one in verse 2, he is motivated by the interruption to the initial supplication in verse 5, which is a call to the community to utter a hymn of praise to God: “Sing (*shiru*) unto God, sing praises to His name: extol Him that rides upon the heavens by His name YAH, and rejoice before Him.” On that verse Rashi comments:

*By His name Yah – ...a name referring to fear.... The poet (ha-meshorer) says “praise Him,” “fear Him,” and “rejoice,” similar to what is said elsewhere: “rejoice in trembling” (Ps 2:11).*⁷⁰

Rashi on the next verse (“A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in His holy habitation...”) offers the following structural observation, by noting that this call to praise God extends throughout the greater part of the psalm:

*This is the praise that you must sing to Him — the entire matter (kol ha-inyan) until the end of the Psalm.*⁷¹

And indeed, later in the Psalm, in verse 20, we read: “Blessed be the Lord, day by day He supports us, God, our deliverance.” On this Rashi comments:

*This is part of the hymn (shir) referred to above, “Sing to God.”*⁷²

As Rashi reads it, “the poet” makes a supplication to God for national salvation, while at the same time exhorting the community of Israel to sing God’s praises—thanking Him for previous salvations. These two elements are arranged in

⁶⁹ These genre distinctions are applied both to entire psalms and to segments within a given psalm (the latter matching Rashi’s intuitive conception of the distinction). See Westermann, *Psalms*, 5–92; Gerstenberger, *Psalms 2*, 9–19, with further bibliography.

⁷⁰ Gruber ed., 834 (Hebrew); 445 (English). Rashi uses the term *ha-meshorer* once more in this psalm, on v. 14: “Dunash ben Labrat explained that *haruṣ* means gold, and therefore the poet (*ha-meshorer*) juxtaposed it with silver”; Gruber trans., 447; Heb. cited from *Miqra’ot Gedolot ha-Keter*, 204. This line appears also in Maarsen, *Parshandatha* 3:63. However, it is omitted in Gruber’s edition, a reflection of the text in MS Vienna 220.

⁷¹ Gruber ed., 834 (Hebrew); 445 (English). Perhaps Rashi does not mean until the very end of the Psalm, since on verse 29 he says that the poet returns to the prayer he began in verse 2.

⁷² Gruber ed., 834 (Hebrew); 449 (English). As Gruber suggests (in the bracketed words included in his translation), Rashi here refers to verses 20–22. It is theoretically possible that Rashi believes that the hymn extends even further within this Psalm. See the discussion in the previous note.

concentric circles within this psalm: the supplication to God forms the outer circle (“Let God arise...” [v.2]; “Display strength, O God” [v. 29]); and the inner circle is the hymn that the poet exhorts the community to sing to God (“Sing unto God” [v. 5]; “Blessed be the Lord...” [v. 20]). Rashi ascribes this sophisticated literary structure to “the poet.”

3. Poetic perspective and theme: Rashi on Psalms 5, 19, 45, 87

Most of the remaining instances in which Rashi employs the term *ha-meshorer* in his Psalms commentary relate to his endeavor to answer the following questions: for whom, to whom, and about what does the persona, i.e., the implied author, in the psalm speak? These questions are all essential for his *peshat* program, which requires accounting for “the sequence of the verses” (*seder ha-miqra’ot*), i.e., their literary coherence. In order to properly account for this “sequence,” Rashi must explain the shifts in perspective, addressee, and theme throughout each psalm.⁷³

To this end, Rashi interprets each psalm superscription in accordance with the theme of the body of the psalm.⁷⁴ For example, on Ps 5:1, Rashi comments:

On *nehiloth* – Menahem [ben Saruq] explained that all of the terms *nehiloth*, *‘alamoth* (Ps 46:1), *gittith* (Ps 8:1, 84:1), and *Jeduthun* (Ps 39:1; 62:1; 77:1) are names of musical instruments and that the melody for the Psalm was made appropriate to the music characteristic of the particular instrument named in the title of the particular psalm.⁷⁵ An aggadic midrash on this book interprets *nehiloth* as a synonym of *naḥalath* (inheritance).⁷⁶ But this is not the meaning of the word. Moreover, the subject matter of the psalm does not refer to inheritance. It is possible to interpret *nehiloth* as a synonym of *gayyasoth* (military troops) as is suggested by the expression *nehil shel devorim* (swarm of bees⁷⁷)... [This Psalm is thus] a prayer prompted by enemy armies coming to attack Israel. And the poet (*ha-meshorer*) utters this psalm on behalf of the entire people of Israel.⁷⁸

⁷³ Rashi does not, however, seek to explain the arrangements of the Psalter as a whole, as Saadia, e.g., had done, prompting Abraham Ibn Ezra’s critique. See Viezel, “Formation,” 24; Simon, *Four Approaches*, 216–220.

⁷⁴ Aside from the example cited here, see Rashi’s gloss on Ps 45:1 (cited below), and on Ps 8:1.

⁷⁵ See *Maḥberet*, s.v., *g-t*; *‘l-m*. Interestingly, this sort of interpretation is not given by Menahem for the root *n-h-l* itself. Perhaps Rashi misremembered what he had read in the *Maḥberet*. In any case, this is a reasonable extension of Menahem’s approach to such unknown terms in the Psalms superscriptions.

⁷⁶ *Midrash Tehillim* on Ps 5:1.

⁷⁷ See m.*Baba Qamma* 10:2. It was not uncharacteristic of Rashi to draw upon Rabbinic Hebrew to elucidate Biblical Hebrew usages. See Netzer, “Comparison.” Menahem ben Saruq, on the other hand, sharply distinguished between the two linguistic corpuses. See *Maḥberet*, Saenz-Badillos ed., 13*–14*, 20*.

⁷⁸ Gruber ed., 812 (Hebrew); 188 (English).

Rashi here confronts the midrashic interpretation that the term *nehilot* in the heading of this psalm connotes inheritance, a reading well-entrenched in both Jewish and Christian Psalms interpretation.⁷⁹ Yet Rashi rejects this interpretation because it cannot be construed as the meaning of that Hebrew term, nor does it suit the context, i.e., the body of this psalm, which is a supplication to God for protection against “murderous deceitful men” (v. 7). Rashi knew that Menahem offered another approach to the difficult Hebrew terms appearing in the headings of the Psalms, namely that they are the names of musical instruments or melodies. He suggests, however, a third interpretation, that *nehilot* means military troops, fitting the theme of this psalm understood as a supplication for defense of Israel from enemies. Since such a reading requires construing the psalm as a collective prayer, Rashi explains that “the poet utters” its singular language “on behalf of the entire people of Israel.”⁸⁰ Explicitly attributed to David in the heading, Rashi presumably ascribed the psalm’s composition to him as its historical author. And yet, when writing of the literary voice that speaks in this psalm, Rashi posits a theoretical persona of “the poet,” i.e., the implied author who speaks in the psalm.

Rashi arrives at a complex notion of the voice of the poet in his commentary on Psalm 19, evident in his opening gloss:

*The heavens declare the glory of God. The poet (ha-meshorer) himself made this matter explicit: “There is no utterance; there are no words” (v. 4), [which is to say that] they [the heavens] do not speak with people except in so far as their circuit has gone forth throughout the earth, and they [the heavens] give light to people. Therefore people declare the glory of God, and they acknowledge and bless [Him] on account of the luminaries.*⁸¹

Following the spirit of his commentary on Gen 1:27 (cited above), Rashi asserts that verse 2, “the heavens declare the glory of God,” becomes clear through the persona speaking in verse 4, which clarifies that “There is no utterance; there are no words.” And so, there can never be any representation of what the heavens “declare.” Rather, it is people who “declare the glory of God” when contemplating the heavens—the sun, moon, and stars—and their daily circuit around the earth. It turns out, then, that mankind at large gives a “voice” to the heavens; and “the poet

⁷⁹ It is reflected, e.g., in the Vulgate (where the superscription reads *victori pro hereditatibus canticum David*), and is therefore explicated in the highly influential commentaries of the early Church Fathers Augustine and Cassiodorus on this verse. Some scholars suggest that Rashi was aware of Christian Bible exegesis, particularly in the Psalms. See Shereshevsky, “Rashi’s and Christian interpretations”; Grabois, “Hebraica,” 632–633; see also above, n. 42. For a more cautious view, see Berger, “Mission,” 196n.

⁸⁰ The notion that David composed some Psalms on behalf of the community can be found already in rabbinic literature. See, e.g., b.*Pesahim* 117a.

⁸¹ Gruber ed., 818 (Hebrew); 246 (English).

himself” gives a voice to mankind, articulating thoughts essential to the human experience of “the glory of God” through nature.⁸²

In considering Rashi’s use of the term “the poet” in Psalm 19, it is instructive to note a midrashic source he cites later in his commentary to the psalm, which notes that “David first mentioned [forgiveness of] ‘errors’ (v. 13), next ‘willful sins’ (v. 14), and then ‘acts of rebellion’ (v. 14).”⁸³ This midrashic formulation underscores Rashi’s innovative move in identifying the literary voice—the implied author or narrator—in this psalm. It is indeed natural for the midrash to refer to David as the speaker in this psalm, since he is said to be its historical author, as its superscription records “A psalm of David.” Yet Rashi uses the term *ha-meshorer* to designate the implied author, the literary voice speaking in this psalm on behalf of mankind at large, much as he posited that “the poet” speaks on behalf of all of Israel in Psalm 5—another psalm attributed to David in the superscription.⁸⁴

In his commentary on Ps 45:15–18 Rashi uses the term “the poet” (*ha-meshorer*) in the course of clarifying the poetic addressee, which is otherwise unclear. As Rashi understands it, verse 15 speaks of gifts brought by maidens “to You” (in the singular) which Rashi glosses: “the poet (*ha-meshorer*) says this addressing the Holy One Blessed be He.”⁸⁵ Verse 17, in turn, speaks in a different vein to what is clearly a group: “your sons will succeed your ancestors; you will appoint them princes throughout the land,” on which Rashi glosses: “He says

⁸² The term *ha-meshorer* is likewise used to identify the voice of the poet in the standard *Miqra’ot Gedolot* printed edition of Rashi’s commentary on Ps 87:5, “...Another interpretation: the poet says ‘I shall mention to my people and to those who know me the great things of Egypt and Babylonia’ (=a paraphrase of v. 4ff).” This is presented as an alternative to the one given by Rashi earlier (on verse 3) that these words are a quotation of a divine utterance. In this instance, then, the term *ha-meshorer* is used in the alternative reading to identify the persona or “speaker” as a human being (as in Rashi’s note on Ps 19:1) rather than God. This alternative interpretation is absent in both the Gruber and Maarsen editions of Rashi on Psalms, and it appears in *Miqra’ot Gedolot ha-Keter*, 56, in square brackets indicating its absence in some medieval manuscripts. All of this may suggest that it is a late interpolation into Rashi’s commentary. In his critical apparatus, Maarsen, *Parshandatha* 3:86, indicates that it is found in two of the medieval manuscripts he checked: MS St. John’s College 3; MS Karlsruhe 10, in addition to the Salonika 1515 and Bomberg 1523 printed editions of the *Miqra’ot Gedolot*. I have also found it in MS Bodleiana 2440. Since this comment appears in the relatively early Cambridge and Bodleiana manuscripts, it is not inconceivable that this addition emanated from Rashi’s circle of students (Lisa Fredman, personal communication). In any case, the scribe or commentator who offered this interpretation adopted Rashi’s distinctive usage of the term *ha-meshorer*.

⁸³ Rashi on Ps 19:14, Gruber ed. 818 (Heb.); 247–248 (Eng.). The idea behind this midrashic comment appears in *Midrash Tehillim* on this psalm; but Rashi’s formulation most closely resembles the version appearing in *Yalqut Shimoni* on this psalm. Although the latter is a thirteenth-century work, it drew upon earlier sources that seem to have been available to Rashi.

⁸⁴ Instead Rashi could have said, e.g., “David made this matter explicit” or “David utters this psalm on behalf of the entire people of Israel.” On the importance of distinguishing between the historical author and the implied author or narrator, see above, nn. 9, 56.

⁸⁵ Gruber ed., 827 (Hebrew); 352 (English).

[this] addressing all of Israel.”⁸⁶ Verse 18 again switches, returning to the singular: “I commemorate Your fame for all generations, so peoples will praise You for ever and ever,” on which Rashi glosses: “the poet (*ha-meshorer*) says this addressing God.”⁸⁷ The question Rashi seeks to answer in each of these glosses is “To whom is the poet speaking?”—an issue essential for a proper understanding of the sequence and literary coherence of the verses.

Psalm 87 is classified by many modern scholars as a “Zion Hymn,” because it contains praises of the city of Jerusalem.⁸⁸ Rashi adopts a similar perspective in his commentary on the second part of the psalm’s superscription:

*Its composition (yesudato) was in reference to the holy mountains. As for the composition of this psalm, the poet composed it (yissedo ha-meshorer) with reference to Mount Zion and Jerusalem.*⁸⁹

Although the Biblical Hebrew root *y-s-d* suggests an understanding of this sentence to mean “...its foundation is on the holy mountains,” Rashi took the word in the medieval Ashkenazic sense commonly used by him (and others influenced by him in the Franco-German school) to mean *literary composition* or *writing*.⁹⁰ For Rashi it was important to use the term “the poet” with reference to the literary voice behind the composition of this Psalm when speaking of its subject matter.⁹¹

4. Voice of the poet vs the literary editor: Rashi on Psalm 45

In Psalm 45, Rashi uses the term *ha-meshorer* to identify the voice of the poet and implicitly set him apart from a distinct literary figure—an editor who incorporated the poem into the Psalms, perhaps David himself at a later point in his life. While many modern scholars classify the psalm as a “royal psalm” because it praises the King (one of the monarchs of ancient Israel),⁹² Rashi construes this psalm as a

⁸⁶ Gruber ed., 827 (Hebrew); 352 (English).

⁸⁷ Gruber ed., 827 (Hebrew); 352 (English).

⁸⁸ See Gerstenberger, *Psalms 2*, 138–141

⁸⁹ Gruber ed., 844 (Hebrew); 559 (English).

⁹⁰ See Ben-Yehuda, *Dictionary*, s.v., יָסַד; Viezel, “Examination,” 182, n. 3; Spiegel, *Jewish Book*, 452–454. (My thanks to Simcha Emanuel for the last reference.) This distinctive medieval Ashkenazic usage is attested in some of the passages cited in this study. See, e.g., n. 126, and the texts cited at nn. 48, 94, 95, 134. On the use of this root in the *pi’el* (rather than *qal*) form, see nn. 48, 94, 95.

⁹¹ The term *ha-meshorer* is used in a similar way in the standard *Miqra’ot Gedolot* printed edition of Rashi’s commentary on Ps 118:16, “...And thus the poet says ‘the right hand of God, the exalted one, which you created.’” This note is absent in Gruber’s edition, as well as in Maarsen’s edition. In *Miqra’ot Gedolot ha-Keter*, 158, it appears in square brackets. In his critical apparatus, Maarsen, *Parshandatha*, 3:107, notes that it appears only in the Salonika 1515 and Bomberg 1523 printed editions of the *Miqra’ot Gedolot*, but not in any of the medieval manuscripts he checked. This, then, would seem to be a late addition to Rashi’s commentary (see above, n. 82).

⁹² See Gerstenberger, *Psalms 1*, 186–190. Abraham Ibn Ezra (comm. on Ps 45:1), likewise, interpreted this Psalm as a praise of King David or his son Solomon, who reigned after him.

praise of Torah scholars,⁹³ as evident in his gloss on the superscription, "...upon lilies, by the sons of Korah" (v. 1):

Upon lilies – They composed (*yissedu*) this psalm in honor of Torah scholars, because they are soft as lilies, beautiful as lilies and, like lilies, they make good deeds blossom.⁹⁴

By highlighting these perceived similarities, Rashi aims to argue that Torah scholars can be referred to metaphorically as "lilies." This typifies Rashi's endeavor to demonstrate that this psalm was composed as a praise of Torah scholars, rather than as praise of a king. But then Rashi notes that the speaker of the next verse is different from that of the previous one:

My heart is astir. Thus the poet (*ha-meshorer*) began his poem: "*My heart motivated within me gracious words in praise of you, the Torah scholar.*"
I say: "My works for the King" – i.e., this poem that I composed (*yissadti*) and "made," I address to one who is worthy to be king, as it says, "by virtue of me [i.e., Wisdom] kings shall reign (Prov 8:15)."⁹⁵

⁹³ As Gruber, *Rashi on Psalms*, 352–353 notes, there is no precise extant midrashic source that reads the entire psalm in this way. Unless Rashi drew upon midrashic sources unknown to us, it would seem that he generalized from the discussion of Ps 45:4, "Gird your sword upon your thigh, O hero, in your splendor and glory" in b.*Shabbat* 63a, where "sword" is interpreted to mean "words of Torah." From this perspective, the verse is a directive to Torah scholars to diligently review their learning in order to always be prepared to draw upon it as necessary—just as a warrior girds his sword so as to always be prepared for battle. (See Rashi's commentary on b.*Shabbat* 63a, s.v., *be-divrei torah ketiv*.) But whereas the Talmud interprets just a single verse in isolation in this vein, Rashi finds it necessary to interpret the entire psalm consistently according to this approach. The talmudic discussion of Ps 45:4 actually invokes the *peshat* maxim to argue that the verse retains its literal sense about a warrior girding his actual sword. And yet, Rashi in his Psalms commentary adopts the midrashic interpretation without any reference to "the *peshat* of Scripture." This confirms that Rashi did not intend to limit himself to *peshat* interpretation, but rather to critically select midrashic interpretations that "settle the language of the verse." See above, n. 29. In Psalm 45, Rashi expanded the midrashic commentary of a single verse attested in the Talmud and sought to demonstrate, verse by verse in his commentary, that it can reasonably be "settled upon" the language and sequence of the entire psalm. See, e.g., below, nn 94, 95. For examples of midrashic interpretations of the Psalms that do not meet this criterion, see, e.g., Rashi on Ps 8:1, 68:34.

⁹⁴ Gruber ed., 826 (Hebrew); 349 (English). The root *y-s-d* here is clearly in the *pi'el* form, as it is written with a double *yod* in the Gruber edition and in *Miqra'ot Gedolot ha-Keter*, 140. See n. 48 above.

⁹⁵ Gruber ed., 826 (Hebrew); 349 (English). In the Gruber edition a double *yod* appears in this word (יִסְדַּתִּי). This clearly indicates that the root *y-s-d* in the in the *pi'el* form. (See n. 48 above.) Rashi's gloss on the term "King" is part of his effort to demonstrate that the language of this psalm can legitimately be construed figuratively as a praise of Torah scholars, rather than literally as praise of a king.

In Rashi's view, the poet who composed this psalm begins by reflecting on the moment of inspiration—when his heart was “astir”—thus prompting his praise of Torah scholars.⁹⁶

Of special significance for our purposes is that Rashi specifies that “the poet,” i.e., the personal voice or persona in this psalm (one of the “sons of Korah”⁹⁷), begins to speak only in verse 2, implying that verse 1, the superscription of the psalm, represents the external “voice” of the literary editor responsible for the arrangement of the Psalter, an activity Rashi ascribes to King David.⁹⁸ Rashi does not spell this out, nor does he make this sort of observation about any other Psalms superscriptions.⁹⁹

Elsewhere in his Bible commentary, however, Rashi is more explicit about the work of an implied author or narrator to be distinguished from the “voice” of the characters cited in the narrative. On Judg 5:31, Rashi notes that the concluding sentence, “And the land was tranquil for forty years,” must be distinguished from the victory song uttered by Deborah: “These are not the words of Deborah; rather, they are the words of the one who wrote the book (*kotev ha-sefer*).”¹⁰⁰ The term *kotev ha-sefer* (“writer of the book”) is telling, as it suggests an emergent investigation of biblical authorship and composition independent of midrashic sources, in which such terminology is not used. Another remark by Rashi on I Sam 9:9 addresses a similar issue in the biblical text. In the midst of a discussion between Saul and his servant boy, who were seeking the Prophet Samuel, there is an explanatory gloss in the text: “Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to enquire of God, thus he would speak: ‘Come, and let us go to the seer’: for *he that is now called* a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer” (I Sam 9:9). Though there

⁹⁶ Compare Rashi on Psalms 8:4–5 (“When I see Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and stars that You have set in place. What is man that You have been mindful of him?”): “As for me, when I see Your heavens, I wonder to myself ‘What is man that you have been mindful of him?’” (Gruber ed., 813 [Hebrew]; 198 [English]). In this paraphrase, Rashi explains the logical sequence of the otherwise unconnected verses by construing verses 4–5 as a description of the moment that inspired the poet’s sentiments recorded in the psalm.

⁹⁷ See Rashi on Ps 42:1.

⁹⁸ See Viezel, “Formation,” 19–26. Following b.*Pesahim* 117a, Rashi posits that the term *maskil* employed in the superscription of this Psalm indicates that it was actually written “through the use of a *meturgeman* (lit. a translator),” which Rashi (in his Talmud commentary ad loc.) explains: “he spoke and another explicated.” See Gruber, *Rashi on Psalms*, 299, 349. Rashi does not, however, identify the *meturgeman* as the one responsible for the superscription of the psalm.

⁹⁹ Such a distinction—between the original author of a psalm and a later literary editor—is made explicitly in a gloss on the superscription of Psalm 137 in the Psalms commentary fragment that some scholars attribute to Joseph Qara. The distinction is made there between the prophet Jeremiah, who authored the original psalm in Babylonia, and Ezra, who incorporated it into the book of Psalms. See Ta-Shma, “Bible Criticism,” 457–459.

¹⁰⁰ Rashi on Judg 5:31, *Miqra’ot Gedolot ha-Keter*, 114. See the extended discussion in Gruber, *Rashi on Psalms*, 129–130n.

words immediately follow a direct quotation of the words of Saul's servant boy, Rashi remarks: "The one who wrote the book (*kotev ha-sefer*) said this; these are not the words of Saul's servant boy."¹⁰¹ Rashi seeks to explain that I Sam 9:9 is a sort of explanatory gloss by "the one who wrote this book." That biblical writer, Rashi reasons, felt the need to explain why, in the dialogue that follows in Samuel's city, the prophet is referred to as "the seer" (I Sam 10:11, 18, 19).

Rashi's comments on I Sam 9:9 may suggest—as some scholars have concluded—that he considered this verse to be a late interpolation into the biblical narrative by a later writer, i.e., many years after the time of Samuel (the author of the Book of Samuel according to the Talmud—the opinion Rashi appears to endorse).¹⁰² This historical question, however, is not addressed here explicitly by Rashi. Rather Rashi's primary concern is a literary one: to demarcate the different voices in the narrative, i.e., to distinguish between the voice of the narrator or implied author and the voice of the characters he cites (the issue Rashi clearly addresses in Judg 5:31).¹⁰³

That Rashi's concerns were primarily literary and not historical can be seen by comparison with the gloss on this verse by his student-colleague Joseph Qara (c. 1050–1130). Evidently inspired by Rashi's comment, Qara explicitly addresses the historical question of authorship emerging from I Sam 9:9:

For he that is now called a Prophet was beforetime called a Seer. What this generation refers to as "a Prophet," the earlier generations referred to as "a seer." This teaches that by the time this book was written they already were calling the "seer" a "Prophet." This indicates that the book was not written in the days of Samuel. If you search all of Scripture you will nowhere else find a prophet called a "seer." This indicates that the generation of Samuel is referred to [in this gloss] as "beforetime." And a generation later than Samuel's is referred when it states "he that is now called a Prophet." Now our Rabbis of blessed memory said that Samuel wrote his book. "The one who illuminates the world will turn darkness into light and will make crooked things straight" (based on Isa 42:16).¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ This seems to be the most accurate text of the commentary, attested in *Miqra'ot Gedolot ha-Keter*, 45. See Viezel, "Formation," 30. Rashi's commentary in the older printed editions of the *Miqra'ot Gedolot* reads *הסופר כתב זה ואין זה מדברי נער שאול*, a formulation more characteristic of Eliezer of Beaugency (above, n. 39 and below, n. 110).

¹⁰² See *b.Bava Bathra* 14b–15a, where the books of Judges and Samuel are attributed to Samuel. On Rashi's adoption of this position, and an analysis of his gloss on I Sam 9:9, see Viezel, "Formation," 29–31; *idem*, "Composition," 123.

¹⁰³ Elsewhere Rashi makes a similar literary observation, using the term "the Holy Spirit" (rather than any explicitly literary terminology) to differentiate between the biblical narrator and the words of the characters he cites. See Rashi on Gen 2:24, 37:22. For the rabbinic source of this usage of the term "the Holy Spirit," see *m. Sot.* 9:6 and Steiner "Redaction," 130n.

¹⁰⁴ Joseph Qara on I Sam 9:9, Eppenstein ed., 57.

For Joseph Qara, it was clear that this verse is the product of a later interpolation. And so, this “voice” is historically and not merely poetically distinct from the authorial voice elsewhere in the book of Samuel.

Qara also adopts Rashi's terminology in employing the expression “the prophet who wrote (*she-katav*) the/this book” to distinguish between remarks by the biblical narrator and the words of the characters cited in the narrative. For example, on Judg 13:18 (“The angel said to him: You must not ask for my name. It is unknowable”), Qara argues that the words “It is unknowable” were not uttered by the angel to Manoah, but rather were added by “the prophet who wrote the book.” In other words, this is the voice of the narrator explaining to the reader why the angel refused to fulfill Manoah's request.¹⁰⁵

The next generation of northern French *pashtanim*—commentators strongly influenced by Rashi and Qara—apply Rashi's terminology to speak more boldly about the role of the biblical narrator/editor in shaping the biblical text.¹⁰⁶ So-called Pseudo-Rashi on Ezra-Nehemiah, believed to have been written c. 1150 by a student of Rashbam, argues that “the writer of the book” (*kotev ha-sefer*), i.e., the editor who compiled the list of the exiled Judeans returning from Babylon to Jerusalem with Zerubbabel in Nehemiah 7, took some liberties and reworked the original list recorded in Ezra 2:1ff.¹⁰⁷ Similarly, Pseudo-Rashi on Chronicles (II Chr 32:25), believed to have been penned c. 1155 by a scholar of the same circle, notes that “the one who wrote the book” abbreviated his source material from Kings and Isaiah when recording certain aspects of Hezekiah's reign in Chronicles.¹⁰⁸ A modern eye will immediately distinguish between the work of a narrator or implied author shaping the words of the characters in a narrative—the way that Rashi used the terms *ha-meshorer* and *kotev ha-sefer*—and a redactor editing, re-working or combining pre-existing literary sources, the activity posited by Pseudo-Rashi on Ezra-Nehemiah and Pseudo-Rashi on Chronicles (and which modern source-criticism posits throughout the biblical text). However, the medieval commentators, especially in the northern French *peshat* school, do not

¹⁰⁵ See also Qara on Judg 17:6; I Kgs 1:15. See Viesel, *Commentary on Chronicles*, 57.

¹⁰⁶ See Harris, “Awareness,” 291–292n.

¹⁰⁷ See Viesel, “Ezra-Nehemiah,” 145–146; 178–180. As Viesel notes, the anonymous expression “the writer of the book” probably refers to the (unnamed) compiler of the historical list in Nehemiah 7, rather than to Nehemiah himself (whom this commentator took to be the author of the book of Nehemiah; see his gloss on Neh 1:1).

¹⁰⁸ See Viesel, *Commentary on Chronicles*, 233, 319–333. On II Chr 32:19, the commentator identifies that verse as a remark by “the one who wrote this book,” as opposed to the words Sennacherib's messenger cited in the previous verses—an observation about the biblical narrator that more closely resembles those of Rashi and Qara cited above.

seem to have differentiated sharply between these literary activities, as suggested by their using similar terminology in reference to both.¹⁰⁹

The active role of the biblical narrator-editor is specified most clearly in a comment by Eliezer of Beaugency, noting that Ezek 1:2–3, which provide Ezekiel’s name, location, and dates, are not original to the prophet himself:

“I saw visions of God (...) and lo, a stormy wind” (1:1, 4)—This is all that Ezekiel said originally; he did not even give his name.... But the scribe (*sofer*) who put all of his words together in writing (*she-katav kol devaraw*) went on to make explicit in these two verses (1:2–3) what he left unsaid and abbreviated.¹¹⁰

To be sure, Rashi—seeking to account for “the sequence of the verses/words”—had already noted that verses 2–3, which speak about the prophet in third-person, interrupt the flow of Ezekiel’s first-person account in verses 1, 4. But Rashi attributes this interruption vaguely to “the Holy Spirit.”¹¹¹ Eliezer of Beaugency, on the other hand, boldly ascribes the biographical information about Ezekiel provided in verses 2–3 to “the scribe” who edited Ezekiel’s prophecies.

What is perhaps the most sweeping remark regarding the work of the editor/redactor in a number of biblical books is found in the gloss on the superscription to the Song of Songs (“The Song of Songs by Solomon”; Song 1:1) in an anonymous northern French *peshat* commentary:

The Song of Songs by Solomon – the scribe (*ha-sofer*) tells us that Solomon composed this poem, and these are not Solomon’s words. And the beginning of the book is “May he kiss me of the kisses [of his mouth] (Song 1:2). And thus “The Words of Qohelet” (Qoh 1:1) are the words of a scribe. And thus “The Proverbs of Solomon son of David” (Prov 1:1) are the words of a scribe.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ See Harris, “Awareness,” 289–290; compare Steiner, “Redaction,” 124. For this reason, Viesel argues that the medieval commentators, as a rule, do not manifest awareness of the work of a biblical editor redacting earlier sources, and that the comments cited above by Pseudo-Rashi on Ezra-Nehemia and Pseudo-Rashi on Chronicles actually express only literary claims about the style of the narrative. See Viesel, “Medieval Bible Commentators.”

¹¹⁰ Eliezer of Beaugency on Ezek. 1:1, *Miqra’ot Gedolot ha-Keter*, 3. See Harris, “Literary Hermeneutic,” 210; idem, “Awareness,” 294. Translation taken from Steiner, “Redaction,” 129.

¹¹¹ Rashi on Ezek 1:1, *Miqra’ot Gedolot ha-Keter*, 2. On Rashi’s similar use of the term the “Holy Spirit” elsewhere in the sense of the narrator, see above, n. 103.

¹¹² Japhet, “Anonymous Commentary,” 231. A note in Rashi’s commentary on Prov 1:7 appearing in the printed editions of the *Miqra’ot Gedolot* likewise attributes the first six verses of that book to an editor rather than King Solomon himself. Lisa Fredman, in her critical edition of Rashi’s commentary on Proverbs, observes that this note is absent in all of the early manuscripts she checked, and appears only in the printed editions (and in a 16th century manuscript that itself seems to be based on a printed edition). This, then, would seem to be an addition by a later scribe

Sara Japhet identifies this anonymous commentator as a student of Eliezer of Beaugency,¹¹³ and so it is not surprising that he uses the term “the scribe” (*ha-sofer*)—characteristic of Eliezer—to refer to the biblical editor.¹¹⁴

The observation in the anonymous Song of Songs commentary appears to be an expansion on the remarks offered by Rashbam on the opening and closing verses of Qohelet:

These two verses, “The words of Qohelet” (Qoh 1:1) and “Vanity of vanities” (Qoh 1:2) were composed not by Qohelet but by the one who arranged the words (*oto she-sidder ha-devarim*) in their current sequence.¹¹⁵

Vanity of vanities (12:8)—Now the book is completed. Those that arranged (*sidderu*) it composed (what comes) from here on, saying: “Everything that goes on in the world is vanity of vanities, said Qohelet.”¹¹⁶

Recognizing that these verses speak of Qohelet in third-person (unlike the rest of the book in which he speaks in first person), Rashbam identifies them as the introduction and conclusion formulated by the editors/redactors of the book.¹¹⁷

Modern scholars thus ascribe to Rashbam a pivotal role in the development of the conception of the biblical editor-redactor—termed “the scribe”—manifested by Eliezer and the anonymous Song of Songs commentator.¹¹⁸ This gives special importance to the conjecture advanced by Richard Steiner that Rashbam's expression “the one who arranged the words (*oto she-sidder ha-devarim*) in their current sequence” may be “a paraphrase of the term *sadran*” used in the Byzantine *Leqah Tov* and *Sekhel Tov* Pentateuch commentaries to connote the biblical narrator/editor who controls the flow of information to the reader.¹¹⁹ However, this

or commentator. Eran Viesel believes that it can be attributed to Rashbam or one of his students. See Fredman, *Rashi on Proverbs*, 17, 90; Viesel, “Formation,” 39–40.

¹¹³ Japhet, “Anonymous Commentary,” 229–230.

¹¹⁴ See above, n. 101.

¹¹⁵ Rashbam on Qoh 1:2, Japhet and Salters ed., 93.

¹¹⁶ Rashbam on Qoh 12:8, Japhet and Salters ed., 213. When speaking of “those that arranged” Qohelet in the plural, Rashbam may have in mind the talmudic statement that attributes the book to “Hezekiah and his colleagues” (b.*Baba Bathra* 15a).

¹¹⁷ This observation was adopted by Rashbam's younger brother, Jacob Tam, who refers to the opening and closing verses of Qohelet using the Talmudic expression *tiqqun soferim* (“correction of the scribes”) to connote the literary work of the editors of the book, as opposed to the original words of Solomon himself. See Lasser, “Rabeinu Tam's Treatise,” 100–101. I am grateful to Jonathan Jacobs for this reference, and to Gedalia Lasser for graciously providing me with a copy of his dissertation, which he is currently preparing for publication.

¹¹⁸ See Harris, “Awareness,” 292.

¹¹⁹ Steiner, “Redaction,” 133. The term *ha-sadran* is used by both Tobiah ben Eliezer (author of *Leqah Tov*) and Menahem ben Solomon (author of *Sekhel Tov*) primarily in the sense of the

linguistic hypothesis must be put into proper context. To begin with, it appears that *Leqah Tov*—which Rashbam cites once—was probably not available to him until late in his career, and the evidence that he knew *Sekhel Tov* (written a generation after *Leqah Tov*) remains inconclusive.¹²⁰ More importantly, it can be argued that Rashbam’s sensitivity to the work of the biblical narrator-editor has its roots in the literary-exegetical concerns that Rashi displays in his distinctive use of the term *ha-meshorer*, in addition to his less frequent usage of the term *kotev ha-sefer*. In other words, even if Rashbam’s terminology was borrowed from the Byzantine commentaries, the literary conceptions underlying it would have already been familiar to him from Rashi, his first and most important teacher.¹²¹ In order to assess this possibility of organic development within the northern French *peshat* tradition, we now turn to investigate how Rashi’s literary terms and concepts related to the biblical narrator/editor reverberate in the work of Rashbam.

5. Reflections of Rashi’s terms and concepts in the northern French *peshat* school
 Rashbam does not use the term *ha-meshorer* in his commentaries precisely as did Rashi.¹²² Yet he adapts Rashi’s coinage in his discussion of the literary perspective represented in the Song of Songs. As Rashbam remarks in his introduction:

[Solomon] wrote his... “Song”...[speaking] like a maiden longing and lamenting the loss of her lover, who left her... She recalls him and his eternal love for her, and she sings (*meshoreret*) and says: such strong love my darling manifested toward me when he was still with me. And she

narrator responsible for the arrangement of the Pentateuch and the details within each narrative, as well as supplying elucidating comments where necessary. It appears that both Tobiah and Menahem regarded Moses as the *sadran* of the Pentateuch. See Elbaum, *Sekhel Tov*, 85–93; Mondschein, “Additional Comments.” In other words, they did not use the term to connote an editor/redactor who reworked pre-existing source documents—the function that Rashbam and Eliezer of Beaugency ascribed to *oto she-sidder ha-devarim* and the *sofer* (above, nn. 110, 115, 116) and Pseudo-Rashi on Chronicles and Pseudo-Rashi on Ezra-Nehemiah ascribed to *kotev ha-sefer* (above, nn. 107, 108).

¹²⁰ See Lockshin, “Connection”; Jacobs, “Clarification.” There is no evidence that Rashbam had any access to the earlier tenth/eleventh-century Byzantine commentaries that use the related term *ha-mesadder* (above, n. 7).

¹²¹ On Rashi’s foundational influence on Rashbam, see Touitou, *Exegesis*, 68–76; Japhet, *Rashbam on Song of Songs*, 63–65.

¹²² Rashbam does not use the term *meshorer* in the sense of a narrator or implied author in (what appears to be) his Psalms commentary. (This commentary is soon to be published by Aaron Mondschein, whom I thank for providing this information. On the commentary itself, see Mondschein, “Lost Commentary.”) The term *ha-meshorer* is used in this sense in a note regarding Ps 141:4 by Benjamin of Canterbury (a student of Rashbam’s younger brother Jacob Tam) in his gloss on Joseph Kimhi’s *Sefer ha-Galui*, Matthews ed., 16. See Bacher, “Commentator,” 168.

speaks recounts (*mesapperet*) to her girlfriends and her maidens: such and such my darling said to me and this is how I responded.¹²³

Notwithstanding the similarities between them, Rashbam's usage certainly differs from Rashi's. Whereas Rashi used the masculine participle form as a noun, preceded by the definite article *ha-* ("the"), yielding *ha-meshorer* ("the poet"), Rashbam uses the feminine participle as a present-tense verb: *meshoreret* ("she sings/speaks poetically").¹²⁴ Furthermore, whereas Rashi posits an external literary voice that narrates for the beloved, Rashbam identifies the beloved herself, a character in the story, as the narrator who "recounts" (*mesapperet*) her own love tale.¹²⁵ Yet the similar point that both *pashtanim* make—with closely related terminology—is that the narrator in the Song of Songs must be distinguished from its historical author, King Solomon.¹²⁶

On the second verse of the Song—the first time the maiden's voice is heard—Rashbam remarks:

Sometimes the bride sings (*meshoreret*) as though speaking with her lover; and sometimes she recounts to her girlfriends about him, that he is not together with her.¹²⁷

Later in the commentary, Rashbam makes a similar point and clarifies that it applies to the work as a whole:

This is the manner of this "Song"—that she sings (*meshoreret*) and grieves in all of them about her love for her darling, and after recounting... her love

¹²³ Introduction to Song of Songs, Japhet ed., 233. The attribution of this commentary to Rashbam is demonstrated (convincingly to my mind) by Sara Japhet; see Japhet, *Rashbam on Song of Songs*, 9–51. For the dissenting view held by some scholars, see Haas, "Reconsideration" and (more provisionally) Liss, "Song of Songs," 1–8.

¹²⁴ It was characteristic of Rashbam to adapt and modify his grandfather's terminological innovations. For example, the distinctive term *dugma* (= *exemplum*) that Rashi used to connote the Song of Songs' allegorical layer of meaning (n. 24 above) was adapted by Rashbam, who employs the term *dimyon* (=similitude) to serve this function. See Liss, "Song of Songs," 8–19.

¹²⁵ There is, of course, another difference between the two exegetes' approaches: Rashi construes the beloved as an elderly woman in "live widowhood" reminiscing about her youthful love, whereas Rashbam casts the beloved and her lover as young lovers experiencing the vicissitudes of their initial relationship. On the differences between the approaches of Rashi and Rashbam, see Japhet, *Rashbam on Song of Songs*, 137–143.

¹²⁶ This usage by Rashbam is also reflected in another twelfth-century northern French Song of Songs commentary that appears to have emanated from Rashbam's scholarly circle, who remarks: "Solomon composed (*yissad*) this song and formulated it from the perspective of the beloved, who sings (*meshoreret*) about her lover, for she utters all the words of the Song that are not direct quotations"; see Alster, "Human Love," 14–16, 70–71.

¹²⁷ Rashbam on Song 1:2, Japhet ed., 233.

to her girlfriends... they scold her, responding: “Forget his love, because he has scorned you and will not return to you...” And she adjures them that they must not speak of this to her because she shall never forsake his love... And still nowadays the convention of the *meshorerim* (singers, poets, *trouvères*) is to sing a song that recounts (*mesapper*) the narrative of the love of a couple, with love songs (*shirei ahava* = *chansons d’amour*) as is the practice of all people (*minhag ha-‘olam*).¹²⁸

Rashbam here introduces another speaker-group whose words are cited in the Song: the maiden’s “girlfriends,” who advise her to forsake him—advice that elicits a reconfirmation of her steadfast love. To support his claim about the shifting speakers and addressees of the beloved’s words, Rashbam cites “the practice of all people,” i.e., the literary conventions of the *meshorerim* in the general culture around him, probably a reference to the *trouvères* of twelfth-century France.¹²⁹ It is conceivable that Rashi’s introduction of the term *ha-meshorer* into the analysis of the Song of Songs opened the door to Rashbam’s analogy between this sacred text and the *chansons d’amour* of the *trouvères*. In any case, Rashbam’s use of the terms *meshoreret/meshorerim* resembles Rashi’s use of the term *ha-meshorer* in his Psalms commentary to identify the voice of the speaker in a given psalm, whose perspective he adopts, and to whom he speaks.¹³⁰

Rashi had coined the usage of the term *ha-meshorer* to designate the narrator or implied author, but applied it only in the Song of Songs and the Psalms, probably because it is only in these biblical books that the term is naturally applicable: the Hebrew title of Song of Songs is *shir ha-shirim*, and the Psalms are said to have been sung by *meshorerim* (see II Chr 29:28).¹³¹ Rashbam adapted this usage in his commentary on the Song of Songs, but evidently sought to widen it, as we see in his commentary on Lamentations.¹³² Traditionally, Lamentations—a book of national lament over the tragedies of the destruction of the Temple and the exile of Israel—was attributed to the prophet Jeremiah, as recorded in the Talmud, followed by Rashi.¹³³ Although Rashbam faithfully records that this was the opinion of the Rabbis, he begins his analysis in a different vein:

¹²⁸ Rashbam on Song 3:5, Japhet ed., 250. On Rashbam’s references to French love songs sung by the *trouvères*, see Liss, “Song of Songs,” 23–24. On the *trouvères* and their *chansons d’amour* see O’Neill, *Love Songs*.

¹²⁹ See Japhet, *Rashbam on Song of Songs*, 100–104, 118–120.

¹³⁰ See sec. 3 above.

¹³¹ See above, n. 9. Abraham Ibn Ezra, e.g., regularly uses the expression “the poet (*ha-meshorer*) said” when citing verses from Psalms.

¹³² On this commentary, of which only fragments survive, see Japhet, “Lamentations,” 231–232.

¹³³ Rashi on Lam 1:1, based on b.*Bava Batra* 15a. See Viezel, “Formation,” 26–27. This opinion was also adopted by early Christian authorities, reflected in the placement of Lamentations immediately following the book of Jeremiah in Jerome’s Vulgate and in subsequent Christian versions of the Bible.

The “lamentor” (*ha-meqonen*) that composed (*yissad*) the scroll of Lamentations selected his style (*shittah*) following the practice of all people (*nohag she-ba-‘olam bi-benei adam*). As might occur typically in the case of a widow, remaining completely alone, bereft of her children and husband, she calls upon [trained] “lamenting women” to utter many lamentations for her. Sometimes they express their lamentations speaking in the voice (lit. in place) of the widow herself... And sometimes they speak to the widow in their lamentations and bemoan her [misfortune]. And sometimes they recount the events that befell the widow to others in their lamentations. In this way this “lamentor” (*meqonen*; i.e., the author of the book of Lamentations) composed (*yissad*) his lamentation for Israel. Sometimes he speaks in the voice (lit. in place) of the people of Israel, and sometimes he speaks to her. And sometimes he speaks to others about her.¹³⁴

Although he would go on in the following lines to cite the rabbinic view that Jeremiah authored Lamentations without any reservations, Rashbam first identifies the literary voice—the “lamentor”—speaking in the book. The term he recruited for this purpose is the participle *meqonen* (attested in Biblical Hebrew [see below]), manifesting the same grammatical form as *meshorer*. Just as Rashbam invokes “the practice of all people” in his Song of Songs commentary to draw an analogy between sacred scripture and *chansons d’amour*, here he does so to interpret Lamentations in light of the style of professional women “lamentors” that a recently widowed woman might invite to mourn her tragedy. In this instance, Rashbam does not, as he might have, cite a contemporary medieval practice (like *chansons d’amour*), but rather a feature of ancient Israelite society in biblical times, as attested by the description of “dirge-singers” (*meqonenot*) in Jer 9:16–17. As the biblical depiction of these women suggests, their dirges aimed to bring the listeners to tears. Rashbam’s specific purpose in drawing this analogy is to explain the shifts of perspective and addressee in Lamentations: at times the “lamentor” speaks in the voice of Israel wailing over her tragedies, at times he speaks to Israel about her tragedies, and at times he speaks in his own voice to others about Israel’s tragedies.¹³⁵ These shifts resemble those delineated by Rashbam in his Song of Songs commentary (using the term *meshoreret*) and by Rashi in his Psalms commentary (using the term *ha-meshorer*).

As noted above, Rashi—in his commentaries on Song 2:8 and Psalm 68—referred to “the poet” (*ha-meshorer*) as the narrator or implied author responsible for the structure and organization of the biblical text. In his Pentateuch commentary, as detailed in recent studies by Martin Lockshin, Eleazar Tuitou,

¹³⁴ Japhet, “Lamentations,” 232–233.

¹³⁵ See Japhet, “Lamentations,” 237–240.

and Eran Viesel, Rashbam boldly ascribes to Moses the role of selecting and organizing the narratives of the Pentateuch.¹³⁶ In other words, it was Moses who conceived the literary design of the Pentateuch, and the arrangement of the laws in it—cited in God’s words verbatim, as indicated with formulas such as “And God spoke to Moses saying, etc.”¹³⁷ Admittedly, in the case of the Pentateuch, Rashbam does not distinguish between the historical author (Moses) and the narrator/implied author responsible for the narrative organization of the text, as the term *ha-sadran/mesadder* was employed within the Byzantine exegetical tradition.¹³⁸ Yet it is evident that a key goal of Rashbam’s *peshat* program was to discern the literary design of the biblical text, as intended by Moses.¹³⁹

In sum, it is clear that Rashbam devised a number of ways to refer to the biblical narrator/editor; the expression “the one who arranged the words (*oto she-sidder ha-devarim*) in their current sequence” is only one of them. It is conceivable that Rashbam devised this locution to connote the biblical narrator under the influence of the usage of the term *sadran* in *Leqah Tov and Sekhel Tov*. But there is ample background for this phrase and—more importantly—the literary conceptions it implies in the work of Rashi. To begin with, Rashi himself uses the term *sidder* in his Talmud commentary to describe the activity of Moses in arranging the Torah.¹⁴⁰ More prominently, as we have seen in this study, Rashi designated the work of the biblical narrator with term *ha-meshorer* (“the poet”) on Song of Songs and Psalms. It stands to reason that this profoundly influenced Rashbam, who sought to apply similar insights about literary structure even in biblical books in which the term *meshorer* is not applicable, such as Lamentations and the Pentateuch. As a close student of Rashi’s, Rashbam would have regarded

¹³⁶ See Lockshin, “Moses”; Touitou, *Exegesis*, 120–121; Viesel, “Moses’ Role.”

¹³⁷ In one passage in his Talmud commentary Rashi states that “Moses wrote and arranged (*katav we-sidder*) the Torah” (comm. on b.*Hullin* 100b, s.v., *ameru lo*). See Viesel, “Formation,” 36. By itself, this comment does not necessarily imply that Moses played an active role in the organization of the Pentateuch, but it may have been suggestive for Rashbam, inspiring him to think along these lines. We should note that later northern French exegetes do speak of Moses’ active editorial activity in the Pentateuch using the root *s-d-r*. See Joseph Bekhor Shor on Deut 1:1 (with Harris, “Awareness,” 303; Steiner, “Redaction,” 132) and Hizkuni on Exod 34:32. For Bekhor Shor’s views on this matter, see Jacobs, *Bekhor Shoro*, 242–244.

¹³⁸ See above, n. 7. It is beyond the scope of this study to conjecture why Rashbam did not distinguish between the historical author and implied author/narrator in the Pentateuch—as he does in other biblical books. We can remark briefly though, that Rashbam may have been deterred from making this distinction on theological grounds, because the authorship of the Pentateuch was a particularly sensitive matter. And so, he may have wished not to suggest, even implicitly, that anyone but Moses authored the Pentateuch. For further discussion of this sensitive theological point and Rashbam’s reaction to it, see the studies cited in n. 136 above.

¹³⁹ See the citation from Meir Sternberg above, n. 59. For further discussion of this literary aspect of Rashbam’s *peshat* program, see Liss, *Fictional Worlds*, 75–168; Cohen, *Rule of Peshat*, 137–165.

¹⁴⁰ See n. 137.

it a central interpretive objective to discern the logic of “the sequence of the words/verses” (*sefer ha-devarim/miqra'ot*). This very value is reflected in his remark, cited above, that “poetry (*shirah*) is the arrangement of words (*siddur devarim*).”¹⁴¹ For Rashbam, the task of the poet is to arrange the words in their proper sequence. Although the term *ha-meshorer* may be relevant only in relation to the Psalms and Song of Songs, the idea of *siddur devarim* can be applied more widely to any text of the Bible. And thus, Rashbam—following in Rashi's footsteps—would have regarded the use of the root *s-d-r* as a natural way of describing the literary work of the biblical narrator and thereby fulfill the goal of accounting properly for the “sequence” of the biblical text, as Rashi had done using the term “the poet.”

6. Rashi's new literary terms & concepts in light of Latin learning

Rashi's deployment of the term *kotev ha-sefer* in his commentaries on Judges and Samuel, and of the term *ha-meshorer* in his Psalms and Song of Songs commentaries suggests a heightened sensitivity to the literary process by which the books of the Bible were conceived and composed. This sensitivity would be developed further in comments by Rashbam and his circle using additional terminology, such as *ha-sofer* and *oto she-sidder ha-devarim*. These innovations suggest a new appreciation for the role of the human writers who shaped the biblical texts, even as they were guided by the *ruah ha-qodesh* (Holy Spirit).¹⁴² In other words, Rashi, followed by his students, does not look at the biblical text exclusively as a final product given by God, but also considers the literary process by which it was produced—through human agency.

Developments in contemporaneous Latin learning help illuminate this awakening of a literary consciousness in Jewish interpretation. Alastair Minnis has traced a gradual shift in medieval Christian perceptions of the Bible as literature and the role of its human authors.¹⁴³ Traditionally, authorship of the Bible was ascribed to the “Holy Spirit,” with its human “authors” regarded as little more than scribes copying the words dictated to them. Gregory the Great (540–604), in his *Moralia in Job*, minimizes the importance of that biblical book's human author:

The search for the author of this book is certainly a vain one, because... the author is the Holy Spirit. The author of a book is the one who dictated it... who inspired it... Suppose we receive a letter from some great person and we read the words but wonder by whose pen they were written; it would certainly be ridiculous... to search out by what scribe the words in it were written down. No, therefore, we know the book, and we know that its

¹⁴¹ See above, n. 17.

¹⁴² For example, in his introduction to the Song of Songs, Rashi emphasizes the role of the Holy Spirit that guided King Solomon in the composition of the book. See nn. 44, 49 above.

¹⁴³ See Minnis, *Authorship*, 33–117.

author is the Holy Spirit; so when we ask about the writer, what else are we doing but asking who the scribe is, whose words we are reading?¹⁴⁴

Since the human writer of the Book of Job was simply writing what was dictated by the Holy Spirit, Gregory reasons, he was simply fulfilling an ancillary instrumental role.¹⁴⁵

This perspective largely prevailed until the thirteenth century. Generally speaking, in the twelfth century “God was believed to have controlled human authors in a way which defied literary description,” and therefore “literary criteria and classifications... were afforded a relatively unimportant place in Scriptural exegesis.”¹⁴⁶ As a result, Minnis argues, the twelfth-century commentators were generally preoccupied with allegorical interpretation. For Geoffrey of Auxerre (late twelfth century), for example, it was not important to know who wrote the Song of Songs, for whether or not the human *auctor* knew what he was prophesying, “the inspirer (*inspirator*) most certainly knew.”¹⁴⁷ What mattered was the prophecy itself, of the mystical marriage of Christ and holy Church. In the thirteenth century emphasis came to be placed on the literal sense of the Scripture—and the exegetes’ interest in their texts became more literary, as the emphasis shifted from the divine *auctor* to the human *auctor* of Scripture.¹⁴⁸ Interpreters thus began to explore the roles played by the human authors of Scripture and the literary forms and devices they used—which were classified as features of the literal sense, i.e., as facets of their personal purposes in writing.¹⁴⁹

It would seem that Rashi’s interest in *pehuto shel miqra*, likewise, brought with it a new investigation of the literary features of Scripture, which, in turn, led him to think about biblical authorship in new ways. In speaking of “the writer of the book” (*kotev ha-sefer*) in his commentaries on Judges and Samuel, Rashi seems to signal a shift of attention to the intentions of the human authors who shaped the biblical text, a trend that would be developed further by Rashbam and his students. Admittedly, the term *kotev ha-sefer* is truly a minor note in Rashi—attested only twice in his commentaries. However, the term “the poet” (*ha-meshorer*), appears more prominently in his commentaries on the Psalms and Song of Songs, and it suggests a heightened literary sensibility within Rashi’s exegetical consciousness. Based on the examples discussed in this study, we can say that Rashi employed the term “the poet” within his endeavor to discern the logic of the “sequence of the matters/verses” (*sefer ha-devarim/miqra’ot*), a central goal of his interpretive methodology. Rashi aimed to discover the literary design of “the poet” in the structure of the biblical text, in the shifts from one verse to the next between

¹⁴⁴ *Moralia in Job*, Adriaen ed., 8–9; Kerns trans., 57–58.

¹⁴⁵ Minnis, *Authorship*, 37.

¹⁴⁶ Minnis, *Authorship*, 58.

¹⁴⁷ Minnis, *Authorship*, 38.

¹⁴⁸ Minnis, *Authorship*, 39.

¹⁴⁹ Minnis, *Authorship*, 74.

different literary voices (who is speaking?) or addressees (to whom?), or transitions in the subject matter (about what?). As already mentioned, Rashbam defined “poetry” as “the arrangement of words (*siddur devarim*).”¹⁵⁰ This conception seems to inform Rashi's use of the term *ha-meshorer* when seeking to account for the often complex arrangement of the text in the biblical texts labelled *shir(ah)*, i.e., the Song of Songs and the Psalms.

The shift in Latin Bible interpretation identified by Minnis occurred much later than Rashi's time—and so there can be question of its influence on Rashi's thought. However, in recent studies, Andrew Kraebel has identified a distinctively poetic approach to the Psalms in the commentary penned by Bruno the Carthusian (1030 – 1101), who served as master at the Cathedral School of Rheims c. 1055–1080.¹⁵¹ Bruno, in turn, influenced other northern Latin commentators, his students at Rheims, who were active in the last third of the eleventh century.¹⁵² As Kraebel demonstrates, the perception of the Psalms as poems inspired these commentators to apply a “coherent, poetic hermeneutic” in which the consecutive verses of individual psalms fit together, by contrast with their patristic sources, such as Augustine and Cassiodorus, who tended to gloss each verse discretely, almost to the point of individual verses being the object of brief commentaries unto themselves. Drawing upon tools of literary analysis in the commentary tradition on the classical poets, the Remois exegetes sought to identify the poetic voice(s) speaking within each psalm, his addressee, which may shift from verse to verse, and his subject matter, which likewise may vary within the psalm.¹⁵³

Rashi can be said to have faced similar interpretive challenges in his commentaries on the Psalms and the Song of Songs, the two biblical texts in which he applied the term *ha-meshorer* to identify the poetic voice speaking within them. The Rabbis of the midrash ascribed prophetic content about the future history of Israel to the Song of Songs, but paid little attention to the literary design of the book. Though Rashi accepted the rabbinic supposition about the prophetic content of the Song of Songs, he criticized the “aggadic *midrashim* on this book... that do not fit (“are not settled upon”) the language of Scripture (*leshon ha-miqra*) and the sequence of the verses (*sefer ha-miqra'ot*).”¹⁵⁴ Rashi sought to discern the literary design of the book, which he attributed to “the poet” (*ha-meshorer*), a term he used to refer to King Solomon's literary agency in composing the Song of Songs—guided by the Holy Spirit. In his commentaries on the Psalms, likewise, Rashi accepted the general premise of the Rabbis that King David and other authors of the Psalms spoke prophetically, among other things, about events befalling Israel in the far future, as well as their prayers to God in

¹⁵⁰ See n. 17 above.

¹⁵¹ See Kraebel, “Prophecy and Poetry”; idem, “Poetry and Commentary.”

¹⁵² See Kraebel, “John of Rheims.”

¹⁵³ Kraebel, “Prophecy and Poetry,” 450.

¹⁵⁴ See n. 25 above.

those times. Yet, Rashi endeavored to meet the exegetical challenge posed by these often disjointed or otherwise seemingly discontinuous texts. Beginning with his efforts to demonstrate basic agreement between the superscriptions of each psalm and the verses that follow, Rashi imposed literary coherence upon these texts, and he criticized midrashic interpretations that failed to do so. Underlying this exegetical agenda is an assumption that the Psalms are “poetic” texts, as Rashi employs the term *ha-meshorer* to account for the literary voices (Who is speaking?), the addressees (To whom is he speaking?), and the subject matters (About what is he speaking?) as they shift within each psalm.

It is difficult to determine the extent to which Rashi was aware of developments in Christian interpretation in northern France in his time. It is not inconceivable that Rashi knew something of Bruno and his poetic-grammatical hermeneutic, which circulated in northern France in the last third of the eleventh century. Three entries in Bruno’s mortuary roll (a rotulus containing nearly 180 eulogies for Bruno in response to the announcement of his death) are from Troyes and its environs: one from Saint-Pierre Cathedral of Troyes, another from the nearby Benedictine monastery at Montier la-Celle, and a third from the nearby Benedictine monastery Saint-Pierre at Montiéramey.¹⁵⁵ This would suggest that Bruno’s students were among the otherwise large Christian clerical population of Troyes.¹⁵⁶ Perhaps conversations with such learned Christians contributed to Rashi’s novel literary perceptions of the Bible, as manifested in his innovative usage of the term *ha-meshorer* in his commentaries on the Song of Songs and the Psalms? But even if that was not the case, this very parallel is illuminating from a methodological perspective, as the implications that Christian interpreters at the school of Rheims drew from what they perceived as the poetic nature of Scripture suggest a new way of appreciating Rashi’s intentions in implicitly classifying the Song of Songs and the Psalms as “poetic.”¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁵ See Beyer, Signori, and Steckel, eds., *Bruno the Carthusian and His Mortuary Roll*, 171–172.

¹⁵⁶ See Holmes and Klenke, *Chr tien*, 12–17.

¹⁵⁷ The implications of the parallels between Rashi and Bruno, as well as the possibility of influence, are discussed in Cohen, “Rashi in Light of Bruno,” as well as in the forthcoming study announced in the initial footnote of this essay.

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