

Rashi and the First Crusade: Commentary, Liturgy, Legend

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THE TENTH AND ELEVENTH CENTURIES MARKED THE birth of Franco-German Jewry, the Ashkenazim. These Jews, invited to a rapidly developing part of Europe by Christian civil and religious leaders, soon distinguished themselves in commerce and scholarship. [1] In the galaxy of their rabbinical luminaries, the figure of Rabbi Solomon son of Isaac (1040--1105) shone the brightest for subsequent generations. Rashi, his acronym, unites both his name and a supreme compliment: *Rabban Shel Yisrael*, Teacher of Israel. To this day, his commentaries illuminate Torah and Talmud so that no Jew can be considered literate in Judaism without knowing them.

The details of Rashi's life are sketchy. [2] We know that he endured a time of great poverty during his studies. He engaged in business with Gentiles and seems to have been a wine merchant. He and his wife had at least two daughters, both of whom married scholars. Three of Rashi's grandchildren--Samuel (Rashbam), Isaac (Ribam), and Jacob Tam (Rabbeinu Tam)--were famous in their own right and began the Tosafot commentary on the Talmud. Samuel, the eldest, left several reminiscences of his grandfather, for whom he occasionally acted as a secretary. From this we know that even in his old age, Rashi wished to make revisions of his commentary. [3]

Rashi also left evidence of his personality in his Responsa to legal questions from other rabbis. He ruled leniently in the case of Jews who converted to Christianity out of fear and welcomed them back. [4] He stressed honesty in all dealings, with Jews or Gentiles alike. He counseled against quarrels. He was scrupulous but not fanatic. The stories of his piety, learning, and humility are legion. Sifting through the legends, one finds a man who bore his immense learning lightly and did not hesitate to admit a mistake. [5] Respectful of authority, he still pointed out errors in his elders. [6] We have glimpses, too, of a sense of humor: when his grandson pointed out that certain biblical verses had a unique style, he would say afterwards wherever encountering the same style, "here's another verse for my Samuel!" [7]

Rashi's biblical commentaries remain justifiably popular because their varied content offers something for every reader. He is the master teacher, whose concise written word draws out the best of the intellect of his readers, from the gifted to the ordinary. He prefers the literal or plain interpretation whenever possible but will offer some explanation even if he has to invoke the Midrash to get it. The student of Rashi will be exposed to Talmudic insights, Hebrew grammar, human psychology, and an encyclopedic intellect. This combination has never been surpassed.

Rashi's work on the Talmud is of a different nature. The concise style remains: he

respects the authority of his illustrious predecessors and cites their explanations; but his own logic rules supreme. Thus, for example, he sometimes interprets the same passage of the Talmud quoted in different places in different ways because one way better suits the location of the passage than the other. [8] Not the least of his achievements was to determine, from comparison with manuscripts and from internal evidence, an accurate text of the Talmud, which in his day had become very corrupt. Rashi is still the commentator who makes the Talmud accessible to a broad readership.

Rashi lived most of his life in relatively secure and prosperous communities. He studied for years in the Rhineland cities of Worms and Mainz before returning to the wealthy and cosmopolitan town of Troyes, scene of annual international trade fairs. He was no cloistered scholar unfamiliar with the world; his commentaries show a keen understanding of the science, medicine, technology, and the society of his times. There can be no doubt that Rashi and his fellow Jews were also on familiar terms with their Christian neighbors and their languages. His writings remain a major source of Old French to this day.

In early 1096, however, these secure conditions came to an abrupt end. Heeding the call of Pope Urban II for a military expedition to recover the Holy Land from the Muslims, crusader armies marched east. Stirred to religious fervor by itinerant preachers and led by violent and greedy men, some of the early and less organized bands decided that Jews, whom they regarded as Christ-killers, should suffer Christian vengeance. Beginning in May 1096, for nearly two months, these crusaders massacred the major Rhineland Jewish communities. The great centers of learning of Rashi's youth and early manhood were extinguished in an orgy of violence, with many Jews killing themselves and their families "*Al Kiddush Hashem*"--to sanctify God's name--a highly debatable act seemingly contrary to Jewish law. [9]

Many have wondered why Rashi himself, already famous, seemed to have written little about these events, although he would still live for almost a decade. Avraham Grossman, for example, concludes that Rashi had already finished his major works before 1096 and therefore altered them little, but Lipschutz found echoes of the event in Rashi's commentaries on Proverbs and Psalms; despite illness that forced him to dictate his answers, he was still composing responsa near the end of his life. [10] Others, notably Robert Chazan, argue that the Jews recovered quickly from the massacres which were perhaps not as significant in Jewish history as once thought, although it should be noted that Ashkenazi congregations still recite the *Av Harkhamim* ("Father of Mercies") prayer composed in memory of the victims of the First Crusade almost every Sabbath. [11] It is our view, however, that, when seen in the proper context, Rashi did write about the Crusade in his commentary and in his liturgical poetry more extensively than once thought. [12] Moreover, the legend that associates Rashi with the most famous of the First Crusaders, Godfrey of Bouillon, Duke of Lower Lorraine and conqueror of Jerusalem, may also be founded on historical events.

Specifically, Rashi's selection of the Midrash for the first commentary on Genesis was probably meant to refute the papal claims to the Holy Land that launched the Crusade. His choice of verses from Isaiah for his penitential elegy refers to historical events: Jewish wine cultivation, Crusader behavior, and Christian imagery. And the Godfrey legend may reflect an actual encounter with a powerful knight, if not Godfrey himself, to which was joined the story of the Crusaders' later defeat for the purpose of the moral theme, namely the triumph of the spiritually

powerful Jews over their physically powerful Christian oppressors.

In short, the Rashi who reveals in both his Biblical and Talmudic commentaries an intimate familiarity with the science, arts, medicine, and technology of his day, also spoke to the Jewish tragedy of his time, the massacres of the First Crusade.

Rashi in His Time: Biblical Commentary

Rashi's very first comment on the Torah is on the word *Breishit*. He quotes the Midrash *Tankhuma* to explain why God began the Bible with the account of creation rather than with the Commandments. The Midrash says that this is to answer the charge that the Jews are bandits (*listim*) who stole the Land of Israel. Because God created and owns the earth, He can assign any portion of it to whomever He wants. As a divine gift, the Land of Israel belongs to the Jews, and this is their irrevocable title. Thus, the very structure of the Bible testifies to Jewish rights to the Land of Israel.

Why would Rashi begin his commentary, which is otherwise dominated by an attempt to stay closely to the plain meaning of the text wherever possible, with this very defensive argument? [13] (The very next commentary of Rashi, *Breishit Bara*, for example, shows that the plain text cannot be in chronological order.) E. Touitou, citing the French writer D. Louys, suggests that the general historical context--the First Crusade--offers a possible answer. A closer reading of the details strengthens this view. [14] On November 27, 1095, at Clermont, some 200 miles from Rashi's town of Troyes, Pope Urban II called for a military expedition to recapture Jerusalem and the Holy Land from the Muslims. His speech, repeated subsequently at many locations in France, electrified the French nobility and common people, and his message spread into Germany and Italy as well.

There are several accounts of the Pope's words, all recollected some time after the event. They all stress the theme of "penitential war": a denunciation of the audience for its sins and a summons to repent through the recapture of the Holy City and the Holy Land. One account will suffice to catch the message:

Let hatred therefore depart from among you, let your quarrels end, let wars cease, and let all dissensions and controversies slumber. Enter upon the road to the Holy Sepulcher, wrest that land from the wicked race [Muslims], and subject it to yourselves. That land which, as the Scripture says, "floweth with milk and honey" was given by God into the power of the children of Israel. [The Church considered itself the "true" Israel.] Jerusalem is the center of the earth; the land is fruitful above all others, like another paradise of delights. This spot the Redeemer of mankind has made illustrious by His advent, has beautified by His sojourn, has consecrated by His passion, has redeemed by His death, has glorified by His burial. [15]

Rashi's comment on *Breishit* refutes this Christian claim to the Holy Land. At a time when both Christians and Muslims rooted their claims to the Holy Land in their most venerated "prophets"--Jesus and Muhammad--Rashi offers his Jewish readers a counterclaim rooted in the very creation of the world. It is couched in the best style of the time, for in an age that sought the answer to every question in Holy Writ, a scriptural citation was the ultimate authority and no citation could be better than the very first word in the Bible. (While this argument would not

necessarily have impressed Urban II, who might have replied that the "true Israel"--the Church--is the legate of Breishit as well, Rashi was writing for the Jews, not the Christians.) Thus the historic context--the First Crusade and the pope's call--may explain Rashi's choice of the *Tankhuma* to begin his commentary on *Breishit* that otherwise would appear to start naturally with his second comment on "*Breishit Bara*."

Three of Rashi's Biblical commentaries also apparently refer to the Crusade. Isaiah 53:9 reads: "*vayiten et reshaim kivro, v'et ashir bemotav, al lo khamas asa, velo mirma befiv.*" Rashi interprets this passage to mean: "He gave himself to all sorts of death, which were imposed on him [on the Jew] for his refusal to accept apostasy upon himself [conversion], to do evil deeds, or to deal with robbery as do the Gentiles surrounding him." Rashi cannot be talking about conversion in the time of Isaiah; he must be talking about the crusader massacres following the refusal of the Jews to adopt Christianity. [16] (There are several versions of Rashi's commentary to this verse, usually a sign of censorship.) Rashi says further that the Jew who refused conversion was buried in humiliating circumstances, such as a donkey's burial or inside dogs' intestines and all of it for his refusal to renounce his faith. The Hebrew accounts of the Crusader massacres all stress that the Jews were buried naked, an act that deprived the dead of their final dignity, i.e., they were interred the way one would bury an animal. A plausible reason for this nakedness is Christian revenge for the treatment of Jesus, who was stripped of his garments at the tenth station of the cross. [17]

In the Song of Songs (5:8-9) we read: "*hishba'ati etchem b'not Yerushalayim in timtzen et dodi...ma dodech midod...*" Rashi states that in the time to come, when every people will stand before God in judgment, the other nations will testify that Israel observed the Torah despite torments. In the next verse, Rashi makes the subject matter more precise, and his choice of words strongly suggests the Crusade. "They would be asking Israel: how is your God different from all other gods that you are willing to be burnt for him and to be crucified for him." [18] The Hebrew expression used here for crucifixion probably does not mean literally crucified, but killed by the cross, that is, by the Crusaders who signified their vocation by affixing a cloth cross to their garments. [19]

Finally, Leviticus 22:32 reads: "*Velo tekhalelu et skem kodski venikdashti betoch benai yisrael...*" [And you shall not profane My holy name so that I am sanctified among the people of Israel.] Rashi comments, "You should give yourself and sanctify My name; can that be done as an individual? [that would be considered suicide which is strictly prohibited] therefore we learn 'amongst the people of Israel' [that is it can be done only as a public communal act] and when you give yourself up to be killed [or to die] be aware that he who gives himself for death should not rely on miracles to be saved, because there may be no miracles, as we have seen in the case of Khananyia, Mishael, and Azariyia who did not give themselves up in order to be saved by miracles..." Rashi probably refers here to the Jews who committed suicide rather than undergo conversion, which was a marked and controversial aspect of Jewish behavior in the massacres of 1096. [29] Rashi again breaks with the plain meaning of the text, which as Ibn Ezra and others point out, seems to refer to the priests in the course of their duties.

Rashi's Liturgy

In a note to his critical editions of the Jewish sources for the First Crusade, Shlomo Eidelberg writes: "One wonders how it was that Rabbi Solomon Yitschaki (Rashi), perhaps the greatest of the medieval commentators, who in fact lived in northern France during the First Crusade, left behind no explicit mention of the 1096 persecutions." [21] Relying on a Hebrew article written in 1940 by I. F. Baer, Eidelberg agrees that there may be hints of the Crusade in Rashi's commentary on Isaiah 53:4,9. He also notes the "interesting legend" of the story connecting Rashi to Godfrey of Bouillon.

It can be argued, however, that Rashi *did* make explicit reference to the Crusaders--at least as explicit as he could under dangerous circumstances--in liturgical poetry lamenting the event. [22]

Put into the proper context of events, Rashi's *Selikhot* become clear. His selection of prophetic references served a double purpose: while obvious to his Jewish audience as a reference to Christian persecutions, the sources could always be "explained away" to Christians to mean the ancient enemies of the Jews rather than to constitute a direct and dangerous insult to Christianity.

There are seven known *piyutim* attributed to Rashi. [23] Two of these *piyutim* are found in the regular Ashkenazic *Selikhot* book. We will deal with the first *piyut* for the eve of Rosh Hashanah. In this poem (as in the others), Rashi uses the allegorical method to address the current crisis. Every metaphor contains a double meaning that his Jewish audience would understand. We reviewed several English translations of this *piyut* and found them inadequate. [24] We therefore provide here our own translation. The *piyut* is alphabetical, and the reference to the crusaders starts at the letter *kaf* (the eleventh letter).

"*KAF: kerem niteinu sigseg nitzanim, kasu fanav kharulim kimshonim.*" [Our planted vineyard which flourished with blossoms is now covered with nettles and thorns.] The vineyard is a traditional metaphor for the Jewish people (see Isaiah 5), but in this case it is even more specific to the Jews of northern France for many were in the vineyard business typical of this area. After lamenting the economic damage, Rashi introduces the catastrophe: "*LAMED: limudei hareva tzmudei khamanim, lokkhei shokhad rodfei shalmonim.*" [Men skilled in evil, devoted to sun worship, takers of bribes, pursuing pay-offs.] The apparently obscure reference to the sun-worship prohibition (Leviticus 26:30) may refer here to the traditional painting of Jesus, who is usually depicted with a bright, sun-shaped halo around his head, a common Christian motif derived in part from Matthew 17:2 and emphasized since the time of Constantine the Great, the first Christian emperor. [25] Rashi could thus derogate the Christians as idol worshippers in a way meaningful for his Jewish audience without running the risk of a direct public insult to Christianity. The rest of the metaphors could easily refer to the historical facts: the Crusaders who extorted money from the Jews of the Rhineland, such as Peter the Hermit and Godfrey, Duke of Lower Lorraine, and the burghers or other officials who failed in their duty to protect the Jews.

"*MEM: maher kilkalnu khupat khitunim, meaz kusagnu leakhor velo lefanim.*" [We have speedily ruined our marriage canopy, and since then we have moved backward instead of

forward.] Marriage canopy refers regularly to the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai (Taanit 26b), and this is celebrated on Shavuot. The slaughter of the Cologne Jews, the burning of the synagogue, and the desecration of the Torah scrolls began on Shavuot (May 30-31, 1096). As the Hebrew chronicle of the event notes, "On the very day it was given ... it [the Torah] was torn and burned. ..." [26] Thus Rashi talks about the Crusade in language clear to Jews of his time.

Another *piyut* signed in the acrostic of Rashi's name begins "O perfect Torah" and contains a brief history of Israel, stressing the high learning achieved by the Jews despite the troubles of exile. Israel's fidelity entitles it to plead metaphorically that the Torah itself intercede with the Almighty:

bakski elbon khasidaich / ushfichat dam limudaich

miyad benei znunim / machritei talmidaich

asker karu yeriotaich / veramsu otiyotaich

uvshetzuf ketzef/ hekherivu mishkenotaich

Demand revenge for the insult of your pious ones /
and the blood-letting of your scholars
at the hand of the illegitimates [Christians] /
the destroyers of your students
who tore the parchment [of the Torah scrolls] /
and stepped on its writing
and with great ferocity /
destroyed our sanctuary [27]

The poet asks God to avenge the acts of the First Crusaders, who, as noted by the Hebrew Chronicles, tore the Torah scrolls and killed the scholars. [28]

Av Harakhamim

The *Av Harakhamim* prayer, still recited most Sabbaths in Ashkenazi synagogues, has long been connected with the First Crusade. There is no doubt of the prayer's age: Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn (b. 1133) mentions it as a memorial to the terrible events of 1096. Significantly, Rabbi Ephraim notes that *Av Harakhamim* was recited only on the Sabbath between Passover and Shavuot, a traditional time of mourning for scholars (the plague that killed Rabbi Akiba's students) and coincidentally the period of the Crusader massacres. [29] Although apparently lacking direct reference to the events of 1096, this prayer, too, may be much more historically specific than once thought. Again, the choice of language is key. The martyrs are described as "swifter than eagles and stronger than lions in doing the will of their Creator"--perhaps a reference to the notable zeal for martyrdom as described by the Hebrew chroniclers. More indicative is the biblical verse chosen to call down God's vengeance on the oppressors of Jews.

Drawn from Deuteronomy 32:43, it reads literally, *Vechippar Admato Amo*, "And He shall atone, His land, His people." While Rashi did not write the *Av Harakhamim*, his interpretation of this verse was clearly preferred by the prayer's composer. Rashi translates the words to mean, "He shall make a reckoning for the troubles that happened to them and that the enemy did to them [land and people]." In choosing this meaning, Rashi sides with Rabbi Nokhemia in the *Sifrei*, who (unlike Rabbi Judah) interprets this verse to apply to other nations, not Israel.

The use of this phrase with its reference to crimes against both the Jews and the Holy Land is thus most appropriate in a prayer devoted to the memory of those murdered by the Crusaders.

Rashi and the Godfrey Story

We have one story of direct contact between the Crusaders and Rashi. According to the *Shalshet Hakabbala* (first edition: Venice, 1587) by Rabbi Gedaliah ben Yehye, a French nobleman named "Gottifrido of Bolyon," a "terrible man of war, a destructive man" heard of Rashi's wisdom ("for of him even the gentiles sought [advice]") and demanded his personal appearance. Rashi refused; the nobleman thereupon besieged his Beit Midrash only to find it empty; and Rashi appeared only on promise of safe conduct.

Announcing his purpose of seizing Jerusalem from the "Ishmaelites," the noble asks Rashi's counsel on the prospect of success. Rashi predicts that he will win the city for three days, then lose it on the fourth day, then return to "this city" with but three horses from all his host. The noble, greatly disturbed, swears that he will kill every Jew in France if Rashi's prophecy proves untrue. Four years later, the noble returns. All has been proven true except that he returns with four horses. As he hastens into the city to harm Rashi, the fourth horse and its rider are killed by a falling stone of the gate. When the noble seeks out Rashi to "bow down" before him in contrition, he discovers that Rashi has already passed away.

Overall, the story falls into what may be called the "revenge of the weak" genre, whereby the spiritually powerful Jewish *tsadik* overcomes the physically powerful Christian warrior. When the warrior, suitably humbled, wishes to "repent" for his arrogance, he is denied even this, for Rashi has already died. There are many such stories throughout Jewish history in Europe; among the most famous is the *Golem* attributed to the Maharal of Prague. Created through spiritual power, the *Golem* also humiliates the enemies of the Jews despite their superior strength.

Is there any truth to this story? Most have treated the tale as a legend. A French biographer of Rashi, Maurice Liber, wrote: "A favorite trick of the makers of legends is to connect their heroes with celebrated contemporaries." [30] Eli Yassif goes further "... the Godfrey legend cannot teach us anything about history, but it can teach us essential things about the mental history of the society which created and transmitted the legend." [31]

It does not help that the only written source of the story is the *Shalshet Hakabbala*--"The Chain of Tradition"--first published in Venice, 1587. Not only does the author repeat stories uncritically, but also the original printing job was botched, creating a whole new series of errors reprinted faithfully over fifteen subsequent editions or "corrected" in an attempt to resolve

puzzling statements. One reviewer of the work quipped that among historians it was known as "The Chain of Falsehoods" instead of "The Chain of Tradition." [32]

The most serious error in transmission, however, was probably committed by either the author or the first publisher, who noted after the story of Godfrey, "I have written a short version." An earlier copy was discovered by Samuel Wiener in the Baron Guenzburg collection (no. 652) in Moscow during the 1890s where it remains to this day. [33] Dr. Abraham David, who examined the copy, concluded, through a comparison of handwriting, that the manuscript's corrections were written by Gedaliah ben Yehye himself. [34] Dr. David was kind enough to send us a photocopy and transcript of the original. What follows then is our analysis based on the full text.

Unlike the shorter printed version, the manuscript adds several details that leave no doubt of the tale's familiarity with the historic Godfrey of Bouillon. He is described as "Lord of Provence and Lorraine and Anicho." Godfrey was Duke of Lower Lorraine; Provence was well south and not his domain, but the text may have originally read "the Province (rather than Provence) of Lorraine and Emicho." (Count Emich of Flonheim led the slaughter of the Rhineland Jews in May 1096.) [35] Moreover, Godfrey is identified as being of "royal descent" and, indeed, he was descended from Charlemagne on his mother's side. [36] His name "Godefrio" in the Hebrew long version is close enough to "Godefroi" in the Old French or Godefridus, which was engraved in Latin on his tombstone; the Italianate "Gotifrido" in the short version possibly reflects Gedaliah's long sojourn in Italy.

Although clearly a Sephardi, Gedaliah may have had an Ashkenazi source for the story. His father was a disciple of Rabbi Yehuda Mintz, chief Ashkenazi rabbi of the Italian town of Padua for 47 years. Rabbi Mintz, as his name suggests, must have had roots in Mainz. He lived nearly one hundred years (c. 1408-1508) and may very well have passed the Rashi story to Gedaliah's father.

The tale in its longer version declares "there was no general like him in his time," conforming to the duke's reputation as the peerless knight and fearless warrior. A tall man with a yellow beard, Godfrey certainly looked the part. His equestrian statue stands today in the Grand Place in Brussels, signifying his status as a Belgian national hero.

Godfrey had a tangled family background. His grandfather, known as Godfrey the Bearded, made a career of rebellion against the Holy Roman Emperor Henry III over possession of the Lower Lorraine, given to his younger brother. Godfrey of Bouillon, aged 15, received his claim to Lorraine (but not possession of it) by virtue of being adopted by his uncle, known as Godfrey the Hunchback, who was assassinated in February 1076 at age 35.

Moreover, Godfrey's universally acclaimed bravery was offset by suspect judgment and little administrative talent. He had not distinguished himself in running Lower Lorraine. The Duchy had been given to him in 1087 as an appointment rather than an inheritance by the Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV, but only after a convincing demonstration of his loyalty in Henry's Saxon wars and his support for the imperial cause against the Gregorian papacy. [37]

Other parts of the story also ring right. Rashi's refusal to leave Troyes "for Lorraine"

presumably deprived the duke of immediate power over his person. When, according to the fuller version, Godfrey descends on Troyes with an armed force, "all the Jews were in great distress and repeatedly fasted and prayed" as well they might at the approach of such a warlord. When the duke searches for Rashi, the language is obscure: "he ascended above in rooms within rooms" may refer to Rashi's hiding in the attic. His Beit Midrash, or study hall, probably a typically gabled house, could have had an upper chamber not easily accessible. He can see the duke but the duke cannot see him. The duke, in any event, attributes this to magic or "wisdom"; Rashi wisely refuses to appear except under safe conduct and then "comes down." After Rashi bows down, the duke "takes hold of him and stands him up" conforming to the protocol whereby a commoner could rise only if touched physically by the noble. When the duke asks Rashi whether he will succeed, Rashi's reply also suggests a subtle understanding of just what is asked of him, namely, a blessing: "My Lord, you have asked a very difficult question," that is, it will be very difficult of me to answer this with the reply you seek, leading Godfrey to promise him immunity once more.

So far, the story is plausible and the duke's purpose clear enough. A blessing from such an eminent rabbi could be used to raise funds from local Jewish communities, which Godfrey badly needed to finance his expedition. This technique had already been used by Peter the Hermit, who led one of the less disciplined Crusader armies. According to the Bar Simson chronicle, when he arrived in Trier he presented the Jews there with "a letter from the Jews of France saying that wherever the sole of his foot should tread passing through Jewish areas, he should be given provision for the journey...." [38] The Jews of Trier took their advice, and Peter did not bother them, although a mob later massacred the community, despite the objections of the local bishop.

Godfrey himself extorted money from the prosperous Jewish communities along the Rhine. The Hebrew chronicles of the massacres of 1096 tell us that the duke's crude threats to harm the Jews were parried when the Pamas of Mainz (Mayence), Rabbi Kalonymous ben Meshullam, wrote to Emperor Henry IV to restrain his noble; a large gift of silver was also conveyed to Godfrey. [39] The emperor issued strong instructions not to molest the Jews, and the duke claimed that he had never had any malice in mind. All this must have occurred between the pope's call for the Crusade in late November 1095 and April 1096, before the massacres. Rabbi Kalonymous, also the publisher of the prayer of Rabbi Amnon, *U'Netane Tokef* recited on the New Year, was killed or committed suicide after a later band of Crusaders led by Count Emicho slaughtered the Jews of Mainz in May. [40]

Could Godfrey have known Rashi or known of him? The answer is probably yes. Godfrey was a very busy fellow in the spring of 1096, selling property, borrowing money, and raising troops for his eventual departure on August 15 for the long road to Jerusalem and fame. [41] Still, it would not have been difficult for him to travel from Bouillon to Troyes, a four- or five-day ride, or to have stopped there on his way home from the Paris military conference in February 1096. Circumstantial evidence also makes it hard to isolate Rashi from the events and personalities of the Crusade. Troyes and its vicinity were a hotbed of Crusader activity. The Count of Boulogne, Godfrey's brother Eustace 11, and Robert of Flanders marched their forces near Troyes in 1096. Hugh of Troyes, count of Champagne, spent 1104--1108 in Jerusalem. Later he joined the Templar Order, headquartered on the Temple Mount, and had two close associates: Hugues of Payns, a village a kilometer from Troyes, and Godfrey of Saint Omer, a town in

Flanders. Both were celebrated veterans of the First Crusade. The count also had a close relationship with the founder of the abbey of Cîteaux, according to Stephen Harding, a distinguished student of the Hebrew text of the Bible, who consulted local rabbinical scholars. [42]

While Godfrey would have had good reason to want something from the famous Rabbi Solomon, it is not likely that the Duke himself directly accosted Rashi, especially with a strong military force. This would have been most offensive to the Count of Champagne; Troyes was his capital, and the Jews there enjoyed his protection. Two other possibilities are more plausible: first, that the Godfrey of the story was Godfrey of Esch-sur-Siire (Ascha), a noble knight in Bouillon's service known to have served as his envoy. [43] As a messenger he would be identified with his master and thus easily confused in the later retelling of the tale. A second choice might be Godfrey of Saint Omer, noted above, who left France with the Count of Champagne in 1104, while Rashi still lived, and returned in 1108 after Rashi died. He, too, might have been confused with the more famous Godfrey as time passed.

The full-length version of the story also describes Rashi as "close to their wise men and judges in France, who asked of him decisions in commercial law and the laws of women [family law?] which he answered so well that they wrote his judgments in his name in the "Litorai Publicho" [Italian for public record] in Paris." A record of Rashi's decisions in French civil law under his name seems highly unlikely and it was his grandson, Jacob ben Meir Tam (Rabbenu Tam), who was deeply involved in public affairs, including service to the French king. [44] It could refer to the later *Extractiones de Talmud*; a collection of Jewish interpretations of the Bible used in 1240-50 as part of the public disputations in Paris. In this collection, Rashi is often quoted directly as "Solomon of Troyes," although not approvingly; the text notes: "His body is buried with honor at Troyes and his soul is in the depths of hell.,, [45] Rashi's commentaries, possibly during his own lifetime, had become sources for those Christian scholars who preferred to study the Hebrew text of the Bible. [46]

Unfortunately, the credibility of the rest of the story dissolves when we examine two elements. First, the duke sketches out for Rashi not only the magnitude of his forces (100,000 knights) but details a line of march overland to the edge of Italy, whence the duke proposes to transport his army in 200 ships to Beirut, then to be reinforced by 10,000 cavalry in "Acra which is Ekron." Discounting the numbers (Godfrey probably had 1,500 knights and 10,000 troops, a large and expensive force for its day), this was not his line of march. He tramped overland, crossed the Danube and passed through Hungary, eventually transferring into Asia Minor at Constantinople with the aid of the Byzantine emperor. And Acre was not captured by the crusaders until 1110.

Second, the latter part of the story seems wholly made up. The four years of warfare, culminating in the loss of Acre (omitted in the shorter version) did not happen on Godfrey's watch. He died on July 18, 1100, in Jerusalem, almost five years before Rashi (July 13, 1105), and was buried in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, where his tomb could be seen until 1808, when a fire and the subsequent reconstruction obliterated it. [47] He never returned to France after leaving in August of 1096; he never lost his army; and above all, he never lost the Holy City.

The military details in the story, however, do bear a striking resemblance to the four years between 1187-1191, which began with the defeat of the Crusaders by Saladin at the Horns of Hittin, followed by the fall of Jerusalem and the eventual loss of Acre. The "Ishmaelite" army, as described in the story--Arabs, Egyptians, Mamluks "who are the soldiers of the Sultan, King of Egypt"--reinforces this impression. And the outcome suggests the campaign of Philip Augustus of France and Richard the Lion-Hearted of England in 1090--91. They marched overland to Messina ("the edge of Italy") and then moved by sea, eventually retaking Acre but never Jerusalem. [48]

This resemblance is strengthened even further by two other details. Richard was shipwrecked near Venice upon his return and held for ransom by the Holy Roman Emperor Henry VI; the story tells of the knight losing many men in a shipwreck (although he lands at Marseilles). And the Christian soldiers who defend Acre with "white crosses on dark clothes" may refer to English troops who adopted the white cross in 1188 to distinguish them from the French (red) and the Flemish (green). The story tells that these "mercenaries" change to black crosses on white garments when they go to defend the "city of Marish"--Maris, a fortress in the Christian kingdom of Cilician or "lesser" Armenia--"where they stood guard for many days." (The kingdom actually lasted from 1198 to 1375.) The cross, black on a white border, is the form adopted by the Brethren of the Teutonic Order, who traced their founding to the German hospital in Acre during the Third Crusade (1192).

Two historic episodes have apparently been combined. The first may reflect an actual incident during which Rashi successfully avoided Godfrey's demands--those of an emissary if not of the duke himself--yet no harm befell him, regarded by the storyteller as a miracle given the events of 1096. [49] The second, to judge from the military detail, is the actual defeat of the Crusader enterprise from 1187 to 1191, but joined retroactively to Rashi's story in order to "punish" Godfrey, the would-be extorter of the Jews. Whoever wrote the first part of the tale had a good grasp of the historic facts of Godfrey's character and family; whoever wrote the second part had a good grasp of the downfall of the Crusader Kingdom at the end of the twelfth century. As Godfrey's modern biographer wrote, "These chroniclers, in amplifying a basic statement, often suffer a lapse of memory and insert obvious errors or legendary additions." [50] As the Crusaders recaptured Jerusalem in 1229, which would surely not fit the theme of the story, it may be dated circa 1190-1200, with the first part perhaps circa 1100.

We conclude with the translation of the legend.

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NOTES

(1.) The authors wish to thank Edward Peters of the University of Pennsylvania, Robert Chazan of New York University, Jonathan Riley-Smith of the University of Cambridge, David Berger of Brooklyn College, and Joseph Davis of Gratz College for critiquing the manuscript.

Bridget Grimes also deserves credit for helping in both the research and the typing of the work. For an account of the setting of Rashi's world, see Robert Chazan, *European Jewry and the First Crusade* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), ch. 1.

(2.) A comprehensive account of Rashi and his thought may be found in Avraham Grossman, *Khachmei Tsarfat Ha'Rishonim* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1996). See also Maurice Liber, *Rashi*, translated by Adele Szold (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1938, first published 1906) and E. M. Lipschutz, *Raschi* (Warsaw: Verlag Tuschijah, 1912). Lipschutz's book was republished in *Sefer Rashi*, edited by Rabbi Y. L. Hachohen Maimon (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1957), and we have used this edition. Ezra Shereshevsky's, *Rashi: The Man and His World* (New York: Sepher-Hermon Press, 1982) relates Rashi's commentary extensively to the everyday life of his times. See especially pp. 155-241.

(3.) Liber, p. 125.

(4.) Lipschutz in *Sefer Rashi*, p. 180. See also Israel Elfenbein, *Teshuvot Rashi* (New York: Shulsinger Bros, 1943) pp. 188-189.

(5.) Lipschutz in *Sefer Rashi*, p. 177.

(6.) Lipschutz in *Sefer Rashi*, p. 175.

(7.) Liber, p. 60.

(8.) See the essay by Rabbi Zvi Pesach Frank, "Perushim Shonim be'perush Rashi," in *Sefer Rashi*.

(9.) See, for example, Avraham Grossman, "Roots of Kiddush Hashem in Early Ashkenaz," in *The Sanctity of Life and Anguish of the Soul: A Collection of Essays in Memory of Amir Yekutiel*, edited by Yeshayahu Gafni and Aviezer Ravitsky (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center for the History of Israel, 1992). Grossman cites Haim Soloveitchik, "Religious Law and Change: The Medieval Ashkenazic Example," *AJS Review* 12 (1987), who writes, inter alia, "The magnitude of this halakhic breach is enormous." Grossman argues, however, that the savants of Rashi's time gave great weight to the Aggadic sources of the Talmud on the issue of "active Kiddush Hashem," especially if the prospect was torture and conversion of children. He suggests that the history book known as Jossipon, then very highly regarded, may have influenced their decisions because of its account, based on Josephus, of the mass suicide on Masada. (The Franco-German Jews trace their origins to Italy and Palestine, not Babylonia.) The Hebrew chroniclers of the events state that the martyrs themselves invoked the example of Hanna and her seven sons (II Maccabees 7) to justify their actions. See A. M. Haberman, *Sefer Gezerot Ashkenaz Ve-Zarfat* (Jerusalem: Tarshish Books, 1945), p.34.

(10.) Grossman, p. 103. See Lipschutz, *Sefer Rashi*, p.285. Also see Shereshevsky, pp. 243-244 and note 1, pp. 244-245. See also S. Schwartzfuchs, "The Place of the Crusades in the Chronicles of Israel," in *Culture and Society in Medieval Jewish History: A Collection of Essays in Memory of C. H. Ben Sasson*, edited by R. Bonfil, M. Ben Sasson, and Y. Hakak (Jerusalem: Merkaz Zalman Shazar letoldot Yisra'el, 1991), pp. 251-267.

(11.) Chazan, p. 145.

(12.) Rashi also authored numerous legal responsa, but the historical circumstances of these materials are very vague. Elfenbein, pp. 89, 245, suggests two responsa related to the First Crusade.

(13.) Many have wrestled with this issue, including Maharal of Prague, who in his Gur Arye Commentary on Rashi argues that Rashi was emphasizing a "model" of Creation: the subsequent commandments could only be properly fulfilled when the Jews possessed Israel, a concept related to the Kabbalistic notion of the Holy Vessels conveying the divine emanations. Yosepha Rakhman in *Agadat Rashi* (M. Mizrahi, 1991) notes that Rashi modifies and adds to the Tankhuma (and Breishit Rabba, a secondary source) to connect political change to God's will. See pp. 156-157.

(14.) See E. Touitou, "The Historical Context of Rashi's Commentary on The Book of Genesis," in *Rashi: Iyunim Be Yetzirato*, edited by Zvi A. Steinfeld (Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University, 1993), p. 102. Touitou cites D. Louys, who was the first to make this connection in an essay, "En Lisant Rashi: Le Conflit Judeo-Arabe" (Reading Rashi: The Judeo-Arab Conflict in Vav: Revue du dialogue (Paris: 1969), pp. 22-24.

(15.) Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusades 1095-1131* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 49, 60-64.

(16.) Saul Kleiman, *Likutei Rashi* (Kansas City: 1942) p. 38, note 15, credits R. Abraham Berliner with the discovery of the connection between this Rashi commentary and the First Crusade. Joel E. Rembaum argues that Rashi's interpretation to Isaiah 53 was written after the massacre of the First Crusade, with two purposes in mind: (1) to refute the Christian claim that Jesus was the Servant of God, and, (2) to comfort Jewish readers with the knowledge that the Jews' suffering served a sacred function. See *Harvard Theological Review* 75:3 (1982). Our thanks to Dr. David Berger for pointing out this source to us.

(17.) See Chazan, pp. 231, 238, 239, 245, 258, 266, 267. The "nakedness" of the dead is stressed in eight places by the Hebrew sources. See Matthew 27:35, John 19:23, and Mark 15:24. See the recording of the stripping of the Jewish martyrs in Haberman, *Sefer Gezerot Ashkenaz Ve-Zarfat*, pp. 25, 33, 34, 39, 62, 63, 68, 74, 87, 95, 96, 97, 101, 102.

(18.) All Rashi translations are by the authors

(19.) Riley-Smith.

(20.) Rashi's source here is the *Sifrei*, which in turn duplicates some of the Talmudic discussion in Sanhedrin 74b. This discussion refers to circumstances when the Jew is threatened with death unless he commits a prohibited act. In general, the Talmud concludes that unless the acts are idol worship, murder, or sexual abuses, the Jew should violate the commandments rather than die. But "in the time of conversions," even minor "negative commandments" should not be violated. Sacrificing oneself in this way qualifies as "sanctification of the name" only if done in public, i.e., with at least ten fellow Jews. In 1096, as noted earlier, many Jews did commit suicide

rather than be baptized: some also killed their wives and children, often done in imitation of the Temple sacrifices. This "active sanctification" contrasts sharply with the passivity reflected in the Talmudic discussions. The Hebrew chronicles of the martyrs also cite the example of Khananya, Mishael, and Azariya, aligning their actions with Biblical precedent See Haberman, *Sefer Gezerot Ashkenaz Ve-Zarfat*, pp. 31,39.

(21.) Shlomo Eidelberg, ed. and transl., *The Jews and the Crusaders: The Hebrew Chronicles of the First and Second Crusades* (Madison : University of Wisconsin Press, 1977), p. 166, note 3.

(22.) A list of such poems was compiled by the German-Jewish historian Leopold Zunz in 1885. One of these pieces, "*Yitnem Lekherpal Ve'Liklala*," is full of violent curses against Edom, Ishmael, and the army of Rome, a clear reference to the Crusade. While at least three sources attribute this to Rashi, we would agree with Grossman that neither style nor circumstances suggest Rashi as the author. See Grossman, *Khachmei Tsarfat Ha'Rishonim*, pp. 142-145.

(23.) See A. M. Haberman, "Piyutei Rashi" in *Sefer Rashi*, p. 592.

(24.) *The Complete Artscroll Selichos*, translated by Yaakov Lavon (New York: Mesorah Publications Ltd., 1993), P. 294; *The Metsudah Selichos*, translated and annotated by Rabbi Avrohom Davis (New York: Metsudah Publications, 1986), p. 300; *Selichot*, translated and annotated by Rabbi Abraham Rosenfeld (New York: Judaica Press, 1984), p. 136.

(25.) See *Catholic Encyclopedia*, 1911, vol. XI, pp.80-81; Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (New York: Viking, 1986) p.575; and Elaine Magalis, *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 10, 1987, p.446. For examples of early "halo" paintings, see Tim Porter, *Prague: Art and History* (Prague: Flow East Limited, 1991) p. 89.

(26.) Translated by Robert Chazan, *European Jewry and the First Crusade*, p. 274.

(27.) *Sefer Rashi*. Piyut 6. Also cited by Grossman, *Khachmei Tsarfat Ha'Rishonim*, pp. 248-249, as relating to the events of 1096.

(28.) See Haberman, *Sefer Gezerot Ashkenaz Ve-Zarfat*, p.36 et passim. The reference to Christians as "*bnei znunim*" (illegitimates) refers to Mary, mother of Jesus, who was impregnated by someone other than her husband Joseph--an insult found throughout the Jewish Chronicles.

(29.) Efraim E. Urbach, *Sefer Arugat Habosem*, vol. IV (Jerusalem: Mekize Nirdamim, 1963), p.49 and note 51 there.

(30.) Liber, p. 69.

(31.) Eli Yassif, "Rash Legends and Medieval Popular Culture" in *Rashi 1040-1990, Hommage à Ephraim E. Urbach*, edited by Gabrielle Sed-Rajna (Paris: Les Editeurs du Cerf, 1993), p. 489.

(32.) The Godfrey story shared in these misfortunes. In *Seder Hadorot* (1769) by R. Yehiel Heilprin (1660-1746) of Minsk, we find "Gottfrido" summoning Rashi to "Vienne" (Vienna? Vienne? A city in South East France); another edition has Worms as the location,

according better with the Duke of Lower Lorraine, whose territory lay well to the north rather than the south. Another copyist, unfamiliar with "Boulyon" decided that it was an abbreviation; his version reads "*Godfredo b'lashon Yavan*" (Godfrey in the Greek language!).

(33.) See S. Wiener, *Da'at Kedoshim* (St. Petersburg, Russia: J. Berman and Co., 1897-98), p. 46. Wiener notes that the second edition made matters even worse, and despite the author's good intentions, "This [lame] calf came out... to the distress of all scholars of Jewish studies,... for it is one of the few sources...."

(34.) The preface to David's 1976 dissertation, translated into French, may be found in the *Revue d'Etudes Juives* (Louvain: Editions Peeters, 1994), Janvier-Juin, NE CLIII, fascicules 1-2, pp. 101-132. Dr. David's conclusions about the manuscript's corrections were communicated to us by letter.

(35.) Wiener, p. 145. Professor Riley-Smith wrote to us that the "weight of opinion now is that the noble concerned was Count Emich of Flonheim," not the usual Leiningen (letter to author, June 22, 1998).

(36.) See Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, Vol. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) pp. 137-138.

(37.) Runciman, pp. 145-146. See also John C. Andressohn, *The Ancestry and Life of Godfrey of Bouillon* (Bloomington: Indiana University Publications, Social Sciences Series, No. 5, 1947) for a good account of Godfrey's relationships. Anderssohn concludes that overall "the position of duke of Lower Lorraine seems to have become relatively unimportant" (p. 47).

(38.) Eidelberg, p. 62.

(39.) Related in the chronicle of Solomon Bar Simson, translated by Shlomo Eidelberg in *The Jews and the Crusaders*, pp. 24-25. This account is based on the earliest extant manuscript, 1453.

(40.) For an account of this prayer, see Philip Birnbaum, ed. and transl., *The High Holy Day Prayer Book* (New York: Hebrew Publishing Co., 1951), pp. 259-260. In the story behind the prayer, Rabbi Amnon displays an extreme sensitivity to even the appearance that he might be thinking about conversion, and this reflects the attitude of Rabbi Kalonymous and other Jews who committed suicide in 1096.

(41.) Riley-Smith, pp. 127-128.

(42.) William of Tyre, writing in the 1160s, describes Hugues and Godfrey as "venerable." Hugues was then 48. Quoted in Alain Demurger, *Vie et Mort: L'Ordre du Temple* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1985). See also Michel Lamy, *Les Templiers* (Bordeaux: Auberon, 1994), pp. 23-25 on Count Hugo and Harding.

(43.) See Andressohn for Godfrey of Ascha, p. 47 et passim, and Riley-Smith, p. 209.

(44.) Shereshevsky, p. 23.

(45.) *Herman Hailperin, Rashi and the Christian Scholars* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1963), p. 117.

(46.) Hailperin, p. 111 et passim. Such luminaries as Hugo of St. Victor (1097-1141) and the English scholar Herbert of Bosham (d. circa 1190) were clearly familiar with Rashi; Herbert quoted him directly. Peter Comestor, a leading scholar of biblical studies (d.c. 1178) was canon and dean of St. Peter's Cathedral in Troyes.

(47.) Andressohn reproduces a drawing of the tomb, next to that of his brother and successor Baldwin, on p. 121. The tomb bore these words (in Latin): "Here lies the renowned Godfrey of Bouillon, who brought this whole region under Christian sway. May his soul rest with Christ. Amen."

(48.) See the translation of the Guenzburg Manuscript #652 at the end of the article. See also Map II following the notes, which highlights the movement of Godfrey's forces in 1096.

(49.) Rashi's grandson, however, was not so fortunate. According to *Sefer Zechira*, the Book of Remembrance by Rabbi Ephraim of Bonn (1133-1196?), Rabbenu Tam was seized and beaten at home by Crusaders on the second day of *Shavuot* (c. 1147, the Second Crusade) in the town of Rameru, not far from Troyes. He suffered five wounds to the head and would have been killed if an "eminent nobleman" had not ridden upon the scene and saved him. See Eidelberg, pp. 130-131.

(50.) Andressohn, p. 37.

English Translation of the Godfrey Legend as Found in the Guenzburg Manuscript #652

Translated by Harvey Sicherman & Gilad J. Gevaryahu

And there I saw also that once there was in France a nobleman of royal descent and he was Lord of Provence, Lorraine, and Anico, and his name was Grofirido Bouillon, a hero and warrior. There was no general like him in his time, a master of stratagems, cruel, and destructive.

And he heard of Rashi, that he was a great, wise man well known by Gentile scholars and judges in France. They used to ask Rashi for his opinion on monetary matters and marital law, and he used to reply in such an erudite manner that they would record his judgments in his name in the public record in Paris. Rashi was regarded by the people as a wise man, like a prophet, and this nobleman was very careful because of Rashi's reputation. He sent for him from Lorraine.

Rashi refused to go, because he knew for sure that his intention was to harm him. The nobleman became angry and said, "If so, I will go to him," and he rode with all his soldiers and went to Troyes and the Jews there were in great distress and repeatedly fasted and prayed. The nobleman came to Rashi's house, he himself, and he [Rashi] ascended to a hidden place, [*] until he reached the Beit Midrash. He found all the gates opened and the books open within the Midrash but he saw no one.

He went out of the Beit Midrash, and called "Shlomo, Shlomo," and Rashi responded, "My lord?" He asked, "Where are you?" and Rashi replied, "Here I am." The voice was coming out of the Beit Midrash, and Rashi saw, but was not seen by him. And the nobleman repeated his call in the Midrash, asking, "Where are you?" and he replied, "Here I am," but he could not see him.

Then the nobleman wondered about this. He left the Beit Midrash and asked "Is there a Jew here?" And he answered "yes" and one of Rashi's students came before him. So the nobleman said to the student, "Tell the rabbi that he should come to me, and I guarantee him on my life that he should not be afraid." The student went and told the rabbi, and Rashi came down to the nobleman and bowed down before him.

The noble took hold of him, stood him up, and said, "Now I see your great wisdom and acknowledge it. Therefore it is my will that you advise me on a great thing which I intend to do." Rashi said, "Ask, my lord." The noble said, "Here I have prepared one hundred thousand horses and two hundred great ships, and I want to go overland to the edge of Italy by horse and chariot, and from there go on the ships to Beirut. From there I will go on and capture Jerusalem, and this is quite feasible because the Ishmaelites are not warriors. And also Acre, which is Ekron, where there are 10,000 cavalry ready to help us. Tell me if I will be successful on this path." Rashi responded, saying, "My Lord, you have asked a very difficult question." The nobleman said, "Make your opinion known to me and do not be afraid." Then Rashi said, "You will go, capture Jerusalem, reign over it for three days, and on the fourth day, the Ishmaelites will drive you out, and you will escape and come back to this city with three horses." The noble was very much upset, and he said, "Perhaps what you have said is true, but if I come back with four horses, I will feed your flesh to the dogs, and I will kill all the Jews of France."

And Rashi said, "It will be that you will come back alive and well, and there will be with you three horses, with your own." The noble went on his way, accomplished exactly what he planned, captured all these kingdoms, and stood in Jerusalem for three days. On the fourth day came a huge army of Arabs, Egyptians, and Mamelukes, the warriors of the Sultan, the king of Egypt. They found them complacent. And they smote them and chased them away from Jerusalem. And the troops of the noble held onto townships around Jerusalem, and fought against the Ishmaelites for many days. And that war continued for four years. And the troops of the noble lost the town of Acre. And the mercenaries that were at that place were dressed in white clothes with a black cross on them. And when they left the city and went to guard the city of Maris(h), they were dressed in black clothes with a white sign on them, and there they stood as a garrison for many days. And the nobleman escaped on one ship to Marseilles.

Many men died on this ship during a storm, and nothing was left with the nobleman except four horses, not including his own. When he was on the shore, he and his three friends rode their horses and entered the kingdom. He remembered what Rashi said, and he intended to harm him. God, however, confounded his plan, for as he entered the gate, a stone fell from the lintel of the gate onto the head of one of the horses, and it died there.

The noble was startled, and said, "So let the matter be known that the words of the Jew

were correct." He went to Rashi and he found that Rashi had passed away to eternal life. And he greatly mourned him.

To this point is what I found.

(*) The text here is muddled. It probably should read that *Rashi* ascended to a hidden place, i.e., hid himself in an upper part of the building, which then makes sense of the line in the next paragraph, "And Rashi came down." The literal expression "rooms within rooms" means a hidden place. See I Kings 22:25, "... you will enter a room within rooms to hide." See also for example Babylonian Talmud, Brachot 10a and Shabbat 146b.

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His commentaries are still important in Jewish life. Rashi was born Shelomoh Yitzhaki in Troyes, France. A legend tells that his father cast a precious gem into the sea rather than surrender it to Christians who desired it for idolatrous purposes. A heavenly voice then foretold the birth of a son who would enlighten the world with his wisdom. It is also related that his mother was imperiled in a narrow street during her pregnancy. Rashi's last years were aggrieved by the massacres committed at the outset of the First Crusade (1095-96), in which he lost relatives and friends. Tradition relates that he foretold the defeat of the expedition of Godfrey of Bouillon, correctly predicting that Godfrey would return to his native city with only three horses remaining from his entire massive army. The First Crusade - Amazing 1st Crusade - Learn about Holy Wars, The Holy Lance, Bohemond and 'The First Crusade'. Discover the History of the 1st Crusades to capture the Holy Lands. There were many Crusades to re-capture the Holy Lands over many centuries and the First Crusade would be one of the most successful of them all. The First Crusade would be led by important Nobles from across Europe and not by Kings as was the case in many of the other Crusades of the Middle Ages. Legend has it that in a particularly bad point of the battle for the crusader armies the holy lance that pierced the body of Jesus when he was crucified was found. This was considered to be a miracle among the Christian troops and this renewed and strengthened their resolve to win the battle. The First Crusade (1095-1102 CE) was a military campaign by western European forces to recapture Jerusalem and the Holy Land from Muslim control. Conceived by Pope Urban II following an appeal from the Byzantine emperor Alexios I Komnenos, around 60,000 soldiers and at least half again of non-combatants set off on their quest. After campaigns in Asia Minor and the Middle East, great cities such as Nicaea and Antioch were recaptured and then, on 15 July 1099 CE, Jerusalem itself. Many more crusades would follow, objectives would widen, as would the field of conflict, so that even Constantinople. Rashi and the First Crusade: Commentary, liturgy, legend (Medieval Franco-German Jewry and the Godfr March 1999. Judaism. H. Sicherman. The outraged response, particularly among humanists, to reports of Ottoman atrocities against a civilian population was arguably the first time in modern history that commentators took so strong and unified a stance on the unnecessary abuses of war. To assess the impact of this [Show full abstract] moment, this chapter asks how 1453 and responses to it compared to earlier and contemporary attacks on non-combatants in wartime in both Europe and the crusades. It also asks what impact this collective outcry may have had upon early concepts of restraint in war and human rights, with a focus on - Harvey Sicherman, Gilad J. Gevanyahu, "Rashi and the First Crusade: Commentary, Liturgy, Legend", in: Judaism 48.2 (1999), pp. 181-197. - B. Barry Levy, "Rashi's Commentary on the Torah: A Survey of Recent Publications", in: Tradition 23.4 (1988), pp. 102-116. - Deborah Abecassis, Reconstructing Rashi's Commentary on Genesis from Citations in the Torah Commentaries of the Tosafot, Ph.D. dissertation, McGill University, Montreal 1999, pp. 1-52 ; 211-216. - Nahum M. Sarna, "Rashi the Commentator", in: Nahum M. Sarna, Studies in Biblical Interpretation, JPS, Philadelphia 2000, pp. 127-137