

GLOSSA ORDINARIA AND GLOSSA HEBRAICA MIDRASH IN RASHI AND THE GLOSS

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*An assiduous interest in the plain sense of Scripture and shared interpretations of particular biblical passages can be observed in certain twelfth-century Jewish and Christian commentaries composed in northern France. While Hugh of Saint Victor and Rashbam engaged in independent endeavors to shed light on the *sensus literalis* and the *peshat* of Scripture, Andrew of Saint Victor attributed his knowledge of particular rabbinic interpretations to encounters with contemporary Jews. Yet points of convergence in Jewish and Christian exegesis can be observed even before the work of the Victorines and Rashi's disciples. The purpose of this study is to examine the midrashic interpretations transmitted in northern France around the beginning of the twelfth century in both the *Glossa Ordinaria* and Rashi's biblical commentaries. Interpretations are found in both corpora on occasions when their late-antique sources, such as *Midrash Genesis Rabba* and Jerome's *Hebrew Questions on Genesis*, themselves transmit similar insights. By analyzing an exposition found in both Rashi and the *Glossa*, the narrative of Abraham in the fiery furnace, this study seeks to clarify the nature and extent of this relationship. It thereby enables a more detailed understanding of the ways that midrash reached twelfth-century Jews and Christians and of how Rashi and the *Glossa* ensured the wide dissemination of these interpretations.*

An assiduous interest in the plain sense of Scripture and similar interpretations of particular biblical passages were shared by Jews and Christians in northern France in the mid-twelfth century. For instance, as Hugh of Saint Victor (d. 1141) was shedding light on the *sensus literalis* of Scripture, Rashbam (Samuel ben Meir, ca. 1085–1174) engaged in his parallel endeavor to reveal its “plain meaning” or *peshat*.¹ And Hugh's pupil Andrew of Saint Victor (d. 1175), in his Old Testament commentaries, attributed his knowledge of particular rabbinic interpretations to discussions with contemporary Jews.² Yet points of convergence between Jewish

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¹ Sarah Kamin, “Affinities between Jewish and Christian Exegesis in Twelfth-Century Northern France,” in *Jews and Christians Interpret the Bible*, 2nd ed. (Jerusalem, 2008), xxi–xxxv; Michael Signer, “*Peshat*, *Sensus Litteralis*, and Sequential Narrative: Jewish Exegesis and the School of St. Victor in the Twelfth-Century,” in *The Frank Talmage Memorial Volume*, ed. Barry Walfish, 2 vols. (Haifa, 1993), 1:203–16.

² Frans van Liere, “Andrew of Saint Victor, Jerome, and the Jews,” in *Scripture and Pluralism: Reading the Bible in the Religiously Plural Worlds of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*,

and Christian exegesis in northern France can be observed even before the commentaries of the Victorines and Rashi's disciples. The purpose of this study is to examine the midrashic interpretations transmitted at the beginning of the twelfth century in the *Glossa Ordinaria* and in Rashi's biblical commentaries. The affinities between these corpora are of interest because they both emerged in northern France at a similar time³ and because they attained unrivaled popularity among medieval Christian and Jewish exegetical works.⁴ Similarities between the two have been highlighted in the studies of Herman Hailperin and Devorah Schoenfeld,⁵ but the extent and significance of the overlap await a full examination. In order to consider how midrash circulated among twelfth-century Jews and Christians in France, therefore, we will first introduce the *Gloss* and Rashi's *Commentary* and then analyze an exposition they hold in common, namely, the account of Abraham in the fiery furnace.

The *Glossa Ordinaria* had its origins at the beginning of the twelfth century in the teaching of masters Anselm (d. 1117) and Ralph (d. ca. 1133) at the cathedral

ed. Thomas Heffernan and Thomas Burman (Leiden, 2005), 67–70; Rainer Berndt, "The School of St. Victor in Paris," in *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament*, ed. Magne Sæbo, vol. 1, pt. 2, *From the Beginnings to the Middle Ages: The Middle Ages* (Göttingen, 2000), 479–84, 486–89; Anna Sapir Abulafia, *Christians and Jews in the Twelfth-Century Renaissance* (London, 1995), 94; Beryl Smalley, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, 1983), 123, 126, 154–72; Chen Merchavia, *The Church versus Talmudic and Midrashic Literature* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1970), 161.

³ In her study of the literal interpretation of the Song of Songs, Mary Dove estimated that only twenty years separated the composition of the *Gloss* (ca. 1110–20) and Rashi's *Commentary* on this book. Mary Dove, "Literal Senses in the Song of Songs," in *Nicholas of Lyra: The Senses of Scripture*, ed. Philip Krey and Lesley Smith (Leiden, 2000), 138; eadem, "Introduction," in *Glossa Ordinaria Pars 22: In Canticum Cantorum*, CCM 170 (Turnhout, 1997), 38–39.

⁴ An obvious point of comparison is the layout of the *Gloss* and of the Rabbinic Bible (*Mikra'ot Gedolot*), in which the Hebrew text is surrounded by medieval commentaries, though this study has yielded differing results. Colette Sirat stated that Jewish scribes saw and imitated Christian glossed books while Frans van Liere has suggested that it was the printed Rabbinic Bible that imitated the *Gloss*. David Salomon has asserted that the *Gloss* layout was derived from that of the Babylonian Talmud. The studies of Malachi Beit-Arié, Guy Lobrichon, and E. Ann Matter suggest greater caution in this comparative study. Colette Sirat, *Hebrew Manuscripts of the Middle Ages*, trans. Nicholas de Lange (Cambridge, 2002), 129; Frans van Liere, *An Introduction to the Medieval Bible* (Cambridge, 2014), 49–50; David Salomon, *An Introduction to the Glossa Ordinaria as Medieval Hypertext* (Cardiff, 2012), 43; Malachi Beit-Arié, *Hebrew Manuscripts of East and West: Towards a Comparative Codicology* (London, 1993), 95; Guy Lobrichon, "Une nouveauté: les gloses de la Bible," in *Le Moyen Âge et la Bible*, ed. Pierre Riché and Guy Lobrichon (Paris, 1984), 98; E. Ann Matter, "The Bible in the Center: The *Glossa Ordinaria*," in *The Unbounded Community: Papers in Christian Ecumenism in Honor of Jaroslav Pelikan*, ed. William Caferro and Duncan G. Fisher (London, 1996), 38.

⁵ Herman Hailperin, *Rashi and the Christian Scholars* (Pittsburgh, 1963), 144; Devorah Schoenfeld, *Isaac on Jewish and Christian Altars: Polemic and Exegesis in Rashi and the Glossa Ordinaria* (New York, 2013), 71–76.

school of Laon, and of their pupil or colleague Gilbert of Auxerre (d. 1134).⁶ It presents the text of the Vulgate together with interlinear and marginal glosses excerpted from the writings of patristic and Carolingian exegetes — Augustine, Jerome, Isidore of Seville, Rabanus Maurus, and many others. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, it was often simply called *Glossa*, “the Gloss,” further qualification being unnecessary for a standard teaching text and reference work.⁷ It reached the height of its popularity by the mid-thirteenth century,⁸ and later commentators interpreted and elaborated what they received as the *Glossa Ordinaria*, the canonical “Ordinary Gloss” on the Old and New Testaments.⁹ An estimated 2000 manuscripts of parts of the *Gloss* are extant, and it has appropriately been described by Lesley Smith as the “ubiquitous text of the central Middle Ages.”¹⁰

Among Jewish exegetical works, it was the *Commentary* of Rashi, Solomon ben Isaac, that attained such starry heights. Composed in Troyes around the end of the eleventh century,¹¹ it covers the entire Hebrew Bible with the possible

⁶ Lesley Smith, *The Glossa Ordinaria: The Making of a Medieval Bible Commentary* (Leiden, 2009), 17–38; eadem, “The Glossed Bible,” in *The New Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2, *From 600 to 1450*, ed. Richard Marsden and E. Ann Matter (Cambridge, 2012), 363–79. Alexander Andréé has questioned the authorship of books of the *Gloss* attributed to Anselm, suggesting that Anselm may have composed continuous commentaries that were transformed by his pupils and successors into glossed biblical texts. Alexander Andréé, “Anselm of Laon Unveiled: The *Glosae super Iohannem* and the Origins of the *Glossa Ordinaria* on the Bible,” *Mediaeval Studies* 73 (2011): 217–60, at 250; idem, “Laon Revisited: Master Anselm and the Creation of a Theological School in the Twelfth Century,” *Journal of Medieval Latin* 22 (2012): 257–81, at 274.

⁷ On the use of the *Gloss* as a teaching text, see the article of Alexander Andréé in this volume. See further Smalley, *Study*, 56; Smith, *Glossa Ordinaria*, 193–228 (particularly 207).

⁸ *Ibid.*, 1; Margaret Gibson, “The Twelfth-Century Glossed Bible,” *Studia Patristica* 23 (1989): 232–44, at 244.

⁹ Beryl Smalley, “*Glossa ordinaria*,” in *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, ed. Gerhard Müller, 13 (Berlin, 1984), 452–57; Guy Lobrichon, “Une nouveauté,” 101–3. On the meaning of the title *Glossa Ordinaria*, see Karlfried Froehlich, “The Shaping of the Biblical *Glossa Ordinaria*,” in *Biblical Interpretation from the Church Fathers to the Reformation* (Farnham, 2010), art. 3, pp. 9–10; idem, “The *Glossa Ordinaria* and Medieval Preaching,” *ibid.*, art. 4, pp. 2–3; Lobrichon, “Une nouveauté,” 96–97; Alexander Andréé, *Gilbertus Universalis: Glossa Ordinaria in Lamentationes Ieremie Prophete* (Stockholm, 2005), 8–9; Smalley, *Study*, 51–57; Smith, *Glossa Ordinaria*, 5.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 1; the *Gloss* is described as the “twelfth-century bestseller” in C. F. R. de Hamel, *Glossed Books of the Bible and Origins of the Paris Book Trade* (Woodbridge, 1984), 9; cf. Mark Zier, “The Development of the *Glossa Ordinaria* to the Bible in the Thirteenth Century: The Evidence from the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris,” in *La Bibbia del XIII Secolo: Storia del Testo, Storia dell’Esegesi*, ed. Giuseppe Cremscoli and Francesco Santi (Florence, 2004), 156.

¹¹ Benjamin Gelles, *Peshat and Derash in the Exegesis of Rashi* (Leiden, 1981), 139–43.

exceptions of Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles.¹² The importance of the commentary was such that, in the thirteenth century, Moses of Coucy ruled that the talmudic obligation to study the weekly Torah reading twice in Hebrew and once in Aramaic could be fulfilled instead by studying the Hebrew with Rashi. This endowed his interpretations with a unique prestige; no other commentary was a permitted alternative to the Targum.¹³ Rashi's commentary was also of great importance to Christian scholars of the Old Testament, including Herbert of Bosham and Nicholas of Lyra, for whom it was a primary source of rabbinic interpretations.¹⁴ The extensive dissemination and study of his work is borne out by the many surviving manuscripts, over 700 whole or partial codices,¹⁵ and by the composition of numerous supercommentaries to guide readers.¹⁶ While

¹² The comments attributed to Rashi on these books, and also on the last chapters of Job (40:25 to the end), are pseudepigraphous. Avraham Grossman, *Rashi*, trans. Joel Linsider (Oxford, 2012), 74.

¹³ "Shenayim mikra ve-'ehad targum," "Bible twice and Targum once." See Grossman, *Rashi*, 106–7; idem, *The Early Sages of France* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 2001), 213–15; idem, "The School of Literal Interpretation in Northern France," in *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament*, vol. 1, pt. 2, *Middle Ages* (n. 2 above), 344; Jordan Penkower, "The Canonization of Rashi's Commentary on the Pentateuch" [in Hebrew], in *Study and Knowledge in Jewish Thought*, ed. Howard Kreisel (Beer-Sheva, 2006), 126–28; Avraham Gross, "Spanish Jewry and Rashi's Commentary on the Pentateuch" [in Hebrew], in *Rashi Studies*, ed. Zvi Arie Steinfeld (Ramat-Gan, 1993), 37–39; Yosi Peretz, "Shenayim Mikra ve-'Ehad Targum" [in Hebrew], *Talelei 'Orot* 14 (2008): 53–62. Manuscripts and printed books that present the biblical text alongside Rashi facilitate this study. For instance, in MS Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek Cod. Hebr. 12a (Ashkenaz, 1402–3?), the biblical text alternates verse by verse with Rashi's commentary. See Sarit Shalev-Eyni, *Jews among Christians: Hebrew Book Illumination from Lake Constance* (London, 2010), 9–10.

¹⁴ On Herbert of Bosham and Nicholas of Lyra, see Eva de Visscher, *Reading the Rabbis: Christian Hebraism in the Works of Herbert of Bosham* (Leiden, 2014), 81–105; Deborah Goodwin, *Take Hold of the Robe of a Jew: Herbert of Bosham's Christian Hebraism* (Leiden, 2006), 139–41, 169–226; Deana Klepper, *The Insight of Unbelievers: Nicholas of Lyra and Christian Reading of Jewish Text in the Later Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 2007), 48–52; Frans van Liere, "The Literal Sense of the Books of Samuel and Kings: From Andrew of St Victor to Nicholas of Lyra," in *Nicholas of Lyra: The Senses of Scripture* (n. 3 above), 59–81; and Hailperin, *Rashi*, 137–246.

¹⁵ According to Ariel Danan; cited in Sirat, *Hebrew Manuscripts* (n. 4 above), 57; D.-S. Blondheim, "Liste des manuscrits des commentaires bibliques de Raschi," *Revue des études juives* 91 (1931): 71–101, 155–74.

¹⁶ According to Grossman's estimate, there are over 150 supercommentaries on Rashi on the Torah. Krieger lists 380 printed supercommentaries; Freimann lists 134 manuscripts. Grossman, "The School," 344; Pinchus Krieger, *Parshan-Data: Supercommentaries on Rashi's Commentary on the Pentateuch* [in Hebrew] (New York, 2005), 1–194; Aron Freimann, "Manuscript Supercommentaries on Rashi's Commentary on the Pentateuch," in *Rashi Anniversary Volume* (New York, 1941), 73–114. Studies of Rashi supercommentaries include Eric Lawee, "The Omnisignificant Imperative in Rashi Supercommentary in Late Medieval Spain," *Hispania Judaica Bulletin* 10 (2014): 169–92; idem, "The Reception of Rashi's *Commentary on the Torah* in Spain: The Case of Adam's Mating with the Animals,"

Christians called Rashi's commentaries *Glossa Hebraica*, "the Hebrew Gloss,"¹⁷ Jews endowed him with the honorific sobriquet *Parshandata*, "the Interpreter."¹⁸ Both refer to Rashi as if there were no Jewish commentator or commentary besides.¹⁹

Jewish Quarterly Review 97 (2007): 33–66; idem, "From Sepharad to Ashkenaz: A Case Study in the Rashi Supercommentary Tradition," *AJS Review* 30 (2006): 393–425; and idem, "Biblical Scholarship in Late Medieval Ashkenaz: The Turn to Rashi Supercommentary," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 86 (2015): 265–303.

¹⁷ Hailperin, *Rashi*, 131–33, 139, 207, 285n24; Judith Olszowy-Schlanger, "A School of Christian Hebraists in Thirteenth-Century England: A Unique Hebrew-Latin-French and English Dictionary and Its Sources," *European Journal of Jewish Studies* 1 (2007): 249–77, at 261; Raphael Loewe, "The Medieval Christian Hebraists of England: *The Superscriptio Lincolnensis*," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 28 (1957): 205–52, at 212; Menahem Banitt, *Rashi: Interpreter of the Biblical Letter* (Tel Aviv, 1985), 131–32. The exception that proves the rule is the *De differentia nostrae translationis ab Hebraica littera in Veteri Testamento* of Nicholas of Lyra. True to his cruel sobriquet "simius Salomonis," Lyra explains in the preface that "glosa" is shorthand not for the *Glossa Ordinaria* but for Rashi: "Where 'glosa' is stated without [further] qualification, it is to be understood [as a reference to] the *Glossa Hebraica*." MS Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Archivio di San Pietro D202, fol. 1r. Cf. Klepper, *The Insight*, 51.

¹⁸ Ephraim Urbach, "How did Rashi Merit the Title Parshandata," in *Rashi 1040–1990*, ed. Gabrielle Sed-Rajna (Paris, 1993), 387–98; Grossman, *Rashi*, 42–51; Mayer Gruber, *Rashi's Commentary on Psalms* (Leiden, 2003), 116–26; Gross, "Spanish Jewry," 27–55; Shamma Friedman, "Rashi's Talmudic Commentaries and the Nature of the Revisions and Recensions" [in Hebrew], in *Rashi Studies*, ed. Zvi Arie Steinfeld (Ramat-Gan, 1993), 147–75; Eric Lawee, "The Reception of Rashi's *Commentary on the Torah* in Spain: The Case of Adam's Mating with the Animals," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 97 (2007): 33–66.

¹⁹ This is expressed starkly in what may be the earliest record of the epithet, the *Kelalim* of Moses ibn Danon (fl. 1510): "The scholars who came after [Rashi] / Said of his commentaries: / All of the commentaries of France / Can be thrown into the bin / Except for Parshandata / And Ben Porata." / This means, 'except for Rashi and of Rabbenu Tov Elem (of blessed memory),' whose words are few but contain much." (החכמ' שבאו אחריו אמרו על פירושי כל פירושי) צרפתא השלך לאשפתא חוץ מפרשנדתא וכן פורתא שר"ל חוץ מרש"י ורבינו יוסף טוב עלם ז"ל שדבריהם מועטים. (כוללים הרבה.) MS Oxford, Bodleian Library Or. 620 (Neubauer 850), fol. 14b.

When Abraham ibn Ezra (1089–1164), famous for his grammatical interpretations of Scripture, censured the prominence of midrashic expositions in Rashi's commentaries, he nevertheless acknowledged the latter's popularity: "Rabbi Solomon (of blessed memory) interpreted the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings by way of *derash*, thinking this to be the plain meaning [*peshat*]. However the plain meaning appears in his books not once in a thousand. Nevertheless the sages of our generation boast of these books." See Abraham ibn Ezra, *Safah Berurah*, ed. Michael Wilensky, *Devir* 2 (1924): 274–302, at 288. See further Eric Lawee, "Words Unfitly Spoken: Two Critics of the Role of Midrash in Rashi's *Commentary on the Torah*," in *Between Rashi and Maimonides: Themes in Medieval Jewish Thought, Literature, and Exegesis*, ed. Ephraim Kanargofel and Moshe Sokolow (New York, 2010), 401–30; idem, "Maimonides in the Eastern Mediterranean: The Case of Rashi's Resisting Readers," in *Maimonides after 800 Years: Essays on Maimonides and His Influence*, ed. Jay Harris (Cambridge, MA, 2007), 183–206; and Aharon Mondschein, "Only One in a Thousand of His Comments May Be Called *Peshat*': Toward ibn Ezra's

Past studies of the relationship between Rashi's commentaries and contemporary Christian exegesis have focused particularly on whether Rashi responds to Christian doctrine and Christological interpretations. While Elazar Touitou interpreted Rashi's comments on Genesis 1–6 as polemical responses to the doctrines of original sin and the divinity of the Holy Spirit, Shaye Cohen found anti-Christian comments not in the Torah commentary but in expositions of Psalms that preclude messianic and Christological interpretations.²⁰ Studies of Jewish exegesis in the works of Christian commentators of northern France have focused on the scholars who, from the mid-twelfth century, resorted to Jews and Jewish books to further their understanding of the "literal" or "historical" sense of the Old Testament. Beryl Smalley highlighted the pioneering studies of the canons regular of the Abbey of Saint Victor in Paris and presented the commentaries of Master Andrew as a crowning achievement of twelfth-century biblical scholarship.²¹ Gilbert Dahan, Frans van Liere, and Rainer Berndt have since highlighted the importance of Andrew's exegesis in increasing the repertoire of Jewish interpretations that circulated among Christian commentators.²² The recent studies of Deborah Goodman and Eva de Visscher have drawn attention to the enterprising scholarship of Herbert of Bosham who, in the late twelfth century, learned Hebrew and consulted Jewish teachers in order to read the Hebrew Psalter and Rashi's commentary.²³ As Judith Olszowy-Schlanger has shown, later Christian

View of Rashi's Commentary to the Torah" [in Hebrew], in *Studies in Bible and Exegesis*, vol. 5, *Presented to Uriel Simon*, ed. Moshe Garsiel et al. (Ramat Gan, 2000), 221–48.

²⁰ Elazar Touitou, "Rashi's Commentary on Genesis 1–6 in the Context of Judeo-Christian Controversy," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 61 (1990): 159–85; Shaye Cohen, "Does Rashi's Torah Commentary Respond to Christianity? A Comparison of Rashi with Rashbam and Bekhor Shor," in *The Significance of Yavneh and Other Essays in Jewish Hellenism* (Tübingen, 2010), 513–33. Among recent studies, see further Grossman, *Rashi*, 10–11, 101–4, 172–73; 198–207; idem, *The Early Sages of France*, 142–46, 205–7, 477–80; Michael Signer, "God's Love for Israel: Apologetic and Hermeneutical Strategies in Twelfth-Century Biblical Exegesis," in *Jews and Christians in Twelfth-Century Europe*, ed. Michael Signer and John van Engen (Notre Dame, 2001), 123–49; and Robert A. Harris, "Rashi and the 'Messianic' Psalms," in *Birkat Shalom: Studies in the Bible, Ancient Near Eastern Literature, and Postbiblical Judaism Presented to Shalom M. Paul on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. Chaim Cohen et al. (Winona Lake, 2008), 845–62. On anti-Jewish polemic in the Gloss, see Linda Stone, "Anti-Jewish Polemic in the Glossed Psalms of the Twelfth Century," (PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 2014).

²¹ Smalley, *Study* (n. 2 above), 149–72, 365–66.

²² Gilbert Dahan, "Les interprétations juives dans les commentaires du Pentateuque de Pierre le Chantre," in *The Bible in the Medieval World: Essays in Memory of Beryl Smalley*, ed. Katherine Walsh and Diana Wood (Oxford, 1985), 131–55, at 133–34; Van Liere, "The Literal Sense," 74–75; Berndt, "The School" (n. 2 above), 488.

²³ De Visscher, *Reading the Rabbis*; Goodwin, *Take Hold of the Robe of a Jew*. See further Smalley, *Study*, 186–95; eadem, "A Commentary on the *Hebraica* by Herbert of Bosham," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 18 (1951): 29–65; R. Loewe, "Herbert of

scholars' study of Hebrew texts was facilitated by the preparation of bilingual Hebrew-Latin texts in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries, including copies of the Hebrew Bible and Rashi's commentary with interlinear Latin translations.²⁴

A study of the interpretations that the *Glossa Hebraica* and early parts of the *Glossa Ordinaria* hold in common sheds light on the exegetical insights that Jews and Christians of northern France already shared on the eve of the pioneering scholarship of the Victorines. It is not necessary to posit direct encounters between compilers of the *Gloss* and Jewish exegetes to explain these similarities.²⁵ As will be shown below, they are late-antique Jewish interpretations that had long circulated among Jews and Christians. An example is the exposition of Abraham's departure from his homeland in Genesis 11:31–12:8. Here Abraham receives the divine mandate, "Go from your land and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you" (12:1) and sets out for Canaan. The narrative poses several exegetical problems. In chapter 11, Abraham and his family are located in "ur kasdim." The meaning of this obscure term, usually translated "Ur of the Chaldeans," is difficult to deduce from the Bible alone where it occurs only four times. Genesis 12 reports that Abraham departed not from Ur,

Bosham's Commentary on Jerome's Hebrew Psalter," *Biblica* 34 (1953): 44–77, 159–92, 275–98.

²⁴ Manuscripts of Rashi's commentary owned by medieval Christian scholars include MS Oxford, Corpus Christi College 165 (France, ca. 1200), and MS Oxford, Corpus Christi College 6 (early thirteenth century). See Judith Olszowy-Schlanger, *Les manuscrits hébreux dans l'Angleterre médiévale: Étude historique et paléographique* (Paris, 2003), 39–40, 283–88 (cf. 43–44); eadem, "Robert Wakefield and His Hebrew Manuscripts," *Zutot* 6 (2009): 25–33, at 32–33; eadem, "The Knowledge and Practice of Hebrew Grammar among Christian Scholars in Pre-Expulsion England: The Evidence of 'Bilingual' Hebrew-Latin Manuscripts," in *Hebrew Scholarship in the Medieval World*, ed. Nicholas de Lange (Cambridge, 2001), 107–28; eadem, "Rashi en Latin: les gloses latines dans un manuscrit du commentaire de Rachi et les études hébraïques parmi des chrétiens dans l'Angleterre médiévale," in *Héritages de Rachi*, ed. René-Samuel Sirat (Paris, 2006), 137–50.

²⁵ One occasion for exegetical discussion between Jews and Christians at the beginning of the twelfth century was the endeavor of Abbot Stephen Harding of Cîteaux to create an accurate text of the Vulgate. See Gilbert Dahan, *Les intellectuels chrétiens et les juifs au moyen âge*, ed. Richard Marsden and E. Ann Matter (Paris, 1990), 273–74 (also 230–31, 293–94); Anna Sapir Abulafia, "The Bible in Jewish-Christian Dialogue," in *The New Cambridge History of the Bible*, vol. 2 (n. 6 above), 616–37, at 630; Michael Signer, "Polemic and Exegesis: The Varieties of Twelfth-Century Hebraism," in *Hebraica Veritas? Christian Hebraists and the Study of Judaism in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Allison Coudert and Jeffrey Shoulson (Philadelphia, 2004), 21–32, at 23–24; and Smalley, *Study*, 72. On the Jewish interpretations in an anonymous commentary on Leviticus dated to the second quarter of the twelfth century, see Beryl Smalley, "An Early Twelfth-Century Commentator on the Literal Sense of Leviticus," in *Studies in Medieval Thought and Learning: From Abelard to Wyclif* (London, 1981), 27–48.

but from Charan, thereby adding to the confusion.²⁶ Different accounts of Abraham's age at the time pose a chronological problem — he was evidently 135 in Genesis 11 (see verses 26 and 32) but a mere 75 in Genesis 12:4. These difficulties confronted medieval Jewish and Christian readers alike, and the same solution was available to both — the story of Abraham in the fiery furnace.²⁷

THE FURNACE IN THE *GLOSSA HEBRAICA*

The term *'ur kasdim* occurs three times in the Genesis narratives of Abraham's migration. Genesis 11:28 records that "Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his kindred, in *'ur kasdim*," and Terah and his family afterwards left *'ur kasdim* for Canaan (11:31). Genesis 15:7 relates God's subsequent address to Abraham, "I am the Lord who brought you out of *'ur kasdim*." Whatever the meaning of the term, it was evidently the place of Haran's death, of Abraham's liberation, and the starting point of his family's migration.

As the Hebrew word *'ur* can mean "flame" or "fire," Targum Neofiti renders *'ur kasdim* as "the furnace of fire of the Chaldeans."²⁸ That the Chaldeans possessed

²⁶ I have standardized spellings for clarity: "Terah" for Abraham's father, "Haran" for his brother, and "Charan" for the place.

²⁷ The account may be traced to Jubilees 12:12–14, Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities* 6:15–18, and *The Apocalypse of Abraham* 8:1–6; see James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols. (London, 1983–85), 1:693; 2:80, 312. The transmission of the narrative in Jewish sources is the subject of Vered Tohar, *Abraham in the Furnace of Fire: A Rebel in a Pagan World* [in Hebrew] (Ramat-Gan, 2010). See further Geza Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism*, 2nd ed. (Leiden, 1961), 85–90; Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (Philadelphia, 2003), 1:177n33; Joanna Weinberg, "Abraham, Exile, and Midrashic Tradition," in *Abraham, the Nations, and the Hagarites: Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Perspectives on Kinship with Abraham*, ed. Martin Goodman et al. (Leiden, 2010), 223–242, at 228–29; Robert Hayward, *Targums and the Transmission of Scripture into Judaism and Christianity* (Leiden, 2009), 227; Menahem Kister, "Observations on Aspects of Exegesis, Tradition, and Theology in Midrash, Pseudepigrapha, and Other Jewish Writings," in *Tracing the Threads: Studies in the Vitality of Jewish Pseudepigrapha*, ed. John Reeves (Atlanta, 1994), 1–34, at 6–7; and James Kugel, *Traditions of the Bible* (Cambridge, MA, 1998), 252–54, 267–70. On the reception of the account in Latin, Greek, and Syriac Christian sources, see Sebastian Brock, "Abraham and the Ravens: A Syriac Counterpart to Jubilees 11–12 and Its Implications," *Journal for the Study of Judaism* 9 (1978): 135–52; William Adler, "Abraham and the Burning of the Temple of Idols: Jubilees' Traditions in Christian Chronography," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 77 (1987): 95–117; Joseph Gutmann, "Abraham in the Fire of the Chaldeans: A Jewish Legend in Jewish, Christian and Islamic Art," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 7 (1973): 342–52; and Laurence Brugger, "Un florilège royal: Les sources juives dans les Bibles moralisées," *Cahiers archeologiques* 51 (2003): 105–24, at 108–10. On the account in Qur'an 21:68–69 and 37:97, see Carol Bakhos, *The Family of Abraham: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Interpretations* (Cambridge, MA, 2014), 91–105.

²⁸ "Atun nurhon de-khasda'ei"; Gen. 11:28, 11:31, 15:7. See *Neophyti 1: Targum Palestinense ms. de la Biblioteca Vaticana*, ed. Alejandro Díez Macho, 6 vols. (Madrid, 1968–79), 1:61, 63, 79; *Targum Neofiti 1: Genesis*, trans. Martin McNamara (Edinburgh, 1992), 85–86, 95.

such a facility is well known from the third chapter of Daniel where their king Nebuchadnezzar sentenced Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to a fiery death. According to Targum Pseudo-Jonathan²⁹ and Midrash Genesis Rabba, Abraham and Haran met the same fate. The latter source (38:13) relates that Abraham perceived the futility of the Chaldeans' idolatry, a devotion practiced even by his own family,³⁰ and so destroyed his father's idol workshop. For this, Terah handed Abraham over to wicked King Nimrod who committed him to the flames. Although Abraham miraculously escaped, his idolatrous brother Haran died in the furnace. Abraham's altercation with Nimrod is related as follows:

[Nimrod] said to [Abraham], "Let us worship the fire!" Abraham replied, "We should worship the water which extinguishes the fire." [Nimrod] said, "Then let us worship the water!" [Abraham] replied, "We should worship the clouds which bear the water." [Nimrod] said, "Then let us worship the clouds!" [Abraham] replied, "We should worship the wind which disperses the clouds." [Nimrod] said, "Then let us worship the wind!" [Abraham] replied, "We should worship the human being who withstands the wind." [Nimrod] said, "You are just playing with words. We will only bow down to the fire ["la-'ur"]. I'm going to cast you into it. Let your God to whom you bow down come and save you from it."

Haran was standing there undecided. He said, "What are the options? If Abraham wins, I'll say that I'm on Abraham's side. [But] if Nimrod wins, I'll say that I'm on Nimrod's side." When Abram descended into the fiery furnace and was saved, [they] said to [Haran], "Whose side are you on?" He replied, "Abraham's." They took him and cast him into the fire. His guts were scorched and when he came out, he died before his father, as it is written: "And Haran died before his father Terah (Genesis 11:28)."³¹

This midrash expounds Genesis 11:28 by interpreting the term *'ur kasdim* and explaining in what sense Haran died "before" (*al penei*) his father. It treats the former as a reference to the Chaldeans' furnace. The verse therefore indicates the place and manner of Haran's death. Due to his half-hearted opposition to

²⁹ Gen. 11:28, *Targum Palaestinense in Pentateuchum: Additur Targum Pseudojonatan ejusque Hispanica Versio*, ed. Alejandro Díez Macho, 5 vols. (Madrid, 1977–88), 1:71; *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, trans. Michael Maher (Edinburgh, 1992), 51.

³⁰ See Josh. 24:2.

³¹ Translated from *Midrash Bereshit Rabba*, ed. J. Theodor and C. Albeck (Berlin, 1903–29), 363–64. Further rabbinic sources that transmit this account include Genesis Rabba 34:9, 38:13, 39:3, 44:13; Tanḥuma (Buber) *Lekh Lekha* 2, 13, 22, *Tetsaveh* 8; Tanḥuma (printed) *Lekh Lekha* 2, 6, 10, 18, *Va-Yera* 3, *Toledot* 4; *Tetsaveh* 12; b.Pesaḥim 118a, b.Eruvin 53a.

Nimrod, he died in the furnace before his father's very eyes. Abraham was miraculously saved, thus explaining the later reference to his divine deliverance from 'ur kasdim in Genesis 15:7.

The story of Abraham's escape was transmitted and reformulated in many later rabbinic and medieval works, including the Babylonian Talmud,³² *Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer*,³³ Midrash Psalms,³⁴ and the Midrash on the Ten Commandments.³⁵ The narrative was well known in medieval Ashkenaz, where it was incorporated into the eleventh-century *piyyut* (liturgical poem) 'Asher mi Ya'aseh ke-Ma'asekha, recited on Rosh ha-Shanah: "They cast [Abraham] into the furnace of fiery coals / But the King of Glory stretched out his right hand and mercifully saved him."³⁶ An elaborate form of the narrative was transmitted in the *Sefer Ma'asim* in the first half of the twelfth century,³⁷ which juxtaposes Abraham's ordeal with the story of the Maccabean martyrs and presents it as a "sanctification of God's name" ("kiddush ha-shem").³⁸

³² See n. 31 above. The texts may be read in translation in *The Babylonian Talmud: Translated into English with Notes, Glossary and Indices*, ed. Isidore Epstein (London, 1935–52).

³³ Abraham's ordeal in the furnace is counted as the second of his ten trials (chapter 26) and the first of the seven wonders since the creation of the world (chapter 52). *Pirke de-Rabbi Eliezer*, ed. Dagmar Börner-Klein (Berlin, 2004), 285, 725; *Pirkê de Rabbi Eliezer*, trans. Gerald Friedlander (London, 1916), 188, 420. It may be dated to the late eighth to early ninth century; see Katharina Keim, "Pirkei deRabbi Eliezer: Structure, Coherence, Intertextuality, and Historical Context" (PhD diss., University of Manchester, 2015), 15.

³⁴ *Midrash Psalms* 117, 3; 118, 11; *Midrash Tehillim*, ed. Solomon Buber (Jerusalem, 1966), 480, 484; *The Midrash on Psalms*, trans. William Braude, 2 vols. (New Haven, 1959), 2:230–31, 238–39. Midrash Psalms 1–118 may be dated to the tenth century; see the discussion in Günter Stemberger, *Einleitung in Talmud und Midrasch*, 9th ed. (Munich, 2011), 358–59.

³⁵ Included among the expositions of the second commandment, "Thou shalt have none other gods but me." *Midrash Aseret ha-Dibrot*, ed. Anat Shapira (Jerusalem, 2005), 39–44. On the dating to the tenth century, see *ibid.*, 12.

³⁶ *Maḥzor la-Yamim ha-Nora'im: le-fi Minhagei benei 'Ashkenaz*, ed. Ernst Goldschmidt, 2 vols. (Jerusalem, 1970), 1:116–17.

³⁷ MS Oxford, Bodleian Library Or. 135, fols. 303b–305a. Beit-Arié dates the manuscript to the second quarter of the thirteenth century and locates its production to Champagne. Malachi Beit-Arié, "Ms Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodl. Or. 135" [in Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 54 (1984–85): 631–34; Eli Yassif, *The Hebrew Collection of Tales in the Middle Ages* [in Hebrew] (Tel-Aviv, 2004), 136–65; Tohar, *Abraham*, 48–50, 114–16.

³⁸ This is already explicit in Genesis Rabba 42:7 and Tanḥuma (printed) *Lehh Lekha* 2, 18. The chronicle of the First Crusade attributed to Solomon bar Simson (mid-twelfth century) invokes this understanding of the narrative by likening the persecution of the Jews of Mainz to the testing of Abraham and of Daniel's companions in the furnace. By means of a play on the words 'ur (fire) and 'or (light), both spelled אור, Isaac ben David's martyrdom in the burning synagogue is presented as his means of attaining the "great light" (*hama'or ha-gadol*). Eva Haverkamp, ed., *Hebräische Berichte über die Judenverfolgungen während des ersten Kreuzzugs* (Hanover, 2005), 26, 36–38 (English translation in Robert Chazan,

In Rashi's commentary on Genesis, the narrative appears as an explanation of Genesis 11:28. Like Genesis Rabba, Rashi focuses on the meaning of "before" (*al penei*) and *'ur kasdim*. His interpretation reads:

"[Haran died] before ["al penei"] his father Terah." [This means] during his father's lifetime. But a *midrash aggadah* relates that [Haran] died by means of his father Terah. This is because Terah complained about his son Abram to Nimrod as he had destroyed his idols, [so Nimrod] cast [Abram] into the furnace. Haran sat and thought to himself, "If Abram wins, I'm on his side. But if Nimrod wins, I'm on his." When Abraham was saved, they said to Haran, "Whose side are you on?" He said, "I'm on Abraham's side." They cast [Haran] into the furnace and he was burned up. This is the meaning of *'ur kasdim*. But Menahem [ben Saruk] explained that *'ur* means "valley."³⁹ This is the case in [Isaiah 24:14 (15)], "Glorify God in the valleys ["ba-'urim"]." A similar instance is [Isaiah 11:8], "den ["me'urat"] of the serpent." Any hole or deep crevice may be referred to by the term *'ur*.⁴⁰

In his famous comment on Genesis 3:8, Rashi stated, "There are many aggadic midrashim and our rabbis have already arranged them in their place in Genesis Rabba and other midrashim. But I am only concerned with the plain sense of Scripture ["peshuto shel mikra"] and with such aggadot as explain the words of Scripture in a fitting manner."⁴¹ In the present comment, Rashi appeals both

European Jewry and the First Crusade [Berkeley, 1987], 255, 263–64); Jeremy Cohen, *Sanctifying the Name of God: Jewish Martyrs and Jewish Memories of the First Crusade* (Philadelphia, 2004), 100–103. See also Ephraim of Bonn's *Sefer Zekhirah* where the sanctity of the three Jews of Blois condemned to death by burning in 1171 was demonstrated by their bodies' resistance to fire. On the allusion to the fate of Daniel's three companions, see Susan Einbinder, *Beautiful Death: Jewish Poetry and Martyrdom in Medieval France* (Princeton, 2002), 53–55. Ephraim of Bonn, *The Book of Memoirs* [in Hebrew], ed. A. M. Habermann (Jerusalem, 1970), 32; Susan Einbinder, "The Jewish Martyrs of Blois," in *Medieval Hagiography: A Sourcebook*, ed. Thomas Head (New York, 2000), 537–60, at 546. See further Elisheva Baumgarten, "Seeking Signs? Jews, Christians, and Proof by Fire in Medieval Germany and Northern France," in *New Perspectives on Jewish-Christian Relations*, ed. Elisheva Carlebach and Jacob Schacter (Leiden, 2012), 205–26, at 218–21.

³⁹ Menahem ben Saruk, *Maḥberet*, ed. Angel Sáenz-Badillos (Granada, 1986), 58*.

⁴⁰ על פני תרה. בחיי אביו ומדרי' אגדי' או' שעל ידי תרה אביו מת שקבל תרה על אברם בנו לפני נמרוד על שבירת צלמיו השליכוהו לכבשן. והרן יושב ואומ' בלבו. אם אברם נוצח אני משלו ואם נמרוד נוצח אני משלו. וכשניצל אברהם אמרו [לן] להרן משל מי אתה אמ' משל אברהם אני השליכוהו לכבשן ונשרף. וזהו אור כשדים. ומנחם פיר'. אור בקעה. וכן באורים כבדו את יי'. וכן מאורת צפעוני כל חור ובקע עמוק קרוי אור: MS Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek B.H. 1, fol. 7a (cf. Solomon b. Isaac [Rashi], *Perushei Rashi 'al ha-Torah*, ed. C. Chavel [Jerusalem, 1982], 43).

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 16–17. Among the many studies on the relationship between the "plain meaning" and midrashic interpretations in Rashi's commentary, see Grossman, *Rashi* (n. 12 above), 78–96; Sara Japhet, "The Pendulum of Exegetical Methodology: From

to the plain sense of the verse and to the midrashic exposition. Sarah Kamin characterized such explanations as “dual-interpretations,” noting that the two approaches respond to the same underlying questions.⁴² In this case, Rashi expounds the plain and midrashic meanings of the same terms in Genesis 11:28, “before” (“‘al penei”) and *’ur kasdim*, thus furnishing two ways to understand them.

Rashi first asserts that the term *‘al penei* means that Haran predeceased his father. The subsequent midrashic interpretation may be from Genesis Rabba 38:13 (the passage cited above); if so, Rashi has paraphrased and translated the comment from Aramaic into Hebrew. He selects details from the narrative and reformulates them in such a way as to blame Terah for his sons’ punishment: because he informed Nimrod of Abraham’s iconoclasm, Haran was forced to take sides to save his own skin, a wager that cost him his life. The meaning of the midrash is thereby transformed. While Genesis Rabba explained that Haran died “in front of” his father, Rashi’s midrashic interpretation suggests that he died “because of” him.

Rashi then turns to the meaning of *’ur kasdim*. In the light of the midrash, it means “the furnace of the Chaldeans.” But he affixes the definition in the dictionary of Menaḥem ben Saruk, the *Mahberet*, to show that *’ur* means “valley,” “hole,” or “crevice.”⁴³ Understood in this way, *’ur kasdim* is the name of a low-lying place rather than a furnace.

Peshat to Derash and Back,” in *Midrash Unbound: Transformations and Innovations*, ed. Michael Fishbane and Joanna Weinberg (Oxford, 2013), 249–66; Gelles, *Peshat and Derash* (n. 11 above), 9–27, 42–65, 114–16; Mordechai Z. Cohen, “Reflections on the Conception of *Peshuto Shel Miqra* at the Beginning of the Twenty-First Century” [in Hebrew], in “*To Settle the Plain Meaning of the Verse*”: *Studies in Biblical Exegesis*, ed. Sara Japhet and Eran Viezel (Jerusalem, 2011), 5–58; Elazar Tseitou, “Darko shel Rashi be-Shimusho be-Midrashi Ḥazal: ‘Iyun be-Ferush Rashi le-Shemot 1:8–22,” *Talelei ’Orot* 9 (2000): 51–78; Moshe M. Ahrend, “The Concept ‘*Peshuto Shellamiqra*’ in the Making” [in Hebrew], in *The Bible in the Light of Its Interpreters*, ed. Sara Japhet (Jerusalem, 1994), 237–61; and idem, “L’adaptation des commentaires du *Midrash* par Rashi et ses disciples à leur exégèse biblique,” *Revue des études juives* 156 (1997): 275–88.

⁴² Sarah Kamin, “Rashi’s Exegetical Categorization with Respect to the Distinction between *Peshat* and *Derash* according to His Commentary to the Book of Genesis and Selected Passages from His Commentaries to Other Books of the Bible,” *Immanuel* 11 (1980): 16–32, at 25–26.

⁴³ See John Elwolde, “The ‘Mahberet’ of Menaḥem: Proposals for a Lexicographic Theory, with Sample Translation and Notes,” in *Words Remembered, Texts Renewed: Essays in Honour of John F. A. Sawyer*, ed. Jon Davies, Graham Harvey, and Wilfred G. E. Watson (Sheffield, 1995), 426–79; Angel Sáenz-Badillos, “Hebrew Philology in Sefarad: The State of the Question,” in *Hebrew Scholarship and the Medieval World*, ed. Nicholas De Lange (Cambridge, 2001), 38–59; and idem, “Early Hebraists in Spain: Menaḥem ben Saruq and Dunash ben Labraṭ,” in *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament*, vol. 1, pt. 2, *Middle Ages* (n. 2 above), 96–109.

Rashi does not state explicitly which of the two explanations of *'al penei* and *'ur kasdim* is correct or whether both are contained within Scripture. Kamin argued that, in such cases, the plain and midrashic meanings are coexistent; the former is stated explicitly to ensure that it is not abrogated by the midrash.⁴⁴ Rashi's exposition of *'ur kasdim* elsewhere in his commentary appears to confirm that he understands it both ways. He treats it as a place name in his comment on Genesis 24:7, where the "land of Abraham's kindred" is glossed as *'ur kasdim*.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, at Genesis 14:10, he cites the narrative of Abraham's escape from the Chaldeans' furnace.⁴⁶ In the present comment, therefore, *'ur kasdim* is a place name with a midrashic meaning.

THE FURNACE IN THE *GLOSSA ORDINARIA*

The narrative of Abraham in the furnace was also relayed by Rashi's Christian contemporaries in northern France to explain Genesis 11:28. It appears several times in the *Glossa Ordinaria* on Genesis, whose compilation has been attributed to Gilbert of Auxerre in the first quarter of the twelfth century.⁴⁷ Most of the

⁴⁴ Kamin, "Rashi's Exegetical Categorization," 13–32; eadem, "Affinities" (n. 1 above), xxxiii; eadem, *Rashi's Exegetical Categorization in Respect to the Distinction between Peshat and Derash* [in Hebrew] (Jerusalem, 1986), 62–77, 158–208.

⁴⁵ Solomon b. Isaac (Rashi), *Perushei Rashi 'al ha-Torah*, 85 (cf. MS Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek B.H. 1, fol. 17b); see also Rashi's commentary on the verses from Isaiah cited above.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 51 (cf. MS Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek B.H. 1, fol. 9b) has a comment that relates the interpretation found at Genesis Rabba 42:7.

⁴⁷ Smith, *Glossa Ordinaria* (n. 6 above), 29; Beryl Smalley, "Gilbertus Universalis, Bishop of London (1128–34), and the Problem of the 'Glossa Ordinaria,'" *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 7 (1935): 232–62, at 253–59; 8 (1936): 24–64, at 48–50; eadem, *Study*, 60; R. Wielockx, "Autour de la *Glossa ordinaria*," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 49 (1982): 222–28, at 225. Patricia Stirnemann identified MS Paris, BNF Latin 14398, as the earliest extant manuscript, likely produced in Laon between 1120 and 1135, and suggested that Genesis was one of the books glossed there. Mary Dove thus includes it among the books likely attributed to Anselm or Ralph. The question is further complicated by indications that the *Gloss* on Genesis was revised in the mid-twelfth century (see n. 60 below). Clearly the revised texts in circulation when the *Gloss* became known as the *Glossa Ordinaria* cannot be the original work of any one glossator. Patricia Stirnemann, "Où ont été fabriqués les livres de la glose ordinaire dans la première moitié du XIIe siècle," in *Le XIIe siècle: Mutations et renouveau en France dans la première moitié du XIIe siècle*, ed. Françoise Gasparri (Paris, 1994), 258–64; Mary Dove, *The Glossa Ordinaria on the Song of Songs* (Kalamazoo, 2004), xii; Alice Sharp, "In Principio: The Origins of the *Glossa Ordinaria* on Genesis 1–3" (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2015); Smith, *Glossa Ordinaria*, 143–44; cf. Lobrichon, "Une nouveauté" (n. 4 above), 103n19. I hope to devote a future study to the glosses in MS Paris, BNF Latin 14398, marked "H." (e.g., fols. 38v, 42r), their relationship to the commentary Burton Van Name Edwards attributed to Haimo of Auxerre, and their significance regarding the origins and development of the interlinear gloss on Genesis. See Burton Van Name Edwards, "In Search of the Authentic Commentary on Genesis by Remigius of

glosses on Genesis 11:31–12:8 are excerpts from patristic commentaries. Augustine’s *Questions on the Heptateuch*, Jerome’s *Hebrew Questions on Genesis*, and Isidore’s *Questions on the Old Testament* predominate. Almost all of their comments on this passage are in the *Gloss*, albeit skillfully condensed.⁴⁸

The *Glossa Ordinaria* accords the narrative of Abraham’s migration a Christological meaning that is apparent in the interpretation of Genesis 12:1, “The Lord said to Abram, ‘Go from your land and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you.’” This verse has three marginal and eight interlinear glosses.⁴⁹ A long marginal comment excerpted from Augustine’s *Questions* addresses the chronological discrepancy regarding Abraham’s age (discussed further below). The interlinear gloss abbreviates Augustine’s insights yet further: the two words *vivente patre* indicate that Abraham received the divine mandate while his father was still alive and that the narrative is therefore not chronological. Further interlinear glosses designate “the Lord” as *pater*, “Abram” as *christum*, “kindred” as *iudaica*, “land” as *gentium*, and “show” as *per apostolos noticiam tui dando*. The verse therefore means that, at the desire of the Father, Christ leaves his Jewish kindred to undertake his mission among the gentile nations, a ministry accomplished through the apostles’ preaching. This closely resembles Isidore’s interpretation of the verse and would be difficult to understand were this latter not given in full in the margin.⁵⁰ But, as Michael Signer has shown,

Auxerre,” in *L’école carolingienne d’Auxerre: de Murethach à Remi, 830–908*, ed. Dominique Iogna-Prat et al. (Paris, 1991), 399–412.

⁴⁸ For instance, in the *Questions on the Heptateuch*, Augustine begins his exposition with the question, “If Abraham’s father Terah was 70 years old when he fathered him, and thereafter he dwelt in Haran with his household, living for 205 years before he died, how can it be accepted that God told Abraham to leave Haran, and that he did so, when Abraham was 75?” Augustine, *Quaestionum in Heptateuchum libri VII*, ed. J. Fraipont and D. de Bruyne, CCL 33 (Turnhout, 1958), 8. In the *Gloss*, the three solutions that follow have been extracted from the question and answer structure of the *Questions* and presented in abbreviated form.

⁴⁹ Citations and translations of the *Glossa Ordinaria* on Genesis 11 and 12 are from the text of *Biblia Latina cum Glossa Ordinaria: Facsimile Reprint of the Editio Princeps; Adolf Rusch of Strassburg 1480/81*, ed. Karlfried Froehlich and Margaret Gibson (Turnhout, 1992), 44. I refer also to MS Paris, BNF Latin 14399, the manuscript of the *Glossa Ordinaria* on Genesis from the library of the Abbey of Saint Victor dated to 1150/60 (digitized and available online at <http://gallica.bnf.fr/>). The text of Gen. 11:31–12:8 is similar to that of Rusch. I have also consulted MS BNF Latin 14398, likewise from Saint Victor. As noted above, it has been identified as the earliest extant manuscript of the *Gloss* on Genesis, copied at Laon between 1120 and 1135. See Philippe Buc, *L’ambiguïté du livre: Prince, pouvoir, et peuple dans les commentaires de la Bible au Moyen Âge* (Paris, 1994), 87–96; Stirnemann, “Où ont été fabriqués,” 262; and Zier, “The Development” (n. 10 above), 163–64.

⁵⁰ Beryl Smalley demonstrated the interdependence of certain interlinear and marginal comments, where “the *Marginal Gloss* is unintelligible except as a complement to the *Interlinear*,” Smalley, “Gilbertus Universalis” (1936), 26–27. On occasions in which the two glosses appear to pursue different interpretive agendas, see Smith, *Glossa Ordinaria*, 83–87; and Michael Signer, “The *Glossa ordinaria* and the Transmission of Medieval Anti-Judaism,” in

by placing interpretations directly above the words of the Vulgate, the interlinear gloss presents the Gospel “at the same moment as the words of the Old Testament.”⁵¹ When the reader encounters the story of Abraham’s migration, the account of the origins of the Church in the ministry of Christ and the apostles opens up before her eyes. A further interpretation of the same verse is overlaid. “Land” refers to the “earthly man” [“terreno homine”], “kindred” to the familiar “vices” [“vitiurum”], and “father’s house” to the house “of the devil” [“diaboli”]. The verse therefore has a moral meaning, exhorting the reader to flee the world, the flesh, and the devil and to follow the path of God’s commandments.⁵²

Three of the references in the *Glossa* to the narrative of Abraham in the furnace are attributed to Jerome. At Genesis 11:28, the marginal gloss reads as follows:

“*In Ur Chaldæorum.*” Jerome: In Hebrew this is “in *ur cesim*,” that is, “in the fire of the Chaldeans.” The Hebrews hand on the tale [“fabulantur Hebraei”] that Abraham was cast into the fire because he refused to worship the fire that the Chaldeans venerate. He was set free by divine assistance and fled the fire of idolatry. Thereafter it is said to Abraham: “I am the one who led you out of *ur chaldæorum*, the fire of the Chaldeans.”⁵³

The next episode of the narrative is in an interlinear gloss above the name Haran, who was “consumed by the fire, as the Hebrews say, which he did not want to worship.”⁵⁴

A Distinct Voice: Medieval Studies in Honor of Leonard E. Boyle, O.P., ed. Jacqueline Brown and William Stoneman (Notre Dame, 1997), 591–605, at 595.

⁵¹ Signer, “The *Glossa ordinaria*,” 593.

⁵² The interlinear gloss also associates “father” with Psalm 45:11, citing “forget your people and your father’s house.” On the relationship between Abraham’s migration and Psalm 45 in Jewish and Christian exegesis, see Weinberg, “Abraham” (n. 27 above), 223–41. A further marginal gloss is attributed to Walafrid Strabo; see Burton Van Name Edwards, “The Commentary on Genesis Attributed to Walafrid Strabo: A Preliminary Report from the Manuscripts,” *Proceedings of the PMR Conference* 15 (1990): 71–89; idem, “Deuteronomy in the Ninth Century: The Unpublished Commentaries of Walafrid Strabo and Haimo of Auxerre,” in *The Study of the Bible in the Carolingian Era*, ed. Burton Van Name Edwards and Celia Chazelle (Turnhout, 2003), 97–113; and J. de Blic, “L’oeuvre exégétique de Walafrid Strabon et la *Glossa ordinaria*,” *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 16 (1949): 5–28.

⁵³ “In *ur chaldæorum*. Hier. In Hebræo in *ur cesim*, id est, in igne *chaldæorum* hic fabulantur hebræi quod abram in ignem sit missus, quia ignem noluit adorare, quem *chaldæi* colunt, et dei auxilio liberatus de ydolatriæ igne effugerit. Unde ad eum dicitur, Ego sum qui eduxi te de *ur chaldæorum*.” *Biblia Latina cum Glossa Ordinaria*, 43; cf. MS BNF Latin 14399, fol. 50r.

⁵⁴ “Ab igne consumptus, vt aiunt hebrei, quem adorare noluit.” *Biblia Latina cum Glossa Ordinaria*, 43; cf. MS BNF Latin 14399, fol. 50r. In MS BNF Latin 14398, fol. 37r, the two interpretations are presented in a single marginal gloss.

Both glosses have their origin in Jerome's *Hebrew Questions on Genesis*, a commentary that overflows with interpretations drawn from Jewish sources. Jerome derived some from the Greek translations of the Bible, from Josephus, and from earlier Christian commentators including Origen. He attributes others to a Jew who instructed him or whose interpretations he heard.⁵⁵ Several such explanations are also found in midrashic literature, the Targumim, and the Talmudim.⁵⁶ Jerome's account of Abraham's ordeal is a case in point. His comment on Genesis 11:28 reads in full:

"And Haran died before his father in the land in which he was born, in the territory of the Chaldeans." Instead of what we read as "in the territory of the Chaldeans," the Hebrew has "in *ur Chesdim*" which means "in the fire of the Chaldeans." Now in response to this verse, the Hebrews hand on a tale ["fabulam"] of this nature, that Abraham was cast into the fire because he refused to worship the fire that the Chaldeans venerate. He was set free by divine assistance and fled the fire of idolatry. (In [verse 31], it is written [in the Septuagint] that Terah and his offspring left "the territory of the Chaldeans"⁵⁷ instead of, as the Hebrew has it, "the fire of the Chaldeans.") This [tale is handed on] because it is stated in this verse that Haran died in the sight of his father Terah in the land of his birth in the fire of the Chaldeans. This is evidently because he refused

⁵⁵ On Jerome's Jewish teacher Baranina, see *Apologia contra Rufinum* I, 13, ed. Pierre Lardet, CCL 79 (Turnhout, 1982), 12; and his epistle to Pammachius and Oceanus (84, 3 in *Sancti Eusebii Hieronymi Epistulae*, pt. 2, ed. Isidor Hilberg, CSEL 55 [Vienna, 1912], 123). See Alison Salvesen, "'Tradunt Hebraei': The Problem of the Function and Reception of Jewish Midrash in Jerome," in *Midrash Unbound: Transformations and Innovations*, ed. Joanna Weinberg and Michael Fishbane (Oxford, 2013), 57–81; Günter Stemberger, "Exegetical Contacts between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire," in *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament*, vol. 1, pt. 1, *From the Beginnings to the Middle Ages: Antiquity* (Göttingen, 1996), 569–86; Stefan Rebenich, "Jerome: The 'Vir Trilinguis' and the 'Hebraica Veritas,'" *Vigiliae Christianae* 47 (1993): 50–77, at 60–63; and Emmanouela Grypeou and Helen Spurling, *The Book of Genesis in Late Antiquity: Encounters between Jewish and Christian Exegesis* (Leiden, 2013).

⁵⁶ Robert Hayward, "Some Observations on St Jerome's 'Hebrew Questions on Genesis' and the Rabbinic Tradition," *Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association* 13 (1990): 58–76; idem, "Saint Jerome and the Aramaic Targumim," *Journal of Semitic Studies* 32 (1987): 105–23; idem, "Jewish Traditions in Jerome's Commentary on Jeremiah and the Targum of Jeremiah," *Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association* 9 (1985): 100–120; Michael Graves, *Jerome's Hebrew Philology: A Study Based on His Commentary on Jeremiah* (Leiden, 2007), 76–127; Adam Kamesar, *Jerome, Greek Scholarship, and the Hebrew Bible: A Study of the Quaestiones Hebraicae in Genesis* (Oxford, 1993), 176–91; Alison Salvesen, "A Convergence of the Ways? The Judaizing of Christian Scripture by Origen and Jerome," in *The Ways that Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. Adam Becker and Annette Reed (Tübingen, 2003), 248–57.

⁵⁷ Ἐκ τῆς χώρας τῶν Χαλδαίων; *Septuaginta: Editio altera*, ed. Alfred Rahlfs and Robert Hanhart (Stuttgart, 2006), 16.

to worship fire and was consumed by fire. Thereafter God said to Abraham, “I am the one who led you out of the fire of the Chaldeans.”⁵⁸

Jerome’s works were important sources of Hebrew and Jewish interpretations for the compilers of the *Glossa Ordinaria*. For instance, his *Book of Interpretation of Hebrew Names* furnished a convenient supply of interlinear glosses for Hebrew proper nouns.⁵⁹ In the case of Genesis 11:28, the *Gloss* provides a précis of the Hebrew story related by Jerome. While he went on to detail the Septuagint’s rendering of *’ur kasdim* as a place name, the *Gloss* simply records his definition of the Hebrew and the explanation. Jerome concludes by recording the fate of Haran, which appears separately as an interlinear gloss that may be read above Haran’s name in the biblical text.

Although Jerome and the *Gloss* here present the narrative as a Hebrew tale [“fabula”], they later rely on the account to explain the chronological discrepancy about Abraham’s age. In his comment on Genesis 12:4, Jerome notes that Terah was seventy when Abraham was born (Genesis 11:26). How then could he die at 205 (11:32) when Abraham was only 75 (12:4)? Jerome finds the answer in the narrative of the furnace. The *Gloss* relays his comment as follows:

Therefore the tradition of the Hebrews is true [“vera est igitur hebræorum traditio”], that Terah and his sons went out from the fire of the Chaldeans, and that Abram, who was encompassed by the Babylonian fire because he refused to worship it, was set free by divine assistance. [Abram’s] age is counted from that time on, namely from the time he acknowledged the Lord and rejected the idols of the Chaldeans.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ “*Et mortuus est Aran ante patrem suum in terra, qua natus est, in regione Chaldaeorum. Pro eo, quod legimus in regione Chaldaeorum, in hebraeo habet in ur Chesdim, id est in igne Chaldaeorum. Tradunt autem Hebraei ex hac occasione istius modi fabulam quod Abraham in ignem missus sit, quia ignem adorare noluerit, quem Chaldaei colunt, et dei auxilio liberatus de idololatriæ igne profugerit — quod in sequentibus scribitur egressum esse Tharam cum sobole sua de regione Chaldaeorum pro eo, quod in hebraeo habetur de incendio Chaldaeorum — et hoc esse, quod nunc dicitur mortuus est Aran ante conspectum Tharæ patris sui in terra natiuitatis suæ in igne Chaldaeorum: quod uidelicet ignem nolens adorare igne consumptus sit. Loquitur autem postea dominus ad Abraham ego sum, qui eduxi te de igne Chaldaeorum.*” Jerome, *Hebraicæ Quaestiones in Libro Geneseos*, ed. Pierre de Lagarde, CCL 72 (Turnhout, 1959), 15.

⁵⁹ Lesley Smith, *Medieval Exegesis in Translation: Commentaries on the Book of Ruth* (Kalamazoo, 1996), xv.

⁶⁰ “Septuagintaquinque annorum. Hier. Si thare pater abrae in regione chaldæa lxx annorum genuit abram, et in charram ducentesimoquinto anno mortuus est, quomodo post mortem thare abram exiens de charra lxxv annorum memoratur, cum a natiuitate eius vsque ad mortem patris cxxxv anni fuisse doceantur. Vera est igitur hebræorum traditio quod egressus sit thare cum filiis suis de igne chaldæorum, et quod abram vallatus babilonio incendio, quia illud adorare nolebat, liberatus sit auxilio dei, et ex illo tempore reputetur ei

According to this comment, Abraham's ordeal was a "baptism by fire" from which he emerged reborn. So when Scripture gives his age as seventy-five, it means seventy-five years after he escaped from the furnace. Jerome calculated that Abraham must have been sixty years older than that, and thus the chronological problem may be resolved. In his mind, this confirms the reliability of the furnace account. Rather than a fable, the narrative is now called a "Hebrew tradition," and Jerome pronounces that it is "true," an accurate insight into the *Hebraica veritas*.⁶¹

Because of Jerome's ringing endorsement, Augustine listed the narrative among several solutions to the problem of Abraham's age in his *Questions on the Heptateuch*, and he returned to it in *The City of God*.⁶² The version in the *Questions* was certainly known to the compiler of the *Gloss* on Genesis, who retained it in his summary of Augustine's comment.⁶³ Later commentators also relayed the narrative as Jerome told it. It is found in Bede's (ca. 673–735) *Commentary on the Beginning of Genesis*,⁶⁴ Alcuin of York's (ca. 735–804) *Quaestiones in Genesim*, Rabanus Maurus's (776/784–856) *Commentarium in Genesim*,⁶⁵ and Remigius of

tempus aetatis ex quo confessus est deum, spernens ydola chaldæorum. Potest autem fieri, vt quia scriptura reliquit incertum, ante paucos annos thare de chaldæa profectus veniret in aran quam morte obiret, vel statim post persecutionem, et ibi diutius moratus sit." *Biblia Latina cum Glossa Ordinaria*, 44. Cf. Jerome, *Hebraicae Quaestiones*, 15–16; and Jerome, *Hebrew Questions on Genesis*, trans. C. T. R. Hayward (Oxford, 1995), 43–44.

This comment is present in MS BNF Latin 14399, fol. 51r (also MS Troyes, Médiathèque du Grand Troyes 195, fol. 46r–v; MS Troyes, Médiathèque du Grand Troyes 65, fol. 33v). However, it is not found in several early manuscripts, including MS BNF Latin 14398 (also Codex S. Petri Salisburgensis a.VIII.34; MS London, Lambeth Palace Library Cod. 349). It appears that the comment was added as part of a twelfth-century revision of the *Gloss* on Genesis. See Buc, *L'ambiguité* (n. 49 above), 87–96; Stirnemann, "Où ont été fabriqués" (n. 47 above), 262; Schoenfeld, *Isaac* (n. 5 above), 131–33; Alexander Andrée, *Gilbertus Universalis* (n. 9 above), 91; Dove, *Glossa Ordinaria*, 28–40; Smith, *Glossa Ordinaria*, 73–76, 105; and eadem, "Job in the *Glossa ordinaria* on the Bible," in *The Brill Companion to Job*, ed. Franklin T. Harkins and Aaron Canty (Leiden, forthcoming).

⁶¹ That Abraham was rescued from the fire is indicated in the text of the Vulgate itself. Neh. 9:7, "You are the one, O Lord God, who chose Abram and brought him out of *'ur kasdim*," is rendered "tu ipse Domine Deus qui elegisti Abram et eduxisti eum de igne Chaldeorum." 2 Esr. 9:7, *Biblia Sacra iuxta vulgatam versionem*, ed. Roger Gryson, 5th ed. (Stuttgart, 2007), 666.

⁶² Augustine, *De civitate dei* 16:15, ed. Bernhard Dombart and Alfons Kalb, 5th ed. (Stuttgart, 1981), 2:151.

⁶³ *Biblia Latina cum Glossa Ordinaria*, 43–44; cf. MS BNF Latin 14399, fol. 50r–v, and MS BNF Latin 14398, fol. 37r.

⁶⁴ Bede, *Libri quatuor in principium Genesis*, ed. Charles W. Jones, CCL 118A (Turnhout, 1967), 1:166–67, 196; idem, *On Genesis*, trans. Calvin Kendall (Liverpool, 2008), 242, 244, 274.

⁶⁵ Rabanus Maurus, *Commentarium in Genesim*, PL 107, cols. 531–34.

Auxerre's (ca. 841–908) *Expositio super Genesim*.⁶⁶ When the *Gloss* on Genesis was compiled, therefore, the account of the Chaldeans' furnace had already circulated widely among Christian interpreters of this book.

CONCLUSIONS

Twelfth-century Christian readers who consulted the *Glossa Ordinaria* on Genesis 11 and 12 would have learned a similar story about Abraham as contemporary Jewish students of Rashi's commentary. Both sources relate that, before the patriarch left his homeland, he was cast into the Chaldean furnace. The reasons given are similar. For Rashi, it was a punishment decreed by Nimrod because Abraham had destroyed his father's idols. In the *Gloss*, it was because Abraham refused to participate in the Chaldean cult. Both relate that Abraham was set free; the means is not stated by Rashi, but it was a miraculous divine deliverance in the *Gloss*. According to both expositions, Abraham's brother Haran was less fortunate, being consumed by the fire from which Abraham had escaped. In Rashi, this was because he reluctantly followed Abraham's example only to save his own life. The *Gloss* does not distinguish between the motivations of the brothers; both rejected Chaldean worship, and no reason is given for Abraham's survival and Haran's death.

Readers of the *Gloss* and Rashi would know full well that this narrative was not related among the biblical accounts of Abraham's departure for Canaan. As transmitted in the *Gloss*, it is an extrabiblical Hebrew tale or tradition transmitted by Jerome and Augustine.⁶⁷ Because it explains the discrepancy between the ages of Abraham and Terah, it may be considered reliable. For Jewish readers of Rashi, the story is a *midrash aggadah*, familiar from rabbinic and medieval sources, which explains how Haran died "before" or "because of" his father and interprets the expression *'ur kasdim*.

This narrative is among numerous explanations of Genesis that were transmitted both by Rashi and the *Gloss*. These include interpretations regarding the generation of Enosh (Genesis 4:26), Abraham's migration from Egypt (13:1–4), the identification of Melchizedek with Shem (14:18), the idolatry of Ishmael (21:9), the healing of Jacob's thigh at Salem (33:18), Potiphar's lust for Joseph (37:35), and many others.⁶⁸ The same interpretations emerge in contemporary Jewish

⁶⁶ Remigius of Auxerre, *Expositio super Genesim*, ed. Burton Van Name Edwards, CCM 136 (Turnhout, 1999), 103.

⁶⁷ Thus Rupert of Deutz introduces the narrative: "Hebraei tradunt, et ecclesiastici illustres uiri ueram esse defendunt." See his comment at Gen. 5:2 in *De Sancta Trinitate et operibus eius*, ed. Hrabanus Haacke, CCM 21 (Turnhout, 1971), 333.

⁶⁸ The following, by no means an exhaustive list, locates each interpretation in the *Glossa Ordinaria* and in Rashi's *Commentary* on Genesis. A dedicated analysis of each would be needed to reveal in full the relationship between the interpretations in the two sources.

and Christian commentaries because of a shared heritage of late-antique Bible interpretation: because Jerome knew some midrash, Christians can cite Jerome and Jews can cite midrash, and both may arrive at the same conclusion. Jews and Christians living at the same time and place therefore shared particular interpretations of the Bible without necessarily having learned them from one another.

As is clear from the transmission of the furnace narrative throughout late antiquity and the early Middle Ages, this was not a new phenomenon in the twelfth century. Jews and Christians had long used a similar account to expound Genesis 11 and 12. But the simultaneous appearance of this narrative in the *Gloss* and in Rashi is nevertheless important because of the prestige that became attached to these particular sources. Because Rashi's commentary was so widely disseminated, every Jew who read the standard commentary on the weekly Torah readings and every Christian who turned to the primary source of rabbinic exegesis learned of Abraham's ordeal. And because the *Glossa Ordinaria* became a standard guide to the interpretation of the Bible, every Christian who read its comments on Genesis 11 and 12 read the same interpretation as Jews or Christians who studied the *Glossa Hebraica*.

Although Jerome is a prominent source of midrash in the *Gloss*, he is not the only one. Commentaries of other Church fathers, including Augustine, were also conduits of Jewish exegesis. In Genesis, a small number of glosses from Remigius of Auxerre's commentary supply further Jewish interpretations.⁶⁹ In Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles, Rabanus Maurus and his Jewish sources fill this role.⁷⁰ Because each book of the *Gloss* draws on a different constellation of patristic and Carolingian commentators, each one must be examined in its own right to

The edition of the *Biblia Latina cum Glossa Ordinaria* referred to is given in n. 49 above. The edition of *Perushei Rashi 'al ha-Torah* is given in n. 40 above. The generation of Enosh (Gen. 4:26; *Gloss*, 33; Rashi, 25); Abraham's migration from Egypt (Gen. 13:2; *Gloss*, 45; Rashi, 48); the identification of Melchizedek with Shem (Gen. 14:18; *Gloss*, 47; Rashi, 53); the dwelling of Ishmael's descendants in the desert (Gen. 16:12; *Gloss*, 50; Rashi, 59); the naming of Sarai as Sarah (Gen. 17:15; *Gloss*, 51; Rashi, 61); the idolatry of Ishmael (Gen. 21:9; *Gloss*, 58; Rashi, 78); the burial of the patriarchs at Kiryath Arba (Gen. 23:2; *Gloss*, 61; Rashi, 83); the naming of Ephron as Ephran (Gen. 23:16; *Gloss*, 62; Rashi, 85); Isaac's business in the field (Gen. 24:63; *Gloss*, 65; Rashi, 89); the healing of Jacob's thigh (Gen. 33:18; *Gloss*, 84; Rashi, 124–25); the breeding of mules by Anah (Gen. 36:24; *Gloss*, 87; Rashi, 131); Potiphar's lust for Joseph (Gen. 37:35; *Gloss*, 90; Gen. 41:45; Rashi, 146); Joseph's elevation (Gen. 41:43; *Gloss*, 95; Rashi, 145); the naming of Joseph as Zaphenath-Paneah (Gen. 41:45; *Gloss*, 96; Rashi, 146).

⁶⁹ Burton Van Name Edwards, "Introduction" (n. 47 above), xlix–l, liii–lv.

⁷⁰ A. Saltman, "Rabanus Maurus and the Pseudo-Hieronimian 'Quaestiones Hebraicae in Libros Regum et Paralipomenon,'" *Harvard Theological Review* 66 (1973): 43–75; idem, *Pseudo-Jerome: Quaestiones on the Book of Samuel* (Leiden, 1975), 35–38; Van Liere, "The Literal Sense" (n. 14 above), 64–65.

see which exegetes supplied the glossators with a knowledge of Jewish interpretations and how these relate to the exegesis of contemporary Jews.

CODA

In the mid-twelfth century, the rabbinic interpretations shared by Jews and Christians of northern France increased as exegetes, including Andrew of Saint Victor, learned from contemporary Jews.⁷¹ This is illustrated by Andrew's comments on the verses examined above. His interpretation of Genesis 11:28 includes details about Abraham's ordeal that would have been familiar to anyone who had read the *Gloss* on Genesis. Haran died because he was "thrown into the fire which he did not want to worship (as the Hebrews relate)."⁷² But when he turns to the question of the relative ages of Abraham and Terah in Genesis 12:4, he tells his readers something new:

The Hebrews say ["dicunt ... Hebraei"] that Abraham's years are only counted from the time when, refusing to worship fire, he was thrown into the fire by the Chaldeans and was rescued by the Lord and carried, with angelic help, to another place, where he abounded in many delights.⁷³

The first part of the comment relates Jerome's insight into Abraham's age. But, to the best of my knowledge, the motif of Abraham's angelic transportation to an Edenic paradise is not found in extant Christian or Jewish texts that would have been available to Andrew.⁷⁴ Elsewhere in his commentary on Genesis, he

⁷¹ See nn. 2 and 22 above; cf. William McKane, *Selected Christian Hebraists* (Cambridge, 1989), 42.

⁷² "Ante oculos eius obiit, in ignem, quem adorare noluit (ut tradunt Hebraei), proiectus." Andrew of Saint Victor, *Expositio super Heptateuchum*, ed. Charles Lohr and Rainer Berndt, CCM 53 (Turnhout, 1986), 58. On Andrew's use of the *Gloss* on Genesis, see *ibid.*, pp. xviii, 239–42; Buc, *L'ambigüité*, 72–73n9; Frans van Liere, "Introduction," in *Andreae de Sancto Victore Opera*, vol. 2, *Expositio Hystorica in Librum Regum*, CCM 53A (Turnhout, 1996), xxi–xxviii; Smith, *Glossa Ordinaria*, 208–9.

⁷³ "Dicunt tamen Hebraei, quod anni Abraham non computantur nisi, ex quo ignem adorare nolens, a Chaldaeis in ignem proiectus est, et a Domino liberatus et angelico ministerio ad alium locum transportatus est, ubi multis affluebat deliciis." Andrew of Saint Victor, *Expositio super Heptateuchum*, 58; a translation of Andrew's comments is in Joy Schroeder, *The Book of Genesis* (Grand Rapids, MI, 2015), 133–38.

⁷⁴ See no. 47 in Rainer Berndt, "Les interprétations juives dans le *Commentaire de l'Heptateuque* d'André de Saint-Victor," *Recherches augustinienes* 24 (1989): 199–240, at 211. The sources listed, Peter the Chanter and Stephen Langton, do not relate the motif of Abraham's transportation. See no. 13 in Dahan, "Les interprétations juives" (n. 22 above), 146; and Gilbert Dahan, "Exégèse et polémique dans les Commentaires de la Genèse d'Étienne Langton," in *Les Juifs au regard de l'histoire: Mélanges en l'honneur de Bernhard Blumenkranz* (Paris, 1985), 129–48, at 138.

claims to relate information that he learned from a Jewish informant.⁷⁵ In the apparent absence of other possibilities, I suggest that the comment on Genesis 12:4 is another case in point.⁷⁶ Andrew has incorporated a Jewish insight into the story of Abraham in the furnace alongside information known from Jerome, and the whole unit is designated as a Hebrew saying.

If Andrew did discuss the narrative of Abraham in the furnace with a contemporary Jew, the foregoing examination shows that it would not have been a simple transfer of information from one party to the other. This narrative was among a corpus of late-antique interpretations transmitted independently by Jewish and Christian exegetes and acknowledged by the latter to be Jewish interpretations. If Andrew asked Jewish informants about Ur of the Chaldeans or Abraham's age, they would have told him an account that he already knew. Just one new detail, the manner of Abraham's escape, betrays that he had a source of

According to the *Ma'aseh 'Avraham 'Avinu 'Alav ha-Shalom*, a late-medieval midrash first printed in Constantinople in 1580, Abraham was rescued when the furnace was transformed into a royal pavilion, a motif also found in Islamic sources; see Bernard H. Mehlman, "A Literary Examination of Maaseh Avraham Avinu Alav HaShalom," *Review of Rabbinic Judaism* 2 (1999): 103–25, at 118, 122; idem, "The Maaseh Avraham Avinu Alav HaShalom: Translation, Notes, and Commentary," *Reform Jewish Quarterly* (Spring 2012): 3–28, at 22; Tohar, *Abraham*, 97; and Gutmann, "Abraham" (n. 27 above), 348–49. A similar motif is found in earlier midrashic accounts of Daniel's three companions; see Ginzberg, *Legends* (n. 27 above), 2:1099–1100n87, Song of Songs Rabba 7:8, Tanḥuma (Buber) *Tsav* 3, and Tanḥuma (printed) *Tsav* 2. In medieval Ashkenaz, the heavenly reward granted to martyrs was elaborated in detail in twelfth-century crusader narratives (see n. 38 above). However, Andrew's commentary is the only source I have found indicating that the story of Abraham's ordeal ended with angelic transportation to this paradise. See Shmuel Shepkaru, "To Die for God: Martyrs' Heaven in Hebrew and Latin Crusade Narratives," *Speculum* 77 (2002): 311–41; and idem, "From after Death to Afterlife: Martyrdom and Its Recompense," *AJS Review* 24 (1999): 1–44.

⁷⁵ Andrew introduces his interpretation of the words of Lamech at Gen. 4:24 with "dicit Hebraeus meus." As Berndt notes, the comment that Joseph Bekhor Shor attributed to Joseph Kara is almost identical. Andrew of Saint Victor, *Expositio super Heptateuchum*, 44; *Perushei Rabi Yosef Bekhor Shor 'al ha-Torah*, ed. Yehoshafat Nevo (Jerusalem, 1994), 14–15. Hugh of Saint Victor, Peter Comestor, and Peter the Chanter give less detailed interpretations. See no. 21 in Berndt, "Les interprétations juives," 206–7; Hugh of Saint Victor, *Adnotationes elucidatoriae in Pentateuchon*, PL 175, col. 45; Peter Comestor, *Historia Scholastica*, PL 198, col. 1079; no. 7 in Dahan, "Les interprétations juives," 145. Regarding the expression "dicit Hebraeus meus," Beryl Smalley wrote: "The expression *Hebraeus meus* in a medieval commentary arouses our caution. The quotation which it introduces may derive from St. Jerome, who perhaps took it from Origen. Coming from Andrew it usually means a contemporary." Beryl Smalley, "Andrew of St. Victor, Abbot of Wigmore: A Twelfth Century Hebraist," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 10 (1938): 358–73, at 362.

⁷⁶ Rainer Berndt, *André de Saint-Victor (†1175): Exégète et théologien* (Paris, 1992), 201–13, 221–24; and Michael Signer, "Introduction," in *Andreae de Sancto Victore Opera*, 6: *Expositio in Ezechielem*, CCM 53E (Turnhout, 1991), xxi–xxxii.

information not available to earlier Christian exegetes. Because the *Glossa Ordinaria* and the *Glossa Hebraica* transmit a similar narrative, and because they were so widely read, Andrew and contemporary Jewish exegetes already interpreted the same verses of Genesis in a similar way.

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