THE BIBLE AND JEWS IN MEDIEVAL SPAIN

Norman Roth
The Bible and Jews in Medieval Spain

The Bible and Jews in Medieval Spain examines the grammatical, exegetical, philosophical and mystical interpretations of the Bible that took place in Spain during the medieval period.

The Bible was the foundation of Jewish culture in medieval Spain. Following the scientific analysis of Hebrew grammar which emerged in al-Andalus in the ninth and tenth centuries, biblical exegesis broke free of homiletic interpretation and explored the text on grammatical and contextual terms. While some of the earliest commentary was in Arabic, scholars began using Hebrew more regularly during this period. The first complete biblical commentaries in Hebrew were written by Abraham Ibn ‘Ezra, and this set the standard for the generations that followed.

This book analyzes the approach and unique contributions of these commentaries, moving on to those of later Christian Spain, including the Qimhi family, Nahmanides and his followers and the esoteric-mystical tradition. Major topics in the commentaries are compared and contrasted. Thus, a unified picture of the whole fabric of Hebrew commentary in medieval Spain emerges. In addition, the book describes the many Spanish Jewish biblical manuscripts that have remained and details the history of printed editions and Spanish translations (for Jews and Christians) by medieval Spanish Jews.

This book will appeal to scholars and students of medieval Spain, as well as those interested in the history of religion and cultural history.

Norman Roth is Professor Emeritus at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. He is the author of several books and numerous articles, and the editor of Medieval Jewish Civilization (2003; 2nd ed., 2016). In 2007 he was awarded the Judaica Bibliography Award of the Association of Jewish Libraries for Dictionary of Iberian Jewish and Converso Authors.
Studies in Medieval History and Culture

English Readers of Catholic Saints
The Printing History of William Caxton's Golden Legend
Judy Ann Ford

Early Medieval Venice
Cultural Memory and History
Luigi Andrea Berto

Heresy and Citizenship
Persecution of Heresy in Late Medieval German Cities
Eugene Smelyansky

From Justinian to Branimir
The Making of the Middle Ages in Dalmatia
Danijel Džino

The Triumph of an Accursed Lineage
Kingship in Castile from Alfonso X to Alfonso XI (1252–1350)
Fernando Arias Guillén

Franks and Lombards in Italian Carolingian Texts
Memories of the Vanquished
Luigi Andrea Berto

The Bible and Jews in Medieval Spain
Norman Roth

The Cursed Carolers in Context
Edited by Lynneth Miller Renberg and Bradley Phillis

For more information about this series, please visit: https://www.routledge.com/Studies-in-Medieval-History-and-Culture/book-series/SMHC
For my son Gil

In memory of Rabbi Abe (Abraham) Lipshitz
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Table</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preface</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of abbreviations</td>
<td>xv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The Bible and its interpretation: in Muslim Spain</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Abraham Ibn ‘Ezra</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ibn ‘Ezra, Part 2</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Bible texts in Spain: manuscripts, editions and translations</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 1: Sources and names cited by Ibn ‘Ezra, Qimḥi and Nahmanides</td>
<td>393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix 2: Commentaries by name of book and of author</td>
<td>403</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td>463</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table

6.1 Hebrew Bible Manuscripts and Editions by City or Locale 337
For the Jew, the Bible is more than just a book; it is a living and speaking entity. Profiat Duran (fourteenth to early fifteenth century), discussing things necessary for learning, observed that traditionally one learns not in a quiet voice but aloud, so that all the senses and “powers” of the body are involved. He notes that perhaps for this reason the Bible is often referred to as miqra, meaning calling or reading (aloud).¹ Note that this is quite the opposite of the term “scripture” which means “writing,” and in this sense has no Hebrew equivalent. As Martin Buber so eloquently expressed it, “Do we mean a Book? We mean the Voice. Do we mean that we must learn to read? We mean that we must learn to hear.”²

Memorization was therefore an essential part of Jewish learning from the earliest times, both for learning the Bible and later for the “oral law,” the interpretations and discussions of which resulted in the Talmud. Without the benefit of printed books, people had to rely on relatively expensive manuscript copies. In schools there were never sufficient copies for all the students, and typically the teacher recited aloud and the students repeated after him. In synagogues, the Torah was read from a large scroll and readings from the prophets from smaller scrolls. Few congregants had copies of the texts, but would gather around those who did or else listen carefully to the recitation. All of this meant that a great emphasis was placed on oral transmission and comprehension. This results in virtual memorization, sometimes completely so, of the texts (talmudic as well as biblical; I have known some cases even in modern times of students who have memorized most of the Babylonian Talmud).

Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, it creates what Buber meant, the attention paid to the exact meaning and even the sound of the words. Hebrew words have a melody, almost a poetic character, and the more one becomes attuned to this, the deeper the comprehension not only of sentences but of individual words. There is no doubt that this phenomenon resulted in an enhanced sensitivity to the meaning of the text and an awareness of the nuances of meaning, which resulted ultimately in the exceptional level of biblical interpretation we find among the Jews of Spain.
Familiarity with the Bible was not, of course, confined to hearing it read in the synagogue, where not only on Sabbaths but also twice during the week portions of the Torah are read as part of the service. In addition, on Sabbaths and holidays there are readings from prophetic books and from other biblical books. The book of Esther, known as the Megiylah (Megillah, scroll, although other biblical books are also so designated), was read aloud on the holiday of Purim. In Spain the custom was for individuals to read Proverbs between Passover and the minor holiday of Sheminiy ʻAşeret. Private obligations were also undertaken; as we shall see, Jewish law required the private, individual, reading of the weekly Torah portion together with its translation during the week. Children, or at least boys, were taught the Torah from a very early age in schools or at home, and in Spain it seems obvious that they also learned the other biblical books, since it can be demonstrated from various sources that average Jews had an excellent knowledge of the Bible. Some women, at least, also studied the Bible, and we have records of women who owned biblical manuscripts among their treasured possessions.

The single most important cultural development among the Jews of medieval Spain was the rediscovery and rebirth of the Hebrew language. The creation of a correct grammar and the scientific study of the language necessarily involved careful and constant investigation of the Bible, resulting in biblical commentary which went far beyond the traditional allegory and mythical interpretation.

Early biblical commentary in Spain was written in Judeo-Arabic, the spoken and written language of Jews in Muslim lands. In the twelfth century, Abraham Ibn ʻEzra produced a comprehensive body of commentary in Hebrew, made accessible in Italy, Provence and perhaps even France, as well as his native Spain. From then on, all biblical scholarship in Spain was in Hebrew, among the Jews as well as a few Christians.

This book investigates the study and interpretation of the Bible by Jews in medieval Spain, from the Muslim domination through the fifteenth century in Christian Spain. The first chapter discusses biblical interpretation and translations in general before moving to the commentators of Muslim Spain (which included much of northern Spain as well as the South), both published and no longer extant. Here also are introduced the various theories or approaches to exegesis in the writings of these scholars. Abraham Ibn ʻEzra, the most important of Jewish commentators, already introduced in the first chapter, is the subject of detailed treatment in the second. Biblical interpretation of Provence and Christian Spain generally is the subject of the third chapter, with a major focus on the famous “Naḥmanides.”

The final chapter also discusses biblical manuscripts and printed editions prepared by Jews as well as translations in the vernacular. Included are details on all extant manuscripts as well as printed editions done in medieval Iberia and medieval Spanish translations.
At the end are appendices that give information on all of the sources utilized by the “main” commentators, Ibn ‘Ezra, Qimḥi and Naḥmanides, as well as a list of all the commentaries by books of the Bible.

To date, no such comprehensive investigation has been undertaken, particularly focusing on medieval Spain (an earlier Spanish book on the subject is general and somewhat superficial). A few general survey articles are useful, perhaps the best being Barry Walfish, “Medieval Jewish Interpretation,” in The Jewish Study Bible (Oxford, 2004, 2014), although in fact extending far beyond the medieval period.

It will be apparent that I am, of course, deeply indebted to many scholars, past and present, and particularly the outstanding work which has been done and continues to be done in Spain.

Technical matters: transliteration

Hebrew letters. I use a unique system of transliteration which attempts to reproduce the sound as well as the transcription of words. Many scholars, students and others have often expressed to me their frustration in not knowing the correct pronunciation of Hebrew names or words, often impossible to guess from current transliterations. Indeed, there is no universally accepted standard transliteration of Hebrew and various attempts to impose one have met with failure, resulting in even more confusion.

I do not double letters (except for commonly known Hebrew names or words, such as names of holidays or common religious items, Shabbat, sidur, tefillin, etc.) inasmuch as I see no reason for this, other than in a purely linguistic study. However, as an aid to correct pronunciation or where the need to indicate a vowel letter seemed necessary (e.g., to aid in finding a title in a catalogue) I have indicated “long” Hebrew vowels. To facilitate proper pronunciation, I have indicated “long -e” (i.e., hiyriq) as ey, with yod, or -ê, without yod, and long -i as iy. There is no short o or u in Hebrew and therefore no need to mark these letters. Š (š) indicates Heb. samek (s) to distinguish it from (S, s); siyn. Sh (sh) indicates Heb. shiyn. Rarely, b indicates the shortened b sound, pronounced today as “v” (this is done only for strict transliteration or when necessary to avoid confusion with vav). Vav, of course, was and is pronounced v and not w and therefore the former letter is used to transliterate it. Also rarely, an apostrophe separates two vowels where there may be confusion about pronunciation. There is also no reason to indicate simple e as ê, as is done in some transliterations; furthermore, this could lead to confusion as sheva mobile. Also, I have kept the standard spelling of the names of talmudic “orders” and tractates, again due to familiarity with these.

Names. Over 40 years of research on the history and culture of Jews in medieval Spain has, I trust, given me the right to insist on the correct transliteration of names, Muslim (and Qaraite) as well as Jewish. Modern Spanish
scholars are for the most part extremely careful about this, but few others seem to care. I have often indicated in notes the explanation for the correct spelling, for example, Ibn ‘Aknīn and not ‘Aqnin or Ibn Shu’ayb (not only is it an Arabic word “help, aid” but it is the name of a Muslim prophet). The careless misspelling of such names not only demonstrates the ignorance of the writer but makes it confusing to identify a particular scholar or locate his work.

Spanish names follow medieval usage, thus Jaime and not Jaume (and certainly not James). I prefer traditional names for Spanish cities, thus Gerona instead of modern Catalan Girona.

Biblical names, because they are commonly known (Moses, Abraham), follow the conventional English spellings. Other Hebrew names are transliterated in accord with the method noted above.

Notes
1 Ma‘asēh efod, 20, “seventh way.”
2 In Buber, Martin and Rosenzweig, Franz. Die Schrift und ihre Verdeutschung (Berlin, 1936), 45. For years while I was teaching in the university I had this quotation posted on the door of my office and students would often ask about it (perhaps not as often as I would have liked).
Abbreviations

AJS = Association for Jewish Studies
Ar. = Arabic
art. = article
art. cit. = article previously (immediately) cited
‘A.Z. = ‘Avodah zarah (talmudic tractate)
B.A.H. = see B.R.A.H.
b. = ben (Heb., “son of”)
B.B. = Baba Batra (talmudic tractate)
B.M. = London, British Museum (now British Library)
B.N. = Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale or Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional
Bodl. = Oxford, Bodleian Library
B.R.A.H. = Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia
B.S.O.A.S. = Bulletin of the School of Oriental and Asian Studies
Dan. = Daniel
Deut. = Deuteronomy
E.J. = Encyclopaedia Judaica (Jerusalem, 1971–72), 16 vols.; most
references are to this ed. but in some cases I have consulted
the second ed., Detroit, 2007, cited as E.J. 2
Eng. = English
Ex. = Exodus
Ezek. = Ezekiel
facs. = facsimile
Gen. = Genesis
H.B. = Hebräische Bibliographie (journal)
Heb. = Hebrew
H.T.R. = Harvard Theological Review
H.U.C.A. = Hebrew Union College Annual
Isa. = Isaiah
J. = “Jerusalem” Talmud
J.A.O.S. = Journal of the American Oriental Society
Jer. = Jeremiash
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J.P.S.</td>
<td>Jewish Publication Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.Q.R.</td>
<td>Jewish Quarterly Review (o.s.) = old series</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.J.S.</td>
<td>Journal of Jewish Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.S.S.</td>
<td>Journal of Semitic Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J.T.S.</td>
<td>Jewish Theological Seminary (New York)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K</td>
<td>Kitâb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K&quot;S</td>
<td>Kiryat (Qiryat) scfer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lev.</td>
<td>Leviticus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.E.A.H.</td>
<td>Miscelanea de estudios árabes y hebraicos</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.G.W.J.</td>
<td>Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M.T.</td>
<td>Moses b. Maimon, Mishnéh Torah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neh.</td>
<td>Nehemiah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Num.</td>
<td>Numbers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P.R.E.</td>
<td>Pirke (Pirqey) de-Rabiy Eli#ezer (see Sources below)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prov.</td>
<td>Proverbs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ps.</td>
<td>Psalm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>q.v.</td>
<td>quod vide, which see</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.A.E.</td>
<td>Real academia española</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.C.T.</td>
<td>Revista catalana de teologia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R.E.J.</td>
<td>Revue des études juives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rpt.</td>
<td>reprint (ed.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S.E.I.</td>
<td>Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam (see below, Encyclopedias)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s.a.</td>
<td>sine ano (no date of publication indicated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s.l.</td>
<td>sine loco (no place of publication indicated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sp.</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>s.t.</td>
<td>sub titulo (under the title of)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St.</td>
<td>Steinschneider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tr.</td>
<td>translation, translated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z.A.W.</td>
<td>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z.D.M.G.</td>
<td>Zeitschrift der deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zech.</td>
<td>Zechariah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zeph.</td>
<td>Zephaniah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z.f.h.B.</td>
<td>Zeitschrift für hebraische Bibliographie</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Chapter 1

The Bible and its interpretation

In Muslim Spain

Tanak[h] (acronym = Torah, Neviyim [Prophets], Ketuviyim [Writings]), today commonly called the “Hebrew Bible,” is the foundation of Jewish personal and communal life and of the entire Jewish culture. Yet during much of history it has remained nearly a closed book which few could actually understand. This is due to the sometimes difficult Hebrew in which it is written, as well as to the obscure meaning of many parts of it. During the Hellenistic period, very few Jews could understand even the Torah, which is in relatively simple Hebrew, that it was read in Greek translation in the synagogues in the Land of Israel and in many places in the Diaspora.

The Aramaic translation was substituted for the Greek translation in the Roman period, although in some synagogues the use of Greek continued (in Byzantium and other Greek-speaking areas, also in the medieval period). In contrast to the earlier period, it appears that the Torah was read in Hebrew, along with the Aramaic translation. As for the rest of the books of the Bible, only selected portions from some of the Prophets were read as part of the Sabbath and holiday service, immediately following the reading from the Torah. The assumption was that these readings helped “elucidate” the Torah portion, but no further effort was made to investigate or comment upon the prophetic readings themselves.

For the most part, the understanding of what the Bible means was left to the few and usually brief comments of the sages preserved in the Talmud supplemented by the more detailed midrashiyim, which in fact were products of the medieval period. It should be noted that the Talmud was not “friendly” to parts of the Bible, with various sages wanting to condemn books such as Song of Songs, Qohelet (Ecclesiastes) and even Ezekiel because of perceived “heresies.” While there were contradictory views about Ben Sira, it is due to the same opinion of it that this was confined to the Apocrypha (and thus is rarely read today), although Hebrew versions of it were known and cited by medieval Spanish Jewish writers. The general Jewish attitude was that the purpose of knowing the Bible was to understand the commandments and laws, in fact limited to the Torah (with a few exceptions), for which the Talmud is the ultimate authority.
This position had its advocates even in Spain, such as Judah b. Barzilay (born ca. 1070) in Barcelona, an important scholar, who (echoing a talmudic saying) warned against those who study only the Bible but do not know the explanations of the commandments (found in the “oral Torah,” that is, the Talmud), “and especially many ba’aley ha-miqra [literally ‘masters of the Bible,’ perhaps Qaraites] whom we see in this time, since they do not know the Talmud and the meaning of the commandments they are like heretics.”

Joseph Ibn Susān (late fourteenth century, probably Toledo) relates that when he was in a certain place outside of the kingdom of Castile (probably Valencia, which he visited), one Friday afternoon two students came to see him and were amazed to find that a scholar such as he had been studying the weekly portion, as if to imply that this was a waste of time. Joseph reported them to their teacher and they were expelled from the yeshivah for their lack of respect for this obligation.

Profiat Duran (Isaac b. Moses ha-Lēvy, late fourteenth to early fifteenth century) complained about the opposite extreme and decried even scholars and great sages who are satisfied with merely the required reading of the weekly Torah portion and translation,

and possibly if you would ask them where a particular verse is [in the Bible] they would not know, and they also consider someone a fool who wastes his time with the Bible, since the Talmud is the important thing.

This “sickness,” he says, is very strong in France and Germany at the present time and in previous generations; however, in the earlier generations it was not so. Even allowing for the typical exaggeration of such statements in medieval sources, there is much truth in this, although certainly not in Spain, at least prior to his generation. There, the study of the entire Bible became common practice among even the ordinary Jews (inventories of books owned by Spanish Jews reveal a number of separate codices of biblical books owned by Jews in various communities, and citations of even obscure biblical verses are common in private letters and other documents).

**Aramaic and Arabic translations**

According to the well-known adage “all translation is commentary,” indeed the early (Jewish) Greek translation (Septuagint) and later the Aramaic, Syriac and Arabic translations were to a greater or lesser degree commentaries. Even stronger is the admonition in the Talmud: “Whoever translates a passage as it is [ke-ṣurato; literally] is a liar and who adds to it [elaborates on its meaning] insults and blasphemes” (Kiddushin 49a). Earlier, Rabbi Gamaliel had wanted to bury an Aramaic translation of Job under a pile of rocks to prevent it being read (Sanhedrin 116a). In spite of this, there is a rabbinical requirement for individuals to study every week the portion of the Torah,
which is to be read in the synagogue, together with the Aramaic translation (called simply *Targum*, but specifically that attributed to Onkelos [not “Onqelos”; the name is Greek]), but increasingly in the medieval period fewer Jews understood the Aramaic translation.\textsuperscript{12}

There is an important (anonymous) geonic responsum (*Teshu	extit{ō}t ha-	extit{ge	extit{ō}niym}, 124–25) mentioning the *Ere	extit{ṣ} Yisra	extit{ē}l* or “Jerusalem” *Targum*: “We do not know who said [wrote] this nor do we even know [the text] itself, and we have not heard of it except a little.” This refers to the *Targum Yerushalmiy* I translation of the Pentateuch. It further says that translating into any language other than the Aramaic of the accepted *Targum* (Onkelos) is forbidden (for reading during services) because of the difficulty of translating correctly, but to interpret and preach in other languages is allowed. It also states that “our *Targum*” was transmitted from the prophets; cf. *Megillah* 3a, which attributes the translation of the Prophets to Jonathan b. Uziel “by the mouth of Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.”

Naṭronai Gaōn (Sura, near Baghdad; years of his office, ca. 849–57) said that “those who do not translate [Aramaic] and say that we do not need the translation of the rabbis but rather in our own language [Arabic]” do not fulfill the obligation of reading the Torah with the translation. Furthermore, according to him this is a biblical commandment, and the translation must actually be read aloud in the synagogue with the reading of the Torah.\textsuperscript{13}

When the commentary of *Rashi* (Solomon b. Isaac of Troyes, France, ca. 1040–1105) became known, it was often substituted for the study of the *Targ	extit{ū}m* (and see n. 17), and prior to that some authorities in Muslim lands had allowed the substitution of Arabic translations. However, the more traditional-minded insisted on the continued reverence for the Aramaic translations. Judah b. Barzilay reports that Hai (or Hayyē) Gaōn (d. 1038) in “Babylonia” (as the Jews still called Iraq) was asked:

the people of Sefarad [Spain] were accustomed to neglect completely the [Aramaic] translation [in public reading of the Torah] and [yet] we find in several places in the Talmud that it is an obligation. And he replied: the thing is clear that not only in the Talmud do we find the obligation of this translation and its laws, but even in our Mishnah...[Megillah 4.4]... Further, there is an explanation of the things that are [to be] read and translated and of the things that are [to be] read and not translated.\textsuperscript{14} and also [rules concerning] a minor who reads the Torah and translates, and many things in our Mishnah which are explained in the Talmud. Are all these empty words? God forbid, since all the prophets decreed these [rules]. And we did not know until now that in [Spain] they neglected this translation. And the nagiyd [Samuel Ibn Naghrillah] wrote:...there is [one of] the rabbis who said, Far be it from the people of Spain that they should neglect the translation, as these questioners [of Hai] said; for Spain was a place of the propagation of the Torah from the earliest time,\textsuperscript{15}
from the exile of Jerusalem until now, and the neglect of the translation is the manner of the heretics and there has never been found heresy among [the Jews of Spain] except in a few villages near the land of Edom [Christian Spain as opposed to al-Andalus] upon which it is proclaimed that they have heretical aspects in secret and they do not believe in [the translation]. And our predecessors flogged some of their men that were worthy of flogging and they died from the beating.\textsuperscript{16} How, indeed, could the translation be neglected at all when everyone completes [the weekly study] of the Torah portion in the congregation on every Sabbath ‘twice scripture and once the translation’ [\textit{Berakhot} 8a], and never did they neglect the translation or a single thing of the rules of the Talmud...\textsuperscript{17} He continued to explain that the custom previously had been to spend the entire Sabbath day in the synagogue, strictly observing the rule of studying the Torah portion twice and the Aramaic translation once, and then followed the public reading from the Torah and translation of it, and so also the reading from the prophets, “and this thing was difficult for the people” (it took too much time) and the elders worried about quarrels because of it and so they decreed that they should complete their Sabbath morning talmudic study with the study of the Torah portion twice and the translation once, and did away with the reading of the translation when the Torah was read during the service.\textsuperscript{18}

Earlier than this, Judah Ibn Quraysh (or, apparently, Qurēys) of Tāhart, at present Algeria (early tenth century), had written to the community of Fez complaining that he heard that they no longer read the “Syrian” (Aramaic) translation in the synagogues, and some had even said they had never read the translation of the Torah (Onkelos) or of the Prophets (\textit{Targum} Pseudo-Jonathan). This, he said, was something which none of their forefathers had neglected in Iraq, Egypt, North Africa or Spain.\textsuperscript{19}

Later in Christian Spain, the custom in some communities was to gather in front of the synagogue on the Sabbath before services began and complete the reading of the weekly portion twice and the \textit{Targūm Onkelos} once; this would have been done by reading from the manuscript (codex) of the Pentateuch with the translation.\textsuperscript{20}

The Muslim conquest of the former Persian Empire (“Babylonia” to the Jews) and Syria (including the Land of Israel) in 635 C.E. resulted in Arabic becoming the standard spoken and written language also for the Jews (the largest Jewish population was in these lands). It soon became necessary to have Arabic translations of the Bible. Qaraite and Muslim sources refer to some, and there are also references in book lists from the Genizah. Several manuscripts of Arabic biblical translations by Qaraites are extant. There were also Arabic translations of at least the Pentateuch (perhaps the entire Bible) made by Muslims and by Christian “Arabs” (i.e., Christians living in Muslim lands).\textsuperscript{21} Fragments of some early (Jewish) Arabic and “Judeo–Arabic”
(Arabic in Hebrew letters) translations have been discovered, dating at least to the eighth century. In Spain, Juan, archbishop of Seville in the early ninth century, is said to have made an Arabic translation of the Bible, but in fact the correct statement is “commentary” and not translation. Even that much is doubtful, although he is said to have been fluent in Arabic.22

Earlier Jewish Arabic translations were made obsolete by that of Sa’adyah (Se’adyah, according to some) Ga’on in the tenth century, followed by some others.23 His translation of the Torah, at least, and perhaps of all the Bible, seems originally to have been in Arabic script and only later redone in Arabic in Hebrew script (so-called “Judeo-Arabic”), since few Jews in the Muslim world could read and understand Hebrew.24 Judah Ibn Tibbon, the renowned translator who was born in Granada but moved to Provence, wrote his “ethical will” to his son Samuel, ca. 1190. Among other things, he urged him to study the weekly Torah reading in Arabic (doubtless in Hebrew letters) in order to improve his vocabulary; certainly Sa’adyah’s translation was what he intended.25

Of great importance also was the aforementioned Jewish heretical Qaraite sect, primarily in Iraq, the Land of Israel, the Byzantine Empire and Egypt, whose belief that only the Bible should be the source of observances naturally led them to focus on the “literal” meaning of the biblical text. Certainly, they were the originators of biblical exegesis, producing commentaries, in Arabic and in Hebrew, a century prior to Sa’adyah. One of the most important Qaraite scholars (Jerusalem), Abu’l-Farāj (Joshua b. Judah) Furqān Ibn Asad, translated the Pentateuch into Arabic in the eleventh century (there were, of course, earlier translations). He also wrote commentaries and philosophical treatises on biblical topics. He was severely condemned by Abraham Ibn Dā’ūd of Toledo (ca. 1110–d. after 1160).26

Four “levels” of interpretation

Gershom Scholem, a scholar of Jewish mysticism, suggested that what he thought was a qabalistic innovation of four levels of biblical exegesis was a direct result of the similar Christian theory (“of the early Middle Ages”), which he believed first appears in Jewish interpretation in the Zohar and other writings of Moses de León (d. 1305), and in Joseph Ibn Chicitilla (ca. 1248–1325) and Bahya b. Asher Ibn Ḥallawa (Halleve or Aleva in Spanish; d. 1340).27 However, this is also not correct, for Rashi (Solomon b. Isaac, ca. 1030–1105) had already used the four levels of interpretation: peshaṭ (simple meaning), remez (allegorical), derash (agadic or homiletical) and sod (hidden, secret).28

Ibn ‘Ezra came very close to this division in the introduction to his commentary on the Torah (see below on that). There and elsewhere, he quoted the talmudic dictum “eyn miqra yoseḥ miy-dey peshaṭ” (“scripture does not depart from its simple meaning”; Shabbat 63a; etc.).29 He also observed that
derash is merely an added (secondary) meaning, but later generations made it the essence of interpretation, such as Rashi, who interpreted the Bible allegorically, although he thought he was giving the simple explanation (pesḥaṭ), but “there is not in his books pesḥaṭ except one out of a thousand [places], and the scholars of our generation exalt themselves [yithalēlū] in these books” (i.e., pride themselves in their knowledge of his commentaries). Ibn ‘Ezra also used the terms remez and sōd (see Chapter 2). Maimonides also mentioned the talmudic statement and explained it as meaning that in every place the Talmud sought the “simple meaning” (Aramaic, peshīyta de-qera) of what is written.

Baalḥya had a somewhat different categorization of the four methods: “those who pursue pesḥaṭ,” those who desire the way of midrash, those who choose the way of philosophical investigation and (the most praiseworthy of all) those who entered “within” to the secrets of Torah. These are, of course, the “qabalists,” among whom he counted himself.

In fact, this system of “levels” of biblical exegesis, originally three and ultimately four, does appear to have originated with Christian scholars, not in the “early Middle Ages” as Scholem thought but the third-century “Church Father” Origen, followed by medieval exegetes such as Bede and Hugh of St. Victor. Epiphanius of Salamis (315–403) refers, nevertheless, to a Jewish fourfold interpretation (born in Judea, he is reported to have been a Jewish convert). Perhaps, indeed, this is the real meaning of the mystical statement about the four sages who entered “pardēš” (Ḥagigah 14b), a Persian term meaning “garden,” and allegorically “paradise” (the modern word is derived from it), which in the medieval period became an acronym for the four levels of Jewish interpretation. The Christian, and perhaps Jewish, exegetical categories certainly influenced later Muslim exegesis of the Qur’aṇ.

In any case, it is perhaps not only the obvious symbolism of the Trinity but also the important classification of the liberal arts and their ultimate division, by Carolingian scholars, into the trivium (grammar, dialectic, rhetoric) and quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music), which resulted in medieval Christian “threefold” and “fourfold” interpretation.

It is questionable, nevertheless, whether any of this had any influence on the Jewish concept, or whether the similarity is merely coincidental. While Origen and the later “school” of St. Victor, for example, were acquainted with some Jewish exegesis, there was little medieval Jewish awareness of early Christian exegesis (other than, of course, the Latin translation of St. Jerome); see, however, below on Ibn ‘Ezra. Samuel Ibn Tibbon (ca. 1160–1232) was apparently the first to actually praise Christian writers, but only in the context of saying that Jews are a derision among them because they do not offer allegorical interpretations of the scriptures (not true, of course). Joseph Ibn Ḥaknīn, whose commentary will be discussed later, in fact used a threefold interpretation (“simple,” “homiletical” and “esoteric” or philosophical) in his commentary on the Song of Songs, unrelated, of course, to any Christian model. Of particular interest is his remark that in the midst
of writing his allegorical interpretation of Jacob wrestling with the angel he received a copy of the Mishnēh Tōrah (code of Jewish law) of Maimonides and saw there the author’s harsh judgment of those who do not interpret the Torah (or Bible in general) according to its plain meaning.

However, he concluded that there was no disagreement between Maimonides (whom he called the “wonder of the generation,” in Hebrew, similar to a common Arabic expression) and himself, for Maimonides intended those who reject the simple meaning and seek only an esoteric interpretation, similar to the Muslim sect of the Bāṭiniyya (accused of complete allegorization of the Qur’ān and its precepts) and “similar to the Christian faith [i’tiqād] concerning the commandments of the Torah,” which method (allegorization) is to be condemned. Also, the opposite extreme of the absolute literalists (ḥashwīya) who deny any allegorical meaning is to be condemned, for this is the way of the “heretics” (Heb. miyniyn, so in the Arabic text; possibly the Qaraite). He concludes that both the “simple” (sāṭi’) and the allegorical, or “hidden,” (bāṭin) meanings are necessary.  

Maimonides, like other Jewish authors, was certainly not opposed in general to allegorical interpretation, which he often used in reaction to Muslim polemic against Jewish biblical or midrashic interpretation, and also to give a more rational explanation of a text. No medieval commentary was entirely allegorical (or, indeed, entirely “contextual,” or simple), but to a greater or lesser degree employed all four types of interpretation.

### Classification of Jewish interpretation

As we have seen, Jewish biblical interpretation generally embraced one or more of the exegetical “levels.” In fact, there is no medieval commentary that is exclusively one of these (such as peshāt, so-called “simple” explanation; the term does not mean “literal,” as often misunderstood). Even Ibn ‘Ezra, who is usually characterized as the exponent par excellence of peshāt, also used both allegory (in his “third way” on Song of Songs; more rarely elsewhere) and “esoteric” interpretation.

At the other extreme, neither do we find commentaries which are exclusively allegorical; even such “mystical” writers as Naḥmanides only incorporated allegorical or “secret” interpretation into a general approach which sought to provide a “simple” explanation. Reverence for the traditions of the talmudic sages, and to a lesser extent the Aramaic translations and various midrashic statements, virtually imposed upon medieval exegesis a necessity for homiletic and allegorical interpretation. With regard to the Aramaic translations, targūmiym, it should be noted that these were generally less important to medieval Spanish commentators than to those in France or Germany and elsewhere. Spanish authorities did not hesitate to disagree even with the translation attributed to Onkelos.

The new science of Hebrew grammar (which evolved in al-Andalus in the tenth to twelfth centuries although it had antecedents prior to this), without
which the proper understanding of the Bible would have been impossible, strongly affected biblical exegesis from the very beginning. This is also reflected in statements about the classification of biblical interpretation. Bahya Ibn Paqudah (ca. 1052–1156) of Zaragoza, author of an important ethical work, distinguished ten classes of understanding of the Bible, which may be summarized briefly (the last three categories relate to understanding of talmudic traditions): those who understand in a literal sense without really knowing the meaning of words; those concerned with the “diacritical points” (the “masoretes”); those who analyze the grammar; those who continue this to explain the text grammatically (adding also the “metaphorical sense” of the grammatical forms); those who examine the “true” and the “metaphorical” meaning (on the meaning of “metaphor” and its distinction from “allegory,” see index) from an “exterior” viewpoint, without use of (rabbinical) tradition; those who rely on the Mishnah to find the meaning of rules in the Bible; and those who use the Talmud for the same purpose.

The aforementioned Joseph Ibn ‘Aknīn, a contemporary of Maimonides (but not his student, as many writers have mistakenly believed), explained that his commentary on Song of Songs was threefold: the first is pesḥat or “simple” meaning, in the manner in which the earlier grammarians had explained texts; the second is “that of our rabbis” (talmudic sages) in Midrash ḥaziyya (or ḥaziyyt, i.e., Midrash Song of Songs rabah) and in the Talmud; and the third, which he claims to have originated, might be called “philosophical-allegorical.” This, he says, is the most important of all, and thus he puts it last, in accord with Aristotle’s (alleged) saying: “The beginning of thought is the end of action, and the beginning of action the end of thought.”

Zeraḥyah b. Isaac Gracian (Ḥēn) of Barcelona (thirteenth century), who lived in Rome, where he wrote his commentaries, wrote that the “fools” among the people who believe literally in all the words of the prophets may be divided into four classes: those who accept as literally true everything said, whether possible or not and without understanding metaphors; the second group is worse, in that they consider anything that is impossible to be a metaphor, but if it is possible then they accept it literally according to the “simple” meaning (pesḥat), and thus confuse the “hidden” (nistar) and the “revealed” (galūiy) meanings; the third group lacks understanding of what is allegory or metaphor and only sometimes understands what is intended but otherwise follows their own reasoning; the fourth group believes that words of prophecy are generally incomprehensible and must be understood only according to the “plain” meaning unless it is specifically stated that it is a metaphor.

Critical-skeptical approaches in medieval commentary

Biblical criticism is not totally a modern innovation. In fact, skepticism is to be found in at least some of our medieval commentators. This was a
revolutionary departure from tradition, which viewed even the most preposterous statements and unlikely events in the Bible as literally true without question. As we shall see, some commentators questioned such things as the serpent who spoke in the Garden of Eden, or the talking ass of Bil’am (so in Hebrew, not “Balam”), and others were skeptical of various “miracles” or of the traditional attribution of certain biblical books or parts of books.

In spite of the universal belief that prophecy was “divinely inspired,” the Talmud already contains the apparently audacious statement “a sage is better than a prophet” (B.B. 12a), concerning which Isaac Ibn Ghibāth (eleventh century), an important talmudic scholar and also author of some biblical commentaries, wrote that this is “because sages innovate explanations from the foundations [basic principles] and draw forth conclusions [or corollaries] from the roots, but [prophets] conduct themselves only in accord with prophecy and prophetic vision.” His student Moses Ibn ‘Ezra(h) also mentioned this, explaining that a prophet fulfills his agency or prophecy as directed, but the sage adds to the words of prophecy according to his own reasoning and understanding and therefore has the advantage (or superiority) of innovation.49

The question of the authorship of, and “editorial” intervention in, various biblical books has its origins in talmudic and other traditional rabbinical sources. However, with the exception of additions to Isaiah and Jeremiah, discussed below (and then only in the opinion of one or two exegetes), no medieval commentator questioned the attributions of any of the prophetic books. The question arose only with regard to chronological books (Kings and, especially, Chronicles), some of the Psalms and in some cases the “Scrolls” that were traditionally attributed to Solomon (except Esther, of course). The Talmud already debated the authorship of Job, and there was an opinion (which was maintained by some commentators) that it was purely fictitious.

We shall see that some medieval commentators were aware of these problems, although generally again tradition prevailed. Apparently Judah Ibn Bil’am (eleventh century) was the only commentator aware of the problem of repetition of some Psalms and the discrepancies between Babylonian and “Palestinian” (Land of Israel) textual traditions, which he attributed rather vaguely to different traditions of copying.50

There are, nevertheless, interesting traces of knowledge of editorial intervention, addition and correction in some biblical texts. While this is found almost exclusively in early Byzantine Jewish exegesis, some Provençal commentators also used terms indicating their awareness of this.51 Of the other exegetes to be considered in this chapter, apparently only Ibn ‘Ezra was willing to concede an “editorial” role to the arrangement (not the writing) of Psalms, but even then he appeals to the authority of the “Men of the Great Assembly”52 who said that (the biblical) Ezra did this.53

While no medieval Jewish commentator went so far as some of the Muslims (e.g., Ibn Ḥazm; see n. 54) in stating that the Torah was written, or at least redacted, by Ezra, there are some audacious suggestions as well as
significant insights on authorship and text in Spanish Jewish commentaries. However, no credible Jewish author ever questioned the Mosaic authorship of the Torah generally, or that it was divinely revealed.

One nineteenth-century scholar had claimed that Aaron b. Gershon Abu’l-Rabī (“Aburabbi”) of Sicily (1420, then under Spanish control; see on him in Chapter 5) had written that the Torah was only a translation of an Arabic work, to which another scholar objected that perhaps Aburrabi only said that the conversations of the Patriarchs were in the vernacular of that time and Moses translated these into Hebrew. This was a remarkably accurate guess, given that he had not seen the actual text, for Abu’l-Rabī indeed wrote (on Gen. 18.5) that Abraham spoke to the angels in Arabic and Moses later translated that into Hebrew (similarly on Gen. 24.23).54

A certain “Isaac,” head of a yeshivah in a Muslim land, who was severely criticized by Ibn ‘Ezra (see “Appendix 1”), is said to have claimed that Gen. 36.31 could not have been written by Moses, because he could not possibly have known the names of Edomite kings mentioned there, who came after him, and this section was written in the days of Jehosaphat, which Ibn ‘Ezra harshly rejected, although he was aware of the real chronological problems in the passage.

**Ibn ‘Ezra’s critical sense: problems in the Torah**

In spite of Ibn ‘Ezra’s harsh rejection of interpretations he considered too radical, he himself was fully aware of chronological problems in the text of the Torah, but because it was dangerous, if not heretical, to state such things, he concealed his meaning so that only careful readers would understand. On Deut. 1.2, he wrote “and if you understand the secret of the twelve...you will recognize the truth.” This refers to the last 12 verses of the Torah, which he says (Deut. 34.1) that “in my opinion” were written by Joshua after Moses died (which is strange, since this is hardly his opinion but a well-known statement in the Talmud: B.B. 15a, Menahot 30a; however, he often asserted as his opinion something which came from the Talmud). In addition, he mentions the words (substituted above by ellipsis) which are the first words of four biblical passages: “And Moses wrote” (Deut. 31.22), “The Canaanite was then in the land” (Gen. 12.6), “(as it is said to this day,) in the mount where the Lord appears” (Gen. 22.14), “and his bed is a bed of iron” (Deut. 3.11).55

Each of these verses is problematic, but it is left to the reader to understand. In the first sentence, he wished to indicate a broader problem of why only at the beginning (1.1–5) and end (31.22) of Deuteronomy is Moses spoken of in the third person. The second, “The Canaanite was then in the land,” is obvious, since if this was written in the time of Moses, of course the Canaanites were in the land; i.e., it was written at a later time. (In his commentary on that passage, he wrote that there is a “secret” about it “and let him who is wise keep still.”)56
The reference to Gen. 22.14 is that the mountain of Moriah is called “the mountain of God” when in fact it was only so “chosen” at a much later time, when the first Temple was built (2 Chron. 3.1); therefore, “until this day” there clearly refers to that later time. The verse about the “bed of iron” of Og refers to it being kept in Rabba of the Ammonites, again a chronological problem since it refers to something which happened after the time of Moses. Nor are these the only anachronistic references he noticed; for example, he inserts in a way which can easily be overlooked (on Gen. 15.16), a reference to Joshua 10.5, where Joshua is said to have fought against the five Amorite kings, and remarks that Moses had already killed the five kings (cf. Num. 21, etc.).

Given all of this, it is peculiar that he strenuously avoided the obvious conclusion as to the meaning of Gen. 36.31, “These are the kings that reigned in Edom before any king reigned over Israel,” concerning which he criticized the interpretation of the aforementioned “Isaac” who said that the verse was written at a later period. The author of an important supercommentary” (commentary on a commentary) on Ibn ‘Ezra, Joseph b. El’azar “Bonfils” (“Ṭōv ‘Elem”), who lived in the then French Provence (fourteenth century) but was of Spanish origin, raised this same objection, but explained that Ibn ‘Ezra only meant to allude to places where the “later prophets” added words to what Moses had written, but not to the addition of an entire passage. This, of course, is not a satisfactory explanation, since Ibn ‘Ezra in fact intended to point out those passages which clearly could not have been written in the time of Moses, nor does he say anything about additions by “later prophets.”

Ibn ‘Ezra also made no comment on Ex. 13.17, that the Israelites left Egypt and God did not lead them through the land of the Philistines, when in fact the Philistines did not appear until long after that (also Ex. 15.14; but see his observation on verse 15 that the Philistines, Moabites and Edomites did not fight with the Israelites in the desert).

He also expressed a certain amount of skepticism, or at least reserve, with regard to “authority.” Thus, although writing in the context of astronomical matters, he stated a principle which also characterizes his biblical commentary:

and if we find geōniym who explained or said [something] which knowledge cannot sustain, or they contradict a known thing in one of two ways, the first [being] the senses and the second deliberation [reasoning], we do not believe it and request a [reason]; and so we do with the Talmud, also the Mishnah and scripture, both the ‘writings’ and the Torah.

(My emphasis)59

This skeptical approach to the geōniym, and even the Talmud, was not unusual even on the part of Spanish rabbinical scholars, but the audacity of including the Bible is noteworthy.
In the “other recension” of his commentary on Genesis, he also stated that biblical passages must correspond to what is reasonable, for “what contradicts reason is as if it contradicts our senses” and if we find something in the Torah which reason cannot sustain a solution must be found or it must be reinterpreted, if necessary, by emending the text, or by adding a letter or word in accord with the rules of language: “We add or correct according to the possibility and the rules of the [Hebrew] language.” So even with the commandments, if the plain sense of the commandment as written is not consistent with reason; for example, “you shall circumcise the foreskin of your hearts” (Deut. 4.16). Nevertheless, he sometimes expressed his skepticism in almost a concealed manner rather than a straightforward statement that something defies reason; for instance, “and behold it is a great matter that oil for the lights [of the candelabrum in the Tabernacle] was found in the hands of the heads [of the tribes] many months after they left Egypt,” obviously unlikely.

In his description there of the “fourth way” of exegesis (see Chapter 2), he added that if we find something which contradicts reason, or a passage which contradicts another, or something which contradicts received tradition, then we must correct it according to our ability, as parable, or by adding a letter or word in accord with the rules of language, and if this is impossible then we must admit that we do not understand the meaning. In fact, he sometimes corrected errors in biblical texts according to philology and reason. He was, however, not consistent in this, for instance, when he insisted that the serpent (Gen. 3.1) actually spoke (see n. 112). Concerning the rabbinical traditions of interpretation of texts, he said that we also must apply reason, “for they knew the simple explanation, since all wisdom was given to them,” and in some cases they had a tradition “from the prophets” and used a verse as support for a law even when it does not clearly refer to that law. Therefore, in describing the “fifth way” (his own), he states that he will explain each passage according to its meaning and grammar, except that on issues of commandments and laws he will rely on the sages.

Some of this “rational” approach seems to be mitigated by a statement in his later years that we do not deviate from the words of Moses, neither adding nor subtracting, “but if we find words of the investigators [scientists, philosophers] who give proofs to their words and they are like [concur with] the words of Moses, we rejoice in them.” However, he also added, “and so if we find ‘secrets’ in the words of our predecessors [the sages] which are similar to the ‘secrets’ of the investigative sages, then we rejoice.”

Elsewhere in his commentaries, he also expressed strong views about derash; for example, on the homiletic statement that only 1 out of 500 Israelites left the land of Egypt (based on an apparent misreading of Ex. 13.18) he says this is an individual opinion about which there was a disagreement and it is not tradition, concluding (after a digression about Muslim criticisms of exaggerated statements in the Bible): “the rule is, it is derash and not to be relied upon; and perhaps he who first said it had a reason [or meaning; sōd].” Nevertheless, as noted elsewhere here, he was not opposed to all derash.
An example of his keen intellect at work is in the serious difficulties he observed between the two versions (Ex. 20.1 and Deut. 5.6–18) of the “Ten Commandments” (see also the following chapter). Problematic are the many discrepancies between the two versions, which he lists and discusses in detail. For example, “when we searched in the words of the sages, of blessed memory, what they said about this, we found that they said that ‘Keep’ [the Sabbath; Deut. 5.12] and ‘Remember’ [the Sabbath; Ex. 20.8] were said as one word”; i.e., in one breath. “God forbid that I should say that they did not speak correctly, for our knowledge is slight compared to theirs,” yet he then proceeds to state that such a thing could not have happened except as a “miracle” (his attitude to miracles will be discussed later); already on Ex. 19.17 (“long recension”) he stated that “some say” that the two words were said as one as a “wonder,” and “all of which we would be able to say were it not that those who heard were human beings” and the ear cannot distinguish two different words at the same time. This is quite different from his pious assertion in Deuteronomy.

Further, why were not both words written together in one or both of the texts of the commandments? Perhaps all of the other differences in the two texts were also said together as one word; if so, why didn’t the sages mention this? Also, why did God say, in the commandment to “remember” the Sabbath, “as the Lord your God commanded you” (in the third person)? And when did he command them about this? And so also there on the commandment to honor father and mother.

He offered a satisfactory explanation of the switch from first person to third (also in other passages mentioned by him): after the Israelites had accepted the Lord as their God, he gave the other commandments in the third person (which is also common in other places in the Bible). As for the difficulties of the two words said as one, and the apparent discrepancies in the versions of the commandments, he explains that the text in Exodus is the actual text of the commandments as spoken and written on the tablets by God, whereas that in Deuteronomy reflects the words of Moses, reporting the commandments to the people without necessarily the exact words (it is surprising that he did not, in fact, mention Deut. 5.1, where Moses specifically stated that he was telling them the commandments of God, not necessarily repeating the exact words).

Nor is there any contradiction between “keep” and “remember” (the one implies the other); thus, when God said “remember,” the people also understood “keep,” as if they were said together (a very weak explanation, of course, which actually indicates at least his skepticism of the rabbinical explanation). His explanation of the differences in the two versions of the “Ten Commandments” is a rejection of the position of Sa‘adyah that this was the result of two separate “revelations,” which position was adopted by Ibn Bil‘am.

As a scientist and mathematician, he also could not help expressing, or at least hinting at, some skepticism about the amount of gold of the vessels
The Bible and its interpretation
described in the Tabernacle (commentary on Ex. 25.10) and the subsequent weight which would result, all of which had to be carried in the journey in the desert. Much later, a Spanish rabbi wrote an entire treatise in reply to these objections.72

As would be expected, he used his analytical ability to explain difficulties in other biblical texts; for example, he noted the several apparent contradictions in statements in Qohelet (Ecclesiastes), to the point where one unnamed commentator had suggested that the work was written by students of “Qohel.” However, Ibn ‘Ezra explained (7.3) the contradictory statements in reference to different aspects of the “soul.” He noted that there are apparent contradictions elsewhere in the Bible and that these could also be explained.

Other critical-skeptical approaches

Moses Ibn Chicatilla, discussed below, another important commentator cited frequently by Ibn ‘Ezra (who mostly disagreed with him), concluded that Isa. 40–66 is a separate book not written by Isaiah (this, of course, is now accepted by all biblical scholars, although most are unaware of this early opinion), and also that some of the Psalms are from the exilic era and not written by David.73 Ibn Chicatilla explained Zechariah 9.9, which according to Ibn ‘Ezra many commentators interpreted as the messiah, as a reference to Nehemiah, called “king in Judah” (Neh. 6.7). Ibn ‘Ezra disagreed only on a triviality, and gave his own non-messianic interpretation of the verse. Similarly, passages in Isaiah and Obadiah were said by Ibn Chicatilla to refer to Hezekiah.74 Equally important to the insight that Isaiah contains later additions is that of David Qimḥi, discussed in Chapter 4, who wrote that the second half of Jeremiah is also the work of later writers (again, modern biblical scholars have not been aware of this theory, which is also now generally agreed upon).

Ibn Chicatilla also asserted that many of the Psalms were not written by the “authors” to whom they were attributed and that some were from the period of the Exile. Furthermore, while he maintained that David was not a prophet and that the Psalms were therefore not a prophetic book, some of them, nevertheless, were “prophecies” on events yet to take place.75

Abraham Ibn Dā‘ūd of Toledo wrote in the epilogue to his chronicle (ca. 1160) that he was writing also a history of the second Temple period “in order to refute the ‘Sadducees,’ who claim that all of the consolatory passages in the books of the prophets were fulfilled for Israel in the days of the second Temple.” It has been suggested that he intended by this (“Sadducees” being a synonym for “heretics” in medieval writing) commentators such as Ibn Bil’am and Ibn Chicatilla; however, this appears very unlikely; rather, the reference is to either Qaraites or, indeed, Christians.76 Finally, Joseph Ibn Kaspī (so, not “Caspi,” ca. 1280–1340; see Chapter 5 on him), a commentator with a unique approach, came very close to the above-mentioned “documentary hypothesis.”77 Of course, he did not draw from
this the conclusion that there were different authors, or underlying sources, but the recognition of the problem of the various names of God was itself ahead of his time.

**Commentators – Muslim Spain**

*Grammarians and biblical commentary*

Biblical commentary in Muslim Spain (which included also many cities in northern Spain) began simultaneously with the development of Hebrew grammar, which set it apart from the previous exegesis of the מדרשים and early medieval מדרשיים. **Menaḥêm Ibn Sărūq** (tenth century), the first grammarian in al-Andalus, in his dictionary explained his understanding of the meaning of many difficult words in the Bible. This aroused criticism by Dunash Ibn Labrāṭ (another grammarian recently arrived from North Africa) and led to a controversy involving both their students. While Ibn Sărūq was not an exegete per se, his dictionary contains much which is of interest for biblical interpretation.

In at least two places, Ibn Sărūq gave a more extensive explanation of biblical passages than was usual in his work. There is also a lengthy digression, following his explanation of כ-ל, on the meaning of הקליים (“diverse” seeds; Deut. 22.8), about the nature of commandments. Some, he says, are dependent on circumstance or a particular reason, or for things necessary for the very existence of the world, while there are others for which no reason is known. Under the rubric א-ד-מ he discusses the statement (Eccles. 3.21): “[Who knows the spirit of man [which] goes up on high and the spirit of an animal [which] goes down to the earth.” The problem is that as written there is the possibility to interpret this as a question: “who knows if the spirit…,” which would indicate at least a lack of certainty about life after death (in fact, a rabbinical and not biblical doctrine). Ibn Sărūq says that this should cause amazement at the words of “Solomon” (traditionally believed to be the author of Ecclesiastes). After a lengthy “theological” explanation as to why such doubt cannot be assumed or maintained, he finally arrives at the grammatical explanation that the text is pointed with a קמהṣ under the ה- (ה-’olah) and not a פתא, which indicates that it is not a question (“whether the spirit goes up”) but a statement. Of course, it could be objected against his explanation that the vocalization of the texts was the work of the “masoretes” and indicates nothing about the original intent of the author.

**Jonah Ibn Janāḥ** (ca. 900–1050), in a lengthy discursus on Ecclesiastes in his dictionary, wrote that it is known to wise men that the “rational” soul (נפש ה-דבראתי) of man ascends after death and lives eternally, and that the article (ה-) of ה-’olah in this verse is the definitive ה-ל, not interrogative, according to what intelligence demands and tradition of the prophets and the “philosophers” show, and also grammatically since it is punctuated with a קמהש.
Zeraḥyah b. Isaac ha-Lēvy (early twelfth century, Lunel and Gerona; an important rabbinical scholar) interpreted the passage philosophically, that it is possible to understand future life or resurrection logically but that this is only to be grasped by the wise who investigate the matter carefully (“who” is thus he who understands this thing). This interpretation is similar, if not identical, to that of Isaac Ibn Ghiyāth (d. 1089), in his commentary to be discussed below, and also Joseph Ibn Ṣaddīq (ca. 1075–1149) in his philosophical treatise. Ibn ‘Ezra’s discussion of this generally belongs to a study of philosophy, but grammatically he agreed with Ibn Sārūq, without mentioning him. Samuel Ibn Tibbon (ca. 1160–1232), in his commentary on Ecclesiastes, explained this in terms of the philosophical concept of attaining intellectual perfection, and that few will thus “rise above,” that is, attain such a state.

Judah Ḥayyūj (probably Abū Zakariyā Yaḥyā b. Dāʿūd al-Fāsī al-Qurṭūbī), ca. 940–1000, was the first important grammarian in Muslim Spain. He also composed a grammatical commentary (Arabic), Kitāb al-nutaf, on the prophetic books. His purpose was to explain difficult or rare words in those books, correcting errors made by earlier grammarians who did not know the triliteral root system which he discovered, and offering other grammatical explanations. Important is his observation that there are “many words” in the Bible which cannot be explained except according to their meaning in the Mishnah; that is, by reference to their use in the Mishnah the meaning of the biblical words can be understood (see also below, an example by Ibn Janāḥ).

Jonah (Abu’l-Walīd Marwān) Ibn Janāḥ (ca. 900–1050) is far more important for biblical interpretation than Ḥayyūj (and, of course, his dictionary is indispensable). He related an incident which happened when he was still in Córdoba when one of his close friends asked him about a difficulty in the Bible, “which no man before me had explained,” and when he explained it, his friend kissed him on the head. Later, Ibn Janāḥ fled to Zaragoza because of the Berber civil war in Córdoba (1009–10), and after many years Abu’l-Walīd Ibn Ḥasdai (a grammarian, whose works are lost) came to Zaragoza and asked him about the same biblical passage and was also very happy with his explanation. The passage in question was Deut. 34.6, and he says that he will explain this in his dictionary, which he did.

Most of his writing focused, obviously, on grammatical aspects of biblical language, including an important discussion of metathesis, or the transposition of letters, such as simlah (Deut. 10.18, etc.) and salnah (Ex. 22.8, etc.), again, another supposed “discovery” of modern biblical scholarship. However, he also offered significant insights into the meaning of various words and passages. Some examples of his explanations of difficulties: Gen. 3.8 he explained as Adam (not God) walking, and that ṭūḥāh (usually “wind” or “spirit”) there is to be understood either as the cool of the evening or as the end of the day. Gen. 49.13: ḥōf is derived from ḥafaf, “to cover, conceal,” hence, “port” or “harbor,” on the basis of mishnaic Hebrew. Unlike his predecessor Ḥayyūj,
He distinguished between *parah*, “to be fruitful” (Gen. 1.22), and *parah*, “to grow, increase”; hence, *bēn pōrat yōsēf* (Gen. 49.22), he interprets as “a branch which increases” or flourish. 91 (On the meaning of *bēn* as “branch,” see also Ibn ‘Ezra on Gen. 49.22.)

His dictionary provides a long discussion of the meaning of *barā* (Gen. 1.1 and elsewhere), traditionally “created,” including the statement that it is like the Arabic *barā* meaning “formed.” Another meaning is “chose,” for which he cites various examples and explains that God “selected” or chose man from all the creatures. There follows a lengthy discourse on Ecclesiastes (2: 15 ff) that there is apparently no difference between man and the animals – they all die – finally concluding (as mentioned above) that the distinction is in the soul of man which “ascends” and lives eternally. 92 While it is not certain, it is possible to deduce from his definition that he did not believe in “creation” but in “formation” from pre-existent matter. This was definitely the belief of some later Jewish commentators, such as Nahmanides (see Chapter 4 here). We shall see that Ibn ‘Ezra gave an entirely different explanation of *barā*.

Song of Songs 7.6, part of the description of the beauty of the girl, in modern translations is always “your head upon you is like the Carmel,” understood as Mt. Carmel in the Land of Israel, but the parallelism is apparently lacking when we read the conclusion of the verse as “and the tresses of your hair as purple” (dark; not “crimson”), about which there can be no doubt as to the correctness of the reading. Ibn Janāḥ, however, explained matter-of-factly that the word in the first part of the verse is not Carmel but *karmiyl*, and that it can be written with or without a *yōd*. Unfortunately, he did not give a definition of the word, which some authorities understand as “crimson” but which more probably is a term for purple, yielding, therefore, an exact parallel (her hair is dark). 93

Among his more important observations is that *afanav* (Prov. 25.11) is like *‘al panav* (before him) and that the *a*- is an extraneous prefix, as in *abaniym* (Ex. 1.16), usually translated as “birth stones” or the like, but which according to Ibn Janāḥ is simply *baniym*, “children,” which makes much better sense. 94 Thus, there is also no need to understand *afanav* as a new word, *ōfen*, a word “fitly spoken,” or “according to its proper turn.” Also of interest is his explanation of the various meanings of the root *ś-kh-l*; e.g., *maškiyl* not (only) as “one who is wise,” as understood by Sa’adyah and Ibn ‘Ezra (and so most authorities), but also “one who succeeds.” This sheds light on several headings of the Psalms: “To David *maškiyl*,” which perhaps should be understood according to 1 Sam. 18.14 and 30, not as “intelligent” but “successful,” one who has achieved. 95 See also his lengthy explanation (270–72) of *mašadah*, noting also the similarity, etymologically and grammatically, with Arabic.

Of particular interest is his alleged allegorical explanation of Prov. 5.19–20 as referring to wisdom, according to David Qimḥi, who claimed that Ibn Janāḥ explained the verb *tīshgeh* there as “study,” and thus the sense of the verse is “always occupy yourself with the study of wisdom.” In fact, of course,
the root _sh-g-h_ means “wander, go astray,” although Maimonides used the verb in apparently the same sense of “occupy.” However, nowhere in the extant writings of Ibn Janāḥ does such an allegorical explanation appear; on the contrary, he gives the correct explanation of the verb in his dictionary. Qimḥi has perhaps mistaken Ibn Janāḥ with his predecessor Ḥayyūj.⁹⁶

In spite of his obvious importance in biblical exegesis, Ibn Janāḥ was severely condemned by Ibn ‘Ezra, especially for his frequent suggestion of substitution, or replacing a word in the Bible by another.⁹⁷ In several places in his commentary, Ibn ‘Ezra disagrees with Ibn Janāḥ without naming him. Twice he condemned him as a “madman” and “confounder” (Gen. 20.2, Ex. 19.12 and “short” commentary on Ex. 19.12 [ed. Weiser 2: 280]; and Dan. 1.1, “madman”). Elsewhere, he wrote that “his book [Kitāb al-lūma‘; _Sēfer hariqmah_ in the Hebrew translation] is worthy of being burned” (“short” commentary on Ex. 21.8; ed. Weiser 2: 291).⁹⁸

On Gen. 20.4, Ibn ‘Ezra wrote, “and do not listen to the words of the dreamer of dreams who exchanges a word for another, who explained ‘nation’ [gōy] as ‘man’ [ish].” True, in his commentary on Ex. 21.7–8 he wrote that this was the interpretation of Sa’adyah, but the _gaon_ only stated that “possibly” Avimelech intended himself by the word gōy (adding that similar to this is the statement in Exodus there, where ‘am nakḥriy means _ish_ nakḥriy, a “foreign man”) (Peyrūsh Rav Sa’adyah Ga’on le-Bereshiyt, 134 [text], 392 [tr.]).

However, it is clear from his objection to exchanging a word for another that on Gen. 20.4 Ibn ‘Ezra meant Ibn Janāḥ, who indeed gave this very explanation (_Sēfer ha-riqmah_ 1: 307). His strongest condemnation of him is on Dan. 1.1 (regular commentary): “there was a great commentator [meforēsh gadōl] in Spain, and he explained [biblical] books grammatically,” and he substituted not only words but names one for another, many words, almost 200, and all of them [should be] carried away by the wind; for how is it possible in language that a man says a word and intends another word; anyone who says this is considered among the insane, and I have already explained all of them. It would have been better had he said “I do not know,” and not turn over [confuse, misinterpret] the words of the living God.

The number of words has doubled from the 100 he had mentioned in his grammatical work _Sēfer saḥot_, 72a, where he warns not to believe the “grammarians” (Ibn Janāḥ), who in his book (_Sēfer ha-riqmah_, 307–33) mentioned more than 100 words which should be changed: “heaven forbid, for this is not right [even] for ‘secular’ words [not found in the Bible], all the more in the words of the living God; and his book is worthy of being burned” (see also there, 19b, his harsh criticism of him by name).

If there is one major failing in Ibn ‘Ezra’s exegesis, it is that his antagonism toward Ibn Janāḥ, whom he constantly criticizes, prevented him from seeing
The Bible and its interpretation

(and accepting) interpretations which are often correct. Yet, in some instances he cited him without comment, apparently accepting his interpretation (e.g., Ex. 6.3), and elsewhere respectfully even when disagreeing with him (e.g., Lev. 11.14; also Deut. 20.19, medaqēq gadōl, “great grammarian”). For other citations of him by Ibn ‘Ezra, see “Appendix 1.”

Lost commentaries

Several commentaries are known to us only from citations of them, or references to them, in other writings. Unfortunately, there has been no systematic effort to list or identify these commentaries; what follows is from my own research and is perhaps incomplete. There are obviously others; for example, Ibn ‘Ezra in his commentaries (e.g., Psalms, Job, Song of Songs and Esther) repeatedly mentions “commentators who say” or “the majority of the commentators,” where very few, or none, are known to us who commented on those passages (other than the ones he cites by name, such as Sa‘adyah and Moses Ibn Chicitalla).

Joseph Ibn Abitūr (born in Mérida, in western Spain, ca. 950–d. after 1012), an important talmudic scholar, also composed a commentary on Psalms, possibly in Hebrew (if so, it is the first known Hebrew biblical commentary by a European Jew). Several new Hebrew words are coined in the short citations of the commentary which survive. Well known also as an author of piyutīym, he wrote one poem which is an interpretation of the book of Habakkuk: “Avo’ be-gevūat Adōnay.”

Isaac b. Lēvy Ibn Mar Saul (Sha‘ūl), one of the teachers of Ibn Janāḥ, also wrote a commentary (no doubt in Arabic), perhaps on the entire Torah. Ibn Janāḥ cited several of his interpretations, and specifically mentioned having read his commentary on Deuteronomy.

Samuel Ibn Naghrillah (correct spelling), poet and grammarian (993–1056), sometimes referred to as “Samuel ha-nagiyd,” was prime minister of the kingdom of Granada and commander-in-chief of its army. He also apparently wrote a commentary on the Bible, citations of which are found in later authorities, particularly Ibn ‘Ezra, who usually cited him approvingly (in contrast to his often harsh criticism of others). In addition, he wrote grammatical works which also refer, of course, to biblical passages, and a dictionary of biblical words (on his copying a Bible codex, see Chapter 6).

Judah Ibn Bil’am was severely critical of him, often citing him without name in his own commentaries; e.g., on Isa. 51.15, where he criticizes “the poet” who erred in interpreting qūba‘at as “cup”; see also his commentary on Jer. 51.11. Yet in his commentary on the Torah he cited an interpretation he had heard from a student of Yūsuf (Samuel’s son and successor) in the name of his father. Isaac Ibn Baron (ca. 1100, lived in Zaragoza and Málaga) quoted approvingly Samuel’s statement against unnecessary metaphorical interpretation.
Solomon Ibn Gabirol (1021/22–ca. 1053 or 1056/7), poet and philosopher, is known to have written several books which have not survived, among which was apparently a commentary on the Bible, known from citations. One of the most interesting of these is in the “other recension” of Ibn ‘Ezra’s commentary on Gen. 3.21: “I have not found [in] any of the sages this ‘secret’ [sōd, esoteric explanation of the garden of Eden] except Solomon Ibn Gabirol, who was greatly learned in the secret of the soul: Eden is the upper level, and it is filled with people as though plants. And the river is a “mother” to all the bodies,” etc. (a very complicated and mystical explanation).

Of importance also is his interpretation of Jacob’s ladder (Gen. 28.12) and the angels ascending and descending it, cited by Ibn ‘Ezra, according to which the ladder is “an allegory [remez, ‘allusion’] of the supernal [upper] soul” and the angels “the thoughts of wisdom” (the sciences by which one acquires supreme knowledge). There are other important citations of Ibn Gabirol in Ibn ‘Ezra’s commentaries, sometimes also from his poetry. David Qimḥi (ca. 1160–1235; Provence, but whose family originated from al-Andalus) also cites Ibn Gabirol, but only from his ethical treatise “Improvement of the moral qualities.”

Abū Ishāq (=Abraham; not Ishaq, a form not permitted to Jews) Ibn al-Ḥarīzī, a contemporary of Moses Ibn ‘Ezra(h), wrote a commentary on Ecclesiastes which he sent to the poet, who replied with a strong condemnation of the commentary. Ibn al-Ḥarīzī was also a poet, praised by the famed Judah al-Ḥarīzī, who may have been related. Moses b. Samuel ha-Kohen Ibn Chicatilla (latter part of eleventh century to early twelfth century) lived in Córdoba and then Zaragoza (both then under Muslim control). Like other early commentators, he was also a grammarian and a poet. He is known chiefly through citations of his commentary by Ibn ‘Ezra, but also in later authorities. Parts of his commentaries have been discovered. He apparently wrote commentaries on the Torah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, the Twelve Prophets (so-called “minor” prophets), Psalms, Job, Daniel and Song of Songs. He was a contemporary of Ibn Bil’am (see below; but died before him), who mentioned discussions between them concerning some verses and cited him frequently in his commentaries, usually harshly disagreeing with him. In his commentary on Isa. 51.6, Ibn Bil’am states that Ibn Chicatilla did not believe that the heavens are subject to destruction, and therefore interpreted it metaphorically, “an opinion which is dahrīya [Ar., materialism; denial of creation].” As we shall see, Ibn ‘Ezra shared this opinion, and yet firmly believed in creation.

Similarly, Ibn Bil’am elsewhere mentioned a discussion he had with him about the sun standing still for Joshua, which Ibn Chicatilla doubted because this would involve a change in nature; rather, he believed that the miracle was that light from the sun remained shining even after it had set. Ibn Bil’am says this was “among his erroneous and perverted opinions.”
Ibn ‘Ezra also mentions (Ps. 84.4) an interpretation by Moses Ibn Chicatilla of derōr (“swallow,” a bird common in Spain according to Ibn ‘Ezra), which Ibn Bil‘am ridiculed. On his other “unorthodox” views, see above, “Critical-Skeptical Approaches.” Of interest is his explanation of hēd hariym as “echo” (Ezek. 7.7): “This is the voice heard between two mountains when a man calls and the voice returns to him like the words which go out of his mouth…” (this was “borrowed” by David Qimḥi, who gave it as his own interpretation on that verse. In some cases, Ibn ‘Ezra wrote (commentary on Num. 28.11) that an explanation of Moses (he never referred to him as Ibn Chicatilla) was correct; for instance, concerning Nissan as the first Hebrew month of the year. Of particular interest is Ibn ‘Ezra’s reference apparently to an actual discussion which took place between Ibn Chicatilla and “others” concerning “first of the months” (Ex. 12.2, at the end of his commentary there). He knew Ibn Chicatilla personally, for he cited (Ps. 69.19) his explanation of a word, “and thus the sage, may he live, explained it to me,” although Ibn ‘Ezra disagreed with the interpretation. See also his comment on Gen. 49.6, citing Ibn Chicatilla that kavōd (“glory”) is another word for nefesh (“soul”) and that there are many examples of this in Psalms, “and he explained well”; he observed that Ibn Janāḥ said that Ibn Chicatilla was mistaken, “but I say that Jonah was mistaken.” Elsewhere, he also sometimes accepted his interpretation or merely cited it with no comment. It is noteworthy that in his commentary both on Isaiah and on Psalms, Ibn ‘Ezra cited him far more than any other source.

Judah b. Barzilay (correct spelling; Barcelona, b. ca. 1070) wrote, or at least intended to write, a commentary on the Torah or perhaps the entire Bible; nothing of this remains, however, other than hints in his writing (even though Barcelona was not then under Muslim control, he is included here because of his general importance).

Judah b. Samuel ha-Lēvy (ca. 1075–1141), the famous poet and polemicist, is cited frequently by Ibn ‘Ezra (see “Appendix 1”), whose son apparently married Judah’s daughter. In at least one instance, he quotes a question which ha-Lēvy had asked him: “Why does the Torah mention ‘I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt,’ and not ‘who made the heavens and the earth, and you [man]’” (the explanation he gave him is discussed in Chapter 2, under Ibn ‘Ezra’s “digressions,” Knowledge). In most of Ibn ‘Ezra’s citations of him, he mentions him by name. In his commentary on Daniel 9.2, he reports a lengthy discussion they had concerning the alleged error of calculation by Daniel. It is possible that ha-Lēvy is also intended by the term hakham gadōl sefardiy (“a great Spanish sage”) in at least some references by Ibn ‘Ezra. As we shall see in Chapter 4, Naḥmanides also relied heavily on Judah ha-Lēvy’s ideas. He was also cited extensively by Immanuel b. Solomon of Rome (1265–1330).

Lēvy Ibn al-Tabbān of Zaragoza, a poet and teacher of the grammarian Isaac Ibn Baron, apparently wrote a commentary (in “Judeo-Arabic”), cited
by Joseph (b. Abraham) Ibn Waqār, a philosopher-qabalist in Toledo (fl. 1290–after 1358), who also wrote a now lost commentary on Ibn ‘Ezra.130

Finally, a certain Khalūf b. Abraham Ibn Zandūn is mentioned by Joseph Ibn ‘Aknīn (see below on him) as having written a commentary on Judges (since nothing is known of him, it is not certain that he was Spanish). In the eleventh century, a certain Moses b. Naḥman ha-Sefardiyy (originally from Spain; not, of course, to be confused with the later famous “Naḥmanides”) in Jerusalem wrote a commentary explaining difficult words, which he sent to a Jewish community in Algeria.131

Major commentators of Muslim Spain

We see from the above listing how much has been lost, some of it very significant and others less so. Fortunately, a considerable amount of the biblical commentary produced by Jews in Muslim Spain has survived and has been published, some in “critical” editions (based at least on some manuscripts, in comparison with earlier printed editions, although rarely have editors consulted citations in later authorities, such as Ibn ‘Ezra).

Isaac b. Judah Ibn Ghiyāth (the correct spelling of his name132) of Lucena (d. 1089 in Córdoba) was a famous rabbi, teacher of Moses Ibn ‘Ezra(h) and others. While he is known for his legal writings, he also did a “Judeo-Arabic” translation of, and commentary on, Ecclesiastes.133 He apparently also made commentaries on, or translations of, other parts of the Bible.134 Vajda claimed that the commentary on Ecclesiastes is not of great interest, and that its principal purpose was to show that Ecclesiastes is a manual for asceticism, which is not at all true.135 At the beginning, he states that some of the students asked him to write the commentary, and that “many of the great commentators” who preceded him had erred in understanding the book. Who these “commentators” (and so in several places) were remains a mystery.136 The commentary is verbose, but hardly without interest, including his grammatical explanations. According to Ibn Ghiyāth, Ecclesiastes contains references to all the sciences: “revelation” (religious teaching), geometry (and surveying) and philosophy.137 Ibn Ghiyāth’s concluding remarks, 294–96, are in fact a brilliant analysis of learning and the importance of wisdom.

Judah (Abū Zakariyā Yaḥyā) b. Samuel Ibn Bil‘am138 (eleventh century) was apparently born in Toledo but lived in Córdoba and Seville. He was the author of several important commentaries, in Judeo-Arabic, perhaps on the entire Bible.139 Only portions of his commentary on the Torah (Kitāb al-tarjiḥ) have survived,140 together with parts of his commentary (Nuqat al-miqra‘) on Joshua and fragments on the “Twelve Prophets” and other books, and complete on Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel.141 He was cited frequently by Ibn ‘Ezra, particularly in his commentaries on the Torah, on Psalms and in at least two other places.142 He is also cited in the commentary of Joseph Ibn ‘Aknīn on Song of Songs.143
In general, his approach was grammatical, explaining difficult words according to their verbal root or form or by analogy (in this, of course, he followed his predecessors, particularly Ibn Janāḥ and Ḥayyūj, but was not slavishly dependent on them). Some of his explanations are ingenious, such as on Isa. 63.11, where he understands mōsheh not as the name Moses but rather as a verb (as in Ex. 2.10, “drew forth”; cf. 2 Sam. 22.17); thus, the meaning is “they [the people] recalled [He who] withdrew them and removed them from the slavery of Egypt.”

There is an anonymous account according to which Moses Ibn Chicatilla was skilled in chess and once delayed the evening prayer in the synagogue because he was playing, but Ibn Bil’ām did not wait for him and began the prayers, and when Ibn Chicatilla entered he said to him “the Lord your God will not hearken to Bil’ām” (Deut. 23.6, the correct form is in the Hebrew). After this, Ibn Bil’ām learned chess and became better than Ibn Chicatilla and he began to criticize him, even calling him a heretic (ed. and tr. in Harkavy, Ḥadashiym gam yešaniym, 128).

His disagreements with Moses Ibn Chicatilla have been mentioned above. Peculiarly, Abraham Harkavy claimed that the commentaries on Isaiah of both Ibn Bil’ām and Ibn ‘Ezra are almost entirely derived from Ibn Chicatilla, and so also that of Ibn ‘Ezra on the Psalms (even when he does not specifically mention him); this is, of course, not true. What he assumed to be new sections of the commentary of Ibn Chicatilla are in fact from Tanḥūm b. Joseph ha-Yerūšalmīy, long after Ibn ‘Ezra, of course (whose disdain for Ibn Chicatilla is abundantly clear).

In addition to his citations of Sa’adyah, Sheriyrah, Hai (or Hayyē), Samuel b. Ḥofniy, Hēfeṣ b.Yašliyah and other predecessors, he also cited both Muslim and Christian sources. As with all Jewish biblical and talmudic commentators in Spain, he consulted various manuscripts (see his commentary on Isa. 5.5). It is also important to note the extent of his use of talmudic and even medieval midrashic sources (for instance, his reference to Pirqey de Rabiy Eli’ezer; in his commentary on Joshua 5.4). Thus, he explains the difficulty of the ten portions (in the allocation of the Land of Israel) assigned to the tribe of Menasseh (Joshua 17.5), whereas in fact only six names had been mentioned as the sons of Zelophehad (Ṣelafḥad; cf. Num. 27.7).

Nevertheless, he did not always agree with statements found in rabbinical sources which seemed to contradict the plain meaning of a text or were illogical. He did not hesitate to disagree with the Talmud, for example, in insisting that Isa. 6.1 refers literally to the year of the death of Uzziah (contrary also to the opinion of Sa’adyah and so some later commentators), and on 7.1 he reiterates that the prophecy of Isaiah began then and not before (David Qimḥi cites the Aramaic translation, which follows the talmudic interpretation, but also suggests that it could mean the actual death of the king, but inexplicably adds that if so Isaiah’s prophecy did not begin in that year).
Important is his distinction that, although “eyn miqra yōsē mi-dey peshūfō” (“scripture does not depart from its simple meaning”) (see above, “Four Levels of Interpretation”), an exception is made in three cases: when the passage is contrary to common sense (such as Deut. 4.24: God “is a consuming fire,” whereas it is known that God has no form), a contradiction between passages or a contradiction between the text and tradition (talmudic interpretation of the law).\textsuperscript{151}

Ibn Bil‘am also exhibits independence and even audacity on some philosophical or “theological” issues, such as his statement (on Isa. 8.19) that “the soul after separating from the body [in death] has no knowledge,” citing Eccles. 9.5 and explaining that “the souls of the dead have no connection with anything of the world of generation and corruption” (the philosophical term for the physical world).

Of great importance is his quotation of the entire text of a responsum of Hai (Hayyē) Gaon concerning the issue of determinism and free will (although he made no comment of his own on the issue). In his commentary on Jonah, he also cited a responsum of Hai about Jonah’s flight and why God chose as a messenger someone who disobeys him.\textsuperscript{152} He mentions a certain person whom he heard explain a passage (Jer. 17.27) as a refutation of the opinion of the Qaraite’s, but Ibn Bil‘am said that this was not necessary since the prohibition of carrying on the Sabbath may already be understood from Ex. 16.29, and that the majority of the laws concerning Sabbath boundaries were conveyed orally in the name of Moses.\textsuperscript{153} He adds that because of the transgression of these laws the dominion of Jews in the Land of Israel was lost, concluding, significantly “and many times we transgress [these laws] publicly or privately.” Ibn Bil‘am was strongly opposed to the Qaraite’s, whom he labeled “heretics.”\textsuperscript{154}

He was one of the first of our commentators to display an interest in astrology or magic, referring to the “tables [Ar. mawāʿid] prepared for the spiritual ascent of the planets,” the description of which he saw in a book of Aristotle’s called “Themistius.”\textsuperscript{155}

In discussing miracles and how they must be interpreted literally, Moses Ibn ‘Ezra(h) stated that Ibn Bil‘am wrote a work in which he collected the majority of the miracles in the Torah and the prophets and those that apply to the future (i.e., postbiblical history).\textsuperscript{156} Isaac Abravanel, originally of Portugal and Castile but who wrote in Italy after the Expulsion, harshly criticized Ibn Chiczatilla for supposedly giving a rational interpretation of miracles (confusing him, apparently, with Ibn Bil‘am).\textsuperscript{157} Abravanel elsewhere criticized those who asserted (in fact, correctly) that the belief in the coming of a messiah is only a rabbinical tradition and without biblical authority. Among those whom he mentioned in this connection were Ibn Bil‘am, Moses Ibn Chiczatilla and Hayyīm Gallipapa (Pamplona, fourteenth century; author of a lost treatise on redemption).\textsuperscript{158} Nothing like this is to be found, however, in
Ibn Bil'am's commentary on Isaiah, where we might expect it, nor in the frequent criticism of him by Ibn 'Ezra. However, in his commentary on Zech. 9.9, Ibn Bil'am stated that Ibn Chicatilla applied the verse not to the messiah but to Nehemiah, an interpretation which Ibn Bil'am severely criticized; as noted previously, Ibn Chicatilla often interpreted “messianic” passages as referring to Hezekiah.159

Joseph Ibn 'Aknīn (late twelfth century) is another outstanding example of the highly educated laity of al-Andalus. He is not to be confused, as he often is, with the student for whom Maimonides wrote his “Guide,” who was Joseph Ibn Shim'on (Ar. Sham‘ūn) of Ceuta (North Africa).160

He was descended from a long line of scholars originating in Barcelona, but he was born in Seville, where he probably received his education. After apparently converting to Islam under duress, he fled the Almohad persecution there and went to Barcelona in 1190 or somewhat earlier. He was never in North Africa, nor did he ever meet Maimonides.161 He was the author of several works, only some of which have survived, and of these only his Sēfer ha-musar (commentary on Avot) and his commentary on Song of Songs (Inkīshāf al-asār wa-zuhūr al-anwār, “Revealing the secrets and the appearance [or showing] of the lights”) have been published in full.162 He wrote his commentary after his major philosophical-psychological treatise “Ṭībb al-nufūs” (“healing of the souls”) and after his other works, which he cites there.163

His commentary is divided into three parts, like that of Ibn 'Ezra (see the following chapter on that) from whom he probably got the idea, without mentioning it. These three approaches, or methods, are allegorically similar to the three “souls,” natural, animalistic and rational (this differs somewhat from the traditional classification and is more fully developed by his contemporary, the aforementioned Joseph Ibn Ṣadiyq; ca. 1075–1149). The first is peshaṭ (so, also in the Arabic text rather than the expected Ar. ṣāḥīḥ), in this case primarily grammatical; as he says, in the manner of earlier grammarians such as Sa‘adyah, Abū Zakariyā Yaḥyā b. Dā‘ūd al-Fāsī (probably Ḥayyūj),164 Ibn Janāḥ, Ibn Naghrillah (note that he spells his name thus, correctly, in Arabic letters), Ibn Baron, Ibn Bil'am and Moses Ibn Chicatilla. The second way is that of the sages in Midrash haziyōt (i.e., Midrash Song of Songs rabah; Halkin has no note explaining this. Maimonides, Naḥmanides and other medieval writers also called that midrash by this name).

The third method is his own, which he claims no one before him had used (in this sense), the allegorical, specifically, the interpretation of the relationship between lover and beloved as that of the “intellects” (as understood in Aristotelian philosophy).165 He notes the saying of the sages that the Torah is compared (also to three things): to water, wine, oil and honey (most frequently, water).166 Other points of particular interest include his discussion of the “four oaths” which Israel was required by God to observe, not to rebel
against the nations, etc., both citing the traditional rabbinic formulation and also giving his own allegorical interpretation.\textsuperscript{167}

The Ten Commandments are the “foundation of the Torah” and are compared to Aristotle’s ten categories of logic (which idea he borrowed from Sa’adyah).\textsuperscript{168} They are also compared to the “ten words” (with which the universe was created), in which everything is included.\textsuperscript{169} One of the most profound sections of his own, allegorical, explanation is the lengthy discussion of the five ways of learning (\textit{i’tiqād}; not simply “belief,” as Halkin translated, but “firm acceptance in the mind of a thing as true,” exactly equivalent to Heb. \textit{emūnah}).\textsuperscript{170}

While the most important aspect of his commentary is his own philosophical-allegorical interpretation, lengthy and verbose to the point where it is the longest Jewish commentary ever written on any single biblical book, there are instances where his “simple” explanation is particularly good. An example is on 8.1–2, where for some reason most translators have understood the verb \textit{telamdēniy} (8.2) as an expression “the chamber of her who conceived me” or (some Jewish translations) as a compound verb “who brought me up.”\textsuperscript{171} Both, of course, are impossible. Ibn ‘Aknīn explained it (402/403) as “she [her mother] will teach me” how to “serve” (refresh) her lover. In fact, he borrowed the grammatical explanation from Ibn ‘Ezra, who stated simply: “it returns [refers back] to the mother” (the alternative explanation of the verb as “you [masc.] will teach me” would not explain why she brought her lover to her mother’s house).\textsuperscript{172}

\textbf{Citations, etc.}

Although, as noted, he criticized Ibn ‘Ezra’s commentary, he, nevertheless, cited him respectfully once (34/35) and borrowed from him elsewhere without acknowledgment (e.g., 216/217, on 4.12 and 4.13 [\textit{kefariym}]). On 4.13 he cited Ibn Baron for the explanation that \textit{pardēs}, “garden, orchard,” is a foreign word.\textsuperscript{173} He again cited him for the explanation of \textit{mitrapeqet} (8.5).\textsuperscript{174} Ibn Gabirol’s poetry (but curiously not his philosophical or ethical writings) is cited several times (see 325, his criticism of a poem, see also 435, 439). He cited Judah ha-Lēvy once (176/177; discussed elsewhere here); yet he ignored that author’s interpretation of Song of Songs 5.2–4 as the rejection of the opportunity to return to the Land of Israel from the exile on the part of those who chose to remain in Babylonia, and that the “voice of my beloved knocking” was that of God calling for them to return. Ha-Lēvy concluded, “Divine providence only gives man as much as he is prepared to receive; if his receptive capacity [is] small he obtains little, [but] much if it [is] great” (this statement was “borrowed,” without acknowledgment by Moses Ibn Tibbon in his commentary). This is very similar to Ibn ‘Ezra’s more fully developed concept of receptivity (see Chapter 2, “Digressions” in Ibn ‘Ezra on this).
Ibn ‘Aknīn summarizes the midrashic explanations given by ha-Lēvy but applies the verses to a future redemption from the exile, in the form of prophetic promises.\(^{175}\) It is clear, nevertheless, that the “Kuzariyy” of ha-Lēvy was a major source for Ibn ‘Aknīn, particularly the last section of that work.

He also cited Muslim authorities (especially al-Fārābī), including poets, and drew extensively from them.\(^{176}\) Ibn Sīnā’s famous Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān, an allegorical tale of the seeker for truth, is described briefly.\(^{177}\) Most important of the sources cited by him, perhaps, is in his discussion attempting to resolve a conflict between the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmud, where he states that he discovered the explanation of the learned sage Joseph b. Isaac Shāmī (= “of Syria-Palestine”) which he found in the manuscript of a commentary on Judges by a certain Khalūf b. Abraham Ibn Zandūn.\(^{178}\)

### The Bible in poetry and poetics

One of the key elements in the Jewish cultural renaissance of Muslim Spain was the interrelationship between the development of Hebrew grammar and philology, biblical exegesis and Hebrew poetry and literature. While scholars have obviously been aware of the importance of biblical exegesis in the writings of medieval grammarians, the interpretation of biblical texts at the hands of poets has generally been ignored. What is intended here is not the oft-repeated (if not entirely accurate) assertions about the imitation of biblical style or use of biblical vocabulary by medieval poets, but rather the interpretation of biblical verses as reflected in medieval poetry. An interesting study would also be the interpretation of specifically poetic verses in the Bible by medieval exegetes.\(^{179}\)

As previously mentioned (n. 142), Joseph Ibn Abitūr, also well known as an author of piyūṭiym (religious poetry), wrote one poem which is an interpretation of the book of Habakkuk.\(^{180}\) All of the poets, of course, even in their “secular” poems borrowed extensively from the Bible, but few actually wrote poems which reflect innovative insight in biblical verses.

Moses Ibn ‘Ezra(h) (ca. 1055–d. after 1135 or 1138) was one such poet who perhaps more than any other qualifies for consideration in this respect.\(^{181}\) Leopold Dukes believed that he wrote an actual commentary on the Bible, since David Qimḥi (on Isa. 51.1) and the sixteenth-century writer Solomon b. “Mōlkhō” (or “Melekh,” both forms are undoubtedly wrong), Mikḥlal yōšīy (on Gen. 1.6), cite him. An anonymous Damascus Qaraite source does mention that he wrote a commentary on the Torah, Psalms and part of the Prophets.\(^{182}\) Nevertheless, this is flimsy evidence and it is in fact unlikely that he wrote any biblical commentary, which would surely have been cited more frequently. There is no doubt, however, that the Bible was a major influence not only in his poetry but in his analytical works.\(^{183}\)
Very important for an understanding of his biblical interpretation is his still unedited rhetorical-philosophical treatise *Maqālat al-ḥadiqa fi ma'na al-majāz w'al-ḥaqīqa*. Not only in this work but also in his book on poetics we find a detailed discussion of such things as *wuhū* (“allusion”) and *al-āsānah* (or *isti‘ānah*; “metaphor”) in the Bible and in poetry. Other statements on “esoteric” interpretation and other things have been mentioned in the notes here.

The exegetical balance between *majāz* (allegory) and *ḥaqīqa* (truth) is central in Ibn ‘Ezra(h), as indicated in the title of the work (“Treatise of the garden on examination of allegory and literalism”). However, it is erroneous to assert that he “followed” the tradition of those denounced by Bahya Ibn Paqudah who interpret the Bible in a literal sense without concern for tradition, since Bahya probably had in mind the Qaraites. Ibn ‘Ezra(h) did not disregard rabbinical tradition, nor did he need freeing from the “bonds” of that tradition in order to utilize philosophical resources. More correctly, Fenton (*Philosophie et exégèse*) has shown that Ibn ‘Ezra(h) probably borrowed from Ibn Paqudah his previously cited statement about the need to examine the “true” and the “metaphorical” meaning, and that there is really no difference between these.

Ibn ‘Ezra(h) explains that there are many proverbial or enigmatic statements in prophetic writings, some of which describe things in terms of the physical senses (thus making them easier to comprehend); however, this does not apply to the “auditory” (received) commandments “lest there be doubt about them and interpretation would increase.” In his rhetorical-philosophical work, he observed that the Torah is divided into three categories: (a) “relating” (*hagadah*), from the account of creation to the days of Moses; (b) the “rational” and (c) “auditory” commandments (*miṣvō t ha-sikhliōyt ve-ha-hashimiy‘ōt*). The former, which are laws that even had they not been commanded reason would require them, and they are called *miṣḥāṭiym* (often translated “judgements”), while the latter are divinely revealed and would not be evident were it not for this, and these are called *ḥūqiym* (“statutes”). Important is his explanation of why the “rational” commandments were included in the Torah, if they are self-evident: because the specific details of what they require, which would not be apparent or agreed upon by everyone.

As with many Jewish writers of Muslim Spain, there is a certain degree of “audacity” in some of his interpretation. An example is his comment on Song of Songs 4.3, “like a scarlet thread are your lips,” which metaphor he says combines the qualities of softness, color and elegant thin shape, adding “and if only in this verse Song of Songs was superior to Ecclesiastes it would be sufficient” (medieval writers, following talmudic tradition, believed Solomon to have been the author of both books, as well as Proverbs). What remains to be done is a careful examination of the poetry particularly of Ibn Naghrillah and Ibn Gabirol in terms of their interpretation of biblical passages or even words (a task made considerably more easy thanks to the complete index of references in the editions by Jarden).
Conclusions

The Jews of Muslim Spain (including the important Muslim communities in northern Spain) were at once strongly influenced by and yet reacted against the Muslim culture. While perfectly willing to adopt the Muslim living style (clothing, food, housing) and education, and the other influences mentioned with respect to interpretation, they rejected the claims of “perfection” and superiority of the Arabic language. This reaction was a major (probably the major) factor in the renaissance of Hebrew language and grammar in Spain, resulting in the creation of secular Hebrew poetry and literature as well as biblical exegesis. It must be emphasized again that these are three aspects of the same phenomenon, without which it is impossible to properly understand and appreciate the significance of Jewish biblical commentary in this period.

Notes

1 The Tanakh originally consisted of 24 books, but under Christian influence the division of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles into two books each and the separation of Ezra-Nehemiah into separate books resulted in the 28 books found today.

2 Regarding the use of Greek, one such synagogue in Jerusalem prior to 70 C.E. is evidenced in the Greek inscription of its founder, who established it for the reading of the Torah (in Greek); see Cambridge History of Judaism 3, The Early Roman Period, 84–85, with a photograph of the inscription (there are numerous other references there to this inscription).

3 It seems very clear, from numerous accounts, that the Torah and Prophets, as well as such things as the “Megillot” (Scrolls), were actually read in the synagogues in Greek. On the use of Greek for reading the Torah in the synagogues, see the still indispensable work of Swete, Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek, 29 ff. Note especially his statement, 30, that when the Septuagint (official Jewish Greek translation) became corrupted by Christian interpolations and changes it was necessary to substitute new Jewish Greek translations (cf. 406 ff. there on the use of the Septuagint in early Christian writers). On the Septuagint itself, see especially Fernández Marcos, Septuagint in Context; still important is the often overlooked article of Bickerman, “Septuagint as a Translation.” Martin Hengel, who has done such brilliant work on the Hellenistic period, has written a provocative volume, Septuagint as Christian Scripture, nevertheless, with a good discussion of early Christian corruption of the Septuagint text. From a different perspective, the development of the legend of how the Septuagint came into being, see Abraham and David Wasserstein, Legend of the Septuagint.

4 There were, of course, Aramaic translations of the Prophets. See in further detail n. 12. Philip S. Alexander, in an essay on Aramaic translations in Mulder, ed., Mikra, correctly states (238) that these translations were recited orally in the synagogues while the reader read from the (Hebrew) text of the scroll; however, nothing is said about the implication that most Jews could no longer understand the Hebrew Bible and that is why they needed such translation. An earlier article elsewhere, generally very good as an introduction to the translations, is his “Targumim and the Rabbinic Rules for the Delivery of the Targum.” On continued medieval Jewish Greek translations, see Fernández Marcos, “Non placet Septuaginta: Revisions and New Greek Versions of the Bible in Byzantium.”
Little has been written on talmudic interpretation of the Bible. Aptowitzer, *Das Schriftwört*, is a highly technical work, assembling variant readings of biblical texts in rabbinical and other early sources known to him, but only for Joshua, Judges and Samuel. A brief study of one aspect of talmudic interpretation is Luzárraga, “Principios hermenéuticos.” Some insights into talmudic (less so midrashic) approaches to the Bible may be found in Weiss Halivni, *Peshat and Derash*. The book is marred by, among other things, selective reading and peculiar omissions of important texts. Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, gives the impression, 34–35, and Table 3, that there are only a few differences between the “masoretic text(s)” and talmudic readings; in fact, the differences are significant.

I chose to use the English titles for individual parts of the *Midrash rabah* for the convenience of readers and because there is an English translation widely available in libraries (there is also a Spanish translation, which I have not seen). On midrash, generally, there is nothing to replace the classic study of Zunz, *ha-Derashōt be-Yisraēl* (the Hebrew translation is updated and expanded). Indispensable is the bibliography by Townsend, “Minor Midrashim,” although some items are missing and there are additional sources and bibliography to be added. See the excellent and thorough analysis of the use of homily in midrashic exegesis by Stern, *Parables in Midrash*, focusing particularly on the midrash Lamentations rabah but with insights of general importance. Of interest recently are two collections of essays: Fishbane, ed., *Midrashic Imagination* and Boyarin, *Sparks of the Logos*. Fishbane’s own *Exegetical Imagination* is a very interesting analysis of certain topics traced from rabbinical literature through later sources. It is significant that few books of the *Midrash rabah* seem to have been known to Maimonides; or to Spanish authorities in general until the late thirteenth century. Ibn ‘Ezra made some use of other *midrashīyām*, but Naḥmanides was the first to cite them extensively, and Bahya b. Asher (see Chapter 4 on him) seems to have used most of the known (minor) *midrashīyām*. There is no analytical study of this subject which would be of interest.


The apparent meaning would be the Qaraites (see n. 26 on them); on the term *ba‘aleh migra* as “Qaraite,” see Allony, N. “Reshiyfat munāhiyīm qara‘īyṭ me-ha-mēah ha-shemiyyīt,” in Weiser and Luria, eds., *Sēfer Qōmṛqīyān*, 332–33 n. 11. However, W. Bacher already dismissed this possibility and explained it as “scholars” who were knowledgeable only in the Bible (“Materiaux pour servir à l’histoire de l’exégèse biblique en Espagne,” 274–75), and cited examples where the term, borrowed from Menāhēm Ibn Sārūq (see here below on him), was used by Natan b. Yehēl of Rome in his dictionary (*‘Arūḵh*). To these may be added Mo-ses b. Naḥaman (“Naḥmanides”), who referred to Ibn ‘Ezra (“the scholar mentioned”) and other *ba‘aleh ha-migra* (on Gen. 46.15; ed. Chavel 1: 254; Chavel made no comment on this). See *Eruvin* 54b, contrasted with those who know the Mishnah. Even the term *qera‘īyām* (here, not Qaraites but something like “those who know the scriptures”), in fact apparently meaning Ibn Janāḥ (see...
below on him), is used by Judah b. Barzilay, Peyrūsh, 63, 96 (and see Halberstamm in his notes there, 292; also Kaufmann there, 335). Nevertheless, these scholars who studied only the Bible (if there ever were any such) would not be called “heretics” (miniym). See also Judah b. Barzilay’s condemnation of the “evil ones of the earth, heretics who pursue the children of Israel and dwell [literally ‘stand’] among us” who dare to accuse the sages of attributing forms or descriptions to God (ibid., 13), where it is quite clear that he did not mean Christians but certainly the Qaraites, who “dwell among us” (Bacher, 279 n. 5, thought that he meant apostates, but this is unlikely). However, there were no Qaraites in Barcelona, so that he was reporting hearsay evidence. Alternatively, he was talking about some otherwise similar people who thought they did not need to study the Talmud but could depend on the Bible alone. The Qaraites were all, or nearly all, driven out of Muslim Spain by the “rabbinité” or traditional Jews by the end of the twelfth century; thus, for example, Nahmanides referred to them as “the heretics called in the East [Iraq, and the Land of Israel] Qaraites” (strictures on Moses b. Maimon, Sēfer ha-miṣvoṭ, 212), since they no longer lived in Spain. Maimonides himself referred to Qaraites in Egypt as heretics (on Avot 1.3; Moses b. Maimon, Mishnah ‘im peyrūsh 4: 410).

9 Ibn Susān (so, correctly, not “Shoshan”), Peyrūshey…Avōt, 80.

10 Ma’aseh ēfōd, 41. Isaac b. Natan b. Kalonymos (not “Qalonymos”), who completed his biblical concordance (the first ever written), Me’ir natiyv, in approximately 1447 in Arles (Provence, then no longer part of Spain) also stated that only the Talmud was studied and the Bible was neglected. He said that by the age of 15 he still knew of the Bible only what was quoted in the Talmud and the works of Maimonides (including the “Guide”); see Rénan (Neubauer), Écrivains juifs, 585; see now Ben-Shalom, “Me’ir Nativ: The First Hebrew Concordance of the Bible,” especially 308–10 on Isaac’s inadequate learning of Bible in his youth, also 310–13 on Duran. Ben-Shalom incorrectly referred to Isaac as “Isaac Nathan.” Jacob b. Abba Marīy Anatoliy (thirteenth century, Provence, Naples; son-in-law of Judah Ibn Tibbon) also complained that people do not diligently study the Torah but rather are content with a “weak reading, like the reading of youths” twice of the weekly portion with translation; he contrasts this with the Christians who constantly investigate and publicly preach the scriptures (Malmad ha-talmiydiym, [9], unpaginated introduction). It is noteworthy that all of these references are from Provence, whereas in al-Andalus and Spain generally, as noted, such changes could not have been made.

11 Maimonides mentioned that the Torah had been translated in Syriac, Greek, Persian and Latin (Igeret Teyman, ed. Halkin, 38, lines 16–17; Igerot, ed. Shailat 1: 131); in fact, no complete Persian translation as early as the time of Maimonides is extant (see Fischer, “Bible in Persian Translation”; while rather vague on dates, it would appear that the earliest translations were not prior to the fourteenth century; the manuscript of a Pentateuch, Or. 5446 in the British Library, is the earliest, dating from 1319; on a tenth-century fragment of Jeremiah, see Shaked, “Fragment of the Book of Jeremiah in Early Judaeo-Persian.” Nevertheless, the testimony of Maimonides is not to be dismissed lightly.

12 Targūm Onkelōs is found in most standard Hebrew bibles (Pentateuch). There is also an edition with translation (German) and notes by A. Berlinger (Berlin, 1884) and a critical ed., The Bible in Aramaic 1 (see Bibliography: Sources). For its incorporation in Spanish Hebrew biblical manuscripts and editions, see Chapter 6. There are other Aramaic translations (targūmim) of the rest of the Bible. There is an ed. of The Former Prophets according to Targum Yehonatan by Sperber (1959) and of The Latter Prophets (1962), as well as some eds. of individual books. All of the
extant targūniym have been translated in English: The Aramaic Bible: The Targums [sic]; see Sources. There is a vast literature on the Aramaic translations; see briefly Levine, E. “The Targums [sic]: Their Interpretative Character and Their Place in Jewish Text Tradition,” in Sebo, ed., Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, 323–31. Of interest, aside from some peculiar contributions, is the collection of studies in Beattie and McNamara, Aramaic Bible. Targums [sic] with a listing of “critical” editions (88–90) and English translations (110 and 112). See also Diez Merino, “El Targum: su definición,” for a summary of recent research, and “Los estudios targúmicos en la actualidad.”

13 As reported by ‘Amram Gaōn, Sēder Rāv ‘Amram ha-shalēm, pt. 2, 34b. See Naṭronai, Teshuvōt, 152–54; see also Ratzaby, “Al tafsīyī R’ Sa’adyah le-miqra,” in Weiser and Luria, eds., Sēfer Qōrngriyn, 238. Brody (ed. of Naṭronai), 154 n. 7, was incorrect in stating that Hai (Hayyē) Gaōn did not consider the reading of the Aramaic translation to be a “fundamental obligation”; the only difference is that he considered it a rabbinical (talmudic) obligation and Naṭronai thought it a biblical one. There were synagogues in Arabic-speaking lands where the haftarah (reading from the prophets, from a special scroll, in the synagogue) was accompanied with or substituted by Arabic translations, based on that of Sa’adyah (see Melamed, “Targum Yonatan ve-tafsīyī ‘aravī yēl shiyyrat Devorah”).

14 Some biblical passages were considered too sexually explicit, or too condemna-
tory of the people, to be translated in public.

15 In Judah b. Barzilay, Sēfer ha-‘itiym, the text is emended by the editor to “from the time [of the Temple],” but this is incorrect, for the reference is not to the time of the Temple but to “ancient times,” in fact, the exile. Margalioth (Ibn Naghrīllah, Sēfer hilkhōt ha-nagiyyd, 92) has the correct reading. Samuel Ibn Naghrīllah (nagiyyd, meaning “prince” or leader, was an honorary title conferred by the gaōniym in Baghdad) is discussed later.

16 Capital punishment was practiced by Jews uniquely in medieval Spain. Flogging which leads to death, however, is a gross violation of Jewish law. Here, the refer-
ence is to the aforementioned Qaraïtes in Spain, the extirpation of whom was deemed a religious duty (indeed, heretics in general could be killed). Adang, Muslim Writers on Judaism, 234 n. 140, is right to be skeptical of the exaggerated claims of some authors about Ibn Naghrīllah’s “persecution” of Qaraïtes, for which there is no evidence (this was already observed by Waxman, History of Jewish Literature 1: 520 n. 1).

17 Judah b. Barzilay, Sēfer ha-‘itiym, 267; reproduced, with notes, in Ibn Naghrīllah, Sēfer hilkhōt ha-nagiyyd, 93. Gross, “Rashiy u-masoret liymud ha-Torah,” briefly refers to Judah’s statement (only), 37 n. 44, but wrongly concludes that it dealt only with the reading of the Torah and translation in the synagogue. Important, however, is Gross’s citation of the legal ruling of Jacob b. Asher (Toledo, four-teenth century) that the obligation of learning the weekly Torah portion with the translation may be fulfilled by studying the commentary of Rashi but not by a translation in any other language (such as Arabic); see Jacob’s Tū, “Ōrah hayyim,” no. 285, 1–2; cf. his father Asher b. Yeḥiēl, commentary (in Vilnius [Romm] Talmud and subsequent editions) on tractate Betakḥōt 8a.

18 In fact, there are problems with the text. Part of the text appears to be transposed from another source and may refer to the custom in Babylon and not Spain. However, the above quoted paragraph is certainly authentic and does refer to al-Andalus. Abraham b. Natan of Lunel (ca. 1155–1215), who lived in Toledo, also wrote that the custom of Spain and Provence is to come early (read “maqdiymiyym,” missing in the text) on Sabbath morning outside of the synagogue and complete the reading of the Torah portion twice and the translation once, “and
whoever does this his life is prolonged.” He adds that some are accustomed to do this on the eve of the Sabbath (Sēfer ha-manhiyyg 1: 158; Raphael’s note citing parallel sources is important, but his interpretation is incorrect).

19 Ibn Quraysh, Risāla, 116. In Arabic (and some Hebrew) texts, Aramaic was always referred to as “Syrian”; curiously, few Jews seem to have known of the Syriac translation, even though the letters are similar to Arabic (the J.E. article on “Syriac” erroneously claimed that Naḥmanides cited the Syriac version of the apocryphal “Wisdom of Solomon”; see Chapter 3 on that; astonishingly, there is no article on Syriac in the E.J.). Intriguing as is a recent hypothesis (Butbul, “Translations in Contact”) that there may be a relationship between early Judeo–Arabic biblical translations and Syriac, the fact remains that Syriac was virtually or totally unknown to medieval Jews.

20 Abraham b. Natan (ca. 1155–1215), Sēfer ha-manhiyyg 1: 158 and parallel sources cited in the notes; incidentally, the word “ṭa’ama” in line 20 should be corrected to “maqdiymiym.” The difference between the later custom and that mentioned earlier in the name of Ibn Naghrīllah was that apparently only the final part of the weekly portion and the Targūm was read (“completed”) and not the entire portion. Not every individual had a codex copy of the Torah or the Targūm, of course, so that no doubt several shared in reading aloud from one copy.

21 See generally the article “Bible Translations, Jewish” in Roth, Medieval Jewish Civilization; also Baron, Social and Religious History 6: 458 n. 41. An unknown Arabic translation of the Pentateuch was cited by the grammarian Isaac Ibn Baron (so, not Barūn; ca. 1100); see Ibn Baruni’s Arabic Works on Hebrew Grammar and Lexicography, 142 n. 115 (as noted there, it cannot refer to Sa’adīyah’s translation, which has a different reading). Several parts of an anonymous translation (1195/96) have been edited; see Poznański, “Arabic Commentary of...ibn Bal’am [sic] on the Twelve Minor Prophets,” 12 n. 30. On Jewish Arabic translations in general, see Avishur, Targumey ha-Tanakh, although mostly on modern translations. On the claim that Aḥmad b. ‘Abd-Allāh Ibn Salām (eighth century) translated the Torah (al-Nadīm, Fihrist 1: 42), see Zucker, ‘Al tāgūm RS"G, 1–2, who questions this. A Muslim mystic of Seville, Ibn Barrajān (d. 1141) apparently utilized an Arabic translation of a Latin version of Genesis in a work which, while not entirely without polemic, is a fairly faithful rendition of some chapters (Casewit, “Muslim Scholar of the Bible”; the claim that it is “not unreasonable” to assume that he had access to Jewish commentaries, such as those of Sa’adīyah or Ibn ‘Eza [!], is of course incorrect). On Qaraite translations: Hoerning, Six Karaite Manuscripts; Polliack, Karaite tradition; Khan, Karaite Bible Manuscripts; Polliack, “Arabic Bible Translations in the Cairo Genizah Collections” and “Medieval Karaite Tradition of Translating the Hebrew Bible into Arabic.” On Christian Arabic translations of the Bible, see Graf, Geschichte 1: 44 ff.; chapters in Griffith, Bible in Arabic and Vollandt, Arabic Versions of the Pentateuch; and see further below. There exists a Christian Arabic translation of the Bible in St. Petersberg dating from 1236, which was copied from an Antioch manuscript of 1022; see Brovenko, “Arabic Bible....” and further details by Polozin and Rezvan, “To the CD-ROM Edition of the St. Petersburg Bible”; both articles are technical rather than analytical.

22 Jiménez de Rada (ca. 1170–1247), De rebus hispaniae IV. iii. The fourteenth-century Spanish translation of his chronicle by Gonzalo de la Hinojosa, bishop of Burgos, corrected “commented on” to “translated” (text in Coleccion de documentos inéditos para la historia de España 105 [1893]: 223); the correction is erroneous, of course. There is a considerable bibliography on Juan; see recently Monferrer Sala, “De nuevo sobre Johannes Hispalensis.”
23 On early Judeo-Ar. translations of the Torah, predating that of Sa’adyah, see the important article by Tobi, “‘Al qadmutam shel targumey ha-miqra…,” with text of a newly discovered translation, and useful notes and bibliography, including his other earlier articles (nevertheless, lacking the references in n. 21); see especially 21–25 and sources cited, according to which there is at least a possibility of pre-Muslim or early Muslim period Jewish translations. On a Judeo-Ar. translation of Proverbs, see Blau, “On a Fragment of the Oldest Judaeo-Arabic Bible Translation Extant”; the possible influence of some terms on Sa’adyah’s translation is noted. Further fragments of that translation of Proverbs have been discovered, and Hopkins has demonstrated that these are dependent on a much earlier (no later than eighth century) Jewish translation in Arabic letters (“On the Vorlage of an Early Judaeo-Arabic Translation of Proverbs,” with references to other studies). All of this is a corrective to the position of Zucker, ‘Al targūm RS"G le-Tōrah, 1–5, that there were no Arabic translations prior to that of Sa’adyah. A good general article in English is Kearney, “Torah of Israel in the Tongue of Ishmael.” The best study of Sa’adyah remains that of Malter (see Bibliography). For a brief discussion of his role as translator and commentator, see the article “Sa’adyah Gaon” in Roth, ed., Medieval Jewish Civilization, with a bibliography of editions and modern studies (inadvertently omitted there was also the edition of his commentary on Exodus, Peyrūshey…Sēfer Shemūṭ, ed. Ratzaby [Jerusalem, 1998]). A more detailed discussion may be found in Brody’s article, “The Geonim of Babylonia as Biblical Exegetes,” in Sebo, ed., Hebrew Bible/Old Testament 1/2: 74–88; see 77–80 on Sa’adyah. See also Ben-Shammai, “Tension between Literal Interpretation and Exegetical Freedom.” Still of interest is St., C.B., 2182 ff., on his exegesis. A new edition of his commentary on Genesis, based on manuscripts, with Spanish translation is Sa’adyah, “La versión judeo-arabe.” Sa’adyah’s biblical commentaries were cited, as we shall see, by Spanish Jewish authorities who knew Arabic, and second hand by others (such as Naḥmanides). Among the former were Ibn Bil’am, Ibn ‘Ezra, and in Christian Spain Joseph Ibn Naḥmias and Joshua Ibn Shu’ayb (the first three are discussed in detail here; for Ibn Shu’ayb see the informative article of Schlossberg, “Peyrushey Rav Sa’adyah Gaon be-derashot Rav Yehoshu’a Ibn Shu’ayb ‘al ha-Torah.” Of some interest is Freidenreich, “Use of Islamic Sources in Saadiyah Gaon’s Tafsīr of the Torah,” although he ignores many of the sources cited here, and especially Ratzaby. The article focuses in a few instances on the Arabic translation which may be borrowed from the Qur’ān.

24 Ibn ‘Ezra, in his commentary on Gen. 2.11, says that Sa’adyah made his translation in Arabic script. This was questioned by Joseph Derenbourg, Hebrew introduction to his edition of Sa’adyah’s commentary on the Torah, Œuvres complètes, and strongly denied by Zucker, ‘Al targūm RS"G, 284–85. There is, however, a thirteenth–century Florence manuscript of the translation in Arabic script (Kahle, ed., Arabischen Bibelübersetzungen; see Z.f.h.B. 9 [1905]: 11), as well as a fourteenth–century Vatican manuscript (originally from Spain, Vat. MS. Cod. Burg. Ar. 129; see Tisserant, Specimina codicum orientalium, xxxviii, no. 3 and Pl. 53), as well as Paris, B.N. MS. Or., Arabic 1; undoubtedly, these are copies of a no longer extant earlier manuscript, which Ibn ‘Ezra may have seen. Steinschneider, Haša’āt, 80 n. 40, mentioned a copy of a manuscript of Sa’adyah’s translation “in Arabic” offered for sale in Edinburgh; one wonders if this was actually in Arabic letters and what happened to that manuscript. See now Dikken, “Some Remarks about Middle Arabic and Sa’adya Gaon’s Arabic Translation of the Pentateuch,” and especially 66 on Arabic script copies. Blau, Emergence and Linguistic Background, 39–41, questioned whether it is possible to know whether
Sa’adyah’s translation was in Arabic or Hebrew script. Nevertheless, Ibn ‘Ezra’s testimony must be taken seriously. It is not at all unlikely that even if the gaon originally made his translation in Hebrew letters he had transcriptions made of it in Arabic script for those Jews who could not read even Hebrew letters. In addition to his translations, he wrote commentaries on most of the Bible. It appears that there were Hebrew translations of at least some of Sa’adyah’s commentaries already in the thirteenth century, or earlier, since Shēm Ṭov Ibn Falquera in Navarre recommended his commentaries on the Torah and the Prophets, along with the works of Hayyūj and Ibn Janāḥ, as guides to proper understanding of Hebrew grammar (Sēfer ha-mevaqēš, 55).

25 Abrahams, ed. and tr., Hebrew Ethical Wills 1: 66.
26 See the article “Bible Commentaries, Jewish” in Roth, ed., Medieval Jewish Civilization, particularly 98–99 on the Qaraite, and Yoram Erder’s article “Qaraite” there; and in greater detail Erder, “The Karaites’ Sadducee Dilemma,” which provides a detailed discussion of theories about the meaning of the name Qaraite and concludes that it is derived from the qeriye ha-Shēm of the “Damascus Covenant” (this is a novel theory, however). See generally Walfish and Kizilov, Bibliographia Karaitica. On biblical interpretation, see the informative article of Frank, “Karaite Exegesis,” in Sēbo, op. cit., 110–28; essentially reprinted as Chapter 1 of his Search Scripture Well, and see that book. Frank inadvertently gave Ibn Asad’s name as Abū’l Farāj Hārūn (sic) Ibn al-Asad, perhaps confusing him with Abū’l-Farāj Hārūn Ibn al-Farāj, the Qaraite grammarian of the same period. On Ibn Asad, see Ben-Shammai, “Yeshu’a ben Yehudah.” See also Pinsker, Liqūtey qadamniyāt, 210; Munk, Notice sur Abou’l Waldī, 6 ff. (although his dates are wrong); Schreiner, Studien über Jeschua ben Jehuda; Pozniński, Karaite Literary Opponents of Saadia, 48 ff. and Ibn Dā’ūd, Sēfer ha-qabbalah, 94–95, 100 (tr.) and works cited in the notes there, and intro., xlvi–ii (nevertheless, Ibn Naghrilah, mentioned there, did not refer to Qaraites but to traditional Jews misquoting rabbinical statements). Ibn Asad was also cited by Moses Ibn Chicatilla (on whom see below) on Joel 3.1 and by Ibn ‘Ezra (see “Appendix 1” here). On Ibn al-Farāj, particularly, see Polliack, Karaite Tradition. Goldstein, Karaite Exegesis in Medieval Jerusalem, also misspells his name as Abū al-Faraj (throughout) and only once refers to him as Ibn Asad (38). Her recent article, “Arabic Book Culture in the Work of a Jerusalem Karaite,” has it correctly, although only part of his name.

27 Scholem, On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism, 52 ff. (see especially 53–54), and his Major Trends, 400. In fact, Scholem took this, without acknowledgment, from nineteenth-century writers (see Bacher, “L’Exégese biblique dans le Zohar,” 37–38; and see n. 3, citing a study by Löw). Isaac Ibn Laṭīf (fl. 1230–70) appears to have developed a somewhat similar schema; see Heller-Wilensky, S. “Isaac Ibn Laṭīf – Philosopher or Kabbalist?” in Altmann, ed., Jewish Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 219. Bahya’s commentary is discussed in Chapter 3.
28 Scholem does not argue that the thirteenth century saw the first use of these categories (or the acronym PRD"S, pronounced pardēš) in qabalistic literature, but rather that the idea itself appeared for the first time then, which is incorrect. This error is shared by Idel, “Zohar as Exegesis,” 89. The importance of peshaṭ in the Zohar was already pointed out by Bacher, “Exégese biblique dans le Zohar,” 41. On peshaṭ in Rashi, and generally on the relationship between peshaṭ and derash in talmudic sources, see Gelles, Peshat and Derash in the Exegesis of Rashi; and Kamin, Rashiy (Heb.). With regard to sōd (admittedly mostly as seen in his school) see, e.g., Kanarfogel, Peering through the Lattices, 146–53 (on Rashi and midrash, incidentally, see the interesting remarks of James
Kugel: https://www.jameskugel.com/rashis-commentary-on-the-torah/). van der Heide, “PARDES: Methodological reflections on the theory of the Four Senses,” enthusiastically accepted Scholem’s theory and even thought he knew precisely where Moses de León allegedly invented the term (PRD’S): in a lost work (!) called “Sēfer ha-pardēš.” One might well postulate “lost” works to explain many things. Rashi and Ibn ‘Ezra are dismissed in that article with barely a mention. There is still no thorough analysis of these levels of interpretation, including their historical antecedents and how they were employed by various medieval commentators. Weiss Halivni’s previously mentioned Peshat and Derash relates only to talmudic interpretation. Kamin, Rashiy, suggested that peshat means “literal” interpretation but that it is not necessarily in opposition to derash; not only is this incorrect, it is less than helpful. Weiss Halivni argued for the “contextual” meaning, taking into consideration the entire context of a word or verse; this is more nearly correct. See the important analysis of the term peshat, and particularly the expression “peshuto shel miqra,” in talmudic usage in the Hebrew article of that title by Moshe Ahrend in Japhet, ed., Miqra be-rō’iy mefōrshav, 237–61 (most of the article deals with this concept in the exegesis of Rashi and his school, but there is a good discussion of the theories of Kamin and Weiss Halivni; cf. Cohen, Opening the Gates, 253 ff.). Loewe, “‘Plain’ Meaning of Scripture in Early Jewish Exegesis,” argued (158 ff. and 181) that peshat in talmudic sources means “authority,” and thus an interpretation rendered by a recognized authority which is then generally accepted, and not the commonly understood meaning of “plain, literal” exegesis (178–79). In fact, however, the term is never used that way in the Talmud and certainly not in medieval sources. Important is his discussion (162–64) of the apparent first use, by the fourth-century talmudic sage Abaye, of the terms peshat and derash (this was first pointed out by Bacher, however). A recent study in great detail on possible Karaite origins and Ashkenazic use of peshat is Viezel, “Rise and Fall of Jewish Philological Exegesis.”

29 Ibn ‘Ezra, Peyrūshey ha-Torah 1: 8, and in his grammatical work Yesōd diqdūq, 86. Weiss Halivni, Peshat and Derash, 80, wrongly claimed (peculiarly, since he earlier noted its source in the Talmud) that Samuel b. Ḥofniy originated this statement and that Ibn ‘Ezra cited it directly from him, which is also not correct. He adds Ibn Janāḥ (Riqmah 1: 18) to the list; but he again misunderstood his source, for there Ibn Janāḥ also specifically cited the talmudic statement, and mentioned Samuel b. Ḥofniy as one of those whose “simple” commentary was not understood or read by those who lacked comprehension of the proper method; not that he was the source of the statement (and see the completely incorrect interpretation given to this by Weiss Halivni there, 198 n. 63). Ibn ‘Ezra of course wrote no book called “Sophe Berura”; the correct title is Safah berūrah (cf. Zeph. 3.9).

30 Safah berūrah, 5a; cf. the edition begun (unfortunately never completed) by M. Wilensky in Devir (Deviyr) 2 (1924): 288. The “scholars of our generation” whom he criticized were the rabbis of France, as correctly noted by Bacher, Avraham Ibn ‘Ezra ha-medaqdēq, 24 n. 1. See especially Abraham Berliner’s introduction to his edition of Solomon b. Isaac, Rashiy ‘al ha-Tōrah, vii–viii; see also the index to Chavel’s new edition (which scarcely replaces Berliner’s) of Pērūshey Rashiy ‘al ha-Tōrah. See also the remarks of Joshua Barker in his critical edition and English translation of Qimḥi, Commentary on Psalms CXX-CL, xv n. 1 and xviii n. 1; but all of this was already said by Ibn ‘Ezra (a source apparently unknown to Barker). Gross, “Rashiy u-masoret liymud ha-Torah,” 28–29, discusses Ibn ‘Ezra’s attitude to Rashi and accepts Uriel Simon’s explanation that his “opposition” to Rashi was because he believed that he knew nothing about grammar.
(actually, according to Simon, because he could not read “Judeo–Arabic” works on grammar; clearly this is not what Ibn ‘Ezra meant). Aharon Mondschein rightly rejects Simon’s statement in favor of the after all obvious fact that the influence of Rashi was growing due to the popularity of his talmudic commentaries (nevertheless, scarcely yet known in Ibn ‘Ezra’s period in Spain), “‘Ve-eyn be-sifrov peshāṭ qaḥ eḥad meneh elef’…” with no mention of any of the above studies. No one has taken note of the fact that Ibn ‘Ezra specifically states that his objection is not only (or even essentially) to Rashi but to the “scholars of our generation” who glory in their knowledge of his commentary; he refers, of course, to French commentators. It is because of this that he virtually ignores the actual commentary of Rashi in his own commentaries.

31 Moses b. Maimon, Ṣēfer ha-miṣnōṭ, 46, “ha-shārēẖ ha-shēnīy.” The original work was in Arabic, of course, but these expressions were in Hebrew and Aramaic, respectively, in the Arabic text. Maimonides discussed the idea extensively in other writings, particularly the “Guide”; Cohen, Opening the Gates, is an exhaustive analysis of this.

32 Introduction to commentary on the Torah (Biyūr, ed. Chavel 1: 4–5; Heb. pages). He wrote this in rhyme, in a very elegant style.

33 See Origen, Hom. in Lev. V (available in English, Homilies on Lev. 1–16; see Bibliography), and see Smalley, Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages, 6 ff., on Origen and 94, 96, 100 on Hugh of St. Victor (see also Signer, “Peshat, Sensus Litteralis and Sequential Narrative”). The classic study is Lubac, Exégèse médiévale. Hanson, “The Bible in the Early Church” (Chapter 5 in Cambridge History of the Bible, vol. 1; vol. 2 has nothing of interest for our topic); while offering a good discussion of allegory in early interpretation, it ignores all of the aforementioned writers. There is a good general discussion of Jerome, 510 ff. Neither are any of these mentioned in any of several recent articles which shed some light (although not much) on this aspect of medieval Christian exegesis, in McAuliffe, et al., With Reverence for the Word.

34 See Dictionnaire de théologie catholique, s.v. “Epiphane.” His main work, of great importance on “heresies” (including Judaism), has been translated into English (see Sources: Epiphanius of Salamis). His animosity toward Jews is reflected throughout this work.

35 See the excellent discussion by Morrall, Medieval Imprint, 79–80.

36 Scholem, On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism, 52, remarked on the possibility of a connection with Christian interpretation, based on already outdated studies, but thought that Philo was the ultimate source not only for Christian but even (vaguely similar) Muslim concepts, forgetting his own earlier (34) quite sound criticism of those who tried to demonstrate a connection between Philo and later mystical traditions. Philo’s unquestioned influence on early Christian allegorization is well discussed by Hanson, article cited in n. 33.

37 See Smalley, Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages.

38 Ma’amur yiqavū ha-mayīyim (philosophical commentary on Gen. 1.9), 173. Joseph Ibn Kaspiy (thirteenth century, Catalonia; see on him in Chapter 5) noted that because of the complexity of meanings in Hebrew, translators of the Bible are not completely able to render the correct meaning, “and there is no doubt that the Christian translator [Jerome] knew this,” and thus did not translate the Tetragrammaton but left it in Hebrew, “and the explanation for this is deep” (Mishnēh kesef 2: 4–5). A study of medieval attitudes to Christian translations would be of interest.

39 Hitgalūṭ ha-sōḏōt, 142–47; see Halkin’s analysis of these passages in his article “Yedaiah Bedershi’s [sic] Apology,” in Altmann, Jewish Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 171. On the two Muslim sects, the Bāṭainyāya and Ḥashwūyā, see the
The Bible and its interpretation

respective articles and bibliography in S.E.I. The term bāṭīn, used here, in this case implies “allegory” more than “hidden,” although both meanings are involved. Ibn ‘Aknīn, who was no “mystic,” certainly did not mean that he had explained the text in an esoteric manner; rather, allegorically. The reference to Maimonides is M.T., Shōfiṭiym: “Melakhiym” 11.3 (only the Soncino, 1490 edition, has the text as cited by Halkin, ibid., note to line 9; available on microfilm and also online: http://www.jnul.huji.ac.il/dl/books/html/bk1769489.htm). That important statement of Maimonides has been ignored, and indeed the significance of peshaṭ in his thought poorly or incorrectly interpreted, by writers such as Twersky, Introduction to the Code of Maimonides, 145 ff.; Weiss Halivni, Peshat and Derash, 83–88 (in fact, a lengthy digression which has nothing to do with peshaṭ) and Cohen, Three Approaches, 124–25, and Chapter 4 (although there are other valuable comments there). Cohen’s book on Maimonides, Opening the Gates of Interpretation, 506–07, discusses this, but with no mention of Ibn ‘Aknīn. For the correct understanding of Maimonides, see Bacher, Bibelexegese Mose Maimuni’s (Heb. tr. Rambam parshan ha-miqra, 22–23).

See some examples in my “Forgery and Abrogation of the Torah,” 212–13 and 220–21, and the text discussed in my Maimonides. Essays and Texts, 20–21. In fact, Maimonides allegorized all “anthropological” references to God found in the Bible. Although born and raised in Córdoba, he wrote most of his works in Egypt and therefore his biblical interpretation (in the “Guide” and elsewhere) is not discussed here in detail but is referred to in passing (see index).

Thus, Weiss Halivni’s claim, op. cit., 79, that the “interpretative state of mind” of medieval rabbis (only rabbis? no other commentators?) “embodied a belief in the superiority” of peshaṭ over derash is incorrect. All medieval commentators (very few in Spain were rabbis) utilized at least these two methods, and many used all four. On Ibn ‘Ezra’s position on these, see below. During the early phase of the “Maimonidean controversy” in thirteenth-century Spain, it was reported to one of the opponents of philosophy, Crescas Vidal, that someone “pretending to wisdom” had written a commentary on the Torah interpreting it entirely as allegory and excluding all “simple” explanation, but no one had seen the book because its author had not taught it during his lifetime, and that now his son desired to have copies made of it (letter in Abba Mariy b. Moses of Lunel, Minhāt qenaṭ, pt. 1: 48; letter no. 12). The story is questionable, probably part of the propaganda of the anti-philosophical campaign.

The best way to define peshaṭ, it seems to me, is as the simple explanation of what a text apparently means, without concern for allegory or other possible implications; yet this is not “literal,” because at times a text is explained in terms of its traditional “rabbinical” interpretation, or indeed on the basis of grammar. Joseph Qimḥi (see Chapter 3), Sēfer ha-galáṭiyy, 4, punned that one who tries to interpret the Bible “simply” (peshaṭ, without knowing grammar, his peshaṭ will not be accepted (lo’ yitpashēṭ; in the sense of “become known,” or “explained,” incidentally an incorrect use of the word; cf. 1 Sam. 18.4, but perhaps in the sense of “hasagōt,” ed. Chavel, 92). Medieval Jewish exegetes were not “literalists,” and would never have argued that the Bible must always be understood literally as it is written. Ibn ‘Ezra indeed said that “everything we find written [in the Torah] is true and without doubt,” but added “and it has a secret,” meaning that apparently “literal” statements can sometimes be interpreted in another way (on Gen. 3.24, ed. Weiser 1: 30 and see the supercommentaries in Ibn ‘Ezra, Margaliyōṭ tōvāh).
This independence was, of course, restricted primarily to the earlier commentators of Muslim Spain (including Ibn 'Ezra); later commentators from Aragón-Catalonia, such as the Qimḥi family or Moses Ibn Tubbon, both of Spanish Provence, or Naḥmanides and Bahya b. Asher from Catalonia proper, utilized the translations somewhat more frequently, although Naḥmanides did not refrain from disagreeing with them at times. There is still no study of this subject, which ought to also include citations in the talmudic commentaries and response literature.

The term refers to those who created the masōrah, literally “tradition,” scribes in the Land of Israel (chiefly eighth to tenth century) who attempted to establish a correct text of the Bible and added the vowel points, accents, etc. (see briefly the article “Bible – manuscripts; printed editions,” the section on Masorah, in Roth, ed., Medieval Jewish Civilization; and the general survey of their work by M. Mulder in Mulder, ed., Mikra, 104–16; nevertheless, with some errors and outdated references). The classic study remains that of Ginsburg, Introduction (Orlin-skys preface to the rpt. ed. is important); see also Ibn Adoniyahu (“Adoniyaḥ”), Introduction to the Rabbinc Bible and the immensely detailed article in E.J.,2 but lacking any supporting notes. It is unfortunate that the experts have generally failed to consult such important sources as the references to the masōrah in Ibn Janāḥ (see, e.g., the index to that in his Sēfer ha-shōrahjym) and other medieval sources. Ibn Janāḥ elaborately praised the “masoretes,” whose investigations led to the understanding of the “words of God” (introduction to his grammatical treatise Sēfer ha-riqmah 1:15–16).

Direction to the Duties of the Heart, 193–94; Ḥovōt ha-levavōt, 235–36. According to one manuscript, those of the first category (who look only for the literal meaning and precise use of language) are “the heretics, may they be cursed by God in the same way as the Sadducees who understood the Law [Torah] only by its literal and external meaning,” Duties, 193 n. 6. The “heretics,” probably, are the Qaraṭes. There is a certain similarity here with the first chapter of Ibn ‘Ezra’s Yesōd mōna, where he notes that some rely entirely on the “masoretes,” others whose “entire knowledge” is dependent on grammar (he, of course, admits that grammar is essential for understanding the Bible but one should not devote all his study to it); others spend all their time on the study of the Bible and think they have reached the highest level, but it is necessary also to study the Talmud and other sciences (see also Simon, Arba’ giyshōt, 182–83 n. 139). There is a remote possibility that Ibn Paqudh’s categories may have influenced the somewhat similar “seven ways” of interpreting the Torah according to the thirteenth-century qabalist Abraham Abulafia (ed. Jellinek, Philosophie und Kabbala, 1 ff.; see generally Idol, Language, Torah and Hermeneutics in Abraham Abulafia). Diana Lobel’s brilliant article, “Speaking About God. Bahya as Biblical Exegete,” is really about his theological approach to biblical issues in comparison with Sa’adya, and not actual exegesis.

Ibn ‘Aknīn, Hitgalūt ha-sōdōt, 16–19. He mentions specifically Sa’dyah, Abū Zakariyā Yahyā Ibn Dā’ūd al-Fāsī (usually identified as Judah Hayyūf; discussed later here), Ibn Janāḥ, Ibn Na‘ūrīlah (note that he correctly transcribes the name in the Judeo-Ar. text, a fact ignored by all who have written about him), Ibn Baron, Ibn Bil’am and Moses Ibn Chicatilla. Incidentally, the reference to “Bacher” in Halkin’s note there, without further identification, is to be understood as his chapter “Hebräische Sprachwissenschaft vom 10. bis zum 16. Jahrhunderts.” Recently, Mordechai Cohen has argued that Ibn Janāḥ introduced a radically “new” interpretation of peḵah according to which there are two ways of understanding a verse: the “simple” or plain meaning (what Cohen
labels the "philological-contextual" interpretation and the traditional rabbinical or "halakhic" interpretation. Yet, in fact, according to Cohen, there are not two equal interpretations but only peshaṭ "even if it differs from rabbinic halakhic interpretation" (Opening the Gates of Interpretation, 62–63). Cohen, nevertheless, is undoubtedly correct about the polarity of peshaṭ and derash in Ibn Janāḥ; surprisingly, he does not mention the probable influence of this on Ibn 'Ezra or Ibn 'Aknīn.

The proverb was noted already by Zunz, Gesammelte Schriften 2: 266, no. 63 (prior to Steinschneider, whom Halkin cites), and see especially Stern, “First in Thought Is the Last in Action.” The proverb appears in Jewish sources first in Abraham bar Ḥayya (Hiyya), Megilat ha-megaleh, 52; also in Judah ha-Lēvy, Kūzariy III. 73 (tr. Hirschfeld, 196; Ibn Tibbon in the introduction to Chapter 2 of his translation of Ibn Paqudah, Ḥōvōt ha-lewawōr; and much later in Ibn Adret, Ḥidūshey ha-Rašba: peyrūshey ha-hagadōt, 139) and in Bahya b. Asher Ibn ʿḤallāwā, “Petiyḥaḥ” to his Bīyūr, ed. Chavel 1: 2. Not all of these were mentioned by Stern. It appears also in Shēm Tōv Ibn Šaprūṭ (late fourteenth century; Tudela, Tarazona), “Ṣafnat paʾnāḥ” (not to be confused with the work of the same title by Joseph b. Elʿazar “Bonfils”), unpublished supercommentary on Ibn ‘Ezra; excerpts published by Dov Schwartz, “Parshanut ha-agadah shel R’ Shēm Tōv Ibn Šaprūṭ,” 70, line 11; Schwartz made no comment on this. It is also in Matityahu (b. Moses) “‘a-Yiṣhariy” (early fifteenth century), Peyrūsh… Avōt, 74, citing Judah ha-Lēvy. Most of these were ignored by Stern. Ibn ‘Ezra also wrote a threefold commentary on at least parts of Song of Songs, the third of which is allegory but not “philosophical.” Both this and Ibn ‘Aknīn’s commentaries will be discussed later in detail. Peculiarly, Rosenberg (“Parshanut ha-fiylosofiyt le-Shiyr ha-shiyriym,” 135) thought that Maimonides “was not the first who explained Song of Songs” philosophically (actually brief references to it in the “Guide”) for it is “well known” that this was the approach of Ibn ‘Aknīn. Ibn ‘Aknīn wrote his commentary after Maimonides, of course, and indeed Rosenberg in his note there seems to have been aware of that (after stating that he would not analyze Ibn ‘Aknīn’s “opinions,” he proceeds at length to do exactly that).

Commentary on Job 1.6, in Schwarz, ed., Tiqvat enōsh, 180.

Ibn Ghiyāth’s commentary on Ecclesiastes (erroneously attributed to Saʿādyah in Ḥamentša megiylōt ‘im peyrūshiyōm atiqiyōm, 162–63. Ibn ‘Ezra(h), Kitāb, ed. Halkin, 36/37, line 28 ff). He adds that this superiority of the sage to a prophet may be confirmed from Jer. 18.18, “Torah [teaching] shall not perish from the priest, nor counsel from the wise [sage], nor the word from the prophet,” where “sage” is prior to the prophet.

See Perez, “Yaḥaso shel R’ [sic] Yonah Ibn Janāḥ le-ṭeqṭiyōm maqbiyliym be-miqra,” 126 n. 3. The article itself discusses some examples of Ibn Janāḥ’s comparisons of similar biblical words or texts, adding little to what is already known.

On the Byzantine tradition (the term sadran as editor-reviser), see Ta-Shma, “Peyrush Divrey ha-Yamiym she-bi-ktav-yad Minken [Munich] 5”; Steiner, “Textual and Exegetical Notes to Nicholas de Lange” and “A Jewish Theory of Biblical Redaction From Byzantium.” In the second article, Steiner mentions that “Reuel” calls the editor sadran, which might be confusing since Reuel is not identified; the reference is to one of the commentators in the Byzantine texts; see Aslanov, “Les gloses judéo-helléniques du ‘Commentaire de Re’uel sur Ezéchiel’” (unmentioned by Steiner). The texts referred to are in de Lange, Greek Jewish Texts. Ta-Shma, cited by Steiner (“Jewish Theory,” 126), discovered that the term sadran is also found in the work of another Byzantine
commentator, Ṭuvyah (“Tobias”) b. El’azar (eleventh century), *Leqaḥ ḫov* 1: 210–11 (see Bibliography). Moses Qimḥi in his commentary (erroneously attributed to Ibn ‘Ezra) on Ezra 4.8 refers to the words of the scribe and the “editors,” or arrangers (*mesadriym*), while his younger brother David used *meḥabër* to refer to the “compiler” of Psalms and for the “authors-narrators” of Joshua and Samuel, and so also later Joseph Ibn Kaspiy for the author-editor of Kings (Steiner, 148, and see 146 on a reference in a responsa of Simon b. Ṣemaḥ Duran to the *ḳotɛv* [“writer,” in sense of editor, perhaps] of Ezra and so of Kings). As Steiner noted, the term *sadran* in this sense of editor is not found in “Spanish” (Spain proper) Hebrew sources; rather, forms of *ḥ-b-r*, “put together” or “compose” (particularly Ibn ‘Ezra). Steiner, 154, was informed by Bernard Septimus that this Heb. term is the equivalent of Ar. ’alif. Septimus probably took this from Kutscher, *Tőldőt meḥqar ha-laḥoḥn* 1: 20, but this is incorrect; rather, the term is the exact equivalent of Ar. ḥabr, “to write, compose.”

52 This is the group of sages in the Land of Israel who came after the period of Ezra, but how long after and who exactly they were is unknown; cf. (Mishnah) *Pirqey avot* 1.1, and see the commentary of R. Travers Herford in his ed. and tr., *The Ethics of the Talmud: Sayings of the Fathers* (1945; with numerous subsequent editions; paper ed. N.Y., 1969), 20–22. See also Frankel, *Darkhey ha-mishnah*, 4–5, and Krochmal, *Mōreh nevōkkey ha-zeman*, 42–43.

53 B.B. 14a; Ecclesiastes *rabah* on 7.19, etc. Thus, Simon is incorrect in stating that the rabbis never attributed the collecting of Psalms to Ezra, and using this to accuse Ibn ‘Ezra of “ignorance” of the Talmud (*Four Approaches*, 183–84).

54 On Ibn Ḥazm, see my “Forgery and Abrogation,” 207, and on Muslim polemic generally 205 ff. and n. 29. See Perles, “Aḥron [sic] Ben Gerson Aboulrab,” 246–48. This is peculiar enough, for apparently he thought that Arabic predated Hebrew. Even more peculiar is that, if the angels do not understand Aramaic (according to well-known rabbinical statements), do they understand Arabic?

55 Surprisingly, all of this was ignored by Steiner, “Jewish Theory of Biblical Redaction” and authorities he consulted, in their effort to portray Ibn ‘Ezra as uninterested (!) in chronological problems. He was, indirectly, accused of heresy in at least one source. ‘Ezra (b. Moses (?) or Solomon) of Gerona (d. ca. 1248) wrote a qabalistic commentary on Song of Songs (Hebrew text in Moses b. Naḥman, *Kitvey*, vol. 2, a reprint of earlier faulty editions, erroneously attributed to Naḥmanides); see Bibliography for translations. A statement there appears only in the text as found in Chavel’s edition (*Kitvey*) and translated only by Brody (85), who made no comment on this. It states that one should guard his soul from “those” who claim that Ezra added to the text of the Torah such things as “The Canaanites were then in the Land,” or “Behold, his bed is a bed of iron.” This is total heresy, against which the rabbis said that one who “despised the word of the Lord” (Num. 15.31) is one who says that the Torah, even a single verse, is not from heaven (God). That the statement is found in none of the manuscripts consulted by Vajda, who therefore omitted it in his translation, clearly indicates that it is a later interpolation, intended as an attack on Ibn ‘Ezra.

56 Moses Ibn Tibbon (thirteenth century) was one who could not “keep still” – “and I am the tale-bearer revealing to the intelligent his [Ibn ‘Ezra’s] measure [manah; cf. Jer. 13.25, or “portion,” i.e., his meaning] but not his substance” (i.e., perhaps not the full implications) – and he explained that the meaning is that Moses could not have written this verse, which could only have been written after Joshua had driven the Canaanites from the Land; he also notes the similar verse Gen. 12.6 (commentary on Ibn ‘Ezra on Genesis, Appendix II, in *Moses Ibn Tibbons Kommentar zum Hohelied*, 612–13, beginning at line 30). However, in a brief note in
Bet mikra (Beyt miqra) 32 (111) (1987): 355–56 (and in more detail in “Le-feyrush rav [sic] Yiṣḥaq ben [sic] Ghiyat le-Kohelet,” K’S 52 [1977]: 159), Shraga Abramson called attention to the opinion of Isaac Ibn Ghiyāth (see here below on him) that ʿaz, usually “then,” can sometimes have the meaning of ʿsham, “there.” Abramson cites various instances where the word can, in fact, have that meaning; if so, the verse could be interpreted not as “the Canaanites were ʿthen in the land” but were ʿthere in the land, at the time of Abraham, which would remove the difficulty. However, Ibn ‘Ezra himself mentioned this opinion of Ibn Ghiyāth (Deut. 10.6 and, without mentioning his name, also Gen. 49.24); if so, he obviously knew of this and yet did not apply it to the verse under discussion here.

Centuries later, Spinoza discussed this at length, adding other examples of verses in the Pentateuch which apparently could not have been written in the time of Moses; see Spinoza, Theologico-Political Treatise, 121 ff. However, Spinoza’s assumption that Ibn ‘Ezra also had intended to indicate that “beyond the Jordan,” at the beginning of Deuteronomy, was also in this category of impossible things is incorrect. On the mistaken belief of M. Perlmann that Spinoza claimed that Moses was not the author (or rather, transcriber) of the Torah, see my “Forgery and Abrogation of the Torah,” 205–06; the claim is that of Spinoza, not Ibn ‘Ezra. Most recently T.M. Rudavsky has written on the connection between Spinoza and Ibn ‘Ezra (Chapter 3 in Nadler, ed., Spinoza and Medieval Jewish Philosophy; however, with several errors). S. Abramson, in his harsh review (K’S 51 [1976]: 653) of Weiser’s edition of Ibn ‘Ezra, criticized him on his interpretation of Ibn ‘Ezra on these examples, saying that his notes (3: 214) are actually the opposite of what Ibn ‘Ezra intended. However, from the example of Mt. Moriah, it is obvious that Abramson was also mistaken in claiming that Ibn ‘Ezra did not go beyond the talmudic assertion (of one rabbi only) that Ezra wrote some verses after the death of Moses; clearly, this verse could only have been written after the Temple was built (and see the statement of Joseph “Bonfils” cited here in the following paragraph). There is nothing new in the brief note of Harvey, “Spinoza on Ibn ‘Ezra’s Secret of the Twelve”; it is no surprise that Hobbes said much the same as Spinoza, since as I pointed out in my 1976 dissertation he plagiarized constantly from him. For exaggerated claims about the “influence” on Ibn ‘Ezra of the Muslim charge that Ezra forged the Bible, see Steiner, “Jewish Theory of Biblical Redaction,” 158; on that topic, see my “Forgery and Abrogation of the Torah.”

Șōfnat pa’nēāh 1: 149. See there also, 91–92, on Gen. 12.6 and 112, on Gen. 22.14 (concerning which he seems to have had a better understanding of Ibn ‘Ezra’s intent). See also his brief discussion (2: 65–66) on Deut. 1.2.

Ibn ‘Ezra, Sėfer ha-ʿibūr, 10a. On the meaning of ḥangashōt, the physical senses, see also his commentary on Deut. 4.28. Prior to Ibn ‘Ezra, Samuel b. Ḥofniy, head of the yeshivah of Sura (in “Babylon,” Iraq), wrote that if the words of the sages contradict reason we are not required to accept their interpretation (as cited in an excerpt of the commentary of Judah Ibn Bil’am on Samuel in Harkavy, Me’asēf nidaḥyym, end of book, 15 n. 20). In one of his grammatical works, Ibn ‘Ezra criticized the statement of the sages concerning several passages in the Bible which are to be understood as “scribal corrections,” which in fact he said could be explained as written. However, he added,

but I do not say that these [my] explanations are true and without doubt, but “there are seventy faces [explanations] to the Torah” [Gen. tābah 13.15] for I well know that the knowledge of the smallest of the early sages is greater than ours.

(Sėfer šahōt [Fürth, 1827; photo rpt. in vol. 3 of Ibn ‘Ezra, Kitvey 3, 74b])
Peyrūshey ha-Tōrah, ed. Weiser 1: 137, 139. This is in direct contradiction to the incorrect assertion of Uriel Simon that Ibn ‘Ezra “fiercely rejects even cautious attempts at conjectural emendation of the text” (his brief note on Ibn ‘Ezra in Sæbø, Hebrew Bible 1/2: 382). Obviously, statements such as Deut. 4.16 must be understood metaphorically. Ibn ‘Ezra may well have been influenced by Sa’adyah Gaōn, who wrote very similarly that sometimes things in the Bible are not to be understood in the literal sense but must be interpreted in accord with tradition or with reason (Amānāt w’al-i’tiqādāt 5.8 and 7.1; introduction to his commentary on the Torah, Peyrūshey Rav Sa’adyah Gaōn le-Berēshīyt, 17–18).

Mordechai Cohen, who did not mention either Sa’adyah or Ibn ‘Ezra in this respect, cites Ibn Bil’am, and this may very well have also influenced Ibn ‘Ezra:

Know that we do not remove a verse from its obvious sense (zāhir) except on account of three things. The first of those is if that verse infringes upon reason. Then interpretation... should be applied in order to divert it toward that which is reason[able]. And the second is that it infringes on what is in another verse and the two [biblical] utterances contradict one another, then we must interpret...one of them as befitting [!] in order to harmonize them. And the third is if the verse opposes what has arrived from the tradition; then we interpret it as necessary to make it consistent with the tradition.

(Cohen, Opening the Gates of Interpretation, 67; citing the commentary on Deut. 4.24, edited in the thesis of Perez; the translation is Cohen’s. See n. 151 for Ibn Bil’am’s source; in fact, Sa’adyah)

60 Ex. 35.27 (“long recension,” ed. Weiser 2: 228). It is unlikely that there would have been enough oil, or that it would have lasted that long.

61 Ibid., 139. In fact, this clearly is derived from Sa’adyah, Amānāt w’al-i’tiqādāt [Sēfer ha-emunot ve-ha-dē’ot], 7.1; Book of Beliefs and Opinions, 415, who stated that we do not accept literally anything in the Bible which contradicts the senses, or reason, or some other biblical statement, or what has been received by tradition from the rabbis. In any such case, we search for a meaning in accord with Hebrew usage which would make it possible to reconcile the contradiction. To this, Ibn ‘Ezra adds that if all else fails, we admit that we do not understand it. Cohen, Three Approaches, 40–41 discusses this, and also (41, paragraph 1) a similar text from Ibn ‘Ezra’s biblical commentary. Weiss Halivni, Pesḥat and Derash, 81, gave an incorrect and even dangerously inaccurate interpretation of Ibn ‘Ezra’s position, according to which “law is only [!] derived from rabbinic ordinance or tradition,” or that when there is a contradiction between the plain meaning and reason derash is followed as the “true meaning of the text.” Nothing, of course, could be further from Ibn ‘Ezra’s words or intent.

62 See, e.g., his “regular” commentary on Ex. 25.29, ed. Weiser 2: 175, correcting the reading of 1 Chron. 28.17).

63 Ed. Weiser 1: 140–41.

64 “Other recension” to Genesis, ed. Weiser 1: 157.

65 Ed. Weiser 2: 265–66; cf. also his comment on Ex. 15.28, ibid., 268. In Chapter 1 of his Yesōd mōna, he also criticized scholars who rely too much on derash. The term sōd (“secret”) as used by Ibn ‘Ezra often means “reason; explanation,” and seldom esoteric interpretation. This has misled several medieval authors of supercommentaries on Ibn ‘Ezra who attempted to explain “secrets” that are not there, and so even sometimes modern commentators such as S.D. Luzzatto; see Lipshitz, ‘Iyūniym, 41 concerning Luzzatto’s peculiar attempt to find the “secret” alluded to by Ibn ‘Ezra on Num. 5.18, where in fact sōd there is simply the “meaning” of the word. Skepticism about some of the hyperbolic statements found in midrash and in talmudic agadōt was also expressed by Judah b. Barzilay, Peyrūsh sēfer yeṣiyrah, 41.
Ex. 20.1, ed. Weiser 2: 125 ff.
Shevu'ot 20b (“what the mouth is unable to speak nor the ear to hear” is added there); Mekhilta (“Ba-ḥōdesh” 7), ed. and tr. Lauterbach 2: 252.

However, this difficulty was “explained” in the Talmud, Sanhedrin 56b, that they were commanded about this at Marah (Ex. 15.23, where God gave them “a statute and ordinance,” verse 25). Nothing is said in the Talmud about the second “as the Lord your God has commanded you” (to honor father and mother); presumably that also was commanded at Marah.

Weiser’s note, 2: 129 n. 41, is completely irrelevant, since nothing of what he says is actually stated in the commentary on Deut. 5.5.

See Perez, “Yahaso shel R’ [sic] Yonah Ibn Janāḥ,” 126 n. 3.

Isaac Ibn Alaḥdab (ca. 1350?–1429), Leshōn ha-zahav, ed. Ya’aqov Spiegel in the obscure journal Be-khal darkheykha da’ēhu (Bar-Ilan University) 12 (2001): 14–34. He was a student of Judah b. Asher of Toledo and a poet and astronomer. While interesting, there is nothing of profound importance in his treatise (unlike his larger astronomical and mathematical treatises of great importance).

See Ibn Chicatilla, ed. and tr. Poznański, 109 (nos. 42, 47), 113 (no. 106). Amazingly, Uriel Simon wrote that “as far as we know” Ibn ‘Ezra was the first to ascribe the second part of Isaiah to another writer (“Ibn Ezra between Medievalism and Modernism,” 257; repeated elsewhere by him and now commonly accepted). The problem of the attribution of Psalms to various authors, according to the headings, has long been recognized; however, as will be noted below, Ibn ‘Ezra did not agree with Ibn Chicatilla on this and generally accepted the traditional attributions. See most recently on the problem, the discrepancies between the Septuagint and the Hebrew texts, the interesting article of Herbst, “La exegesis intra-bíblica,” especially 27–30, with reference to other studies.

Ibn Chicatilla, op. cit., 100–01 (Isa. 40.1), 109 (Ps. 42.47 and 51.20); see also there 101, on Isa. 52.13; “this prophecy was said concerning King Hezekiah” (from a commentary of Judah Ibn Bil’am, not in the published text of his commentary on Isaiah [see Bibliography]; obviously Poznański had a different manuscript, and his book should have been consulted by the editors of Ibn Bil’am). Overlooked by Poznański was Ibn ‘Ezra’s statement in his commentary on Isaiah that Ibn Chicatilla explained all of Chapter 11 as referring to Hezekiah; cf. also on Obadiah v. 17 (cited by Poznański): “this is about the days of Hezekiah.” However, in the edited commentary on Isaiah, Ibn Bil’am rebukes his predecessor for applying the prophecy of Isa. 53.12 to Hezekiah, and strongly asserts that 60.12 is a prophecy on “the future” (messianic era) and not about Hezekiah, as those “lacking in faith” think, particularly Ibn Chicatilla “may God forgive and redeem him.” This was also the subject of rebuke by Naḥmanides, who called Ibn Chicatilla “the lying priest” (he was a kohēn, member of the priestly clan) and “stubborn [or perverted]” (Moses b. Naḥman, Sēfer ha-gēūlah, in his Kītvey, ed. Chavel 1: 274–76; he, of course, did not see the original texts [Arabic] either of Ibn Chicatilla or of Ibn Bil’am but followed Ibn ‘Ezra’s criticism. See also below, Isaac Abravanel’s criticism of Ibn Chicatilla and Ibn Bil’am (he also, like Naḥmanides, did not know Arabic; see Chapter 4). Moses Ibn ‘Ezra(h) also referred to this, stating that none of the prophetic statements about the messianic age is to be interpreted as parable, and anyone who tries to interpret them thus “does not believe in the Jewish law.” He concludes by noting that Ibn Bil’am wrote a treatise in which he collected all of the miracles in the Torah and the Prophets, and wrote that they were an indication of the future (Kītēb 268/269, last paragraph). Similarly, his criticism (232/233, line 84 ff) that those who
attempt to calculate the “end” (the redemption) based on passages in Daniel and the like are foolish possibly refers to Ibn Chicatilla; or to Judah (?) Ibn al-Fakhkhār or Ibn Gabirol (see Ibn ‘Ezra’s criticism of them on Daniel 11.31).

The complex nature of Ibn Chicatilla’s attitude to the Psalms is detailed extensively by Simon, *Arba’ giyshōt*, 104 ff. (tr. 121 ff.). Perhaps the most important contribution of that book was the discovery of a manuscript containing a much longer version of Ibn ‘Ezra’s introduction to Psalms, edited by Simon there, 237–43; translation of the book, 308–29 (with also the “regular” introduction found in printed editions of his commentary, 247–48; tr. 330–33), according to which Simon convincingly argued that the anonymously worded references in that introduction are in fact intended to be Ibn Chicatilla (it is unfortunate that in the discussion itself he failed to cite the pages of the introduction in his own text). Simon seems to imply (110, 111; tr. 127, 128) that it was generally accepted that David was a prophet, but this is nowhere specifically stated in rabbinic sources; see *Makkot* 23b–24a concerning his reduction of the 613 commandments to 11 (which perhaps implies prophetic status). Aside from Ibn ‘Ezra, few if any of our medieval commentators considered David a prophet. Simon, 114 (tr. 131–32), enumerated 14 psalms which Ibn Chicatilla believed were written at a later period. Simon’s book, which is also cited below in the discussions of Ibn Chicatilla and of Ibn ‘Ezra, is generally an important study, but not without problems (not the least of which is the peculiar failure to include David Qimḥi); see my review in *Hebrew Studies* 25 (1984): 210–13.

Ibn Dā‘ūd, *Sēfer ha-Qabbalah*, text 74, Eng. tr. 103. This is cited by Simon in his ed. of Ibn ‘Ezra, *Sheney peyrūshēy… le-Trey-‘Asar*, 97 n. 8, as if he had made the discovery that apparently few Qaraites held such a view and that Ibn Dā‘ūd perhaps referred to Ibn Bil’am and Ibn Chicatilla. In fact, both of these observations were already made by Gershon Cohen, the editor and translator of Ibn Dā‘ūd (see there, 103, note to line 166, and the introduction, xxxvi ff., and see 300–01). It is not so certain that “few” Qaraites held this view; a thorough investigation of this remains to be done. It seems to me unlikely that Ibn Dā‘ūd was here criticizing Ibn Chicatilla (as noted below, Ibn Bil’am did not make any such claims, as far as we know), since he wrote very positively about him as having been one of those who had written “books, liturgies [i.e., piyūṭim; religious poems], poems, hymns in praise of our Creator, exalted be His name, and verses of consolation to fortify the hearts of Israel in the lands of their dispersion” (text 73; tr. 102). It would scarcely be consistent for the author to criticize him on the very next page for denying that “consolatory passages” of the Bible referred to the messianic period.

See the text of his description of his works, edited from manuscript in Renan (Neubauer), *Écrivains juifs*, 193: “ha-sēfer ha-shemiyin.” See also ibid., 96–97. Ibn Kaspīy, dependent as he was on Ibn ‘Ezra and Maimonides, had a unique understanding of the names of God which differed from the explanations offered by both of those (see also his *Mishnēh kesef* 2: 2–3); see the discussion by Basil Herring in his translation of Ibn Kaspīy, *Gevia‘ Kesef*, 84 ff.; however, he dealt (89) only with the second statement referred to in *Écrivains* but he apparently overlooked the crucial passage from the manuscript mentioned above. See also his important observations (94–95) about the alleged creative powers in certain divine names according to Ibn Kaspīy.

We still know relatively little about his life. According to Moses Ibn ‘Ezra(h), he was from Tortosa (then a Muslim city). It is known that he wrote, at the request of the Jewish government official Ḥasdai Ibn Shaprūṭ (whom he served as secretary), the famous letter to the Khazar king On Ḥasdai Ibn Shaprūṭ; see my
The Bible and its interpretation

Jews, Visigoths & Muslims, 79–86, and notes; and on the famous letter, 85, and the works cited in the notes there. Valle Rodríguez, Historia de la gramática hebrea en España, vol. 1, deals extensively with the grammatical activity of Ibn Sāruq, Ibn Labrāt and their students; and see his “Exégesis bíblica de Menahem ben Sāruq” on grammatical approaches to his understanding of the Bible.

79 See Bibliography for his Mahberet. There are two rather technical articles relating to this: Steiner, “Meaningless, Meaningfulness, and Super-Meaningfulness in Scripture,” and Sáenz-Badillos, “Los ‘hapax legomena’ bíblicos en Menahem Ben Sāruq,” and see the list and discussion of these (hapax legomena, unique words) in Valle Rodríguez, Historia de la gramática 1: 436–39, and his “Exégesis bíblica de Menahem ben Sāruq.” In a more general way, see Sáenz-Badillos, “Filología hispanohablante del siglo X como exégesis.”

80 So also Judah ha-Lēvy gave this passage as one of the examples of the “definitive hēḥ”; that is, a statement and not a question (Kuzariy II. 80; tr. 128–29; see Bibliography). David b. Samuel Ibn Sūsan (not “Shoshan”), one of the exiles of 1492 and member of a distinguished family, wrote in Jerusalem a commentary on Ecclesiastes in which he critiques the interpretation of this verse in the Zohar, which in fact is derived entirely from Ibn Sāruq; see Langermann, “David Ibn Shoshan [sic] on Spirit and Soul” (Langermann, 73, mentions also Ibn Janāḥ; see the following paragraph here, but from a secondary source).

81 Ṣēfer ha-shōrashiyim, 76.

82 See Ta-Shma, “Sifrey ha-riyvut beyn ha-RAbD le-veyn Rabiy Zeraḥyah ha-Lēvy.”

83 Joseph Ibn Ṣaddiq, Ŭlam qaṭan, 77.

84 Robinson, “Samuel Ibn Tibbon’s Commentary on Ecclesiastes,” 112, section 22; 114–15, section 27; see also 142 n. 254, 143 n. 255, 144 n. 283. See Chapter 4 on this commentary.

85 Kitāb al-nutaf; see Bibliography (cf. S. Poznański in J.Q.R. [n.s.] 16 [1925]: 258–66). There is now a critical edition and translation (Heb.) by Nasir Basal (Tel-Aviv, 2001). Kokóvtsov’s text was reprinted in Allony, ed., Mi-sifrey ha-balshanut, 1–58, with additions, 193–204. Unfortunately, the Russian introductory material was not included in Allony’s reprint, nor did he provide his own introduction to the reprint of the texts; worse, the texts were not translated into Hebrew. Additional fragments were edited by Bacher, Grammatische Terminologie des Ḥayyūj; and in Hirschfeld, Arabic Chrestomathy, 37–50; by Allony in Bet mikra [Beyt miqra] 8 (16) (1963): 90–105 (rpt. in Allony, op. cit., 1–15 [Hebrew numerals]); and Abramson, Mi-piy ba’aley leshōnōt, 25–86 (and see there 89 ff. on Judges). However, there are two important corrections to be made to Abramson (105): the Keter shēm Tōv is by Shēm Tōv Ibn Gaōn, not “RIYṬBA” (Yōm Tōv Iṣhḥīl), and in “he-hasiyd b’r barūkh” there is undoubtedly an error for ha-RṬYBa’T, i.e., Isaac b. Ṭodrōs, who was the teacher of Ibn Gaōn. A useful brief summary of Ḥayyūj’s grammatical approach to biblical exegesis is Maman, “Linguistic School [of Spanish Jewish exegesis].” Ḥayyūj was cited by Ibn Bil’am (see below on him) on the “Twelve Prophets”; see Poznański, “Arabic Commentary…” 8. I prefer this term (which translates the traditional Trey-’asar) to “Minor” prophets, employed in his article and traditionally in Christian versions of the Bible.

86 Allony, Mi-sifrey ha-balshanūt, 15 (Heb. numeral): some difficult or unique biblical words can be understood according to their later mishnaic usage. It should be noted that, contrary to the assertion of many modern scholars, medieval grammarians frequently referred to postbiblical Hebrew.

87 His dictionary: Ṣēfer ha-shōrashiyim. Wilensky’s ed. of his main grammatical work, Sēfer ha-riqmāh, in the Hebrew translation of Ibn Tibbon (see Bibliography
for all these works), has a complete index of biblical passages cited or discussed; however, there is no index of words explained, which makes the work difficult to use. It should be noted that the long list of variants in biblical passages (differences in his citation from the accepted text), ibid. 2: 494–96, does not necessarily indicate that he actually had a different reading, since he may have quoted from memory. Bacher, *Vier Abhandlungen*, has one section (book) devoted to his biblical exegesis, with some important observations. Berliner, “Tosafot ‘al peyrush Ra’B’A ‘al ha-Torah,” published excerpts of Ibn Janāḥ and others (it has nothing to do with Ibn ‘Ezra; apparently the meaning is “in addition to” his commentary). Ibn Janāḥ, *Peyrūsh*, is a collection of some (not all) of his statements relating to the Bible. Maman, “Linguistic School,” 267–75, discusses Ibn Janāḥ from a grammatical perspective rather than as a biblical exegete. However, Maman was the first to call attention (273) to an overlooked explanation by Ibn Janāḥ (*Shōrāshīyım*, 219) of the problematic word, which has also troubled modern scholars, ֵי in Ps. 16.8 (שֵׁרִי יִתְ עֲ לַ נ יֵי תְ וּ כְי“They are similar to Ar. kāy, “so that; therefore.” Another interesting article is M. Perez, “Le–darkho ha-parshaniyıt shel R’ [sic] Yonah Ibn Janāḥ,” dealing with his discussion of 20 examples in the Bible where reference is made in a verse to something which does not precede it immediately but rather a few (or even several) verses before (cf. *Sēfer ha-riqmah* 1, Chapter 34). Finally, mention must be made of the important discussion by Mordechai Cohen, *Opening the Gates of Interpretation*, 57–66, demonstrating his use of interpretive principles familiar in Arabic sources which he may have seen. A fragment of an apparent commentary on Chronicles was edited by M. Perez in *Tarbiz* (1989): 283–88. The possibility that he translated (Judeo-Ar.) the “Song of Deborah” (Judges 5) has been suggested, although this in fact is unlikely (Judah Ratzaby, “Tafsīyr shiyrat-Deborah li-ben Janāḥ,” *Sinai* 66 [1970]: 94–95); there are several manuscripts of such translations, in addition to the famous one of Sa’adyah; see, e.g., Shunary, “An Arabic Taftīr of the Song of Deborah.”

88 *Sēfer ha-riqmah* 1: 319–20; Wilensky there (320 n. 1) cited and discussed the explanation given in Ibn Janāḥ’s dictionary, *Sēfer ha-shōrāshīyım*, 51. On Ibn Ḥasdai, see also *Sēfer ha-riqmah*, 175, lines 13–17; 279, line 19 (see n. 6 there, also for reference in another of his works).

89 *Sēfer ha-riqmah* 1: 48–49 and see n. 1 there.

90 *Shōrāshīyım*, 163–64.

91 Ibid., 411 (p-r-h), but cf. 65, where he said that the meaning of pōrat is the same as pe’ōrōt (“boughs, branches,” only in plural, in Ezek. 17.6, etc.).

92 *Shōrāshīyım*, 75–77.

93 *Shōrāshīyım*, 234, lines 2 and 3 from the bottom. See Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, 502, who suggested “crimson,” and “probably” a Persian loan word, but he also cited Ibn Janāḥ. It is likely that Ibn Janāḥ intended the famous dye of the purpura shellfish, a spiral-shaped fish which produces the liquid from which the famous “royal purple” dye was made (perhaps also tekhelet, used in biblical times for the central dyed cord in the ritual fringes attached to a four-cornered garment; generally this is mistakenly assumed to mean “blue”), which color is similar to a rose but inclining to black (in other words, purple), according to Pliny, *Natural History* IX. 60, 61 (see Ginsburg, *Song of Songs*, 179). Ibn ‘Ezra followed Ibn Janāḥ in his (standard) commentary on Song of Songs: “there are those who say [it is] Mount Carmel, [but] it is not, but a color,” citing also 2 Chron. 3.14 (the word ‘ayin in his commentary there means “color,” cf. Num. 11.7, as explicitly stated in the “other” recension of his commentary, *Peyrūsh Shīyṛ ha-shīyriyım*, 9; see Bibliography).
Ibn ‘Ezra (commentary on Ex., ed. Weiser 2: 11) cites this in the name of Judah Ibn Quraysh (Qurṭās). However, it is not in Ibn Quraysh, Risāla. The same is true of a statement cited by Ibn ‘Ezra on Amos 6.10; see Comentarios hebreos medievales al libro de Amos (see Sources in Bibliography), 208–09 n. 1. Unfortunately, we do not have Ibn ‘Ezra on Proverbs (the commentary published in his name is actually by Moses Qimḥi, to be discussed in Chapter 4).

Shōrashiym, 512–13. Joseph Ibn Kaspiy also used it in this sense, explaining Prov. 10.5 (mašḵyīl), “and this is the rule for every man of whatever craft” (introduction to his “second recension” on Proverbs, in ‘Asanah keley kesef 1: 83).

Qimḥi, Sēfer ha-shōrashiym, s.v. sh-g-h. See the brief discussion of this by Cohen, Three Approaches, 153. Cohen asserts that the “normal sense” of the verb is “to err,” which is not correct (it is one meaning), and thus mistranslates what Qimḥi says. Cohen was apparently unaware that Ibn Janāḥ made no such statement; for Ibn Janāḥ’s actual statement as to the meaning of the verb, see his Shōrashiym, 497 (referring, incidentally, to a work of Hayyū). See Maimonides, M.T., Mada’: “Hilkhōt teshu’ah,” 6.10, and the criticism of Abraham b. David of Posquieres there (cited also by Cohen). However, the perplexing issue of the “allegorical” meaning of the verb is easily solved on the basis of the Aramaic Targum of Prov erbs there, which translates it as tigraš (“acquire [knowledge]”).

94 Ibn ‘Ezra (commentary on Ex., ed. Weiser 2: 11) cites this in the name of Judah Ibn Quraysh (Qurṭās). However, it is not in Ibn Quraysh, Risāla. The same is true of a statement cited by Ibn ‘Ezra on Amos 6.10; see Comentarios hebreos medievales al libro de Amos (see Sources in Bibliography), 208–09 n. 1. Unfortunately, we do not have Ibn ‘Ezra on Proverbs (the commentary published in his name is actually by Moses Qimḥi, to be discussed in Chapter 4).

95 Shōrashiym, 512–13. Joseph Ibn Kaspiy also used it in this sense, explaining Prov. 10.5 (mašḵyīl), “and this is the rule for every man of whatever craft” (introduction to his “second recension” on Proverbs, in ‘Asanah keley kesef 1: 83).

96 Qimḥi, Sēfer ha-shōrashiym, s.v. sh-g-h. See the brief discussion of this by Cohen, Three Approaches, 153. Cohen asserts that the “normal sense” of the verb is “to err,” which is not correct (it is one meaning), and thus mistranslates what Qimḥi says. Cohen was apparently unaware that Ibn Janāḥ made no such statement; for Ibn Janāḥ’s actual statement as to the meaning of the verb, see his Shōrashiym, 497 (referring, incidentally, to a work of Hayyū). See Maimonides, M.T., Mada’: “Hilkhōt teshu’ah,” 6.10, and the criticism of Abraham b. David of Posquieres there (cited also by Cohen). However, the perplexing issue of the “allegorical” meaning of the verb is easily solved on the basis of the Aramaic Targum of Prov erbs there, which translates it as tigraš (“acquire [knowledge]”).

97 See also Simon, “Who Was the Proponent of Lexical Substitution....” 79. Most of Simon’s article contains nothing new except (224) the discovery that several manuscripts of the commentary on Dan. 1.1 read “…there was a great commentator in Spain and he explained in ten books…,” which clearly proves that Ibn Janāḥ was intended (Ibn ‘Ezra, in his Yesōd mōra, 1, referred to “ten books” composed by Ibn Janāḥ, although we know only of seven). Joseph Ibn Kaspiy (Ṭīrat kesef, in his Miḥnēḥ kesef 1: 36) also cited Ibn ‘Ezra on this, saying that he did well in calling Ibn Janāḥ (he specifically names him) “the overturner of the words of the living God,” referring to the above statement in Dan. 1.1. Cohen, M. “Moses Ibn Ezra,” in Sæbø, ed., Hebrew Bible/Old Testament 1/2: 286 n. 12, erroneously claimed that Ibn ‘Ezra(h) also “rejected the substitution principle” of Ibn Janāḥ; what he actually criticized him for was devoting a chapter (27) of his Kitāb al-lūma’ (Sēfer ha-riqmah, Chapter 28) to words which say one thing and mean another (actually, simile). “If all [of what he wrote] were true, no story [in the Bible] would be believable nor would any commandment be able to stand” (Ibn ‘Ezra(h) Kitāb, 258/259, lines 30–32 [Cohen cites the marginal folio number of the manuscript, printed in the edition]. On yet another disagreement, see Perez, “Le-darkho ha-parshaniyt shel R’ [sic] Yōnāh Ibn Janāḥ” (2).

98 All of this is discussed in Weiser’s note to the “regular” commentary on Ex. 19.12 (ed. Weiser 2: 122), from which it was copied without acknowledgment by Simon, “Ibn Ezra’s Harsh Language and Biting Humor,” in Díaz Esteban, ed., Abraham Ibn Ezra y su tiempo, 326–27 (original Heb. version in Levin, Meḥqariyim, 111–20). Incidentally, Simon’s translation of mahbiyl as “prater” (and so in other of his articles) should be corrected to “confounder”; cf. Jer. 23.16: those who confound, or lead astray; and see Ibn Ezra’s comment on Ps. 8.1, which Simon indeed discusses at length in Arba’ giyshōt; in the translation of that book (238) it is again incorrectly rendered “praters.”

99 Ed. Weiser 3: 272; cf. Ibn Janāḥ, ha-Riqmah 1: 270 lines 10–11. Allony, intro. to his ed. of Ibn ‘Ezra, Yesōd diqḏūq, 53 n. 152, believed that this was a reference to Ibn Bil’am, but had he checked the index to Ibn Janāḥ he would have found this reference there (nor is this the only place where Ibn ‘Ezra refers to him by this term).

On Esther 9.6, in his first recension, he mentions “scholars of Spain” who rejoiced because they thought they understood the meaning of the names Aridatha
and Paratha (verse 7), but he says that in fact those names are Persian (which is correct). In his second recension, written many years later, he wrote that there was an exegete in Spain who explained Parshandata (another name there) as "interpreter of the law" (and so it has been traditionally understood in medieval Hebrew), to which Ibn 'Ezra said these are "empty words" because the name is Persian. In the medieval period and later, it was often applied to Rashi, in the mistaken belief that it is a word meaning "exegete" or the like; possibly the term was first applied to him by students of Isaac Abba (see Urbach, "How Did Rashi Merit the Title Parshandata")

101 Quotations from this commentary were discovered by Harkavy, Ḥadashiyim gam yeshaniym, 3–4 (cf. also M.G.W.J. 34 [1885]: 285–86, and D. Kaufmann, ibid., 380–81); see also Steinschneider, A.L., 117. Ibn Abitūr's piyūṭ on Habakkuk was edited by S. Bernstein in Sēfer ha-shanah li-yhūdey Ameriyqah 5 (1940): 183. From the fact that Ibn 'Ezra never mentions Ibn Abitūr in his own commentary on Psalms, it is apparent that his commentary was already lost. It is of course untrue that Ibn Abitūr also represents the earliest Hebrew writing in Spain, as Harkavy thought (that honor belongs to Menahēm Ibn Sāruq).

102 See Bacher's introduction to Ibn Janāḥ, Shōrashiym, x, notes 1 and 3. He is also cited, but from Ibn Janāḥ, by Judah Ibn Bil'am, Peyrūṭ ...le-sēfer Yeša'yāhū (Isaiah), 130, and by Ibn 'Ezra on Deut. 32.17 and Isa. 27.3, probably also from Ibn Janāḥ (incidentally, Cambridge MS. 46 [Deut. 32.17] has "Isaac b. Mar Saul" correctly and not "Isaac b. Saul"; see Bacher, "Ḥilufey nusḥa'ot," 93).

103 See on him my Jews, Visigoths & Muslims, 89 ff. and index. The proof for the correct spelling of his name is found there; note also that Joseph Ibn 'Aknīn spelled it correctly in his "Judeo-Arabic" commentary on Song of Songs. It is also not to be written with one l, since the Arabic sources clearly indicate a doubling (shaddah) of that letter. Remarkably, Krinsky, Meḥōqeqey Yehūdah 1: 43 has it correctly, while most nineteenth-century scholars, and nearly all since then, misspell it. The title nagiyd, not literally "prince," but leader, was an honorary title for an important leader of the community.

104 See especially Ibn 'Ezra on Ex. 6.3 and Nahum 2.8 ("I have not found a better explanation" than that given by Samuel); see also his commentaries on Gen. 19.18, 33.10 and 49.23 (however, 49.18 is an error for Sa'adyah; see Ben-Menahem, 'Inyaney Ibn 'Ezra', 218); and the "other recension" of Gen. 1.31, 17.1 (ed. Weiser 1: 164, 192); Ex. 6.3, 32.31; Lev. 16.8; Num. 22.7, where he disagreed with him; yet it was particularly that interpretation which Ibn Bil'am said he heard in the name of Samuel's son Yūsuf, and praised as being correct (see Ibn Bil'am, "Sēfer ha-tajnīṣ...," ed. Abramson, 53, and the very important citations in n. 12 there; Num. 22.28; Isa. 32.10; Joel 1.15 (important, and "well he said"); Michah 1.7; Nahum 2.2, 8; Habakkuk 2.6; Ps. 68.15; Eccles. 9.12 (where his explanation is correct); Dan. 9.4. "Moses ha-nagiyd" (Isa. 57.9) is obviously a copyist's error for "Samuel ha-nagiyd" (since there he usually refers to Moses Ibn Chicatilla as "Moses ha-Kōhēn"; in any case, he was not a "nagiyd"), and see on this Abramson's important observation, 54 n. 13; nevertheless, this was not corrected in the so-called "critical ed." of that commentary in Isaiah of Miqra'ot gedōlōt ha-keter, the edition of part of the Aleppo Codex, with some medieval commentaries added. Poznański earlier suggested either "Moses ha-Kōhēn" or "Moses said [according to the opinion of] the nagiyd" (Moses b. Samuel Hakkohen Ibn Chiq-uitilla, 133 ff., and review of Ibn 'Ezra, Reconstruction, in Z.f.h.B. 7 [1903]: 82). It is apparent that not all of these citations are from Ibn Naghrillah's grammatical work, but seem to be from a biblical commentary (contrary to Poznański, "Ouvrages linguistiques de Samuel Hannaguid," 253). He was also cited by Ibn Baron as being in favor of the "simple" (pesḥāf) interpretation of the Bible
The dictionary, fragments of which have been published, also served as a source for an anonymous (twelfth century) Judeo-Ar. commentary on Psalms; see the citations edited and translated by M. Perez, "Muva'ot me-tokh 'Kitāb al-istikbnā.

Ibn Bil'am, *Peyrūsh le-sēfer Yēshī'yah*, 209, 224. See on this Abramson, *Bi-lshōn qōdmiym*, 17–19. The first citation is from the poem "Zeman la-anashiym" in Ibn Naghrīllah, *Ben Tehiliym*, 143, line 1 (see Bibliography). Incidentally, the first word of the poem in the citation by Ibn Bil'am there should also be corrected to *zeman*; see Abramson's note to his ed. of Ibn Naghrīllah, *Ben Mishley*, 382. As he observed there, the poet also used the word *quba'at* together with *kūs*, "glass," in another poem; see *Ben Tehiliym*, 42, line 20. He overlooked another example: ibid., 38, line 33. The second citation, where Ibn Bil'am quarrels with Ibn Naghrīllah, is from the poem in his *Ben Tehiliym*, 324, line 31. See on this also the comment attributed to Tanḥūm b. Joseph ha-Yerūshalmī (Egypt, thirteenth century) in Harkavy, *Ḥadashiym gam yeshaniym*, 223, no. 6; reproduced also in Abramson, *Bi-lshōn qōdmiym*. It is unfortunate that the editors of Ibn Bil'am did not see Abramson's book or his remarks on the poems, nor did they make any effort to identify these poems of Ibn Naghrīllah (and this in spite of the fact that his modern editor, Dov Jarden [so he himself spelled it, not "Yarden"], provided a complete index of words in the poems). They did reference Harkavy, but only as "Warsaw, 1896" (i.e., in the Hebrew translation of Graetz's history) nor did they note the separate photo reprint of the work. As noted by Abramson ("Sēfer ha-tajnīs...", 53 n. 11), Ibn Bil'am, nevertheless, elsewhere mentioned Ibn Naghrīllah in respectful terms.

Peyrūsh...le-sēfer Yermiyah, 152 (sāḥib rasā'il al-rijāq, "master of the letters of companions," refers to Ibn Naghrīllah's criticism of Ibn Janāḥ, fragments of which have been published). Other citations of Ibn Naghrīllah in Ibn Bil'am: Num. 4.7, 22.7; Jer. 51.11; Micah 2.4 (see Poznański, "Arabic Commentary," 8); Ps. 51.17 and 91.

On the interpretation he heard from a man of Lucena (not "Suṣena"), in the name of Ibn Naghrīllah, see Steinschneider in *he-Halāš* 2 (1853): 61, and see also 62 for another citation; and see Abramson, "Sēfer ha-tajnīs," 53 (not repeated in his aforementioned book). Ibn Baron quoted him as saying that "no word is to depart from its literal meaning [pēshāto] and be rendered metaphorically unless literal rendition is utterly inadmissible," with which he agreed (Ibn Baron's Arabic *Works on Hebrew Grammar and Lexicography*, 56–57).

Cited by Ibn 'Ezra and David Qimḥi, see notes 112 and 113. See generally Kaufmann, *Studien über Ibn Gabirol*, 63 ff. Abraham Berliner cited a brief explanation of why God appeared only to Moses with His complete name but to the Patriarchs only with the name Ėl Shaday (Pleytāt sōfīyym, 28; from part of a manuscript "Mḥberet Sā'adyah"). Shēm Ṭūv Ibn Shapūrī (late fourteenth century), in his unpublished commentary on Ibn 'Ezra, cited Solomon Ibn Ya'iṣḥ (Seville, mid-fourteenth century; see Chapter 2, Supercommentaries on Ibn 'Ezra, on both of these) as having seen a commentary by Ibn Gabirol (Steinschneider,
“Supercommentare zu Ibn-Ezra,” in Berliner, op. cit., 49; this and the afore-
mentioned citation since ignored by all who have written on the problem of
Ibn Gabirol’s commentary. In Gad’s ed. of Menahem b. Solomon “ha-Meiyrey,”
Peyrūsh ‘al ha-Tōrah, there is also a “commentary on the Torah” of Ibn Gabirol,
in fact, only excerpts from his various writings.

110 “Other recension” of the commentary, ed. Friedländer, Essays, Heb. appendix,
40; Ibn ‘Ezra, ed. Weiser 1: 170, from M. Mortara’s ed. of that recension in Otsar
[Oṣar] neḥmad 2 (1857): 218; but the excerpt was first published in Edelmann
and Dukes, Ginzey Oxford, iv (see Bibliography: Sources) and in Literaturblatt des
Orients (1850): 615, and Jellinek, Beiträge 2: 30. Steinschneider, who re-edited
this excerpt in Berliner, Pleyṭat sōfīyym, 46 (and cf. 47), corrected the reading
“ha-gan ha-melo’ he-hamōn” to “ha-gan ha-malē he-hamōn” (“garden filled with
the multitude” like plants) and this is the reading which Weiser also has (see
next note), probably from a manuscript (he certainly did not see Steinschneider).
One commentary, noted by Steinschneider there (he mentioned, 48–49, some
supercommentaries which cite this explanation by Ibn Gabirol), explained: “the
heavens are full of a multitude [hamōn] of stars,” but this is clearly not what Ibn
Gabirol intended, rather souls. Jellinek, who cited a text of Asher b. David,
grandson of Abraham b. David of Posquières, thought to correct Ibn Gabirol
accordingly to kemō ilan, “like a tree” (Kerem ḥemed 8 [1854]: 159).

111 Regular (standard) commentary on Gen. 28.12. See Altmann, “Ladder of As-
cension,” 13–14 and cf. 16, on Ibn ‘Ezra (again, this article was not mentioned
by Klein-Braslavy, art. cit.); and Munk, Mélanges, 165–66. Klein-Braslavy,
“Peyrusheya ha-Rambam la-ḥalom” was finally noted by Altmann’s article, to
which her own adds nothing, but with no mention of Ibn Gabirol or Ibn ‘Ezra,
both of whom undoubtedly influenced Maimonides here; see below, Chapter 2
n. 125). See especially Diamond, Maimonides and the Hermeneutics of Concealment,
Chapters 2–5 (his disagreements with Klein-Braslavy will be apparent), but
again with no reference to Ibn Gabirol or Ibn ‘Ezra. See also Kaufmann, Studien
über Ibn Gabirol, 73 n. 1. Note particularly Maimonides (“Guide,” Introduc-
tion, 12) and the agreement of the standard medieval commentators (in Mōreh
ha-neṿōḵḥiyym, 8) that the top of the “ladder” refers to the world of the spheres,
and the angels are the “separate intellects,” all of which seems to be influenced
by Ibn Gabirol, through Ibn ‘Ezra’s citation. Moses Almosnino (Ottoman Em-
pire, ca. 1515–80), thought that Ibn Gabirol wrote a separate book on this, “his
work which he composed on their existence and nature” (Me’amēṣ kōah, 117a);
he undoubtedly concluded that from Ibn ‘Ezra here. The main source in Mai-
monides is his “Guide” I. 15 (tr. Pines, 42), where he says that after ascending
and attaining certain rungs of the ladder, the prophet descends, not “with whatever decree” of which he has been informed, as Pines translates, but with (Ar.) ‘amr al-ilāḥ, the “divine word” (borrowed, probably, from Judah ha-Lēvy); see also “Guide” II. 10 (272). See the important explanation of his sources in S. Buber’s introduction to his ed. of Midrash Tanhūma 1: 47b (this is the answer to Pines, 272 n. 12). Maimonides there refers to midrashic manuscripts which say there were seven rungs, which was surely the source for Ḥanokh Alcostantini, who said that he wrote not for every “passerby” but for the “remnant of the angels ascending and descending the seven levels of the ladder” (Sēfer maraʾōt Elōhiym, 18) and not as the editor of that work thought (65 n. 3), the Christian concept of seven liberal arts.

Ḥayyim (b.?) Israel (Israeliy), fl. ca. 1272, Toledo and Zamora, discussed this subject and related it to “the wisdom of logic [han-dasah] which is the wisdom of Aristotle and Ibn Sinā” (“Ma’amār gan ʿēden,” 22). Altmann discussed interpretations given by Ẓēʾm Tōv Ibn Shaprūṭ, Samuel Ibn Tibbon and Joseph Ibn Kaspiy; the latter returned to this in his Geviyāt keseʃ, text 43, tr. 268–69. Although he refers specifically to Maimonides, Ibn Kaspiy was also overlooked by Klein-Braslavy. Not surprisingly, the more traditional Judah b. Moses Hallāvā (Tortosa, fourteenth century) ignored all of this and strictly adhered to midrashic interpretations (Imrey shefer, 279). The last of the commentators originating from Spain who dealt at length with the subject was Isaac Caro (so, not “Karo” or “Qaro”; ca. 1440–1518), the uncle of Joseph Caro (author of the Shūlḥan ʿarūkh), who following the expulsion from Portugal in 1497 went to Turkey, where he wrote his commentary on the Torah, Toldōt Yiḥaq; see there 48 ff., and the translation and discussion by Bland, “Issues in Sixteenth-Century Jewish Exegesis,” 52–57. Also, Joseph Albotiniy (Portugal, fifteenth century; following the expulsion from Portugal he went to the Land of Israel) wrote a qabalistic work on this theme, Sulam ha-ʿaliyah (Jerusalem, 1989). See further the index here, “ladder, Jacob’s.”

112 Other citations of Ibn Gabirol: in Ibn ʿEzra’s “other recension,” Gen. 3.1 (ed. Weiser 1: 168), where Samuel b. Ḥōniy’s explanation that the serpent spoke was refuted by Ibn Gabirol, who objected that if the serpent spoke why doesn’t it speak today? In fact, as cited there, he gave an allegorical interpretation to the serpent as one of the three “souls” (the animal) in man, the other two being symbolized by Adam and Eve. In the “regular” commentary on the passage, Ibn ʿEzra briefly cited the opinions of Saʿadyah (on this, see the important observation of Lipshitz, ʿIyūniym… Bahya, 353 n. 6) and Samuel b. Ḥōniy, and that “Solomon ha-Sefardiy” (Ibn Gabirol), a great sage, replied to Samuel’s interpretation (the statement there that Ibn Gabirol was “master of the metered verses” refers to his famous poem on grammar, “ ʿAnaq” [necklace], written at the age of 19; critical edition, with new additions, in Ibn Gabirol, Shīrey ha-hōl, ed. Jarden 1: 375–83). Ibn ʿEzra used the same expression in the introduction to his grammatical work Mōznayiym). As noted previously, Ibn ʿEzra, nevertheless, insisted that the serpent actually spoke. See also on Num. 22.28 (and Gen. 3.1), where an identical dispute is reported concerning whether Bilʿam’s ass “spoke,” where again Ibn ʿEzra disagreed with Ibn Gabirol (Maimonides, like Saʿadyah, interpreted it as a vision, an “angel” speaking; “Guide” II. 42, tr. 389). See also Ibn Bilʿam (in Fuchs, Studien, ix–x, Ar. text). Other citations of Ibn Gabirol in Ibn ʿEzra: Ps. 16.2 (citing one of his piyūṭiym), 143.10, 150.6, and Dan. 11.31 (where he states that Ibn Gabirol sought to calculate the end of the world, or the messianic age, by the “great conjunction” of the planets Jupiter and Saturn). On Isa. 43.7, he disagrees with Ibn Gabirol’s interpretation of “created” and “made it” as meaning the “light of the world,” i.e., the creation of light (Schlanger,
Philosophie de Salomon Ibn Gabirol, 15, completely misinterpreted this, based on Munk’s reading, 106, rather than the actual text of Ibn ‘Ezra’s commentary). There are several references in the following chapter to indirect influences of Ibn Gabirol on Ibn ‘Ezra.

113 Qimḥi on Jer. 2.24 (in standard “rabbinic” Bibles, with commentaries); cf. Ibn Gabirol, Improvement of the Moral Qualities, 33, on the sense of smell; Qimḥi on Ps. 37.8 (Qimḥi, Peyrīsh ha-shalēm ‘al Tehilim; from Improvement, 47; the Heb. translation, Tiqūn midōt ha-nefesh, 7b); Ps. 37.23 (Improvement, 4; Tiqūn, 8a). Qimḥi used the Hebrew translation, since (unlike his father and brother) he did not know Arabic.

114 Moses Ibn ‘Ezra(h), Shirey ha-ḥōl, 98, no. 96; Judah al-Ḥarīzī, Tāhkenōniy, “gate,” 3 (tr. Valle Rodríguez, 62, no. 5 and 65, no. 11; cf. the Heb. text in Schirmann, Shiyrah 2: 108, 112. Schirmann stated there (108, note to line 94) that he was from Toledo, and suggested that he may have been the grandfather of Judah al-Ḥarīzī, but I have no idea on what basis. None of his poems, so highly praised by Judah, has apparently survived, nor has his commentary. In his poetic rebuke, Ibn ‘Ezra(h) says: “Behold the child of folly which he has sired” and further rebukes him for having “gone forth to do battle with the warriors of intellect without weapon or numbers.” Apparently the commentary was not only incorrect but attacked other commentators, perhaps Ibn Ghīyatḥ or Ibn Bil’am. Incidentally, it has been claimed that al-Ḥarīzī wrote a commentary on Job (Zunz, Zur Geschichte, 213); however, the responsum cited (Solomon b. Simon Duran, Sēfer ha-RaSHBaSH, Teshārōt [Livorno, 1742], no. 595), while very difficult to make out, apparently reads l-l-h-r-z-y which is unlikely to be al-Ḥarīzī (usually his first name or full name would be written).

115 So, not “Gikitila” and certainly not “Chiquitillah.” Chicatilla is Spanish chica (“small, little”) with the diminutive ending -[t]illa. The correct spelling of the name is clear from “Judeo-Arabic” sources (the initial G is often lacking the gērūsh [‘], which indicates that it should be pronounced j or dh). There were several scholars with this name (e.g., Isaac Ibn Chicatilla, a student of Menaḥēm Ibn Sārūq, and later Joseph Ibn Chicatilla, a qabalist). The name “Jusef Xicatella” (in a Spanish source) is found in Tortosa, ca. 1272–79 (Carreras y Candi, L’ałjama de juhéus de Tortosa, 25).

116 See the thorough study by Poznański, Moses b. Samuel Hakkohen Ibn Chiquitilla (see Bibliography, Sources: Ibn Chicatilla), 55–58, with the Hebrew text of all the citations known to him of his commentaries, 94–120, with notes, 124–99 (see in addition n. 177). Bacher wrote a review of the book in R.E.J. 31 (1895): 307–17; the first pages are of no significance, but there are some corrections, 312–17, which should be consulted; since then, additional citations by Ibn ‘Ezra have come to light, see here “Appendix 1.” Remarkably, Poznański missed some citations in Ibn ‘Ezra’s commentary on Isaiah (see Bibliography; published in 1873, yet apparently not seen by Poznański) and added others, perhaps from a different manuscript. Missing are Isa. 9.18; intro. to Chapter 11, and 11.10 (not cited completely); 27.15; 29.21; 30.26; 34.2; 35.3; 40.1; 52 (intro.); 56.2. Note Ibn ‘Ezra’s statement in his comment on Ps. 69.19 (see below) that Ibn Chicatilla had personally explained something to him, and concluding with the statement “may he live”; that is, he was still alive at least until 1145 when Ibn ‘Ezra’s commentary was first written, or even as late as 1156 when the second revision was made (which is the version in our printed texts). In spite of this respectful wish, Ibn ‘Ezra was usually critical of his interpretations.

117 On citations of him by Joseph Qimḥi, see Poznański, 58, and for Samuel Ibn Tibbon (in his philosophical treatise), Judah al-Ḥarīzī and David Qimḥi, ibid., 60–62.
However, the passage which Poznański, 18 n. 4, cited from Menasseh b. Israel is certainly from the qabalist Joseph Ibn Chiquitilla, as indeed he surmised (incidentally, Poznański suggested, probably correctly, that there is no relationship between Moses and either the grammarian Isaac or the later qabalists Jacob and Joseph Ibn Gigațela, none of whom is known as ha-Kohên, as was Moses).


The fact that Ibn ‘Aknīn, in his aforementioned explanation of his division of interpretation of Song of Songs, mentioned Ibn Chiquitilla after Ibn Bil‘am cannot be accepted as chronological evidence. In Ibn Bil‘am’s commentary on Malachi 3.23, Ibn Chiquitilla is mentioned with the formula for one already deceased (Poznański, “Arabic Commentary,” 9, 53). Judah Ibn Bil‘am on Ibn Chiquitilla: Peyrūsh le-séfer Yesha‘yahū, 117, 135, 137, 139, 156, 207, 216, 236; Peyrūsh le-séfer Yermiyahū, 52, where he says that an explanation of his is laughable, but a “laughter” of sorrow. See also Poznański, Moses b. Samuel Hakohen Ibn Chiquitilla, 139 ff.; unfortunately, the editors of Ibn Bil‘am’s commentary on Isaiah did not consult this work. Perez, in his aforementioned paper, 43–51, briefly discussed some disagreements of Ibn Bil‘am on a few Psalms. See particularly on Zech. 9.9 and Malachi 3.23 his accusation that Ibn Chiquitilla had undermined the traditional belief in the messiah; see Poznański, “Arabic Commentary,” 51–53. He also apparently disagreed with him on Gen. 7.11; see the fragments ed. and tr. by Dan Becker in Friedman and Gil, eds., Meḥqariym be-mada‘ey ha-yahadut (=Te‘udah 4 [1986]): 168–84 (text 177, line 20; tr. 181, and see n. 84 there).

Ibn Bil‘am, Peyrūsh le-séfer Yesha‘yahū, 207; the manuscript was surprisingly overlooked by Poznański. On the complex meaning of the term, see Goldziher, “Dahrīya” in S.E.I. (see Bibliography), an excellent discussion with reference also to Sa‘adyah. Incidentally, throughout I have translated, or used, the word “heavens” and not “heaven” for two reasons: first, the usual Hebrew term is plural (or rather, technically, dual); and, second, Jewish tradition, following
Ptolemy, maintains that there are seven heavens (Ḥagigah 12b; etc.; cf. Maimonides, “Guide” I. 70, tr. 171). Bahya b. Asher (d. 1340; see Chapter 4) referred to the various heavens according to the sages and (erroneously) nine “according to the philosophers,” confusing the planetary spheres with “heavens” (and so the editor, Chavel, citing Maimonides, M.T., Mada’: “Yesodey ha-Torah” 3.1; “Guide” II. 9; in both places he speaks of the spheres and not the heavens). See further on the spheres in Chapter 2.

122 Ibn Bil’am, commentary on Joshua 10.12–13; ed. (Judeo-Ar.) S. Poznański in Freimann and Hildesheimer, eds., Birkhat Avraham 1: 17; Heb. tr. M. Goshen-Gottstein in Gad, ed., ‘Asarah me’orot ha-gedolim, 36 (erroneously there: a-k-n instead of ibn; the error is probably the editor’s). Moses Ibn ‘Ezra(h), while praising Ibn Chicaṭilla’s grammatical work, also stated that he held weak opinions “which robbed him of his elevated place” among the truly great commentators (Kitāb, 68–69).

123 Mentioned also in Ibn ‘Ezra’s grammatical treatise Sefat yeter; see Michael, Or ha-ḥayiyim, 447. See the explanation of this in Ibn Bil’am, Sheloshah sefiyyim: K. al-tajnīs, 35 n. 15.

124 The term kavod (“honor, glory, splendor”) as a metaphor for soul is also found in Ps. 16.9 (there Ibn ‘Ezra says without comment: “the soul”), and was frequently used by writers from the medieval to the early modern period; see, e.g., Zeraḥyah b. Isaac ha-Lévy as cited in Talmage, Peyrūshiyim le-sēfer Mishley le-seyyt Qimḥiy (see Bibliography: Sources), introduction, 34, and frequently in medieval poetry and other texts, and in such early modern writers as Bialik. Ibn ‘Ezra is cited as the authority for this meaning by Almosnino, Me’ameṣ ḥaḥaḥ, 182. See Ibn ‘Ezra on Ps. 103.1, where he explains that the soul is the “glory” (kavod) of the body, and thus the “essential” name of God, which is kavod, is there mentioned together with the soul.

125 See Bacher, “Materiaux pour servir a l’histoire de l’exégèse biblique en Espagne.” In his Peyrūsh sēfer yeṣiyrah, 158, he wrote of his intended commentary, “to begin with Genesis and finish everything,” which could refer to either the Torah alone or the entire Bible; cf. also ibid., 21 and 258 (and other pages cited by Bacher, 272).

126 Weiser commented on the “companionship” between the two, without being aware of the family ties (introduction to his ed. of Peyrūshiyey 1: 7–8), even though Krinsky, whose edition and commentary he used, had already discussed this. Earlier scholars (and some today), probably misled by Isaac Abravanel’s erroneous statement, thought that Abraham Ibn ‘Ezra married Judah’s daughter; see on that and legends associated with it Ben-Menahem, ‛Inyaney Ibn ‘Ezra, 236–39, 346 ff. (the author also accepted this as fact); see also David Conforte, Qorė hadonot (Berlin, 1846; photo rpt. Jerusalem, 1969), 10a. S.D. Goitein claimed to have discovered that it was Isaac, Abraham’s son, who married Judah’s daughter (“ha-Paršaḥ ha-ahronah,” 25; and see his “Biography of Rabbi [sic] Judah ha-Levi,” 52 “[Judah Ibn Ezra” there is a misprint for Isaac, of course]). In fact, this was already known to Azariah De Rossi (sixteenth century) and David Azulai (eighteenth century); see Krinsky, Meḥoqegey Yehudah 1: 20 n. 19 (ignored by all who have written on this), and also to the sixteenth-century Italian rabbi and commentator Judah Aryeh Moscato (“Qōl Yehudah” on the Kuzari I. 25, not mentioned by Krinsky). However, according to Menahem Schmelzer (Isaac Ibn ‘Ezra, Shiyriyyim, 14–15 of the introduction, n. 50), Goitein changed his mind; no reason was given. See also Gil and Fleischer, Yehudah ha-Lévy, 248 (Fleischer accepted Goitein’s first identification) and 250–51 (note Gil’s rejection of this, with some questionable theories, such as that Isaac was the son of an otherwise
unknown brother of Abraham named Judah). Isaac accompanied ha-Lēvy on his trip to Egypt, and as we learn from these letters (and see Gil and Fleischer, 192) was to have gone with him also to the Land of Israel, but ha-Lēvy told him to go there directly and not meet him in Egypt; thus, his life was saved, since the ship on which ha-Lēvy left Egypt was sunk in a storm and the great poet died. On the conversion of Isaac, Abraham’s son, to Islām and his “repentance” (the poem cited by Weiser, 9), see Isaac Ibn ‘Ezra, Ṣhiḥriyim, 147. On Abraham’s elegy on Isaac, cited there by Weiser, see Naftali Ben-Menahem, “Al Yiṣḥaq Ibn-‘Ezra,” Tarbiz (Tarbiyāt) 25 (1955): 93 (see also n. 179). Isaac’s conversion is also mentioned by Judah al-Ḥarīzī, Ṣahkenoni 3.12 (tr. Valle Rodríguez, 65). Ezra Fleischer flatly denied that Isaac returned to Judaism (Gil-Fleischer, Yehudah ha-Lēvy, 148 n. 3; the denial runs in the face of the manuscripts cited as well as Schmelzer’s conclusions).

127 The question which he asked Ibn ‘Ezra and his answer to him: Ex. 20.1 (ed. Weiser 2: 131; see Ben-Menahem, Ṣiyāney Ibn ‘Ezra, 227 n. 18; see also Kūzariy 1.25 where ha-Lēvy has “taken possession” of Ibn ‘Ezra’s reply and presents it as his own. For other citations of him by Ibn ‘Ezra, see Appendix 1 here and see Ben-Menahem, ibid., 225–31; he missed some; see also following note). There are interpretations of biblical verses in Judah ha-Lēvy’s Kūzariy; some of these (in the medieval Hebrew translation of Judah Ibn Tibbon) were published as a “commentary on the Torah” by Hayim Yosef Isar Gad in his ed. of the commentary of Joseph Bekhor Shor (Jerusalem, 1956–60; 3 vols.), 2: 149–91. None of Ibn ‘Ezra’s citations of ha-Lēvy is from the Kūzariy, which has led to the surmise that he composed a separate biblical commentary. However, these could have come (some clearly are said to be) from conversations between the two. (Incidentally, the expression “may he rest in peace” on Ex. 20.1, indicating that Judah was deceased, is missing in Cambridge MS. 46 and thus is probably a copyist’s addition; see Bacher, “Ḥilufey nūṣḥa’ot,” 36; this may be true elsewhere as well). Daniel Lasker briefly discussed the exchange on Ex. 20.1 but missed the key concepts while shedding no new light on the meaning (“R ‘sic’ Yehudah ha-Lēvy ke-farshan ha-miqra be-Sefer ha-Kūzariy,” in Bar-Asher, et al., eds., Davar davur ‘al ofnav, 181). The article, 179–91, analyzes ha-Lēvy’s philosophical interpretations in a far-ranging comparison with general philosophical background and possibly related sources. Lasker surmises that Ibn ‘Ezra did not accurately reflect ha-Lēvy’s position.

128 Ps. 89.2, 53. (On Ps. 89.2, he says: there was in Spain a great sage and pious man, and this Psalm was difficult to him and he did not read it and was not able to listen to it because this poet [author of the Psalm; note that he does not say “David”] speaks harshly against God.

This was also cited by David Qimḥi in his commentary on the verse. The second citation (89.53) states that “a great Spanish sage” explained the final verse as a sort of “signature” by the scribe, as was the current (medieval) custom of scribes to write at the end of books “blessed is he who gives strength to the tired.” On Ps. 72.20 he already gave this explanation in the name of Judah ha-Lēvy. If both of the statements on Ps. 89 refer to the same “sage” it is peculiar, since in the first citation Ibn ‘Ezra said that the “sage” would neither recite nor hear this psalm; if so, why would he give an explanation of part of it? Does he, in both citations, refer to ha-Lēvy? Elsewhere (Gen. 3.23), Ibn ‘Ezra used the expression “a great Spanish sage” almost certainly in reference to Abraham bar Hayya (or Hīyya, ca. 1065–1136), with whom he disagreed here; cf. the latter’s Megilat ha-megaleh, 67–68 (cf. intro., xxii); cf. also Ibn ‘Ezra’s commentary on
Dan. 2.79 and (probably) 3.2. He is specifically named on Dan. 11.30. It is possible that either ha-Lēvy or Abraham is the “sage who was in Spain” whose explanation is quoted by Ibn ‘Ezra on Hos. 2.10; also Ps. 51.20. The expression “a sage in Spain” is found also on Ex. 24.12, 28.9, and “one of the great ones of Spain” in the “other recension” of his commentary on Gen. 2.6 (ed. Friedländer, Essays, Heb. appendix, 35 and rpt. in Peyrūḏīyeh, ed. Weiser 1: 166). However, in the regular commentary on Gen. 1.14 “a great Spanish sage” is apparently Mar Ḩassān; see “Appendix 1” here. The suggestion that the reference in general means Judah ha-Lēvy was made by Poznanski, Moses Ibn Chiquitilla, 14 n. 1 (however, he did not mention all the above citations). It seems unlikely that Ibn ‘Ezra would “conceal” ha-Lēvy’s name in these other citations, when he elsewhere wrote respectfully of him and by name. In the context of discussing Ibn Ezra’s astrological interpretation of Hos. 2.10, Rodríguez Arribas, “El profeta Oseas y la astrología,” 248–49, also mentions various theories as to who the “sage” was; but rather than being “more remotely” Abraham bar Ḥayya there, that is precisely to whom it refers (and see, e.g., his Megilat ha-megalah, 120).

See Il commento di Emanuele Romano al capitolo I della Genesi, ed. Tocci (Rome, 1963), but possibly the J.T.S. (N.Y.) manuscript is preferable; see the review of the above work in J.J.S. 15 (1964): 169. Naḥmanides also quoted him on Num. 27.3, as did Babya b. Asher (see Ben-Menahem, ‘Inyaneh Ibn ‘Ezra, 227 n. 20).

The citation is on Isa. 6.10, and the name of the commentary is “Rūḥ al-talāmīd” (“spirit [or perhaps better nāḥ, ‘refreshment’] of the students”); see on this Vajda, Recherches, 132–33. It is probable that the “R’ Lēvy” cited by Ibn ‘Ezra on Ps. 7.10 and 35.13 is also Ibn al-Ṭabbān.

Ibn ‘Aḵīn, Hitgalīṭ ha-sodōt, 336/337, lines 8–9 (incidentally, the “great sage” Joseph b. Isaac Shāmī there is also mentioned by Judah ha-Lēvy, Divan 2: 29, no. 21; also his father Isaac there 28, no. 5. Moses b. Naḥman of Jerusalem: Hirschberg, H.Z. “ha-Qeshariym beyn yehudey ha-Magrīy v-veyn Eres Yisraēl be-tequfāt ha-geonīym,” Eres Yissāʾel 5 [1949/50]: 216 n. 24, and see 218.

Not “Gayyat,” “Ghayat,” etc. (library catalogues also incorrectly spell the name). See G. Cohen’s note to line 336 in Ibn Dāʾūd, Sefer ha-Qabbalah, 81 (tr.), but he transliterated it as “Giat,” following S.D. Goitein (“Giyāt”) as cited there, which is absolutely incorrect. In a note in Tarbiz (Tarbiyṣ) 25 (1955), Goitein wrote that there was a misprint in an earlier article where “Ghayyah” had been printed instead of “Ghiyath.” He there also correctly explained that the name must be Ghiyath, which means “help, aid” in Arabic (this was already known to the editor of Ibn Ghiyath’s “Judeo-Arabic” translation of Ecclesiastes, Libri Kohelet versio arabica, and of course to M. Steinschneider, “An Introduction to the Arabic Literature of the Jews,” J.Q.R. [o.s.] 10 [1897–98]: 515; cf. his C.B., 2466). See also the index to al-Naḏīm, Fihrist, where the correct spelling of the Arabic name is given (this work is a major source on early Arabic writings, also by Jews, but is rarely consulted by Jewish scholars). See further on Ibn Ghiyath in the index here.

The texts of both the translation and commentary were edited, with a Hebrew translation of the commentary (see Bibliography), 161–296, but erroneously attributed by the editor to Saʿadyah (as is also the commentary on Song of Songs there); see Vajda, “Quelques observations,” 518 (citing S. Pines, see n. 1 there), and Abramson, “Le-feyrush rav [sic] Yiṣḥaq ben [sic] Giyat…” However, the commentary was already correctly mentioned as that of Ibn Ghiyath by Yeda’yah “Bedersiy” in his famous letter to Ibn Adret (see his Sheʾelōt u-tešōḥōt 1: 418, f. 57a, col. b), overlooked by Vajda and Abramson. Jacob Mann (R.E.J. 72 [1920]: 166) noted a reference to this translation and commentary in a Genizah book list; cf. also K"S 18: 275. It should be noted that J.T.S. MS. Lutzki 431 (Ruth,
Psalms, Job, Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs, with “Judeo-Arabic” translations) is wrongly identified (catalogued) as having the translation of Ecclesiastes by Judah b. Isaac Ibn Ghiyāth, the son of Isaac, instead of (correctly) Isaac; this manuscript was ignored by both Vajda and Abramson. The text of the Arabic translation only (correctly identified) was published from another manuscript as *Libri Kohelet versio arabica* (see Bibliography). Loewy, the editor, included citations of the commentary from the writings of Ibn Bil‘am, Jacob b. Solomon (Ibn) *J-y-a-n-y* (of Jaén; see on him Chapter 5, “Navarre”), and David Qimḥi; but omitted Ibn ‘Ezra, who also cited it (see the Appendix 1 here for Ibn ‘Ezra’s citations of and references to Ibn Ghiyāth); see Ibn ‘Ezra, *Comentario de Abraham ibn Ezra al libro del Ecclesiastes*, where there are references to Ibn Ghiyāth (and see Gómez-Aranda, “Influence”). The claim by Kafih (not “Qafih”), in his ed. of Ibn Ghiyāth’s commentary, 184 n. 56, that Ibn ‘Ezra “copied” those remarks is incorrect. Abramson repeats many of Loewy’s references and adds others, including Samuel Ibn Tibbon. Vajda’s article, 519–27, briefly discusses Ibn Ghiyāth’s use of Ibn Janāḥ (although missing some specific references) and Isaac b. Solomon “Israeliy” (tenth century), the neo-Platonic philosopher of North Africa. Simon, *Arba’ giyshot*, 151–52, notes that his commentary is specifically and indirectly referred to by Moses Ibn ‘Ezra(h). Sarah Katz (Kats in U.S. catalogues), *R’ Yiḥqak Ibn Giat* (Jerusalem, 1994), 151–61, discusses some aspects of the commentary (she was apparently unaware of Vajda’s article). Mittelman, “Tefiyat ha-periyshut,” did not cite any of the above information, other than Kafih’s ed. On her own edition, see Bibliography: Sources.

134 Ibn Bil‘am, ed. Pozański, “Arabic Commentary,” 33, cites him (a “mistake” he made) in his commentary on Obadiah 1.3, and also in his grammatical treatise *Otīyāt ha-‘inyaniym*, in Ibn Bil‘am, *Shelōshah sefarim*, 137–38, and in his own commentary on Ecclesiastes (see Abramson’s notes there, and his aforementioned article in *K’S*: 52). There also appears to be a reference to his biblical commentary in *Ginzey Schechter* 3: 304–05 (line 21); Davidson, the editor, was unable (285) even to guess the identity of this Isaac. Ibn ‘Ezra also cited him in several places without mentioning his name (Simon, *Arba’ giyshot*, 160). He is also cited by Joseph Qimḥi (Sefir ha-galūyi) and his son David in his grammatical works; Samuel Ibn Tibbon (from his commentary on Ecclesiastes, on which see Chapter 3 here on Provence); and later commentators not from Spain (Abraham b. Solomon, cited by Abramson, in Ibn Bil‘am, *Shelōshah sefarim*, 67, lived in Yemen apparently in the sixteenth century; see St. in *H.B.* 19 [1879]: 131–32; see all these citations in Abramson’s article. He is also cited on Gen. 49.11 and Isaiah 16.8 by Solomon b. “Molkh” (“Melek,” both forms are undoubtedly wrong), *Mikhalt yōfiy* (see Bibliography).

135 Art. cit., 519. It is true that the title of his commentary, *(Kitāb) al-zuhd*, means “asceticism,” but also denouncing worldly things in general, which is a characteristic of Ecclesiastes. While there is a certain amount of ascetic teaching in the commentary, it also comprises a combination of grammatical and philosophical interpretation. The same misconception was already held by Samuel Ibn Tibbon, who apparently in his commentary on Ecclesiastes criticized Ibn Ghiyāth for calling it a “book of asceticism” (Robinson, “Samuel Ibn Tibbon’s Commentary on Ecclesiastes,” 88; the statement is not in the introduction which Robinson edited and translated there). On the contrary, Ibn Ghiyāth says (ed. Kafih, 170) that with regard to “asceticism,” separation from things which are permitted and from all worldly things is not required by wisdom *(al-hikma)* “nor does the intellect accept nor the Torah require it,” for this is the opposite of what the Torah requires or nature instills; rather, it refers to the investigation and
knowledge of the foundation (source) of all things and knowledge of the truth of all branches and categories, that is, philosophical and scientific investigation. So also on Eccles. 2.12–16 (195), the meaning of “philosophy” is “love of wisdom,” and the principal part of this is attachment to God and his actions, to understand the truth of all things and know their foundation as much as possible for human ability. A detailed analysis of “ascetic” teachings and comparison with Muslim mystics is Mittelman, “Tefiysat ha-periyshut”; however, this consists almost entirely of quotations and the author in my opinion fails to prove any direct influence.

Commentary, ed. Kafiḥ. 164. Sa’adyah made an Arabic translation of the book, but it is doubtful that he wrote a commentary on it (see Vajda, “Quelques observations,” 519 n. 3). As noted above, Ibn Sārūq made passing reference to Ecclesiastes in his dictionary. One of the sources which Ibn Ghiyāth utilized (174) was the midrash Pirqey de Rabiy Eli’ezer, but this of course is not a “commentary” (thus, this work was known in Spain long before the twelfth century, contrary to Lawee, “Exegesis and Appropriation,” 150). It is perhaps not impossible that one of the “commentators” or “scholars” to whom he frequently refers was none other than his teacher Ibn Naghrīllah, either what he heard from him or his lost biblical commentary (and see n. 104, where I mentioned that Ibn ‘Ezra cited him on Eccles. 9.12).

Introduction, 164. Further on (168), he explains that “geometry,” allegedly known to “Solomon,” includes measuring and building as well as actual geometry, all of which is included in mathematics. Here he adds astronomy and music to the list of things supposedly alluded to in Ecclesiastes. Contrary to many later writers, he believed that the universe and the physical earth and the movements of the planets are eternal, but everything created in the “world of existence” (our world) is temporal (179). Time also, the measure of the movement of the heavens, is eternal (cf. Aristotle, Physics VIII. 1); there are two “motions” (moving forces): time and the establishment and “direction” (tadbīr, guidance) of the world (this is not mentioned in the otherwise interesting book of Rudavsky, Time Matters). For all the undeniable influence of Isaac “Israeliy” and his neo-Platonic views (see Vajda, 522–27), this is obviously Aristotelian (Vajda ignored this and other important philosophical comments; e.g., 181, on the general value of wisdom). From all of this, we can see how incorrect it is to characterize this commentary as lacking in interest.

The name Bil‘am is, of course, biblical (Num. 22, etc.; even the biblical name has usually been incorrectly transcribed as “Balaam”). There is also no Arabic name Bal‘am, as some have claimed; the error is, incredibly, Steinschneider’s, Arabische Lit., 138. Wickes, W., ed. Treatise on the Accentuation of the So-called Poetical Books of the O.T. (Oxford, 1881), erroneously ascribed to Ibn Bil‘am, at least correctly transcribed his name; so also Derenbourg (see Bibliography, Sources: Ibn Bil‘am: Isaiah, Gloses) and N. Porgès (in a note in R.E.J. 23 [1891]: 308). U.S. libraries erroneously catalogue him as “Ibn Balam.” Fuchs, Studien, followed by Poznański (“Hebräisch-arabische Sprachvergleichungen”), wrote “Bil‘ām,” an impossible form; yet that is preferable to “Bal‘ām” (Poznański, Zur jüdisch-arabischen Litteratur, notes and corrections to Steinschneider [Berlin, 1904], 63). Allony’s theory about the origin of the name in Areshet 6 (1980): 12 is rejected by Goshen-Gottstein in his ed. of Ibn Bil‘am, Peyrāsh... le-sēfer Yēgh’āyāḥ, 11 n. 1. See also Allony’s article in Stein and Loewe, eds., Studies … Presented to Alexander Altmann, 35–52 (Heb. section). Michael, Ōr ha-ha’ayim, 446, claimed that the name is a Spanish (Jewish) family name and not derived from Bil‘am of the Bible (because of the talmudic objection to using the names
of the “wicked”; however, some rabbinical sources assigned merit to Bil’am and absolved him of any “evil”). In fact, the name “Abenbilaam” (so, in Spanish; Ibn Bil’am in the Hebrew text) is found in Córdoba in the thirteenth century (Fidel Fita, “La sinagoga de Córdoba,” B.A.H. 5 [1884]: 370 ff.). We also find it in Spanish transliteration, Çag aben Bilaam, in Córdoba (1254); Baer, Die Juden (see Bibliography: Sources) 2: 53, no. 68, and cf. ibid. 1: 198 (Salomon Bilam in Daroca), 879 (Moses Bilam in Cervera). Incidentally, the Hebrew text of the document cited by Baer concerning Jews in Córdoba in 1254 reads “Ibn Bil’am,” transliterated in Romance characters as “Bilaam.”

See on this Shraga Abramson (Ibn Bil’am, “Sēfer ha-tajnīs”), 55; that work itself is a dictionary of biblical homonyms. N. Allony disagreed and wrote that there are still unpublished fragments and “these were not a complete commentary” on biblical passages (“Sheloshah qeṭṭa’iyim ḥadashiym me-ḥiyburey Ibn Bil’am,” Bet mikra [Bet miqra] 9 [20–21] [1964]: 110). Maman, “Linguistic School,” also discusses in detail grammatical and other technical aspects of Ibn Bil’am’s exegesis. The earlier short treatise of Fuchs, Studien über Abu Zakaria [sic], has some useful comments on his biblical commentaries as well as his grammatical works, and in the appendix fragments (Judeo-Ar.) of his commentaries on Numbers and Deuteronomy. It is unfortunate that Poznański died before he was able to do his “comprehensive view” of Ibn Bil’am’s biblical exegesis, as he promised in “Arabic Commentary,” 4. In a review of the modern edition (n. 140) of his commentary on Isaiah, Maman claimed that “Ibn Bal’am” (sic) was known primarily for his grammatical work, the importance of which he also disparaged, and that his biblical exegesis was “neglected” in later works and in fact that the commentary “disappeared” until the end of the nineteenth century (J.Q.R. 86 [1991]: 468–69; the review, 468–75, deals primarily with technical details of the translation of the Arabic text by the editors [why this was done in a review in English is unclear]). None of this is correct; see below on citations of him by Ibn ‘Ezra and Ibn ‘Aknīn, and he was also cited by Samuel b. Isaac “ha-Sefardiy” (“al-Kānzī”) of Egypt. In a shorter review of the same work, Meira Polliack (in Vetus Testamentum 46 [1996]: 408–09) opines that the chief value of his commentary was to introduce the Judeo–Arabic “gaonic” (sic, geonic) commentaries to Spanish exegetes of the twelfth century, like Ibn ‘Ezra. This is incorrect both with regard to the independent value of Ibn Bil’am’s commentary and for the fact that Ibn ‘Ezra of course knew Arabic, as did most of the exegetes of the twelfth century. The writings of the geoniyim, including exegetical, were widely known in Spain long before the twelfth century and certainly to Ibn ‘Ezra.

Not tārjīh as sometimes cited (I myself erred in this, Dictionary, 257). The work was unknown until Steinschneider noted a mention of it in a manuscript and correctly guessed its nature (“Ein unbekanntes Werk…,” M.G.W.J. 34 [1885]: 287–88; unknown to all who have since dealt with the work). Steinschneider first discovered the existence of the commentary on the Torah in a Bodleian manuscript, but lamented the fact that it contains only Numbers and Deuteronomy (note in he-Halūs 2 [1853]: 60–63, with important information about authorities cited by him). Since then, other fragments have been found; see complete listing in Dictionary, 257–59. For partial eds. of Torah commentary, see here Bibliography: Sources. Zarza, “Meqōr ḥayiyim,” in Ibn ‘Ezra, Magal yōḥōt ṭōvah, 97a, on Lev. 14 (parashat Maṣōna’) cited a statement from the mystical Sēfer yeṣiyyah followed by: “and as Judah b. Bil’am wrote,” which Michael, Or ha-ḥayiyim, 448 understood as a possible reference to a commentary on Sēfer yeṣiyyah by Ibn Bil’am; it is not, of course; rather, it refers to his citation of that work in his commentary, probably on Leviticus (although unfortunately the commentary on that chapter is not preserved).
The Arabic word *nuqta* (pl. *nuqat*) essentially means a diacritical point in a letter of the alphabet, but more generally “details, particulars,” and it is in this sense that it should be understood here, “particulars of the scriptures” (N. Allony, op. cit., 112, gave an erroneous translation and explanation). The bibliography of editions of all of Ibn Bil'am’s commentaries is incomplete in the recent editions on Isaiah, Ezekiel and Jeremiah; see Bibliography: Sources here for complete listing or my Dictionary, as above. On Isaiah, following the unreliable edition by Derenbourg, Gloses...sur Isaïe (see Bacher, W. “Jehuda Ibn Balaams [sic] Jesaia–Commentar,” Z.A.W. 14 [1893]: 223–49), there is now a critical edition and translation, Peyrūsh...le-séfer Yeshà‘yahū. See Maman’s review (n. 139); there are errors, or questionable renderings, in Perez’s Hebrew translation not mentioned by Maman. The (lost) commentary on Psalms is cited by Ibn ‘Ezra frequently (see next note; there is no mention of this in Simon, Arba’ giyshōt). There are also some leaves of his commentary on Job and on Daniel in the Vatican (see Neubauer and Driver, eds., Fifty-Third Chapter of Isaiah 1: xix; this book was overlooked by Abramson, and by Goshen-Gottstein and Perez in their edition); fragments on Daniel were, however, edited by Perez in Bet mikra (Beyt miqra) 45 (2000): 1–36. His commentary on Samuel was partially “reconstructed” from the commentary of Isaac b. Samuel “ha-Sefardiy” (“al-Kānzi”) of Egypt (eleventh to twelfth century) by Abramson, Mi-piy ba‘aley leshonot, 66–86 (rpt. from Leshonenu 43 [1979]: 29–51); see St., A.L., 247; Margoliouth, “Isaac b. Samuel’s Commentary”; Simon, “Contribution of R. Isaac ben Samuel Al-Kanzi” and his note in Sēbo, Hebrew Bible/Old Testament 1/2: 372–77; Shtero, “Nofeah ve-atareyah shel Ereṣ Yisraēl be-feyrusho...” and “Peyrush Shemuēl le-Rav [sic] Yiṣḥaq bar Shemuēl.” Fragments of Ibn Bil’am on 2 Samuel were edited by S. Poznański in Z.f.h.B. 1 (1896): 96–99. For 1 Sam. 28, see n. 156; see also Basal, “Me-niṣyaney eskolah ha-Sefer Diyit,” for additional citations on 1 Samuel.

Gen. 49.6, the “short recension” on Ex. 30.23 (ed. Weiser 2: 331) and the regular commentary on Ex. 5.19. Weiser in his introduction, 1: 62, who mentioned only the citations in the commentary on the Torah, erred in thinking that “Yehūdah ha-medaqēq” (“the grammarian”) in the “short recension,” Ex. 9.30, is Ibn Bil’am; in fact, Ibn ‘Ezra always uses that expression to refer to Judah Hayyū; see also on Deut. 29.28, “Yehūdah ha-medaqēq ha-rishōn,” meaning Hayyū. See Ibn ‘Ezra’s citations of Ibn Bil’am in “Appendix 1” here; Ibn ‘Ezra disagreed with him in all these citations. He also cited him in the “other” recension of his commentary on Gen. 8.12 (ed. Weiser, 178), and Zech. 9.6 (cf. Abramson, Mi-piy ba‘aley leshonot, 101 n. 11).

Ibn ‘Aknīn, Hitgalūt ha-sōdōt, 366/367 (however, this does not necessarily mean that he cited a lost commentary on Song of Songs; more likely, from his grammatical writings).

Poznański, “Arabic Commentary,” 4 n. 13, summarized Ibn Bil’am’s intent (based on his introduction to “Writings,” in Derenbourg’s ed. of the commentary on Isaiah) as (a) to translate “every word” (actually, only unusual or difficult words) with a corresponding Arabic word; (b) to indicate where the corresponding word first occurs: in the Bible, traditional [rabbinic] literature, or in Aramaic or Arabic texts; (c) to establish the grammatical forms and also give such explanations as occur to him. Poznański notes (5–6) that in his commentaries on the “Twelve Prophets,” he relied heavily on Sa’adyah’s list of unique biblical words and also on the dictionary of Ibn Janāh. See also Perez, “Terumat R’ [sic] Yehudah Ibn Bil’am,” of value primarily for quotations of the Judeo-Arabic text of some excerpts of his commentary, with Hebrew translation. Of more interest is the same author’s “Yaḥaso shel R’ [sic] Yehudah Ibn Bil’am le-qodmav be-feyrūshav,” discussing Ibn Bil’am’s attitude toward Sa’adyah Gaon, Ibn Janāh,
Ibn Naghrillah and Moses Ibn Chichatilla. Perez claimed, 56, that Ibn Bil'am said of Sa'adyah, “he has no knowledge of the foundations of the Hebrew language,” citing the commentary on Isa. 1.7; however, there is no such statement there, nor anywhere in that commentary (neither is the statement he cites on Isa. 11.15 to be found there). Nevertheless, Ibn Bil'am frequently disagreed with the gaon, but it would have been absurd for him to claim that he had no knowledge of Hebrew, since he was the first important (“rabbanite”) grammarian; on his actual citations of Sa'adyah, see Poznański, “Arabic Commentary,” 7–8, unknown to Perez. On his reliance on Ibn Janāḥ, see Poznański, 8–9 and on Lev. 15.23 (Z.f.h.B. 4 [1900]: 19). Perez correctly noted a harsh criticism of Ibn Janāḥ, who explained Isa. 27.1 in astrological terms, to which Ibn Bil'am replied that this could only be said by one who is a prophet, which does not exist in these times, or a magician (Peyrūsh ... le-sēfer Yesha' yahu, 129). Yet he often followed him, sometimes (particularly in the commentary on Jeremiah) citing him as “some say,” or the like. In the introduction to his commentary on the Torah, he wrote that many of the commentators (not “translators” as in Allony’s translation) incorrectly translated certain words in the Bible and that one of his intentions was to correct these errors (Allony, N., ed. and tr. “Sheloshah qetaiym ḥadashiyym me-hiyburey Ibn Bil'am,” Bet miqra [Beyt miqra] 9 [1964]: 117, line 9 [text]:120 [tr.]); that is, he was not criticizing the Arabic translations but rather earlier commentators who allegedly misunderstood some words.

145 Peyrūsh ... le-sēfer Yesha’ yahu, 241 (I correct the Hebrew translation slightly). Ibn ‘Ezra cited this as a possible interpretation of the verse (without mentioning its author) in his own commentary on Isaiah. The English translations of the verse are all problematic, some omitting ‘amō, “his people,” altogether; the J.P.S. translation rearranging the text, rendering it: “Then his people remembered the days of old, the days of Moses,” and so the New International Version, with an interesting change: “Then his people recalled the days of old, the days of Moses and his people,” adding a second “his people” which is not in the text. Note that according to both translations, it is not God but “the people” who remembered the “days of old,” as Ibn Bil’am suggested (unknown to these translators, of course). The translators of the (Israeli) “Koren” version (Jerusalem, 1977) understood it as referring to God who remembers (recalls), but it still takes mōsheh to be the name Moses, instead of, correctly, the verb “withdrew.”

146 Harkavy, letter to Samuel Poznański; see Kovets (Qovēṣ) ‘al-yad (n.s.) 11 (1936): 210, no. 22 and 213. See the detailed (unnecessarily so) discussion of the background of all of this in Simon, Arba’ giyshōt, 100–03 (tr. 117 ff.). On the other hand, there is no mention of this at all in the brief introduction of the editors to Ibn Bil’am’s commentary on Isaiah.

147 See, for example, the interesting discussion of the story of the necromancer of En-Dor (1 Sam. 28) in the fragment of Ibn Bil’am’s commentary edited and translated (Heb.) by Harkavy, Ṣikhrōn ha-qaōn rav Shemuēl ben Ḥōfiniyy, at the end, 14–15 n. 20. See also Simon, “Contribution of R. Isaac ben Samuel Al-Kanizi,” 178 n. 22; that Egyptian (originally from al-Andalus) commentator disagreed with Samuel b. Ḥōfiniyy’s interpretation and cited Ibn Bil’am. Aaron Greenbaum, in his ed. of Samuel’s commentary on the Torah (Jerusalem, 1979), 36–38, edited and translated several excerpts from Ibn Bil’am’s commentary in which he cites Samuel (also Ḥeḇēṣ b. Yaṣliyah); however, he was apparently unaware of the edition of that commentary of Ibn Bil’am (on Numbers and Deuteronomy) by Perez. Most valuable in this respect is the text of Ibn Bil’am on Lev. 15.31 (ed. Poznański in Z.f.h.B. 4 [1900]: 20–21), republished with Heb. tr. by Greenbaum, op. cit., 380–81). Other citations of Samuel b. Ḥōfiniyy by Ibn
Bil‘am are in fragments of his commentary on Zech. 5.6 and 6.3 (ed. Poznański, “Arabic Commentary,” 51), and see Harkavy, op. cit., 18 n. 31, 20 n. 42 and 24 n. 59. The citation from Isa. 49.17 (Harkavy, n. 42) is now found in the ed. of Goshen-Gottstein and Perez, 200, with no mention of Harkavy by the editors (in general, their bibliography is inadequate). On Ḥeḳesh b.Yaḥyā (tenth century), the important talmudic scholar and rabbi of Qayrawān (North Africa), see Baron, Social and Religious History 6: 93–96 and notes. For Hai (Hajjāy) Gaon, see below. For other citations of Hai, see Poznański, “Arabic Commentary,” 8. On Ibn Bil‘am’s use of various works of Sa‘adyah, see Poznański, “Arabic Commentary,” 7–8. Interestingly, on Isa. 1.7 he harshly disagreed with Sa‘adyah’s explanation and yet he gave the identical explanation in his commentary on Jer. 18.3 (ed. Perez, 79 and see his n. 3). Sheriyrah Gaon is cited in the fragment on 2 Sam. 7.23, ed. and tr. Harkavy, “Ḥadashiym gam yeshaniym,” in the Heb. tr. of Graetz’s history (Divrey yemey Yisrael, various eds., 4: 22; photo rpt. in Harkavy, Me‘asēf nidatiyim, 130). The same passage was edited by Poznański in Z.f.h.B. 1 (1896/7): 98–99, and see n. 8 there.

148 These include the Qur‘ān (also in his commentary on the Torah), Arabic poetry (cited anonymously), dictionaries, a book of stories about Medina (see commentary on Isa. 16.1) and al-Masūdī’s famous history (Isa. 18.1), as well as popular proverbial expressions. He also cited Aristotle, in Arabic translation, of course. “Christians,” without specifying the source, are cited (Isa. 16.1, where apparently the reference is to Jerome, the so-called “Vulgate”; see there 91 n. 3), and as “al-rūm” (Isa. 46.1), which the editors inaccurately translated, 191, as “Romans” (it is singular, and here means “the Christian”). Note also the polemical statement about Christians, commentary on Isa. 21.11 (at 111). He cited anonymously Christian commentators, or translators (not, however, Jerome), also on Deut. 14.1 and Habakkuk 2.4 (see Poznański, “Arabic Commentary,” 45 n. 10).

149 Commentary on Joshua, in the translation of Goshen-Gottstein, in Gad, ed., ‘Asarah me’orot ha-gedoliyim, 36–37 (the complete explanation of how the number of ten is arrived at is rather complicated). For Pirqe de Rabiy Eli’ezer, see Bibliography (Sources), and for citations of it by later commentators see the index here. There is still no “critical edition” of this important work; see on the problem and planned project Lewis M. Barth in Raphael, ed., Agenda for the Study of Midrash; that plan has now been abandoned. The alleged “critical ed.” published in a limited edition by Makor (Jerusalem, 1972) is actually a reprint of an earlier edition with some corrections. There is an excellent Spanish translation, also utilizing a manuscript, Capitulos de Rabbi Eliezer. Neither of these was mentioned by Barth. Two recent studies focus on the nature of PRE as reinterpretation or reworking of earlier rabbinic sources: Sacks, Midrash and Multiplicity, with also an insightful chapter on biblical exegesis in the work; and Adelman, Return of the Repressed. See also Keim, Pirqe de Rabbi Eliezer.

150 See, e.g., his commentary on Judges 20.28 (in Gad, op. cit., 44). Perez, in his aforementioned “Yaḥaso” article, also briefly mentioned (55) this aspect of his general approach, without giving specific examples.

151 Commentary on Joshua 7.25, ed. Poznański, “Perush ‘al sefer Yehoshū‘ah,” in Freimann and Hildesheimer, eds., Birkhat Avraham, 100 (offprint, 14); and in the Heb. tr. of Goshen-Gottstein (with important comments), 34; this has been overlooked by those who have written on the concept of pesḥat (“simple meaning”) in biblical commentary. See, however, Fenton, Philosophie et exégèse, 296–97, where he translates the entire passage (the identical statement in his commentary on Deut. 4.24) from Fuchs, Studien, xvi. Ibn Bil‘am’s source for this was Sa‘adyah, Gaon, Sēfer ha-emunōt ve-ha-dē‘ōt.
Peyrūsh, 167–71). The corrected Ar. text of the responsum was published, with Heb. tr., by G. Weil in Cassuto, M. D. et al., eds. Sēfer Aṣaf (Simḥa Assaf jubilee vol. [Jerusalem, 1953]), 261–67, with an important and detailed discussion relating it to Muslim philosophical and theological sources, 267–79. For some reason, the first paragraph of the text was omitted entirely in the edition of Peyrūsh, and the translation should have been compared carefully with that of Weil. Wertheimer, Qōhelet Shelōmōh (Jerusalem, 1899), who edited the text from another manuscript, was correctly criticized by Weil for not identifying the manuscript he used and ignoring the previous publication of the text by Derenbourg. Wertheimer’s grandson, in the photo rpt. ed. of one volume of his grandfather’s Ginzez Yerūshalayim (Jerusalem, 1981), 33 (intro.), falsely stated that Weil had harshly criticized Wertheimer and chose to publish only Derenbourg’s text, when in fact Weil consulted both texts and published a corrected version. However, the other sources which are discussed there, 33–35, are important and should be consulted. As for the connection of this responsum with the thought of Maimonides, see also his Igroth 1: 264 ff. The Teshuvat ha-Rambam, etc., cited by the editors of Ibn Bil’am, Peyrūsh, 167 n. 1, contains simply a Hebrew translation of Weil’s book cited in his article, 267 n. 39; the editors’ notes about all of this are erroneous. The responsum of Hai, in the commentary on Jonah 4.6 (ed. Poznański, “Arabic Commentary,” 36–38), was also published by Wertheimer, op. cit., 76–78, with a Heb. translation, 7–10; but with regard to Wertheimer’s statement that Hai was referring to Sa’adyah, Poznański there (36–37 n. 12) disagreed and noted that the Shi’ites also dealt with this theme (however, it seems to me unlikely that Hai could have confused a Shi’ite doctrine as that of the Mutakallimin, and Wertheimer was probably correct). This citation has been subsequently ignored by scholars.

Peyrūsh, 77. The concept of “oral law” (Tōrah she-ba’al peh) or laws ascribed orally to Moses (halakhah le-Mōsheh mi-Sīnay) is central to rabbinic tradition and medieval interpretation. Indeed, even in the medieval period and later many teachings were conveyed orally rather than in written form.

In his commentary on Leviticus (Poznański in Z.f.h.B. 4 [1900]: 17).

On Jer. 7.18. Perez in his note there, 48 n. 3, says that “Themistius” (a fourth-century C.E. commentator on Aristotle) is obviously an error and cites the suggestion by Y. Tzvi Langermann of an Arabic magical treatise called Ṭīmāūs, also attributed to Aristotle. I am unable to find any reference to such a work, nor is it mentioned in Frank E. Peters’ famous works on Aristotle. It is, nevertheless, interesting that a fifteenth-century Viennese monk claimed to have found in Palencia (Spain) a book called the Summa of Themistius “on natural entities [, ] distinguishing them from incorruptible and supernal entities” which certainly is far from the known commentaries, or paraphrases, by Themistius and possibly could be related to our subject (Thorndike, History of Magic 3: 550). More likely, it is in fact a reference to the Platonic work Timaeus, understood in a metaphysical manner by Muslim and Jewish sources (see Chapter 4, n. 162).

Kitāb, 268/269, lines 33–35. That (lost) work, Ta’dīr mu’jizāt (“enumeration of miracles”), is cited by Ibn Bil’am in his commentary on Joel 4.18 (Poznański, “Arabic Commentary,” 27) and at the end of 1 Sam. 28 (see n. 141), Ezekiel 37.9 and 47.5. Ibn ‘Ezra(h) there stated that biblical miracles must be understood literally, and “their past shows their future,” that is, indicates that there would be future miracles.

Abravanel’s commentary on Dan. 3 (see Bibliography; this ed. only), cited by Simon, Arba’ giyshōt, 98 n. 11; see above, n. 122, on Simon’s own erroneous understanding of Ibn Chicatilla’s views on miracles. Peculiarly, Abravanel accused
many earlier commentators, among them Joseph Ibn Kaspiy (see Chapter 4 on him), of having said things which in fact are not in their writings.

158 Abravanel, Ḫadashiym gam yeshaniym, introduction (Gallipapa’s name is corrupted in the text); also cited by Silver, Abba Hillel, *A History of Messianic Speculation in Israel* (N.Y., 1927), 129 (still the most thorough study of this topic). See also Tanḥum b. Joseph ha-Yerūšalmī (thirteenth century); see W.Z. Bacher’s review of Poznański in *R.E.J.* 31 (1895): 314 and see Tanḥum’s criticism of Ibn Chichatilla on Isa. 11.1, edited and translated by Harkavy, Ḫadashiym gam yeshaniym, 225. Joseph Albo mentioned Gallipapa’s (lost) “Igeret ge’ullah” on the prophecies of Daniel. Samuel Ibn Naghrillah in his youth wrote a poem in which several lines (58–64) are similar to the later “thirteen principles of faith” of Maimonides, but omitting belief in prophecy or in the messiah; the poem is in *Ben Tehiliym*, 261 (see Bibliography). Apparently, Abravanel did not know this poem or he would have added him to the list of those he criticized.

159 Text (Judeo-Ar.), with Germ. tr., in Poznański, *Mose b. Samuel*, 157–59. See also Ibn ‘Ezra on the same passage, briefly citing Ibn Chichatilla and disagreeing with his interpretation (however, he applied the verse to Judah Maccabee); yet in his “short” commentary on Daniel, 11, Heb. text at end, he stated that Nehemiah, in fact, was referred to as a messiah. On Isa. 60.12, Ibn Bil’am argues passionately that the entire chapter is prophecy “for the future” (the messianic time) and those who disagree and “cling to” a false interpretation of this include Ibn Chichatilla, “may God forgive him.” Elsewhere he accused him of “philosophizing,” which leads to heresy (see Perez, “Yaḥaso,” 57; he did not mention these other examples).

160 After stating (206) that the two Judahs must not be confused, Sirat, *History of Jewish Philosophy* then does just that, claiming that Ibn ‘Aknīn “met” Maimonides in North Africa (he did not) and that he was born in Barcelona (he was not, rather Seville) and lived in Fez, which he did not. There are others who continue to believe incorrectly that Ibn ‘Aknīn was the student of Maimonides, in spite of the fact that Halkin already correctly identified him in his introduction to the commentary on Song of Songs (and, of course, it had been known to careful scholars years before). For the sources of all these errors, see the following notes. See further on this the article “Ibn ‘Aknīn” in Roth, ed., *Medieval Jewish Civilization*. Not only has he frequently been confused with Maimonides’ student, even when rightly identified his name is usually misspelled (in my brief invited article in the De Gruyter, *Encyclopedia of the Bible and Its Reception*, vol. 11, the spelling was changed without my consent). Salfeld, *Das Hohelied Salomo’s*, 81, correctly transcribed the Arabic name but incorrectly said that his “Hebrew name” was Joseph b. Judah “ibn Simon,” and also thought that he was the student of Maimonides (see n. 203 for the source of the error). Of the nineteenth-century scholars, only Neubauer, “Joseph ben Aqnin,” had the details of his name (although misspelled) and career correct.

161 See also my *Jews, Visigoths & Muslims*, where I have discussed this and all of his polemical references to Muslims in his commentary (see index there); see also Chapter 4 on Bahya b. Asher’s citation of him, discussed in my book. Errors about Ibn ‘Aknīn and Maimonides continue, most recently in Joel Kraemer’s popularized *Maimonides* (N.Y., 2008), 116, where he perpetuates the mistaken notion that Ibn ‘Aknīn lived in Morocco where he “studied” with Maimonides, and then misinterprets a statement in the commentary on Song of Songs as “proof” that Maimonides had converted to Islam (ever since Bernard Lewis raised this calumny again in his *The Jews of Islam* [Princeton, 1984], 100, 102), several others have enthusiastically adopted it even though it has been known
for over a century that this is a myth; see on all this my Jews, Visigoths & Muslims, 116 ff.

162 Sêfer mûsar on Avot; Bacher, the editor of that work, followed Steinschneider (e.g., his aforementioned note in he-Halûš 2 [1853]: 60–61) in identifying its author as the student of Maimonides, even though the author himself gave his name as Ibn ‘Aknîn; therefore, Bacher wrongly concluded (vii–iii of his introduction) that he was Maimonides’ student and that he lived in Ceuta. To this day that book is erroneously catalogued by libraries (attributed to “Ibn Shimon”). The commentary on Song of Songs was edited (Judeo-Ar.) and translated (Heb.) by A.S. Halkin (see Bibliography). He at least recognized that Ibn ‘Aknîn was not the student of Maimonides, yet made two other errors: that he was born in Barcelona (he was not; rather Seville) and that he “fled” to Fez in Morocco, as Maimonides had done. This is, of course, incorrect. Ibn ‘Aknîn went from Seville to Barcelona, where he wrote this work, and was never in Morocco.

163 He cites (Hitgalût ha-sōdōt, 26/27) his “Ṭibb al-nufûs” (still not published in full; there is a partial edition, Judeo-Ar., with Germ. translation in Moritz Güdemann, Das jüdische Unterrichtswesen während der spanisch-arabischen Periode [Vienna, 1873], and some few excerpts have been translated elsewhere. Halkin incorrectly translated the title as “Refuat ha-nefesh,” singular, instead of “Refuat ha-nefashôt,” plural, “souls”). He also cites it on 142/143, along with his Sêfer mûsar and “Ḥitqîm u-mishpaṭîym” (“statutes and judgements”) on the “works of creation and the works of the chariot” (the esoteric interpretation of these). In fact, that book (lost) was essentially a work on the commandments applicable after the destruction of the Temple and the exile (see Sêfer ha-mûsar, 109 line 25; Bacher’s assumption, introduction, x–xi, that this work was “like the Mishnîh Torah of Maimonides” is a gross exaggeration, of course). In addition to these works he also wrote a book on “the beginning [or principle] of the roots of religion” (al-ibāna li-usûl al-dīyâna), for which he gave also a Hebrew title, ’Iqarey datey ha-Tôrah (“Fundamentals of the laws of the Torah,” which does not exactly correspond to the Arabic title; see Sêfer ha-mûsar, 61 lines 17–18). That work also, at least in part, was a commentary on the Bible, perhaps primarily on the prophets (the word “Torah,” Ar. tawrât, does not appear in the Arabic title).

164 Halkin has the Hebrew spelling, Zekharyah, even in the Arabic text, which is undoubtedly an error in transcription (surely the author did not make this error). Ibn ‘Aknîn does not identify him as Ḥayyûj, nor does Halkin make any observation on this. Isaac b. Samuel “ha-Sefardiy” (“al-Kânzî”) of Egypt (see n. 141) also cited him simply as Abû Zakariyâ Yâhyâ. There have been differences of opinion among scholars as to the identity of him with Ḥayyûj, although that is almost certain.

165 Hitgalût ha-sōdōt, 16/17–18/19. There is nothing specifically “erotic” about his philosophical interpretation, as Elliot Wolfson tried to discover (“Asceticism and Eroticism,” 94). Obviously, Song of Songs is written in “erotic” terms, and any interpretation must deal with various metaphors, such as kissing and the like. There is no “erotic imagery” of the “longing of the soul for union with the Active Intellect” in Ibn ‘Aknîn, as Wolfson claimed (however, that metaphor, borrowed from Ibn ‘Ezra, is in the commentary of Moses Ibn Tibbon, discussed in Chapter 4). Note that Ibn ‘Aknîn, in the one source cited by Wolfson (on 1.2), says that this is intellectual pleasure, not erotic. Wolfson may have been influenced by Rosenberg, “Parshanut ha-fiylosofiyt le-Shiyr ha-shiyriym,” who, after a lengthy discussion of Maimonides, claims (141) that the emphasis of medieval exegesis of Song of Songs is on “attachment” of the soul to God, expressed as either “romantic” or “erotic” love. Later exegesis (after Maimonides) is entirely (or
the majority of it) on this topic, according to Rosenberg. Since he overlooked many of the medieval commentaries on Song of Songs (see especially Chapter 4), the statement is meaningless; but the only source he can cite (142) from medieval Spanish commentators (Gersonides lived in Provence when it was no longer Spanish) is Moses Ibn Tibbon, an inconsequential statement (while ignoring the important statement in his introduction to the commentary; see Chapter 4, text after n. 14). Important in Rosenberg’s article is his general citations (135–36, note) of quotations of Ibn ‘Aknīn in the supercommentary of Samuel Zarza on Ibn ‘Ezra (see Chapter 3 on that).

166 Hitgalūt ha-sōdōt, 22/23. Halkin quotes the entire section from Ṭibb al-nufūs in which Ibn ‘Aknīn discusses this in almost identical words, but did not mention that this is also in Sēfer ha-mūsar, 5; nor did he note any of the rabbinical sources for the comparison with water. The primary source is Sifre [Sifriy] on Deuteron-omy, 110–11 (§ 48) (Finkelstein in his notes there provides references to related talmudic and other sources); his secondary source is Midrash Tehilliyim 1.18 (see Bibliography; this is not the Midrash Psalms rabah). Later (62/63), Ibn ‘Aknīn compared (the people) Israel to the narcissus, which is in constant need of water, so Israel is in need of Torah, which is compared to water. The Midrash Song of Songs rabah (1.2, 3) provides entirely different metaphors for Torah and water, of which only the analogy of one who is thirsty and is not embarrassed to ask a child is similar to what Ibn ‘Aknīn cites, and even that is in different wording. So throughout in the commentary, where Halkin indicates that the author “changed” the language or idea of the Midrash, one should in fact look for other sources and not rely on Halkin. Incidentally, it appears that Ibn ‘Aknīn may have been the first Spanish commentator to have cited (utilized) the midrashic work Sifriy (“Sifre” as it is transliterated by modern writers); cf. also 145, Halkin’s note to line 12. Ibn ‘Ezra, while he cited the companion work Sifra, apparently did not use Sifriy. Nahmanides frequently cited both, directly or indirectly. The comparison of Torah to oil and honey is also found in Song of Songs rabah (loc. cit.), and honey also in Midrash Psalms rabah (on 119.97; § 41). Of course, all of these metaphors are biblical. It is perhaps not too fanciful to suggest that Ibn ‘Aknīn in his pseudo-philosophical interpretation intended water as a metaphor for peshaṭ, oil for remez (allegory) and honey for sōd, or the “esoteric” interpretation. Maimonides referred to a similar metaphor of honey, and also of water (“Guide” I. 30, tr. 63–64 and see 73). Ibn ‘Aknīn may have been influenced by that (he saw the Arabic original of the “Guide”), or he may have used these metaphors independently, based on the above sources. David Qimḥi (see Chapter 4 on him) also compared Torah and wisdom to water (commentary on Isa. 55.1).

167 Ibid., 78/79–80/81, and cf. 416/417, where he applies each of the oaths to one of the “four kingdoms” of the Gentiles who oppressed the Jews (see on that topic my Jews, Visigoths & Muslims, 205–14, and Chapter 2 on Ibn ‘Ezra and Daniel).

168 Ibid., 186/187, line 15; cf. Sa’adyah’s Taṣfīr kitāb al-mabādī, 21 ff. [text], 40 ff. [tr.].

169 Op. cit., 298/299. The source of the “ten words” is Arot 5.1 and Avot de-Rabbi Natan 31 (1), ed. Solomon Schechter (N.Y., 1967 rpt.), 90, and cf. Rosh ha-shnahah 32a; Ḥagigah 12a. See also Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer, tr. Friedlander, 17–18 and 238 (with references to other midrashic sources in the note there). See also Ibn ‘Aknīn, Sēfer musar, 145. On the perfection of the number ten, ten, frequently also discussed by Ibn ‘Ezra, see Judah b. Barzilay, Peyrūḏ sēfer yeʾṣiyrah, 144, 148. For other interpretations, see index here: “ten.”

170 Hitgalūt ha-sōdōt, 250/251–258/259. The quoted explanation I have used is from the excellent article in S.E.I., 189 (see Bibliography). On this section, Halkin did a better job than usual in tracing sources, which are important (see his notes).
Al-Fārābī and even, possibly, Ibn Šīnā (“Avicenna”) as sources are not surprising, but his use of the famous book of the Ḥikmat al-ṣafā’ (so-called “Brothers of purity,” not an accurate meaning) is of interest, 258, note to line 25 and 259, note to line 3. The statements on love which Ibn ‘Aknīn cites without naming the sources (258/259) are attributed to Dḥū al-Nūn al-Miṣrī and Yahyā Ibn Muḥādī, according to Georges Vajda in R.E.F. 124–25 (1965–66): 187.

Marvin Pope kept the first erroneous translation, although in his notes he indicated that he was aware that others had correctly rendered it, and he “ventured further” by “restoring” an allegedly corrupt reading in the text (Song of Songs [Anchor Bible series; Garden City, N.Y., 1977], 653 and 658–59). Pope was unaware of Ibn ‘Aknīn’s commentary. Once again, there is no hidden or esoteric “erotic” interpretation here, of course; he is merely giving the most logical grammatical explanation of the verse.

The masculine form is indeed preferred by Ginsburg, Song of Songs, 185; but he does not explain why, then, the mother’s house is mentioned.

Hitgalūt ha-sōdōt, 216/217, line 10; however, no such statement is found in his extant writings. Halkin again made an error in translation, rendering Ar. al-rūm as “Greek.” The word usually means Roman, Latin (also Christian), but may here simply mean “foreign,” since it is difficult to imagine that Ibn Barōn did not know the Arabic (in fact, Persian) origin of the word. Strangely, Ibn ‘Aknīn does not remark that Ibn ‘Ezra correctly explained it; in fact, he may have erroneously attributed that explanation to Ibn Barōn.

Ibid., 422/423. Halkin, both in the text and in his translation, has “Abraham ben Barōn,” which of course is an error for Isaac (Abū Ibrāhīm). The explanation given is remote and incorrect; more likely is Ibn ‘Ezra’s explanation of “joined,” He notes that it is a unique word. The best modern translation (also a guess) is “leaning.”

Ibid., 260/261, bottom; Judah ha-Lēvy, Kūzari II. 24, tr. Hirschfeld, 100–01; the translation “Providence” is not really correct. This aspect of ha-Lēvy’s statements about the Land escaped the attention of Shalom Rosenberg, who dealt superficially with ha-Lēvy and some few other medieval thinkers (more with post-medieval writers) in “Link to the Land of Israel in Jewish Thought,” translated in Hoffman, The Land of Israel, 139–69. The same superficiality and inclusion of post-medieval and early modern figures in articles ostensibly devoted to medieval subjects characterizes contributions in a more recent collection, Ḥallāmish and Ravitzky, Eresh-Yisrāʾēl. Although ha-Lēvy is discussed there, however briefly, by several authors (see specifically Y. Silman on the “centrality” of the Land [superiority over other lands] in the Kūzari), the statement cited here is not mentioned. There is still a real need for a thorough analysis of medieval Jewish attitudes to the Land (see also index here).

For al-Fārābī, see especially Hitgalūt ha-sōdōt, 442/443, a paraphrase of his “Falsafat Aflāṭūn” (in Alfarābī’s Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle), which also strongly influenced Ibn’Aknīn’s discussion on education in Tibb al-nūfūs (see n. 204). The same work was also paraphrased by Ibn Falquera, Rêshiyyt haḥkīmāh, see 76, which is very similar to Ibn ‘Aknīn here. For references to other Arabic writers, see Halkin’s index.

Hitgalūt ha-sōdōt, 308/309 (section 80a, line 11 ff.). Halkin quotes the Arabic text from some obscure edition, rather than the standard edition and translation by Corbin, H. Avicenne et le récit visionnaire (Paris, 1954; vol. 2). The English translation of that book by Trask, W. R. Avicenna and the Visionary Recital (N.Y., 1960; rpt. 1980) is not complete or reliable. There is a good Hebrew translation of Ibn Šīnā’s text by Israel Levin in his ed. of Ibn ‘Ezra’s adaptation of that work,
Hitgalut ha-sodot, 336/337. Halkin provides references to two articles which mention the first of these scholars, who died in 1141; however, he did not note that Judah ha-Levy mentioned both the father and son, Divan 2: 28, no. 5 and 29, no. 21. Nothing whatever is known of the second scholar he named, nor of his biblical commentary (Ibn ‘Akın only indicates that he was deceased).

A different aspect is dealt with by Berlin, Biblical Poetry through Medieval Jewish Eyes, who analyzes representative statements of medieval and post-medieval Jewish writers (mainly not poets) concerning the nature of poetry in the Bible and related topics. Included also are translations, for the most part very good, of some texts, but obviously no attempt to deal with the interpretation of biblical verses or words by medieval Hebrew poets or authors. The same is true of Kugel’s important book, Idea of Biblical Poetry, which served as the source for most of Berlin’s book. Only four articles – aside from mine on Ibn ‘Ezra(h) – have dealt with poetic biblical interpretation: Wallenstein, “The Piyyut, with Special Reference to the Textual Study of the OT” (mostly earlier piyutiym, and of course numerous editions were not then available, but it is a good model for the kind of research which yet must be done); Malachi, “‘Lyurv siypurey migra be-fiyuṭey Ibn Gabirol”; Loewe, “Bible in Medieval Hebrew Poetry”; and Sáenz-Badillos and Targarona, “Exégesis bíbica en la poesía hebreu medieval.” In fact, Loewe discussed only a few medieval poems, again primarily piyutiym. The only Spanish poets mentioned are Ibn Gabirol (his “Keter malkhūt”) and Abraham Ibn ‘Ezra, whose elegy on the death of his son Isaac is misinterpreted by the author, 149–51, as a poem lamenting Isaac’s conversion to Islam. Malachi discussed in detail a Spanish poet (Ibn Gabirol), although the approach (biblical stories used in religious poems) is somewhat different than what is advocated here. Sáenz-Badillos and Targarona dealt only with some verses reflected in Ibn Naghrillah. Another article which may seem to be relevant, Granat, “Intertextual Polyphony: Scriptural Presence(s) in a Piyyutim Cycle by Joseph Ibn Abitur,” in fact deals with allusions to Psalms in only one of those poems.


I have briefly discussed some examples in my article “Seeing the Bible through a Poet’s Eyes.” The only other article on his use of the Bible is Girón Blanc and Abumalham, “Aproximación a las citas bíblicas de R. [sic] Moše Ibn ‘Ezra en su obra ‘Kitāb al-Muḥāḍara wal-Mudākara,’” which actually deals with a few variant readings of biblical words in that text (important, however, is their observation, 328, that Halkin made many errors in the citation of biblical passages as well as in the index of them in his edition). An earlier article by A. Mirsky, “Koḥ ha-miqra be-shiyur Sefarad,” deals with one well-known poem by Ibn ‘Ezra(h), giving obvious explanations (although not always correct), but nothing about biblical interpretation; see also Mirsky, “Biblical variations in medieval Hebrew poetry.” See also Cohen, M., “Moses ibn Ezra,” in Sebo, ed., Hebrew Bible/Old Testament 1/2: 282–301. Much of what he stated is incorrect and even misleading; references are often incorrectly cited, particularly to Ibn ‘Ezra(h), Kitāb [he also cites the marginal folio number of the manuscript, given in the edition, rather than the printed page numbers]. His unfortunate spelling of “ibn
Ezra” leads to frequent confusion between Moses Ibn ‘Ezra(h) and Abraham Ibn ‘Ezra, especially when he fails to use a first name. The majority of his article deals not with biblical exegesis but poetic concepts, on which it is quite good (so also his long review essay of Fenton in J.Q.R. 93 [2003]; 533–66, only the last part, 543 ff., deals essentially with the same material in his earlier article). Another aspect of Ibn ‘Ezra(h)’s poetical interpretation of biblical verses, relating the meaning to similar Arabic poetical verses, is ably discussed by Schippers, *Spanish Hebrew Poetry & the Arabic Literary Tradition*, 37–40.

182 Dukes (see n. 184), 117; incidentally, the citation from Menaḥēm Ibn Zeraḥ there is not from ‘Arūgat ha-bōsem but from Kitāb, 271. For Mikhlal yōfī, see Bibliography. The Qaraite source is cited by Harkavy, *Hadashiym gam yeshaniym* , 136–37 (published originally in Graetz, *Divre[y] yeme Yisraēl*, tr. Rabinowitz (Warsaw, 1893–1911) 4: 28–29). It is possible that this source confused Ibn ‘Ezra(h) with Abraham Ibn ‘Ezra.

183 Brann, Ross, *The Compunctious Poet* (Baltimore, 1991), criticizing my “Jewish Reactions to the ‘Arabiyya” (see Bibliography), claimed that Allony (cited in my article) and I erred in charging Moses Ibn ‘Ezra(h) somehow with “deprecation of the Hebrew Bible” (which I certainly never did, nor do I know of any place where Allony suggested such a thing), and asked rhetorically (69 and see n. 44) whether he did not “canonize the eloquent style of biblical Hebrew,” but of course I discussed precisely that in the article. On Brann’s book, see n. 191. There is no doubt, of course, that Ibn ‘Ezra(h) firmly believed in “Arabic cultural superiority” (language, rhetoric, poetry), contrary to Cohen, *Opening the Gates*, 73 n. 150.

184 “‘Arūgat ha-bōsem,” in the Hebrew translation attributed to Judah al-Ḥarīzī. Fragments of the translation have been edited by L. Dukes in *Zion* [Ṣiyōn] (ed. Jost and Creizenach; not to be confused with the later journal of that title) 2 (1842): 117–23, 134–37, 157–59, 175–76; and *Litteraturblatt des Orients* 10 (1849): 747–48. Fragments of the original Judeo-Ar. text were published by A. Harkavy in *M.G.W.J.* 43 (1889): 133–36. These, and citations from Ibn Gabirol, *Fons vitae*, were republished by S. Pines in *Tarbiz* [Tarbiyṣ] 27 (1958): 220–33; rpt. as *Sēfer ha-yōvēl li-khōd Gershōm Schōlem* (Jerusalem, 1958), 92–107. Pines never did the complete Arabic edition that he promised. Some other brief fragments of the Arabic text have been published, and see the important study by Fenton, *Philosophie et exégèse*, frequently mentioned here, which analyzes the work, with some translations. An edition and translation of the work is very much a desideratum.


186 Cohen, “Moses ibn Ezra” (n. 181), 288 and n. 25, overstated this; his understanding of Ibn Paqudah is also wrong; see his actual statement in the text preceding n. 45. Cohen, *Opening the Gates*, provides a more correct summary, 71 ff., derived chiefly from Fenton. However, his claim (71) that Ibn ‘Ezra(h)’s discussion was “informed” by the “extensive commentaries” of Moses Ibn Chicatilla and Ibn Bil’am (correct spellings for these) is mistaken. As noted previously (n. 122), he in fact stated that Ibn Chicatilla held weak opinions “which robbed him of his elevated place” among the truly great commentators (Kitāb, 68–69). Fenton, understandably, said nothing about either Ibn Chicatilla or Ibn Bil’am.

187 Kitāb, 286/287, last paragraph; see also 224/225 for his list of examples of biblical metaphors.

The distinction between “auditory” and “rational” commandments is derived from Sa'adyah, *Emunot ve-dē'ot* III. 3, but the explanation is his own.

189 *Kitāb*, 258/259; this passage was also discussed by Polliack, “The Spanish Legacy in the Hebrew Bible,” 87, who aptly remarked that this type of “aesthetic judgement,” ignoring traditional allegorical interpretation, is characteristic of the freedom of Spanish exegesis (incidentally, her citation of the passages in n. 16 is incorrect, no doubt the fault of the aforementioned article of Mordechai Cohen which she cites).

190 See my article “Jewish Reactions to the ‘Arabiyya” for sources, and the literature cited there; also my *Jews, Visigoths & Muslims*, 47, 172–77. Brann, *Compunctious Poet*, who misunderstood the whole issue, also misrepresents what he calls, 88, the “second view” about Judah ha-Lēvy’s position (much of Brann’s book, including translations of poetry and the few things he got right about ‘Arabiyya, is borrowed heavily from this and other of my articles and my unpublished Messenger-Chalmers Prize paper on Hebrew poetry, in the Cornell University archives, which he saw but did not have permission to copy; see also my review of his book in *Journal of Semitic Studies* 37 [1992]: 335–37).
Abraham Ibn ‘Ezra (ca. 1089–1167) was born and educated in Tudela in Navarre (not Toledo, as once thought), a Muslim city until it was conquered by the Christians in 1115. He was certainly an outstanding example, before Maimonides (Moses b. Maimon, 1138–1204), of the ideal of Jews living in Muslim lands, of the completely educated man, expert in grammar, philosophy, mathematics, astronomy and other sciences, as well as poetry and literature. He wrote works on all these subjects, as well as what might be called “theological” (more properly simply “religious”) writings, and was a translator of Arabic (Muslim and Jewish) works. He was fluent not only in Arabic but also in Persian, citing Persian words and making reference to Persian chronicles and Arabic works which he had read, including the so-called “Nabatean Agriculture.”1 As we shall see, he left Spain and wandered in various countries, and it was then that he composed most of his work. He probably returned to Spain at the end of his life.2

All of his numerous writings are of great importance; however, his commentaries on the Bible are what have made him most famous. It is no exaggeration to say that it is impossible to understand many biblical passages correctly without consulting what he wrote, and his remarks are always instructive.3 Technically speaking, Ibn ‘Ezra’s biblical commentaries cannot really be considered as “Spanish” Jewish works, for they were all written in Italy and Provence (although Provence was then part of Christian Spain) and perhaps also in France.4 It is not impossible that he actually wrote, or began to write, some of his commentaries while still in Spain. Certainly during those years he made at least one trip, and possibly more, to Egypt and North Africa where he saw important manuscripts, discussed later here. By the time he left Spain, at the age of about 50, he must have been an accomplished biblical scholar.

His interpretations influenced all subsequent biblical commentary from David Qimḥi to Naḥmanides and later and also French commentators, and so throughout subsequent centuries. One of the earliest citations of his commentaries is found in the polemical treatise of Jacob b. Reuben (1170).5 His commentaries were even cited by Meir b. Barūkh of Rothenburg (ca. 1220–93),
Abraham Ibn ‘Ezra

73

the most important rabbi of Germany, and by an exegete in Aleppo (Syria), Samuel b. Nisiym Masnūṭ. It is interesting that one of the manuscripts of his “short” commentary on Exodus published in the first edition was copied in Strasbourg, Germany, in 1476.

In spite of criticism of him by Naḥmanides (see the following chapter), his commentaries remained popular also in Catalonia and in Aragón; for example, one Meir b. Natan Gerundiy (“of Gerona”) in 1271 copied a manuscript of the commentary of Ibn ‘Ezra on the Torah for “don Shealtiel” (probably Gracian [Ḥēn], an important scholar). The importance of his commentaries is also attested by the numerous commentaries written upon them (see in Chapter 3 the section “Supercommentaries”). From these, we also learn that he was widely read and quoted in Catalonia as well as Castile. Joshua Ibn Shū’ayb, a student of Ibn Adret who later lived probably in Tudela (Navarre), frequently cited Ibn ‘Ezra simply as “Rabbi [sic] Abraham” in his sermons, which indicates that his listeners instantly knew to whom he referred; he was not, of course, a rabbi.

Ibn ‘Ezra at one time was known at least to some Christian writers. There is a strong possibility that he was the “learned Jew” cited by the Christian scholar Nicolaus Maniacoria in Rome (ca. 1145, around the time when Ibn ‘Ezra was there). In medieval Spain, he was cited constantly (27 times) by Ramón Martí (see note) in his polemical Pugio fidei. A more positive influence was on the biblical exegesis of Luis de León (ca. 1528–91), a descendant of conversos, the famous Hebraist of the university of Salamanca. The Protestant biblical critic Richard Simon (1638–1712) greatly respected Ibn ‘Ezra and noted that he set forth rules for expounding the Bible than which nothing is more valuable, adding “I doubt not but the Christians will receive his methods,” a hope unfortunately largely unrealized, as few modern biblical scholars have consulted Ibn ‘Ezra. As noted elsewhere here, there were also several Latin translations of his commentaries by Christian scholars, and this has been renewed with some excellent modern Spanish translations (cited in the appropriate places below). References to Ibn ‘Ezra will be found also in other chapters here.

Exegetical and grammatical approaches in his commentary

His exegesis may be characterized as having three emphases (see also Chapter 1 on his classifications of biblical commentary): grammatical explanation (often important), interpretation of the “simple” meaning (peshaṭ, which must not be misunderstood as “literal,” but rather as the most direct explanation consistent with grammar and rabbinical tradition) and, above all, rational explanation which is (generally) free of derash or mysticism (although there are exceptions to this). His commentaries are also often profoundly philosophical as well as scientific in nature.
He was responsible also for innovations in terminology, such as *ma’amad har Siynay* (the revelation, literally “standing,” or assembly, at Mt. Sinai), and others. What may be called his exegetical terminology was also adapted by later commentators, such as Nahmanides, particularly such expressions as *ve-ha-nahōn be-eynay* (“what is right in my view”) after having presented the opinion of another commentator with whom he disagreed. A recent article points out some of the influences of Arabic syntax on Ibn ‘Ezra’s expressions in his commentary. Important is the explanation of the use of the future tense to express the present, like the Arabic verb form *yaf’alū*.

He was often critical (at times severely so) of his predecessors when he believed they had made mistakes which could seriously mislead others, but he had a sharp wit and often couched his criticism in satiric form. He also did not hesitate to learn from ordinary people. Since the study of the Bible was an essential part of Jewish life, sometimes a learned “layman” could provide interpretations which he accepted or at least mentioned with interest (see, e.g., his commentary on Ruth 2.17 where a certain man, perhaps earlier in Spain, asked him the meaning of “like an *eyfah* of barley,” and Ibn ‘Ezra dismissed his question; the man returned and offered him various explanations of the verse which had not occurred to Ibn ‘Ezra).

There are sometimes errors in his citation of passages or of statements by predecessors, some of which (particularly erroneous grammatical readings) may be due to copyists’ mistakes in manuscripts he had consulted, but more likely were the result of relying upon memory. In the introductory poem to his commentary on Lamentations, he wrote: “I was forced to flee the land of Spain because of the oppressors, and these my books during my exile were in the hands of those entrusted with them”; in other words, he did not take his library with him, which no doubt would have included biblical manuscripts. Given this, his remarkable memory is cause for admiration, not criticism.

Spanish Jewish authorities repeatedly referred to their careful collation of numerous manuscripts of biblical and also talmudic texts, and there is no reason to imagine that Ibn ‘Ezra should have acted differently in his studies while in Spain. Also, after he left Spain, he reports that he had seen biblical manuscripts “which were examined by the sages of Tiberias and it was sworn by fifteen of their elders that every word and vowel point had been inspected thrice [by them].” He adds that the particular correction of a word which he found there was not found by him “in the books of Spain, [France and ‘across the sea’] and the West (North Africa).”

The commentaries are discussed here not in the chronological order in which they were written but rather according to the arrangement of the biblical books. He wrote commentaries on all the books of the Bible, although some are now lost (Joshua, Samuel, Kings, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles and Proverbs).
Commentary on the Pentateuch

Separate published editions of the commentary on the Pentateuch alone appeared before editions of all his texts in the so-called “Rabbinical Bibles” (i.e., with commentaries). Later editions of the separate Pentateuch commentary were less frequent, and the edition by Weiser is very inadequate. Ibn ‘Ezra apparently intended to write two different recensions of the commentary on the entire Pentateuch, as was his practice also with at least some of the other commentaries. However, only those on Genesis and Exodus (with fragments of Leviticus) have survived in two (on Genesis possibly three) versions. The first recension of Genesis was written approximately in 1146 in Lucca (Italy), where he wrote his commentaries on all of the Pentateuch (by 1147 he was in Verona), and the second (the “other” recension, shytah aheret, as it is called) later (1153 or 1154) in Provence (or improbably France).

He used various terms to refer to his commentary on the Torah, such as “Sēfer ha-yashar” (book of the upright) and even “yesōd” or “Sēfer ha-yesōd” (“foundation,” in the meaning “commentary”), not the same as his grammatical work of that title.

In an introductory poem to the second recension, dedicated to one Moses b. Meir, he refers to an illness (not necessarily “stroke,” as Friedländer translated) from which he was nursed back to health by Moses and he thereupon vowed to compose a commentary on “the law given at Sinai” (by which he certainly meant the entire Torah). According to this poem, he began the commentary at the age of 64 (“eight upon eight,” i.e., eight times eight), or approximately in 1153/54. The reference in the poem to a vow to compose a commentary is peculiar, inasmuch as he already had done so; it must refer to the revision. He may not have fulfilled his plan, if such it was, to revise his commentaries on Numbers, Leviticus and Deuteronomy; for if he had, surely something of the revisions would have survived. As mentioned above, the “other recension” exists only on Genesis and portions of other books.

Some manuscripts of the commentary on the Torah contain a poetic epilogue indicating that it was written in 1166/67. Friedländer, and later Fleischer, argued, correctly in my opinion, that this epilogue is not the work of Ibn ‘Ezra. Friedländer did not, however, know that Ibn ‘Ezra died in that year and that he certainly was not then in Rome as the poem states.

There are also two versions of the commentary on Exodus (the regular text and what is referred to as the “short” recension). The date of the completion of the larger (regular) commentary is indicated in some manuscripts as 1152/53. There has been much debate as to where it was written, in Provence or in Rouen (Normandy). Although it has now become almost an accepted fact that he was in Rouen, there is no proof for this and much reason to doubt it. However, there is no question that he was in Provence, and the theory that he wrote commentaries in France may after all be incorrect.
From citations of him by the French authors of the Tosefta in their bibli-
cal commentaries, it is clear that his commentaries written in Italy had not
reached France (or, apparently, Provence) and this may be the reason for his
decision to undertake a new commentary. Many of those citations, incident-
tally, are not to be found in any of Ibn ‘Ezra’s extant commentaries and are
either erroneous or based on word of mouth tradition, such as the reports of
his student Joseph b. Jacob of Moudeville (or Morville).

Commentaries on other books

Nearly all of the commentaries on other books of the Bible were written in
the early years in Italy. The texts of all the extant commentaries are found in
the standard “Rabbinical Bibles” mentioned above, and in numerous subse-
quently editions (modern versions of such bibles are usually published with the
title Miqwe’ot gedolot, which means not “great scriptures” but large versions,
with commentaries). Sadly, we still await critical editions of most of these
commentaries (even that on the Pentateuch needs revision).

As mentioned, no (complete) text of his commentaries on Joshua, Judges,
Samuel, Kings, Chronicles, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Ezra or Nehemiah has sur-
vived (if they ever existed). An attempt was made to “reconstruct” from
other statements commentaries on the “early” prophets (Joshua, Judges,
Samuel, Kings), but this was not as useful as it might have been, and so also
a reconstruction from other sources of his commentaries on Jeremiah and
Ezekiel.

Also, as previously mentioned, the commentary on Proverbs (and so Ezra
and Nehemiah) in standard texts of the Bible with commentaries is not that
of Ibn ‘Ezra but rather Moses Qimhi (on whom see Chapter 4).

Song of Songs

His approach in the commentary on Song of Songs differs significantly from
his other commentaries. The introduction to the “standard” commentary,
which is perhaps of dubious authenticity, accepts without question that it
was written by Solomon and that the title reflects the fact that it is the greatest
of the “five thousand” poems he supposedly composed (cf. 1 Kings 5.12). Ibn
‘Ezra (or whoever wrote this introduction) also indicates his acceptance of the
rabbinical allegorization that it is a “song” between the “assembly of Israel”
(keneset YisraEL the Jewish people) as the “bride” and God (maqom, read ha-
maqom) as the “groom.” His commentary is more complex than most of his
other commentaries (there is much to say about it but there is no room here).
He provides a “threefold” interpretation: grammatical, “simple” (peshat) and
derash, which in this case actually is allegorical. “And forfend that it should
be about words of lust, rather by way of parable, and were it not for its great
merit it would not have been written in the ‘secret’ of the holy scriptures.”
Yet in the “first recension” of his commentary, he explains “a king is caught in its tresses” (7.6) by the example of the “Arabic songs [for sarey, “ministers,” read, more probably, shiyrey, “songs,” of lust” (14, line 5)]. The first “way,” grammatical, ends with 8.11 (as noted in the previous chapter, the remarks there about Arabic belong probably to verse 5).

As noted in Chapter 1, Joseph Ibn ‘Aknīn, in Barcelona, went to some trouble to obtain a copy of Ibn ‘Ezra’s commentary on Song of Songs and when he had it he was not impressed, sarcastically applying to it the words of an Arabic poem, “better to listen to him than to see [it]”; that is, his reputation is superior to his commentary. Nevertheless, as we shall see, he modeled his own commentary on a similar threefold approach. It is easy to understand why he objected to his predecessor’s commentary; in his opinion, it was neither sufficiently “philosophical” nor sufficiently “allegorical.” Moses Ibn Tibbon (Montpellier, second half of the thirteenth century) made a similar criticism in his commentary on Song of Songs, discussed in Chapter 3.

**Psalms**

The commentary on Psalms is somewhat different than his usual method. Grammatical analysis plays a major role, but there are also “theological” interpretations, which while not uncommon in his other commentaries seem to be more in abundance here. He accepted the traditional attribution of the majority of the Psalms to David, or to his “singers,” or Moses. While sometimes noting that a particular verse might be “in the spirit of prophecy” and might refer to the present exile (rarely, to a messianic future), he never stated that this was the only or even primary interpretation, but related all of the Psalms to past history and emphasized their main purpose as songs of praise.

Some things are surprising, such as his peculiar statement that shomēr Yisraēl (“guardian of Israel,” Ps. 121.4) is a reference to Jacob, “who slept” (Gen. 28.10 ff.). Generally, this was understood to be a term for God (and see already Soṭah 48a). On Ps. 30.1 he says that some have explained “house” there as a reference to the first or second Temple, or even the “third” (the one to be rebuilt by the messiah), but that this is not the meaning; rather, David’s own palace, since God’s “house” is not mentioned in the Psalm. It is quite possible that this was the source for the same explanation by Moses Ibn ‘Ezra(h) in his rhetorical-philosophical treatise, Maqālat al-hadīqa.

He states that Ps. 139 is very important on “the ways of God” and there is none like it in the “five books” (of Psalms; traditionally divided into five sections, or books). Similarly, Ps. 148 is praised as containing “many secrets” (esoteric ideas); others are also said to be so distinguished. Other than these few remarks, there, in fact, is nothing astonishing or even particularly important in his commentary. His “theological” interpretations are traditional and generally lacking in originality, although there is some correspondence with his own cosmological ideas discussed below.
There are citations of his commentary by David Qimḥi which obviously have the correct text, sometimes corrupted in our editions. One of these is particularly important: Ps. 89.13, hopelessly corrupt in our text, which as cited by Qimḥi makes perfect sense.\textsuperscript{44} From this, we can see that there are undoubtedly other corruptions in the texts of Ibn ‘Ezra’s commentaries which yet await critical editions. As in some places in his other commentaries, the hand of a student is apparent, e.g., on Ps. 119.103: “so the sage [Ibn ‘Ezra], may he live, explained it to me.”

**Job and Daniel**

Job is taken by him to be literally the work of an ancient writer, but it was translated from another language and therefore is difficult to understand, “like all translated books” (2.10; cf. 1.1). With some few exceptions, his commentary on Job is rather disappointing, consisting of grammatical remarks and a few obvious interpretations. At the end of the commentary, he wrote a brief “synopsis” of the book.

The commentary on Daniel also has two recensions, the regular text printed in standard Bibles and a “short” recension. As in all his commentaries, there is a running quarrel with Sa’adyah’s interpretations, but with few references to others except Moses Ibn Chicaṭilla and the Qaraite Yafet (or Yefet) b. ‘Alī (see index on him). The interpretations of the former he rejects, again as usual, while often accepting those of Yafet. Unlike Yafet, however, he avoids giving a messianic interpretation to passages unless he finds it unavoidable, and even then only suggesting it as an alternative to the “simple,” historical explanation.

There is considerable historical detail in his commentary on Daniel, much of it important (which, again, should be consulted by modern biblical scholars), even though he asserts that knowing the past does not help in the present.\textsuperscript{45} Elsewhere he also made some historical observations, such as “[these descendants of the ‘House of David’ are] still today in Baghdad, the capital of the Muslim kingdom, and they are the exilarchs, a great and large family which has a genealogical chronicle from early times…” (commentary on Zech. 12.7 and cf. 13.7, in standard Hebrew bibles with commentaries). This is important information. As previously mentioned (n. 1), much of his information is based on his having read histories of the Persians and Medes and other historical works he cites.

The important question of the identification of the “four kingdoms,” dealt with extensively in earlier Jewish, and of course Christian, sources (and see index here), receives a unique interpretation at his hands: Edom is not identified, as it usually is, with Rome, for Greece and Rome are one people and hence one kingdom. He agrees with some earlier sources in making “Ishmael” (the Muslims) the fourth kingdom. Naḥmanides sharply disagreed, observing that while the biblical Kitūyim (Isa. 23.1, etc.), which are the
later Romans, in fact are part of the biblical “Greece,” they are a strong and independent people and thus the fourth kingdom. Ibn ‘Ezra, he says, was confused about this and made Ishmael the fourth kingdom “because their [Muslims’] fear fell upon him” and he wondered how such a powerful people could not be mentioned as one of the kingdoms.46

### Innovations and “digressions” in Ibn ‘Ezra

Throughout his commentaries, there are numerous “digressions,” as Friedländer called them, or more properly excurses on metaphysical, cosmological or even geographical and historical subjects. Examples of the most important are here discussed.

**Names of God.** The entire account of creation (Gen. 1.1–2.3; which, of course, is all one section, the arbitrary Bible chapter numbers, which often disregard the logical content of the text, having been assigned by Christian translators; see previous chapter, at n. 94) mentions only the name *Elōhiym*, and only after that is the name *Y-H-V-H* added, and Moses used only that name (see also on Ex. 3.13).47

And how precious are the words of our predecessors [the sages] who said: “the Name was called complete on a complete world” [Midrash Genesis *rabah* 13.3], for there was not the strength to receive this name [until the creation was completed].48

In the “other recension” of his commentary, he also states that the account of creation contains only the name *Elōhiym*, and adds “and from the time that Cain was born you find [only] the ‘honored name’ [Y-H-V-H] alone.” In one of his “theological” treatises, he explains that Adam did not “receive the power of the Name appropriately until he ate from the tree of knowledge and gave birth to a son.”49

Elsewhere, he wrote that because there is nothing on earth which is enduring except the human soul, the ineffable name (*Y-H-V-H*) is not mentioned in the account of creation (again citing the above midrash). As previously mentioned, Moses used only this name, by which it is possible to perform miracles. Therefore, in *Qohelet* (Ecclesiastes) this name is also not found (in fact, no name of God) since it speaks only of godly knowledge “and the power which all may receive, not [the specific] individual power, like Moses” (*Yesōd mōrā*, Chapter 12).

In other words, there is apparently a general “receptive” ability and a specific one, on a much higher level, reserved for Moses (and other prophets?).50 The concept of “reception” is important throughout his commentaries and other writings (see, e.g, below, “Knowledge,” “Commandments,” “Prophecy” and index here: receptivity; this is perhaps influenced by Alexander of Aphrodisias’ commentary on Aristotle *De anima*). God gave wisdom to every man
“and planted in his heart the intellect to receive the upper strength, to add to his goodness or to decrease [it] according to his knowledge” (on Ex. 7.2).

He explains that Shaday in the name Ėl Shaday (Gen. 17.1), usually translated as “God Almighty,” is an adjectival (descriptive) form (as is Elohim) and not a proper noun (thus, the correct translation should be “almighty God”). While a proper noun (shēm ha-‘esem, the same term used for the “essential name” of God) is carefully distinguished by him, grammatically, from an adjectival form (shēm ha-tō‘ar), he remarks that it can sometimes be used “like an adjective” (one of the examples he gives, Isa. 63.11, is, nevertheless, explained differently in his commentary on that verse). So the essential name of God can sometimes be used as an adjectival form, since God “dwells eternally, standing alone and in him all [else] stands,” or exists (everything is dependent on God), and he is the ma‘amiyd (establisher; that which causes to exist).

The “honored and awesome name” (Y-H-V-H) is the essential name of God, while Shaday is indicative of God’s actions. On Ex. 6.3 he cites the opinions of various predecessors, agreeing particularly with Samuel Ibn Naghrīlah who explained Shaday as meaning al-qahār (Ar.), “vanquishing” (thus, in Arabic, “the Subduer,” God), but disagreeing with Sa‘adyah and “Rabbi [sic] Joshua” (the previously mentioned [Chapter 1] Qaraite Abu‘l-Farāj [Joshua b. Judah] Furqān Ibn Asad). The explanation of Ibn Naghrīlah as cited by Ibn ‘Ezra is repeated by Naḥmanides (Gen. 17.1) and Bahya b. Asher Ibn Hallāva (Biyyur 1: 158); see Chapter 4 on both these commentators.

The essential Name stands by itself (like the number one, which has no other number before it), and just as one in numbers is the “all” (includes but is not composed of other numbers), thus God has no image; rather, he is the “all” for all images (forms; that is, he is the universal source of all that exists), which receive their existence through him.

He says that Ehyeh (“I will be,” as usually translated, but there is considerable modern scholarly debate as to the actual meaning, perhaps “I am”) is also an essential name, although it is found only in Ex. 3.12 and 14.

Briefly, the entire purpose of the Torah is to teach “attachment” (devēqah) to God, and the Patriarchs did not achieve the level of direct knowledge of God which Moses had, and thus to them was revealed only the name (and its descriptive) Ėl Shaday, while to Moses was revealed the “essential [ineffable] Name.” The connection between knowledge and “attachment” is further explained: “know that when the part [man] knows the whole [‘All,’ God, who encompasses all of the universe] he will attach [himself] to the whole, and will [be enabled to] initiate all the miracles and signs” mentioned in the Bible; however, these “signs,” or changes in nature, are only permitted by God for a particular purpose, such as Moses bringing forth water from the rock.

Independently, however, man cannot bring about miraculous changes in nature.
It is not in the ability of the “formed” [man] to change the action of the “Former” [God] or his decrees; and the reason [or secret; sōd] is that the part [man] cannot change a part [something in nature], only the decree of the whole [God] can change the decree [or fate, fortune] of the part, and I cannot reveal this secret for it is profound.

This is related to his statement that “those who say that by the [ineffable] Name they can perform great deeds do not know the Name [or do not know God].” Elsewhere, he also used these terms in relation to God’s knowledge: “the All [God] knows every part [individual existent] by way of the general [kol] and not by way of the particular [ḥēleq],” not only a denial of God’s knowledge of particulars but also of “individual providence” (hashgahah periṭiy).

The Soul – “tabula rasa.” God alone, creator of the “all,” knows the parts of the “all,” which are constantly changing, except for the soul of man, which remains as God gave it, “like a tablet prepared to write upon it [lūḥ mûḏkhan līkhōv ‘alav].” And “when there is written upon this tablet the writing of God, which is the knowledge of the generalities, like that which is formed of the four elements [fire, air, water, earth] and the knowledge of the planets (or spheres) and the ‘throne of glory’ and the secret of the ‘chariot’ [of Ezekiel’s vision] and of the upper [world], then the soul will be attached to God” (see below, on knowledge) both while it is living and afterwards. He also wrote that after the death of the “intelligent” person [ha-maskiyl] his soul attains a level which is not attained during his life.

Creation. In the introduction to his commentary (“regular” recension, ed. Weiser 1: 8–9), he discusses and dismisses the various midrashic interpretations of creation. Very important is his detailed discussion of Gen. 1.1 ff., both the interpretation of the text and the explanation of the nature of creation. Not surprisingly, this has received more scholarly attention than any other aspect of his commentary, including the meaning of beyt in berêshiyt.

Perhaps his greatest innovation here was to reject the long-held interpretation (not only of Sa’adyah) that bara uniquely means created out of nothing. Ibn ‘Ezra cites several passages in which the verb is used where it cannot have that meaning. One of these (Isa. 45.7) relates to darkness, “which is the opposite of light, which is something”; or, as he explains in his commentary on that verse (see Bibliography: Ibn ‘Ezra, Isaiah), this is a case of bringing forth nothing from something (the exact opposite of the traditional understanding of bara as something out of nothing; darkness is the absence of light and is therefore not a “thing” in itself; nevertheless, apparently it was “formed,” in his opinion from something else).

In fact, according to him, the verb has two meanings: one is formation from some other thing; the second is as in 2 Sam. 12.17 (also 3.35), which essentially is to “cut” or cut out. He concludes the explanation with the usual cryptic expression, taken from Dan. 12.10: ve-ha-maskiyl yaviyn (“the discerning will
understand”), by which he apparently means that according to the first explanation there is a pre-existent matter, prior to creation; which appears to be very close to the doctrine of eternity of the universe.

As for the “scientific,” or cosmological, interpretation, he presents a rather sophisticated view, not surprising given his scientific knowledge. According to this, the earth was covered with water, and the air, dried by the heat of the sun, was the atmosphere of the earth. When the heat of the sun’s light reached the earth, it was reflected by the clouds and thereby warmed the atmosphere of the earth. The air was drawn by the heat of the sun from the water, which, nevertheless, itself remained cold, being too solid (relative to the air) to be heated, as the air was.

He also observed (Gen. 1.16) that the sun and moon are called “great” in respect to the stars, and that there is no difficulty in the observation of astronomers that all of the planets except Venus are larger than the moon, for the term “great” here refers to the light of the sun and moon, and the light of the moon (which elsewhere he explains is reflected) is greater than that of the planets because it is closer to the earth. Elsewhere, he provided specific astronomical details on this.

Astrology. In spite of the undeniable importance of astrology in his thought in general, he denied astral determinism. The planets and stars remain unchanging according to God’s direction, and therefore in themselves cause neither good nor bad; thus, those who worship them do so to no avail, for what is determined for a person according to his birth will happen “unless the higher power protects him more than the power of the stars.”

Knowledge. Ibn ‘Ezra stated that there are three basic means of acquiring knowledge: through reason, which is the essential method; being taught by others; and that which is told to one “from the beginning” (from childhood), which is the lowest form of knowledge. Physiologically, he assigned (Ex. 31.3) a special portion of the brain to each of the means of learning: da’at (knowledge), ḥakhmah (wisdom) and tevūnah (understanding). He adds that in Arabic these terms are also separately distinguished: al-takhayyul (imaginative, or better, “imaging” knowledge), al-fikrah (understanding) and al-ḥikmah (wisdom). This division is strongly influenced by the notion of “internal senses,” particularly in Ibn Sīnā (“Avicenna”). Man’s intelligence is, allegorically, the “angel” which communicates between him and God. Concerning knowledge generally, he wrote: “wisdom to the soul is as food to the body.”

There is much more to be said on this topic but there is no room here. Elsewhere, I have discussed at length the twin concepts of the “three worlds” and the “ladder of knowledge.”

Commandments. All of the commandments fall into two general categories: “deliberative,” or rational, understood by all, and “hidden” and not immediately understandable. Concerning the second group, he writes that we are required to observe all of them, whether the reason is apparent or not,
and if a commandment appears to contradict reason we are not required to believe about it that it is as literally apparent; rather, “we search for its meaning in the books of the sages.” Failing this, we must rely on our reason and ability; “perhaps we can correct it” (in other words, there may be a mistake in the wording) “and if not, we leave it as it is and admit that we do not know what [the reason is].” Within these basic categories, commandments are further divided into three kinds: “of the heart” (mind), “of the tongue” (speech) and “positive” (actions).

He explains in further detail (Hos. 4.15) that one must not transgress a negative commandment, not as if in fear of a king or fear of harm that may come but solely because of reverence for God; “and him shall you serve” means the positive commandments, whether of the mouth (language) or of deed; “and to him you shall cleave” in thoughts of the heart, “that with all his power [he should see that] not a minute should pass that he does not think in his heart of the deeds of God and his wonders in the ‘upper’ and ‘lower’ [worlds], and of the signs of the prophets.”

Commenting that “empty-minded” people question why Moses needed to spend 40 days and nights with God on Mt. Sinai, he says that many times that number of years still would not result in an understanding of all God’s ways or the “secret” (sôd; here possibly simply “meaning”) of all the commandments, concerning which many think that action is the essence, but it is not, “rather, understanding and action; and the heart [understanding] and the tongue [speech] are to accustom” one to observe the commandments.

Against the opinion of “many who said that there is no iniquity [‘avôn] in thought of the heart” (intent to transgress without actually doing so), he cites various verses to disprove this, concluding: “and the essence of all the commandments is to make upright the heart, and the majority of them are a remembrance” (a reminder of other commandments); there is a fuller discussion of all of this elsewhere.

With regard to the “Ten Commandments” (Ex. 20.2–14; Deut. 5.6–18), the discrepancies of which have already been discussed in Chapter 1, he questions how “I am the Lord your God” could be included among the “ten”; his explanation as to why, in fact, “I am the Lord your God” is considered the first of the “Ten Commandments” is that it is the “essence” of all the others, a “commandment of the heart.” Yet he said that this was the opinion of the earlier commentators, but what appears “right in my eyes” is that it is not the first commandment, but rather “I am the Lord your God” is the commander, the giver of the following commandments.

An important example of a “commandment of the heart” is Lev. 19.18 (ve-ahavta le-rē’akha ke-mōkha), usually wrongly translated “love your neighbor as yourself,” where he explains that the preposition le- (which can be understood as “to” or “for”) indicates that which belongs to another (which one should “love,” or consider as he does his own possessions), as opposed
to similar biblical phrases where the presence of the direct object indicator (et) means actual love of the one mentioned (the stranger, or proselyte; and God).  

**Commandments and the Land of Israel**

The essence of the commandments is that “the intelligent person should understand them and know why they were given” (Deut. 4.5), that is, the reason for them; however, they can only be observed perfectly in the Land of Israel, “for God knew that [the Jews] would not be able to perform them properly when they are in the lands of those who rule over them” (ibid., verse 10; Weiser’s explanation is incorrect). This is a theme repeated often in his commentaries (while Nahmanides is generally considered to be foremost in his veneration of the Land, a similar regard expressed by Ibn ‘Ezra has generally been overlooked).

He also explains that just as there are different organs in the body, each of which experiences feelings (sensations) in a different way, some more than others, so there are places in the world in which the “power” of God is seen more than others, and this is the “secret” of the Temple, the altar and the other vessels, each receiving a different level of the “glory” (see index on this term) of God. Following this, he also speaks about man as a microcosm.

Although the glory of God fills all the earth, “there are places where the power of God is seen more than other places,” either because of the development of the nature of the receptive ability (a key concept in his thought, and see index here: “receptivity”) of the people or because of the increased influence of the power itself; thus was chosen (from all places on earth) the place of the Temple (Ex. 25.40, at the end). Similarly, Mt. Sinai was “chosen” of all places in the desert (Deut. 33.17). In the “other recension” of his commentary on Gen. 2.6, he refers to a discussion he had with “one of the great [sages] of Spain,” by whom he almost certainly meant Judah ha-Lévy, concerning the importance of the Land, in which that sage explained *adamah*, “land,” there as the Land of Israel, and Ibn ‘Ezra replied, concluding with the statement that it is the most “honored” or important on all the earth.

While the “power” or wisdom of God does not change, there are differences in the ability of receiving from place to place, and it is “part of the service [avodah, worship] of God to maintain the power of reception.” There is, therefore, a distinction between transgressions of commandments outside of the Land of Israel and the same transgressions committed in the Land, which are far more serious; indeed, in his opinion, some things were permitted outside the Land which were forbidden in it because of the holiness of the Land (although some of his examples, such as marriage by Jacob or ‘Amram, not in accord with commandments could be explained by the fact that the Torah had not yet been given, these are not laws which could be known by reason and hence observed before the giving of the Torah, as explained above).
Miracles. His generally rationalistic approach is particularly obvious in his understanding of miracles (and see above on this, concerning “attachment” to God). In dismissing claims by the geônîym and others concerning the “miraculous” creation of a special divine voice prior to the creation of the world, and other such things, he concludes:

And I will state a principle: everyone who interprets something and relates it to a miracle [“wonder”] which is not in the Torah and not in the words of tradition, his explanation is not true; also if we find in the Talmud words which are an individual opinion, we neither learn from them nor contradict them.

(In other words, we ignore them) 83

Note that he does not deny altogether the possibility of miracles if they are specifically mentioned in the Torah.

He also gave an allegorical interpretation (in spite of his general dislike of allegory) for the “miracle” at the giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai, when it is described as smoking in every part because of the divine fire (Ex. 19.18); the meaning of which, according to him (Ps. 80.4), is that the prayers of the assembled Israelites ascended like smoke. In his regular (and “short”) commentary on the passage, he made purely grammatical observations.

In another context, he wrote that if one finds books containing statements that contradict the senses (sensory perception), even though they may be reasonable (logical), one should not believe them, “and even if you know that they were written by sages in an esoteric sense or allegorically. Possibly you will consider the signs and wonders which the prophets did and think that they are the opposite of senses or reason; forfend [ḥaliylah] that this should be so, rather they are the reversal of [the laws of] nature,” 84 including the sun standing still for Joshua (cf. Chapter 1, Ibn Chicatilla’s doubts about this), since God causes the sun to move according to a certain “secret,” and so he may also stop the sun from moving.

And now pay attention, if a prophet were to come and say to you that you do not see the sun by day and [yet] you see it, and were he to give you a sign and great wonder that you would see with your eyes, would you believe him because of the wonder? Yet [you believe] the wonder you do not know except by the sight of your eyes, but he says to you the opposite of what your eyes see [the sun shining]. How much less [you should believe] if something is contrary to reason. 85

Prophecy. In general, prophets are divided into two categories: agents to convey commandments and those whose prophecies are on the future (rarely does he consider these in an eschatological sense; rather, the immediate future events of the time of the prophet; see also above on Psalms). 86 He believed
that everyone with whom God “spoke” was a prophet; thus, Adam (Gen. 5.29) and Noah (Gen. 8.21) and even his sons (Gen. 9.8) were prophets, and so the Patriarchs (and see on Gen. 31.9). Not only Moses but Aaron was a “prophet of the Torah” and “a great many commandments” were given by his hand along with his brother Moses. Three prophets were “youths,” Samuel, Zechariah and Jeremiah (commentary on Zech. 2.8). If a prophet sometimes needs to speak things which are not proper (such as Amos or Isaiah), this does no harm, but a prophet may never lie (Gen. 27.19).

In his introduction to Isaiah, he says:

God is one and his word is one, only the levels [of reception] change according to the power of each prophet; for their levels are not equal, there are some whose prophecy is in night visions, such as Abraham [Gen. 15.1], Gad the Seer [1 Chron. 29.29] and Isaiah [1.1].

This is more fully developed in his introduction to Zechariah where he explains that “there are many different levels of prophecy and there is no way to count them,” for there were many ways in which the “suitable souls” [ha-neshamot ha-hagunot, an expression coined by Ibn ‘Ezra; worthy to receive prophecy] received “the power of the holy spirit to prophesy [read le-hinavē instead of le-ha-navi’, ‘to the prophet’].” Very important is his comment, almost lost in the context of a different discussion, that the “disciples” of prophets (beney ha-neviyiym) were “separated” (or secluded; mitbodediym), “perhaps each receives [divine influence] according to his ability.”

Instructive is his observation (Job 1.1) about prophecy in general, analogous to creating poetry (he was also a poet):

there are those who make [poetic] verses by their nature without learning and others who need learning, and just as he may receive [the instruction] so also he may not receive, and this is more likely than not; and all the prophets except Moses, after the “glory” of God passed before his face, their prophecies were in visions and also in a dream…

The prophecy of the Patriarchs was in a night vision (Ex. 6.3); but he perhaps used this term to refer generally to a “vision,” since there are instances when God apparently spoke to Abraham, at least, in the day. Statements referring to “seeing” God are not to be taken literally, but refer to a prophetic vision, since “the senses only sense accidents” (Ex. 33.21), and since God has no form he has no accidents (specific properties) and therefore cannot be seen by the eye (“short recension,” ibid.).

The first part of the above statement, comparing prophecy to poetry, is somewhat enigmatic. Did he really mean that just as there is an innate ability and a learned ability with regard to poetry, so also there is with respect to prophecy? This would then be quite similar to Maimonides’ idea that the perfection of
the “imaginative faculty” could result in the ability to prophesy (and note above what Ibn ‘Ezra said about the receptive ability of “suitable souls”), and quite the opposite of Judah ha-Lēvy, who rejected such a notion. 91

In one of his “theological” (religious) treatises, Ibn ‘Ezra provided a more detailed discussion of this, according to which the emanation of the “separate intellects” (or intelligences, the forces which move the celestial spheres) reaches the intellectual power of the individual and according to his (innate) ability he “grasps and imagines, feels and understands future things and the image of [future] events...” This only can happen to one who has from birth the “proper disposition” to receive. He therefore sees and understands things in a manner which is not possible to others. 92

Prior to the first exile, the nature of the various prophecies was understood, but afterwards prophecy came in visions to Daniel and others and had to be explained by “angels” who appeared to them (introduction to Zechariah and see commentary on 11.12: the “glory” of God was removed, or diminished, in the time of the second Temple; cf. end of n. 161). Angels, of course, are a metaphor for the separate intellects (although not always, for he apparently believed literally in the existence of angels; see commentary on Ex. 23.21, “every angel does the word [command] of God without adding or detracting”) (cf. already Gen. 6.13).

Contemporary customs and reports

Ibn ‘Ezra refers to several current customs and stories in his commentaries. For instance, he states that the requirement is to attach ściṣṣiyt (“fringes”) to any four-cornered garment and that this should be worn all day, and the custom of those who pray in a taliyit (“prayer shawl”) is in order to remember the commandment during the recital of the Shema’, but that in his opinion it is more of an obligation to wear a garment with fringes (attached to a four-cornered garment) all of the other hours of the day in order to remind oneself not to commit any transgression (he explains this in more detail elsewhere).

He mentions the custom of “heretics” (Qaraits) in Algeria who burn any meat left from the Passover feast, as was the biblical requirement but not observed afterward. 93 Superstitions such as the “evil eye” are mentioned; in his commentary on Song of Songs 1.5 (“first way”) he cites the opinion of those who explain that the girl was in fact beautiful but called “dark” by her mother as a means of avoiding the evil eye, and so the “Cushite” woman whom Moses married (Num. 12.1). He dismisses this explanation. 94

Among current customs mentioned by him: On Hagar and the well (Gen. 16.14), he observes that every year the Muslims celebrate at this well, called zamūm (read zamzam, the sacred well at Mecca visited annually on the pilgrimage). Other Muslim customs mentioned include rings (Ex. 4.22; 12.9) and other kinds of ornaments, such as those on the necks of boys and girls (Ex. 3.22), and cf. Song of Songs 8.6 (“second way”) about seals “attached”
to the finger, as rings; various kinds of meat in different lands (Ex. 23.19); “turbans” (a veil-like covering worn around the head and sometimes lower face), which are worn only by men in Arabia, (Muslim) Spain, North Africa, Iraq and Egypt (Ex. 28.36; he explains that these are similar to what are worn by women “in these lands,” Christian Europe, and also distinguishes the veil from the broad hats worn in Europe).

He mentions the custom among Jews in Egypt always to have bitter herbs on their tables (Ex. 12.8, and cf. the “short recension”); in the Muslim countries wheat for bread is refined by removing impure parts, “and there is no better bread” (Ex. 29.2); he discusses rice in India, France, Spain, etc. (Dan. 1.15). Houses in Muslim lands always have an outer courtyard with a gate (Ex. 12.6); the custom of ministers in Muslim lands is to have a separate winter house (Amos 3.15). The “king” (sultan) of Egypt is accustomed to go twice a year to the Nile to see how far the river has risen (Ex. 7.15). The custom among Gentiles is to place the hand under the hand of the king (oath of allegiance) or to kiss the king, as in India (Ps. 2.12; and cf. Gen. 24.2 where he mentions the custom in India to place the hand under the thigh of a master), and the custom of kissing either the hand or shoulder or cheek of someone in greeting (depending on the local practice in every place; Song of Songs 1.1, “first explanation”).

Elsewhere, he explains the Hebrew word šēōt as something which is struck to emit a sound, “like a ṭūbūr [Ar., drum], which is wider and bigger than ours, and the soldiers gather in [groups of] ten or more to strike them, to make noise and cause fear.” He mentions the custom in Muslim lands upon hearing bad news during wars to say that the world has been “turned upside down” (Haggai 2.21), a topos in classical and medieval Jewish and general literature. Much of this information comes from personal observation on his travels in North Africa and in Egypt, whereas the information on India comes probably from travelers’ tales.

He was aware of the Zoroastrian religion (semi-tolerated by Islam), stating that “there are also today many Gentiles who worship fire” (Deut. 18.10). While his commentaries are relatively free of polemic, whether against Islam or Christianity (notable exceptions are Gen. 27.40, possibly Ex. 16.25 [see n. 36] and some passages in the commentary on Isaiah and the general introduction to his commentary on the Torah; see Chapter 1), it is interesting that he reports that “many Gentiles in the world think that the form of a Jew is different from others and ask whether a Jew has a mouth or eyes; thus I heard in Muslim and Christian lands”; and “to this day there are Gentiles who when they see a Jew turn their faces away.”

**Story of the “wild boy”**

Stories of the so-called “feral children” or “wolf boys” are well-known in anthropological and psychological literature, made famous by the “wolf boy,”
Abraham Ibn ‘Ezra

or “wild boy of Aveyron” (France) in the nineteenth century, who allegedly grew up among wolves. Unnoticed by the many who have written on this theme is the story told by Ibn ‘Ezra in his commentary on Dan. 4.28. According to this, a believable man told Ibn ‘Ezra that he had been in the island of Sardinia when a Gentile boy suddenly fled from his father, having lost his senses, and became insane, and he lived with the deer for many years and walked on all fours as they did, and one day the king went to hunt the deer and the boy was also captured, since they thought he was a deer. When his parents recognized him, they gave him bread to eat and wine to drink, which he refused, but when they gave him grass to eat with the deer he ate, and in the middle of the night he again fled and joined the deer of the field.

The closest analogy to this tale is in Sumerian mythology, the “Epic of Gilgamesh,” in which Enkidu was said to have lived with gazelles. Similar stories of wild boys running with herds of gazelles have been reported in modern times (Iraq in 1946, the Spanish Sahara in 1960), with the Iraq story also bearing strong resemblances to the tale in Ibn ‘Ezra (the boy caught while a herd of gazelles was being hunted, eating only grass, etc.).

Geographical information

The commentaries also contain a considerable amount of information about various countries, some of which may have come from his own travels but most of it is based on what he read in other sources (particularly Arabic geographies) or perhaps heard from travelers. He frequently mentions India in his commentaries (e.g., Gen. 24.2, 46.34; Ex. 8.23, “short recension” Ex. 19.9; Ps. 2.12). This does not mean that he himself was ever in India, as some have claimed. Legends to that effect began in the medieval period. Aaron ha-Kohēn of Lunel cited the poet and scholar Joseph ha-Ēzōbiy of Perpignan (late thirteenth century) for the notion that during his “captivity” in India Ibn ‘Ezra lived entirely on maṣōṭ (unleavened bread). Possibly this silly legend arose from his reference to manna (commentary on Ex. 16.13), “which does not descend today in the Sinai desert, for the [location of] the mountain is known,” but he adds that he himself saw something similar to it in “the kingdom of ….” (the name is corrupt in the various texts; in any case, not India). “Hōḏū” (usually understood as India), he says, is in proximity to Egypt (Ex. 19.9).

In his commentary on Jonah (1.2), he reports the claim of certain Jewish scholars in Greek lands that Nineveh is ʿOrṭiyah (Assūr, Aramaic ʾṬūr, capital of Assyria), adding that he does not know if this is correct.

Egypt of the biblical period is not the Egypt of today (Joel 4.19), since the ancient Egypt of the pharaohs was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. On Ex. 12.31 he says: “It is known today that there is between old Egypt, where the storehouses of Joseph are known to this day, and Raamses [a distance of] 6 parsang.” Since 1 parsang is equal to a little over 4 modern miles, this results
in a distance of approximately 24 miles (of course, by “old Egypt,” Miṣr, he meant Fusṭāṭ, which certainly was not the biblical capital). He also refers generally to the “kingdoms” of the Muslims, Dan. 7.14 (is Barasan there perhaps Kurasan?), and to that of the Almoravids as “the kingdom of the Philistines,” a term commonly used by Jews in Muslim Spain to refer to the Berbers in general.

On Obadiah 20: “we have heard from great ones [gedōliym, great scholars] that the land of Almania [Germany] is of the Canaanites who fled from the children of Israel when they came into the Land; so also Šarfat [in Obadiah there] is Fransiyah [France],” and Sefarad is Spain, where the Jews went in the exile at the time of Titus (the destruction of the Temple).

While he traveled extensively (he was several times “on the ocean,” he says), he was never in the Land of Israel, as some have maintained. He explains (Ex. 10.19) that west is (sometimes) referred to in Hebrew as yam (“sea”) because of the “Great Sea” (the Mediterranean) which “goes out of Spain and passes to Egypt,” and this is not the Oceanus (Atlantic) “because the Israelites did not inherit so much” (their territory did not extend that far); rather, the “sea of Spain” (yam Sefarad) is called the “Great Sea,” which is the Mediterranean (see also on Num. 3.23). In the “short recension” on Ex. 13.18 he explains that Yam Sūf (“Sea of Reeds”) is named after a place, and not according to the fanciful explanations others have given, nor is it the “Oceanus,” and “the sea of Spain” is greater than it. On Ps. 72.8, he explained it as “from the southern sea, called the sea of Edom, to the northern sea, which is the Oceanus,” cited also by David Qimḥi in his commentary on that Psalm (also on Zech. 9.10).

He notes that on the “Oceanus” there is sometimes great darkness during which a person cannot distinguish between day and night, and sometimes this lasts for five days (Ex. 10.22). From this description, and his statements that he was several times “on the ocean,” it might be assumed he actually was on the Atlantic; however, simply “on the ocean” (yam) more probably refers to the Mediterranean.

It is clear that he had little real knowledge of the geography of the Land of Israel. For example, he states that Egypt and Assyria both were “to the west” of Israel, or more precisely southwest (Gen. 25.18; Hos. 11.10; but cf. the commentary on Zephaniah 2.13, Assyria to the north of Israel, correctly). Also on Dan. 8.9 he correctly mentions that Antiochus (Antioch) is north of the Land of Israel and Egypt “south” (i.e., southwest), and locates these places, and also Jerusalem, in terms of distance from the equator (knowledge he probably derived from Muslim geographers, or from Abraham bar Ḥayyā). Antioch at the time of Daniel was, he says, a part of the Land of Israel.

Another curious error is his location of Mt. Zion, which he says was in the north of Jerusalem, which is difficult to explain. Jerusalem is called “Ariel”
on the name (because) of the altar, “or another thing.” The “other thing” apparently is the opinion that the zodiacal sign governing Jerusalem is Arieh (the Lion), an opinion he rejects (commentary on Isa. 29.1).111

Incidentally, Rashi had even more inaccurate geographical knowledge. Thus, Nahmanides wrote (on Gen. 35.18) that he did not understand why Rashis said that Israel is to the south of Mesopotamia, whereas he could prove from a biblical verse that it was to the east of Israel; however, Nahmanides made his own errors (see his commentary on Gen. 42.1 and notes there).

Ibn ‘Ezra wrote confusing, and incorrect, information about the rivers mentioned in Genesis and claimed that “gan Ėden” (the biblical garden of Eden) was south of the equator.112 In his discussion of the rivers of the garden of Eden, he also says that he had seen in Spain rivers in which gold was found “in [their] ground” (in the bed of the river). There he says that “one of the sages of his generation” (in fact, Sa’adyah; hardly his generation) had said that the Piyshon River was the Nile, but this is incorrect because the other three rivers are known and they flow from east to west, but the Nile originates in a spring on Mt. Lebanon “which is south of the equator” (I)113

Bahya b. Asher Ibn Ḥallāwa created another geographical peculiarity which he attributed to Ibn ‘Ezra, a distinction between Mt. Seir, which is “near the land of Canaan,” and a Mt. Seir on which “today dwell the descendants of Edom, which is none other than the land of Greece.” However, Ibn ‘Ezra never wrote any such statement.114

The following chapter details further his categories of exegesis before considering his influence on the thought of Maimonides and concluding with discussion of the important supercommentaries on Ibn ‘Ezra.

Notes

1 Historical sources cited include “books of Persians and Medes”: Isa. 1.2; Dan. 6.1, 7.14 (where he says that he saw these books some 40 years ago, and had forgotten the names of the cities mentioned there; this would mean that he saw them in Spain in the year 1116, when he was approximately 27), and 9.25 (“book of the kings of Persia”). In several places he mentions Persian words (so also in his astronomical and astrological works). He mentions also a “Greek book,” apparently a history (Dan. 8.25), but he certainly did not read Greek (Ibn Janāh cited “Greek chronicles,” although he of course also did not read Greek [Shorashiym, 238]). The only Arabic work which Ibn ‘Ezra specifically cites in his commentaries (on Ex. 2.10) is the “Sēfer ‘avodat ha-adamah, translated from Egyptian,” according to which the Egyptian name of Moses was Monios, or Munius. This, of course, is the so-called “Nabatean Agriculture” (al-Filāḥa al-nabāṭīya) translated by Ibn al-Walshīya (ninth century?), possibly a spurious work although some accept its authenticity; see Khan, “Chapter on Ancient Chaldean Sciences,” 25–26; and most recently Alves Carrara, “Geoponica and Nabatean Agriculture” and Hämeen-Anttila, Last Pagans of Iraq. The work was also used by Judah ha-Lévy (Kuzariy I. 61) and by Maimonides (“Guide” III. 29 and elsewhere). Ibn ‘Ezra referred to this and other similar works in other of his writings, e.g., Sēfer ha-aṣāmiym. However, his statement that it was translated
from “Egyptian” is incorrect; the consensus is that it was Syriac or Aramaic, but it is interesting that some Latin translations of Maimonides also give the title of the “Nabatean Agriculture” as “Egyptian” (e.g., Dux seu director dubitâtium aut perplexorum [Paris, 1520; facsimile rpt, Frankfurt, 1964], 90–91; translation attributed to Jacob Mantino). See also Chapter 3, n. 10, on other midrashiym and pseudo-chronicles mentioned by Ibn ‘Ezra.

2 Fleischer, “Eyfah mét Rabênu [sic] Avraham Ibn ‘Ezra,” believed that he died in London, based on a fantastic legend reported to Moses Taqû (Moses b. Ḥasdai of Regensburg), a contemporary of Moses b. Nahman (“Naḥmanides”), who cited him; see on him Gross, G. J., 440; Urbach, Baʻaley ha-tosafôt, 348. The theories of S. Eppenstein that Ibn ‘Ezra returned to Italy from “France” (Provence) at the end of his life, and that he had known Joseph Qimḥi in Narbonne, are without foundation (translated in his collected articles, ʻIyûn ve-ḥēger, relevant pages 140–49; the source of the original article as cited there is incorrect). Kahana also mistakenly believed that he died in Rome; see n. 34. Ibn ‘Ezra probably returned to Spain at the end of his life and died there, as persistent Spanish Jewish testimony asserts; see details in my “Abraham Ibn Ezra—Highlights of His Life,” 36–37. He composed, or at least finished, his last work, Sēfer ha-ʻasmiym (physics, astronomy, metaphysics, etc.), in Spain shortly before his death; see my Dictionary, 309, no. 3. See on Ibn ‘Ezra various articles in Iberia Judaica 4 (2012), including Roth, “Abraham Ibn Ezra—Highlights of His Life,” “Abraham Ibn Ezra—Mysticism,” and Gómez Aranda, “Comentarios bíblicos.” Other articles there deal with different aspects of his work. All of the various theories on the date of his death are discussed in detail by Rottzoll in his German translation of Abraham Ibn Esras langer Kommentar zum Buch Exodus, pt. 1, Chapter 3. After carefully reviewing the chronology of his commentaries, Kiselv, “Relationship,” 297, also concluded that he died in 1167 (the author adheres to the standard theory that he wrote some of the commentaries in France).

3 Friedländer, Essays, 141, expressed his opinion that the popularity of his commentaries, in spite of “their obscure and elliptical style” and although they “frequently disappoint the reader,” is due to his “severe and satirical criticisms” of others. This unfortunate and totally inaccurate assessment has influenced some modern writers; see, for example, Simon in the preface to his edition of Ibn ‘Ezra, Sheney peyredey… le-Trey-ʻAsar, 9; but in reality the texts are not that “difficult,” with some few exceptions. In fact, there is rarely anything either “obscure” or “elliptical” about his commentary, and the “satirical criticism” of predecessors, while sometimes amusing, is also not that frequent nor is it the main point of interest in any particular commentary. Ibn ‘Ezra combined solid grammatical interpretation (dependent, in part, on others, although he also wrote several works on grammar) with a thorough knowledge of Arabic and a keen, almost intuitive, understanding of the text. Far from “disappointing,” his commentaries almost always correctly elucidate otherwise obscure biblical passages. Incidentally, while much of what Friedländer wrote in Essays is valuable, there are also several serious errors. For instance, he claimed (63) that Ibn ‘Ezra “distinctly stated” in the second chapter of Yeṣōd mōra that in the apprehension of God little can be gained from study of the sciences. In fact, he said nothing of the sort (which would be the exact opposite of his opinion); rather, he was discussing the observance of mīṣvōti (commandments), and even then he did not mention the study of sciences at all (the text is even cited and translated by Friedländer in a note there). There are other examples where Friedländer apparently distorted things to fit his own interpretations.

4 On his first commentaries in Italy and the error about his having fled persecution in Muslim Spain, see n. 21. The theory that he may have written commentaries
Abraham Ibn 'Ezra 93

in North Africa, or even in Spain, cannot be supported (contrary to Simon, Arba’ geyshot, 126 n. 18 [Four Approaches, 260 n. 16; hereafter “translation”], who cites the earlier views of Judah Fleischer on this), since not a single fragment of any such commentary has been discovered, nor is there any mention of such either in Ibn ‘Ezra’s own writings or in the writings of others. Simon there (only in the Heb. ed.) referred to a poem by Ibn ‘Ezra (Qoviy 1: 22), which for some reason he thinks was written in “Italy or Sicily,” which says that in every place he lived he wrote books; this obviously was written on his return to Spain at the end of his life. There is no evidence that he was ever in Sicily; the grammarian Solomon Ibn Farḥun (so, not “Parḥon”) of Salerno who wrote that he was a student of Ibn ‘Ezra and Judah ha-Lēvy did not mean this literally. Marvin Pope erred in believing that he wrote his commentaries (or at least on Song of Songs) “for his coreligionists in Spain” (Song of Songs, Anchor Bible series [Garden City, N.Y., 1977], 103); only those few which apparently were written in Provence would fit this description.

5 Milḥamot ha-Shēm, ed. Rosenthal (Jerusalem, 1963), 32; the work was probably written in Huesca and not Gascony as earlier claimed (see Valle Rodriguez, Carlos del. Polemica judeo-cristiana. Estudios [Madrid, 1992], 59–65).

6 See particularly Lipshitz, ‘Iyūniym, who assembled and analyzed in detail the citations of or references to Ibn ‘Ezra in Qimhi, Naḥmanides, Bahya and the authors of the Tōsaftōt in their commentaries on the Torah. There are, nevertheless, some citations which he missed, and his book deals only with the commentaries on the Torah. Other citations of Ibn ‘Ezra on other biblical books and by other commentators will be noted here and in Appendix 1. Meir b. Barūkh cited Ibn ‘Ezra in at least three responsa (She‘elōt u-teḥuvōt [Prague, 1608], nos. 512–14) and perhaps others I have not seen. Samuel b. Nisiym Masnūt, originally from Sicily, was highly praised by Judah al-Ḥarīzī (Toledo, thirteenth-century poet, author and translator), who met him on his travels (Tahkemoniy 46.22 and 26; tr. Valle, 296, 298). Masnūt was the author of a commentary on Job, Me’cyan ganīym, and of other commentaries, appropriately called “midrash,” on Genesis (Midrash berēshiyt zuṭa) and on Daniel and Esther. Bacher, “Commentaire sur Job de R. Samuel b. Nissim d’Alep,” already correctly characterized that work also as a “midrash,” or homiletic interpretation, similar to Ṣūviyyah (Tobias) b. El’azar’s Lēqaḥ tōv (see Chapter 1 on him). The author frequently cited Ibn ‘Ezra and also utilized the grammatical work of Jonah Ibn Janāḥ (ca. 990–1050; Córdoba and Zaragoza). This does not necessarily mean, as Bacher thought, that these works were already available in Syria (although they may have been); more likely, he had seen them in Sicily or Italy. Medieval supercommentaries on Ibn ‘Ezra will be discussed at the end of this chapter. Such “commentaries on commentaries” have continued to the present time and have been written in numerous lands. Other biblical commentaries have also been influenced by Ibn ‘Ezra, even when he is not cited by name.

7 See, generally, and on the German manuscript, Ben–Menahem, ‘Inyaney Ibn ‘Ezra, 30; that section, “Qeṭa’īym me-feyrūḥ ha-qāṣar ‘al Shemot,” appeared originally in Otsar [Qṣar] yeḥudey Sefard 4 (1961): 91–107. The author discussed some 18 manuscripts of the work. However, there are several citations, particularly by French rabbis, which are in error; either no such comment of his exists or it is erroneously attributed to him and is actually by someone else (see examples cited as appendix to Abramson, Shraga, “Igeret ha-qodesh ha-meyuḥeset la-Ramban,” Sinai [Sinay] 90 [1982]: 244–49). In some cases the errors may be due to copyists or to insertions into manuscripts, in others to careless extrapolation from one remark to apply it to a completely different situation on which Ibn ‘Ezra, in fact, made no comment. A thorough examination
of German Jewish authors may reveal other references to his commentaries. As Joseph Dan has demonstrated, his commentary, as well as his Yesod m'Ora, was known and utilized by the German “pietists” (hashiydey Ashkenaz); see, e.g., J. Dan, Jewish Mysticism 2: The Middle ages (Northvale, N.J., 1998), 44–45.

8 On the Gerona manuscript, see Cantera Burgos, “Más sobre los manuscritos hebreos,” 231; the manuscript is now in Paris, B. N. For citations of Ibn ‘Ezra, see Ibn Shū’ayb, Derashōt, ed. Metzger 2: 585; see also n. 71. Copies of his commentaries were owned by ordinary Jews, as we know from book inventories, in Catalonia, Aragón, Majorca and of course Castile.

9 See Linde, “Basic Instruction,” especially 11 ff.; note that he speaks of a Spanish Jew “learned in many languages.” Linde remarks on the apparent influence on Nicolaus of a statement in Ibn ‘Ezra’s commentary on Psalms, but the first redaction of that was written in Lucca several years later (nevertheless, he may have seen it later). Ramón Martí (thirteenth century) was an important Spanish Dominican scholar and anti-Jewish polemicist; see briefly on him Roth, ed., Medieval Jewish Civilization, 221–22. Pugio fidei was printed in Leipzig in 1687 (photo rpt. Farnborough, 1967). His citation of Ibn ‘Ezra on Prov. 2.7 and 14.34 is an error, and is actually from Qimḥi, Sēfer haqah, 5. and Peyrūštiym le-sēfer Mishley le-beyt Qimḥiy, 13, 75 (not mentioned by the editor there, however). See also Lieberman, Saul. Sheqi‘y’in (Jerusalem, 1939), 91. Abraham Geiger, in Ṫsar [Oṣar] nehmad 2 (1887): 23, already observed that Martí also had the commentary of Moses Qimḥi on Proverbs, attributed to Ibn ‘Ezra. As mentioned below, Ibn ‘Ezra’s commentary on Proverbs has been lost. On Luis de León, see Ḥabib Arkin, Influencia de la exégesis hebrea. Richard Simon: cited by Lipshitz, introduction to his edition of Ibn ‘Ezra on Hosea (see Bibliography), 3. Recently, it has been shown that his commentary on the “Ten Commandments” influenced several sixteenth–century Spanish writers (Mariano Gómez Aranda, “Abraham Ibn Ezra and the Spanish Humanists on the Ten Commandments.” As mentioned above (n. 4), Marvin Pope at least knew of his existence (even if he thought that he wrote his commentaries in Spain). Some modern interpreters of Isaiah have utilized his commentary; e.g., Goldingay, John. The Message of Isaiah 40–55 (London, N.Y., 2005), a refreshingly new approach (however, the International Critical Commentary on the same chapters, by Goldingay and Payne [London, N.Y., 2006], does not mention Ibn ‘Ezra at all). H.G.M. Williamson’s volume on Isa. 1–5 in the same series (London, N.Y., 2006) makes passing references to Ibn ‘Ezra, usually critically.

10 Important also is his explanation of na‘ (often translated as an entreaty, “please” or “pray”) as always meaning simply “now” (“short recension” of commentary on Ex. 12.9, ed. Weiser 2: 161 [see Bibliography]; where he explains why it cannot be a word of supplication), and cf. Num. 10.31; 12.6, 11 (ed. Weiser 3: 141, 148, 149) and Isa. 5.1 (commentary ed. and tr. M. Friedländer [see Bibliography], 25 n. 1 of the translation); and Lamentations 5.16. Modern biblical dictionaries, the authors of whom have not carefully examined Jewish commentaries, recognize the meaning “now” only in limited instances. His explanation of antiphrasis (using a word of the opposite meaning because of respect or to avoid an unpleasant word), Num. 12.1 (ed. Weiser 3: 147), is also of interest. A thorough study of the grammatical aspects of his biblical commentaries, first attempted in the outdated work of Bacher, remains to be done. There is a general overview in Melamed, Mefarshey ha-miqra 2: 640–53; the long chapter there on Ibn ‘Ezra is worthwhile, although overly detailed and consisting mostly of citations, some of which are wrong (i.e., the text is not where it is said to be, as is true throughout the book). The most thorough and important works on Ibn ‘Ezra as exegete are
Lipshitz, "Pirqey 'iyūn" and 'Iyūniyim bi-l'shōnōt ha-RAB". The commentary of Weiser is generally excellent (although with some errors), as is that of Krinsky, on whose edition Weiser based his own.

By stressing this, which certainly is the most important aspect of his commentary, I do not mean to deny that he also employed derash (see the following note) and even sōd (examples of that will be discussed on particular passages, especially the section on "Digressions" below; these terms have been explained in Chapter 1). Judah b. Barzilay (b. ca. 1070) already distinguished between mashal (metaphor) and siyman ("sign" or "symbol"). Peyrūsh sēfer yēṣīrāh, 41. Cohen, Three Approaches, has some insights (Chapters 1 and 5) into Ibn 'Ezra's use of mashal ("metaphor," rather than "allegory" or even "symbol" as the author sometimes defines it). See, e.g., the definition of "metaphor" in Pei, Mario. Glossary of Linguistic Terminology (Garden City, NY, 1966). Pei quite rightly did not include the term "allegory," which is a literary technique rather than a linguistic term. See also Sirat, History of Jewish Philosophy, who incorrectly categorizes Ibn 'Ezra generally as an "allegorist." Caution is necessary in assuming "Arabic influences" even on the terminology, much less the general application, of Ibn 'Ezra's use of metaphor (Cohen, especially 53 ff., is certain of such influence). Many biblical verses are obviously not meant to be understood literally, and there are only so many possibilities in any language for saying that one thing is "like" another or that one idea, or word, is "borrowed" from another. Cohen offers a good discussion of some "restructuring" in Ibn 'Ezra's commentary (65–73), two instances where he revised metaphorical interpretations. Other writers have also confused metaphor with allegory; e.g., Robinson in his translation of Samuel Ibn Tibbon's introduction to his commentary on Ecclesiastes ("Samuel Ibn Tibbon's Commentary," 108, section 14: "the second species is words expressed in the way of 'allegory and riddle'; but Ibn Tibbon actually says [94] mashal ve-hiydah, "metaphor and parable" (hiydah can sometimes mean riddle, but not here), further explaining where one thing is said but another is meant; derived, of course, from Maimonides). See also Ibn 'Ezra on Eccles. 1.1 (incidentally, he does not use the expression "allegory" in 1.13 there, as Gómez Aranda translated, Comentario…Eclesiastés, 25; rather, "hint" [remez]]. This was clearly explained by Moses Ibn 'Ezra(h) in his chapter on metaphor, Kitāb, 228/29, and see excerpts of his "Arugat ha-bīshem" (Maqāla al-hadiqah) in M. Creizenach and J. Jost, eds., Zion (Šīyōn) (Frankfurt a. M.) 2 (1842–43): 136–37; see also the thorough analysis of his theories about metaphor in that treatise in Fenton, Philosophie et exégese, Chapter IV (Cohen, in his lengthy review essay on that work in J.Q.R. 93 [2003]: 533–66, correctly criticizes [545–46] Fenton's lack of precision in his use of the word "metaphor", somewhat ironic given Cohen's own confusion elsewhere). One writer who seems to have understood the meaning of mashal and clearly distinguished it from allegory and parable (although peculiarly failing to use the most applicable term "metaphor") is Stern, Parables in Midrash, see especially 11–12. Nevertheless, the author inexplicably reverts to the terminology "allegory" and "parable" in Chapter 6, discussing medieval "Hebrew literature," actually a midrash (the mystical Sēfer ha-bāhiyār), Maimonides and the Zohar. In his essay "The Rabbinic Parable and the Narrative of Interpretation," in Fishbane, ed., Midrashic Imagination, 78–95, he again (82) uses the term to mean "allegory," although only with regard to "enigmatic" expressions. Mashal may indeed be understood as "parable" in a less technical context and in real medieval Hebrew literature (secular narrative or stories); in the Bible and some medieval sources it also means "proverb," of course. Hughes, Invention of Jewish Identity, devotes an entire chapter (3) to metaphor in Ibn 'Ezra(h) and Maimonides.
12 On Ibn ‘Ezra’s (rare) use of actual allegorical interpretation, which he calls midrash (elsewhere he sometimes used the word remez, “hint, allusion”), in his commentary on Song of Songs, see the discussion of that commentary later here, and on his commentary on Ecclesiastes, and see the following note. This term and its meaning altogether escaped Cohen, Three Approaches. Cohen is not alone in thinking, incorrectly, that Ibn ‘Ezra was inconsistent in his insistence on peshat and supposed “rejection” of derash (see that author’s discussion of this, especially 268–71 and the notes there). In fact, Ibn ‘Ezra did not “reject” the use of metaphor, only that which was not in accord either with reason or with what was demanded by rabbinical tradition. Even his most extreme instances of the application of this, for example, applying verses or even whole books to the future messianic period or interpreting them as typologies of the history of the Jewish people (neither of which is mentioned by Cohen), have their antecedents in other sources. See Chapter 1, levels of interpretation and on Ibn ‘Ezra’s introduction to his commentary for further analysis of his attitudes to derash.

13 The most important work on his philosophical ideas, not only in his commentaries, remains Rosin, “Die Religionsphilosophie Abraham Ibn Ezra’s.” See also Husik, History of Medieval Jewish Philosophy, 190, generally a good presentation. Sirat, History of Jewish Philosophy, 105, made the statement that Ibn ‘Ezra “forms part of a long line of allegorists that began before Philo.” This is completely to misunderstand his entire approach to exegesis, which (aside from the peculiar case of the commentary on Song of Songs, as noted above) is almost totally devoid of allegory (as previously mentioned, the term mashal is generally used by him to mean “metaphor,” not allegory; on his anti-allegorical position see the excellent article of Gómez Aranda, “El maśal como método exegético en los comentarios de Abraham ibn ‘Ezra a Eclesiastés y Job,” especially 113–14; and 117 on rare use of allegory in the commentary on Job). It is perhaps not surprising that Sirat’s interpretation (105–06) of fundamental ideas in Ibn ‘Ezra’s commentaries, such as the meaning of bara (usually translated “create,” and so she erroneously translates his understanding of it), is also incorrect; see below here on “Digressions: Creation.” Some of Sirat’s other explanations are better, particularly when she is dependent on Altmann’s important article “Moses Narboni’s ‘Epistle on Shi’ur Qomā,” in Altmann, ed., Jewish Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 225–88.

14 Šarfati, Mūnāḥey ha-matemaṭiyqah, 145, correctly observed that it is at times difficult to determine whether his innovation of a scientific or mathematical term came first in his biblical exegesis or whether he first conceived of it as an explanation in a scientific context and then applied it to biblical interpretation (such conceptualization, of course, is irrespective of the date when various works were actually written). Šarfati’s study of Ibn ‘Ezra’s medieval mathematical and scientific terminology is indispensable (although the book has other shortcomings). On astronomical (actually, mostly on astrological) writings of Ibn ‘Ezra and their relation to his biblical commentaries, see Sela, Astrologiyah, and Science. A thorough study of Ibn ‘Ezra’s actual scientific and mathematical, instead of astrological, works remains to be done.

15 “Long” commentary on Ex. 19.5, 9, 13, 34.3, and simply “ma’amad,” 20.21 (ed. Weiser 2: 126); “short” commentary on Ex. 24.1, 33.18, 34.3; Num. 16.3; Deut. 5.5, 33.2, 34.12. So common has this become since that Weiser apparently did not even realize that it was an innovation and made no comment on it.

Abraham Ibn ‘Ezra

his commentary on Ex. 15.1, where he explained that there are verbs found in the past (tense) in place of the future (e.g., Gen. 23.13) and in future in place of past (Ps. 106.19 and elsewhere), and so in the Arabic language, explaining: “it is also possible to say that they are in the present time” (tense; zeman ha-’ōmēd, under influence of Ar. al-qā’ima), as in Isa. 6.2 and 4, ‘since in the holy [biblical] language there is no indication [siyman; a technical term in Ibn ‘Ezra] for zeman ha-emṣē’ay [continuous time; or present], the language of past and future is used” to indicate an action which is ongoing. Interesting also is the fact that Ibn ‘Ezra sometimes omitted the object indicator et (never translated) before a direct object. The midrash (Gen rabah 1.14) discusses et as indicative of amplification, to include something else; see Urbach, Sages 1: 184–85. The talmudic sage Rabbi ‘Aqiva was said to have allegorically interpreted every instance of et in the Bible, and Bahya b. Asher wrote about that and the “wonders” that were revealed as a result (Biyyūr 3: 310, on Deut. 10.20). Ibn ‘Ezra explains it as “like the essence of a thing” (i.e., indicating the essence), noting that sometimes it is omitted, and sometimes it is a substitute for “with” or “from” (Gen. 1.1, ed. Weiser 1: 13). Ibn ‘Ezra’s use of Arabic syntax, and also grammatical terminology (already well-known from various studies), is of course quite different than the hypothetical speculation about such influence on his understanding of metaphor, referred to above. We still await a thorough study of the influence of Arabic syntax and grammar on medieval commentaries generally, as well as on other works.

17 Many examples could be cited; for instance, on Gen. 49.6 (“let my soul not come into their counsel”), he cites an explanation by Aaron (Sarjado; see “Appendix 1” here) with which he disagreed, saying “these explanations are cold [incorrect]; in their counsel my soul will not come.” As noted in Chapter 1, he particularly criticized Ibn Janāḥ.

18 The poem is with the commentary, in standard editions of the Hebrew Bible with commentaries. Friedländer, Essays, 104 n. 3, did not understand the line and so assumed either that it refers to unknown writings of Ibn ‘Ezra or that it is necessary to correct it to read sifrey Ėl, “books of God,” instead of sifrēy ē-l-ŷ (which makes no sense). However, the words should simply be corrected to read sifray ēlu, “these my books,” meaning specifically the rabbinic and midrashic interpretations of Lamentations to which he refers, but probably generally books he had left behind (indeed, the text in the Berlin, 1705 ed. [Pentateuch with Megillot] has ēlu). Simon, “Madua ‘azav R’ [sic] Avraham Ibn ‘Ezra,” 495, erroneously claimed that the reading (which only I have suggested) is found in manuscripts but that it in fact should not be corrected since it refers to “books of God” (he fails to credit Friedländer for that, however). Clearly, Ibn ‘Ezra acquired other books on his travels to Egypt and North Africa, such as the grammatical strictures of Sa‘adyah’s student (Dunash Ibn Tamiym, probably) against which Ibn ‘Ezra wrote a rebuttal, and perhaps the biblical commentaries of Moses Ibn Chicatilla and others, and apparently even the grammatical work of Judah Hayyūj which he translated into Hebrew in Rome, since as we have seen he did not take any of these (or any other books) with him from Spain. Other works, such as the commentaries of Qaraite scholars, he read but did not obtain copies, and this explains some of the errors in citations of them. While the only historically possible explanation for why he “fled” Spain would be the Almoravids, in fact we know of no persecution of Jews by them (on the history of Jewish relations with the Almoravids, see my Jews, Visigoths & Muslims, Chapter IV). Tudela, where Ibn ‘Ezra was born and presumably still lived, had been under Christian control since 1115. There is no evidence that he was ever in Córdoba, as some have claimed; that he exchanged some poems with Joseph
Abraham Ibn ‘Ezra

Ibn Ṣaddiq, philosopher and judge there, does not mean that he actually was in the city. The erroneous notion concerning Ibn ‘Ezra having “fled” Lucena, near Córdoba, because of the Almohad persecution (which in fact had not yet begun) was already rejected by Steinschneider; yet Judah Fleischer (“Rabênu [sic] Avraham Ibn ‘Ezra be-Ṣarfat,” 353, and in more detail “Mado’a yaṣa... mi-Ṣarafad?” 330 ff.), went so far as to claim there were two invasions by the Almohads, one before 1140, untrue, of course. In fact, he left Spain before 1140, since he was already in Rome in 1139, and had been in Egypt and North Africa before that (see also Bacher, W. “Die hebräische Sprachwissenschaft,” in J. Winter and A. Wünsche, eds., Geschichte der rabbinische Literatur [Berlin, 1897; photo rpt. Hildesheim, 1965] 2: 185). There is a possibility that he had already been to North Africa before he left Spain for Italy. In the poetic lines preceding his introduction to the commentary on Ecclesiastes, also written in Rome, he writes that he was separated from his land (Sefarad) and “descended to Rome disturbed in spirit”; he of course makes no mention of any persecution. Uriel Simon rehashes all of this, albeit with no mention of Steinschneider, and presents it as his own deduction (“Madoa ‘azav,” especially 489–90). Simon did correctly state, 491, that there is no evidence that Ibn ‘Ezra was ever in Lucena, although his interpretation of the source cited needs correction. There are other valuable suggestions in his article.

19 Ex. 25.31, ed. Weiser 2: 175. However, Cambridge MS. 46 omits “France and across the sea” (me-‘ever ha-yam), reading instead “and the west” (ma’anav), which makes better sense. Bacher, “Ḥilufey nusḥā‘ot,” 26 (see Bacher, Varieties). The expression ‘ever ha-yam (“across the sea”), even if it were correct in the text, does not necessarily mean “England,” as Weiser, n. 106, thought. It is somewhat doubtful that he ever went to England; and even according to those who insist that he did, he completed all of his biblical commentaries earlier in Provence (or France) and thus could hardly speak of Torah manuscripts he “saw” in England. Rather, he referred to manuscripts he had probably seen in Egypt or else in North Africa; which could be described as “across the sea” (on his travels there see Fleischer, “Rabênu [sic] Avraham Ibn ‘Ezra be-Afriyqah”). Fleischer noted that in his grammatical work Safah berûrah, 6b, he harshly condemned as “fools” those who corrected the very same word which he (later) found in these carefully investigated Torah codices (“Matay ve-eyfah ḥibër Ibn ‘Ezra ‘Safah verûrah’ shelô?” 86–87). By “sages” (ḥakhamiyim) of Tiberias, he certainly did not mean Qaraite, for whom he generally had contempt; rather, the “masorëtes” (see Chapter 1 on this and on his attitude to Qaraite). Over a century before, the students of Menahêm Ibn Sârûq, in their critique of Dunash Ibn Labrât, also mentioned biblical manuscripts corrected by the sages of Tiberias, as well as correct Spanish manuscripts (Teshûvot talmidey Menahem ben Sârûq ve-Dûnah ben Labrât, ed. Stern, 47, 67; superior edition: Teshubot de los discípulos..., ed. and tr. Benavente Robles, 24*, 36*). Ibn ‘Ezra does not say, as some have misunderstood, that he met these sages, only that he saw manuscripts which had been investigated by them. See a similar list of 15 scholars of Tiberias in Harkavy, Hadasiyym gam yeshaniaym, 19–20. Harkavy referred to Ibn ‘Ezra’s statement, but stated that these are not necessarily the same scholars mentioned by Ibn ‘Ezra. Very important is his reference to Steinschneider’s article on Ibn ‘Ezra in which he said that the word liy (“to me,” in the phrase “and it was sworn,” which in some texts reads “and they swore to me”) was added by later editors, and on the basis of that many thought that Ibn ‘Ezra had been in the Land of Israel. In the “short” recension on Exodus (ed. Weiser 2: 316) on the same passage, Ibn ‘Ezra stated that “those lacking in knowledge of [Hebrew] language” said that
the word te’aseh in the text should be written with a yod (this is identical to his aforementioned complaint in Safah berūnah, and thus also before he had seen these texts). Harkavy, 20 n. 3, objected that he could not thus have referred to the “masoretes,” whose knowledge of grammar he elsewhere praised, but added that he found in Safah berūnah, 7, that he did mean here the masoretes, and thus contradicted what he elsewhere wrote about them. However, this is not necessary, for while it is true that he praised the masoretes for their knowledge of vocalization, he also criticized them (e.g., his introduction to his commentary, ed. Weiser 1: 10) and it is entirely possible that he thought that they sometimes lacked a correct grammatical understanding. Ibn ‘Ezra wrote, or at least planned, commentaries on all the biblical books; see the introduction to his Sēfer ha-‘ibūr, 8 n. 5.

20 Not all these commentaries have survived; see further on this below and see n. 35. He cites his commentary on Ezekiel in the “short recension” of the commentary on Ex. 28.41, and the commentary on Isa. 1.4, 6.1, etc. He alludes to the commentary on Jeremiah on Lev. 20.20 and on Isa. 48.8 and 49.1 refers to it as not yet written. For other references to his commentaries on the “later” prophets, and on Proverbs and Ezra-Nehemiah, see Friedländer, Essays, 142 notes 1–3; Krinsky, Mehōgeqey Yehūdah 1: 25 (his reference to a printed text of the commentary on Ezekiel is of course erroneous). See also Weiser’s introduction, Ibn ‘Ezra, Peyrūshey 1: 14–15. The commentaries on Proverbs (and so on Ezra, Nehemiah) published in standard Hebrew bibles with commentaries are not his but rather by Moses Qimḥi. David Qimḥi “borrowed” heavily from Ibn ‘Ezra and therefore may be a source for understanding something of his lost commentaries, which perhaps he saw.

21 Editions of the commentary alone: Naples, 1488; Constantinople, 1514; edition, with text, Constantinople, 1522 (rpt. Berlin, 1705). The commentary appears in the famous “Rabbinical Bibles”: (a) Venice, 1524–25 (“Second Rabbinical Bible”); (b) Venice, 1546–48, 1568 (“Third Rabbinical Bible”); (c) Venice, 1617–18 (“Fourth Rabbinical Bible,” i.e., fifth revision); (d) Basel, 1618–19 (ed. Johannes Buxtorf); 2 vols.; (e) Amsterdam, 1724–28 (“Seventh Rabbinical Bible”) and frequently thereafter (the term “Rabbinical Bible,” invented by bibliographers, simply refers to early Hebrew bibles with commentaries; on medieval printed editions, see the article “Bible Manuscripts, Printed Editions” in Roth, ed., Medieval Jewish Civilization). On Genesis, in addition to the work of Prijs (discussed below), Ben-Menahem edited Chapters 1.1–2 in Otsar [Oṣ ar] yehūdey Sefarad 2 (1959): 43–54; rpt. in his Inyaney Ibn ‘Ezra, 10–28. Abramson, in his important review essay in K”S 51 (1976): 654–58, carefully analyzed Prijs’s edition. Many of Abramson’s criticisms led to corrections in the more complete later edition by Prijs of the commentary of Ibn ‘Ezra on Gen. 1–3 (London, 1989). It should be noted that Abramson’s criticism of both the editions of Weiser and Prijs relate only to technical matters of editing; nothing was said about the notes (particularly Prijs), which are often of considerable value.

22 Editions with supercommentaries (to be discussed later) appeared in Venice, 1553, and Mantua, 1559, and in later years. An edition by Judah Krinsky, based on three manuscripts and the commentary in Bible (O.T. Pentateuch. Hebrew. 1859) Miqra’ōt gedōlōt, ed. Netter (Vienna, 1859; rpt. 1936–37, 1976; etc.), 5 vols. (which Krinsky claimed was superior to other eds.), is in the Pentateuch entitled Mehōgeqey Yehūdah, with important commentary. There is still no “critical edition” of Ibn ‘Ezra’s commentary, but Weiser’s edition (generally cited here) has become the standard text. In fact, it is based chiefly on Krinsky, and there are many (over 40) manuscripts which Weiser did not consult, nor did he utilize
all of the above editions (see his preface in vol. 1); see the severe criticism by S. Abramson, art. cit., and also by N. Ben-Menahem in *Bet midrash* [Bet mitzvah] 3 (1957): 63. Weiser unfortunately did not even consult the important corrections from Cambridge MS. 46, carefully compiled by Bacher, “Ḥilufey nusḥa’ot”; see Bacher, *Variaten* (I have utilized these). The facsimile ed. of MS. Vat. Ebr. 38, Commentary to the Pentateuch, with Eng. intro. by E. Levine (Jerusalem, 1974), is difficult to read because of the poor printing quality (curiously, Abramson ignored that publication in his review essay; however, he examined the manuscript itself and reported that it is full of errors). The longest commentary on Ibn ‘Ezra ever written is that of Moses Crémieux (not “Karmi”), *Sēfer hō‘iyl Mōsheh bēr* (Aix, 1833–36), 6 (plus vol. 12) vols. (see Friedländer, *Essays*, 246). Apparently no U.S. library has this; however, there is a copy at the Jewish National Library in Jerusalem and the British Library. No one, including Weiser, has consulted this in any published work. There are two English translations of the commentary, by Shachter, with only Leviticus and Deuteronomy published; and complete by Strickman and Silver, an adequate translation for general readers, but not based on Weiser’s edition and with some errors. Shachter’s translation is not as good and lacks needed explanations. There is also *Translation of Ibn ‘Ezra’s commentary on the Pentateuch*, tr. Allan Benyowitz (Jerusalem, s.a. [2006]), 3 vols., not seen.

23 He did not revise his “earlier” commentaries, as Halberstam, introduction to Ibn ‘Ezra, *Sēfer ha-‘ibūr* thought; see Wilensky, M., “Sēfer safah ḥerurah,” *Devir* [Deviyr] 2 (1924): 279, and see the colophon of his commentary on Isaiah (see n. 25). Several scholars have argued that the “long” (regular) commentary on Exodus and the “other” recension on Genesis are part of the same commentary; however, this is denied by Kislev, who carefully reviews the evidence, “Relationship,” 283 ff.

24 The “other recension” on Genesis as we have it is not complete. It was the opinion of Judah Fleischer (“Be-eyzu shanah met Rabenu [sic] Avraham Ibn ‘Ezra?” 246 n. 5; and “Rabenymu [sic] Avraham Ibn ‘Ezra be-Ṣarfat,” 218) that Ibn ‘Ezra wrote a complete revision, which has not survived. Both versions were known in later medieval Spain; for example, Samuel Ibn Moṭṭoṭ (fourteenth century), in his supercommentary on Ibn ‘Ezra (*Megiylat setariym* [Venice, 1553], f. 18, col. b; 22, col. a; etc.), cites the “shiyṭah aḥeret.” It is interesting that Moses b. Naḥman (“Naḥmides”) had that text, which is cited by him at least once and possibly elsewhere (on Gen. 17.1, Ibn ‘Ezra explained “in the name of the naqiyd,” i.e., Ibn Naghrillah, which statement is found in that recension; ed. Weiser 1: 192). For other later citations, including Menahēm “ha-Meiyriy” (the *Mēshiyya nefesh* is the first part of his *Ḥibūr ha-teḥūvah*), see Schorr in *he-Ḥalēs* 11 (1880): 92 (this escaped the attention of Weiser). This recension of Gen. Chapters 1–11 was edited by M. Mortara in *Otsar Ūṣar neḥmad* 2 (1857): 209–23; on Chapters 1–17 by Weiss in *Bet Beyt* ha-‘midrash 1 (1865): 14 ff., and rpt. in Friedländer, *Essays*, Heb. appendix, 1–71, with other unpublished sections on Gen. 47.28–49.10 and Lev. 23.15. For the second recension of Exodus, see below. The entire text of Weiss (taken from Friedländer) was reprinted in Weiser’s ed. of *Peyrūḏ* 1: 137–93 (nevertheless, it is necessary to see the original publications of these and not to rely entirely on Weiser). Weiser there claimed to have “compared” Mortara’s text with that of Weiss to “correct” and annotate his edition, but it is clear that he never saw Mortara’s text at all (in fact, he entirely omitted sections of it). According to Mortara’s introduction, that text was written by one of Ibn ‘Ezra’s students (yet this is contradicted by statements such as “I have already explained…”?); in fact, it differs in the beginning from the text of Weiss, and
reflects yet a third recension of the commentary. To the best of my knowledge, no one has discussed Mortara’s text since its publication; even Friedländer made only a brief mention of it. Friedländer did, however, allude to a “third recension” of the commentary (perhaps on the entire Pentateuch, or at least begun before his death), Essays, 158, 160 (the text of the epilogue which he mentions, 158, was edited by Ben-Menahem, see n. 28). A. Mondschein discovered a fragment (Gen. 32.4–36.43) apparently of this third recension, which he did not publish but discussed and quoted sections in relation to Ibn ‘Ezra’s other commentaries (“‘Shiyṭ ha-šeliyšiyt’ le-feyrusho shel R’ [sic] Avraham Ibn ‘Ezra le-Torah?”). Virtually the same article, “Peyrush ha-RAB”‘A,” finally has the full text of the fragment with extensive notes, 209–21. Many of the comments there attributed to Ibn ‘Ezra are surprisingly simplistic. Judah Mosconiy (fourteenth century) wrote that Ibn ‘Ezra made the second revision of his commentary at the request of Isaac b. Judah, to whom he dedicated his Sefer ha-shēm (cited by Friedländer, Essays, 216; he says that this is “groundless,” but gives no reason; in fact, it is not improbable since that work was written in Béziers ca. 1156, at about the same time, or a little later, as the second recension on Exodus).

25 Sela and Freudenthal, “Chronology,” 18, incorrectly claim that the “short” commentary on the Pentateuch, titled by them “Sefer ha-Yashar” (see following note on this term), was written in Lucca between 1142 and 1145; however, the aforementioned colophon of the commentary on Isaiah states that it was completed in 1145, and since there is no reference in that commentary to the Torah commentary it is safe to assume that the latter was written later, after the commentary on Isaiah. The “other recension” is what they refer to as “Commentary on Genesis II,” which they claim, 21, was written in Rouen (France) in 1155–56 (debatable; see further on this below). Friedländer and others have advanced questionable theories about some of the commentaries having been written for “unlearned” people, and of a different approach in the supposedly more “enlightened” atmosphere of Italy as opposed to the more “traditional” one in (allegedly) France. It is clear that he wrote his commentaries, as well as his other works, at the specific request of individual scholars or students, and was not engaged in any “enlightenment” campaign. Regev has recently proposed that the “long” recension of some of his commentaries was intended for “enlightened” readers and the “short” recension for those who merely wanted a simple explanation of the text (“Siymboliyqah shel ma’asēh ha-mishkan,” 251). The same interpretation is given by Regev specifically to the two recensions of the commentary on Exodus (“‘Ta’amei Ha-Mitzvot’ in R. Avraham Ibn-Ezra’s Commentary: Secrets,” in Díaz Esteban, ed., Abraham Ibn Ezra y su tiempo, 240), suggesting that the “long” recension (shiyṭah aḥeret) was written for those who had a basic philosophical knowledge. This is possible, if indeed that recension was written in Provence and not, as some have claimed, France (see further below). The Jews of Provence were far more “enlightened” (in terms of acquaintance with science and philosophy) than the Jews of Italy.

26 On “Sefer ha-yaṣhar” as his commentary (and not just the “short” commentary), see his rhymed introduction to the standard text of the commentary, and other works; e.g., Sefat yeter, 18b; Safah berūrah, 43b and note; Sefer ha-ibûr, 9a. There is a fifteenth-century manuscript of the commentary on Genesis and Exodus at Madrid, Universidad Complutense (BH MSS 8; formerly 117-z-27), described as “Sefer ha-Yasar” (sic); there is, of course, no Venice, 1517 ed., with which this is said to correspond (Memoria de Sefarad exhibition catalogue [Madrid] 2002, 206). It is unlikely that he derived this title from the book of the same name mentioned in the Bible (Joshua 10.13; 2 Sam. 1.18); and see Sela and Freudenthal,
“Chronology,” 27–28. If this term refers to the entire Torah or even just Genesis, Ibn 'Ezra would hardly have applied it to his own commentary. Ibn 'Ezra also sometimes refers to his first, or “other,” recension as “Sēfer ha-yesōd”; e.g., in the regular commentary on Gen. 1.1 (ed. Weiser 1: 12), where he criticizes Sa'adyah, he says “and I have already explained this in Sēfer ha-yesōd,” and that explanation is found in the “other” recension (ed. Friedländer, Essays, Heb. appendix, 20–22; ed. Weiser 1: 156–58; and see the important observations of Prijs, Abraham Ibn Ezra’s Kommentar, 9–10 n. 42). This is not the same as his lost grammatical treatise of the same name (also cited, e.g., on Gen. 3.22, Ex. 32.1 and Deut. 20.19); nor is it the Yesōd diqdūq, as Allony thought (his ed. of that work, 52 at n. 150, citing Gen. 1.1 with the observation “it is not in this work”); of course not, since it refers to the above statement in his commentary). I was not able to find the statement of Sa'adyah, which Ibn 'Ezra criticizes, in Zucker’s ed. of Peyrūshey Rav Sa'adyah Gaōn le-Berēshiyyt; however, in Amānāt w'al-iṭiqādāt (ha-Emūnāt ve-ha-de’ēt), III, he wrote at length about man as the ultimate purpose of creation. Friedländer’s claim, 20 n. 5, that this whole passage is a later interpolation in Ibn 'Ezra is incorrect, as noted already by Bacher, Avraham Ibn 'Ezra ha-medādqēq, 15 n. 5 (and so also Friedländer’s comment, 115, on the passage is in error). The term “yesōd,” which has aroused much scholarly comment, is not unique to Ibn 'Ezra, but was used already by Rashi (on R.H. 20b): “thus I saw in the yesōd [commentary] of Rabbi Sa'adyah” (this certainly does not mean that he actually saw a Hebrew translation of that, since none is known, but rather a citation in some other work) and in his commentary on Num. 7.18 and 15.41 with reference to the commentary Mīdrrash berēshiyyt rabatīy of Moses “ha-darshan” (“the preacher,” Narbonne, eleventh century, not then part of Spain; see Sources here). That work was not seen by Spanish commentators, but is cited by Nahmanides from references in Rashi. In one of those citations, he quotes Rashi: “from the yesōd [commentary] of Rabbi Moses ‘ha-darshan’ I learned this” (on Deut. 21.14; Peyrūšhī, ed. Chavel 2: 444).

27 Texts of the poem: Ibn 'Ezra, Qōvēš 1: 69–70 and Ibn 'Ezra, Reime und Gedichte 2: 55–56, with references there to earlier editions, and in Friedländer, Essays, 147–48, with English translation (all of this apparently unknown to Sela and Freudenthal, “Chronology”). For whatever reason, it was not included by Weiser in his edition of the commentary. This Moses is not to be confused, of course, with Moses b. Menahēm of Rome, whose father was a scholar there and to whom (father and son) Ibn 'Ezra dedicated another poem (Qōvēš 1: 60–63); and see Gottheil, “Bible Mss. in the Roman Synagogues,” 183–84, on a manuscript of Ibn 'Ezra's commentary containing poems, perhaps by Ibn 'Ezra himself, dedicated to a certain Menahēm, who well may be the same one. From a letter of Maimonides to Samuel Ibn Tibbon (Heb. tr. only, in Moses b. Maimon, Qōvēš II, 27–29), we know of a certain Rabbi Meir, who had studied with Ibn 'Ezra. Possibly Moses was the son of whichever scholar this was who had been a student of Ibn 'Ezra. Part of the letter, in Ibn Tibbon's translation, was also edited from another manuscript, by Kaufmann, Attributenlehre, 336, note 206 and 372 n. 14, and Studien über Salomon Ibn Gabirol, 6. Alexander Marx edited a small portion of the text from another manuscript (J.Q.R. 25 [1935]: 386). Isaiah Sonne discussed the letter in detail (in Tarbiz [Tarbiyyot] 10 [1939]: 135–54 and edited (309–32) yet another text from a relatively late Verona manuscript. The important (Parma) De Rossi MSS. 143.4, 145.11 and 772.11 have not been consulted by anyone. See also Steinschneider, H.U., 40 ff. and 417 ff. (there is much more to be said about this letter, but this is not the place; some have doubted the authenticity of parts, or all, of the letter, but there is no reason for such doubt). Gross, G. J., 246–47,
Abraham Ibn ‘Ezra identified “Jacob” as Jacob b. Meir (“Rabēnu Tam”) and Meir as his student, hence of northern France. Marx, *Studies*, 50 n. 4, thought Meir was Meir of Carcassonne, who settled in Tyre and is mentioned in a responsa of Maimonides (he is mentioned also by Benjamin of Tudela). Another possibility is Meir b. Barūkh from France; al-Ḥ arīzī (*Tahkemoni*, “Gate 46,” tr. Valle, 290) describes him as head of the Jerusalem community, along with his brother Joseph (cf. also Abraham, the son of Maimonides, *Milḥamot ha-Šem*,” in Moses b. Maimon, *Qōvēs* III, 16; and see Stern, “An Unpublished Maqama by Al-Harizi,” *Papers* of the Institute of Jewish Studies London I [Jerusalem, 1964], 190–91, with no mention of Gross or Marx). It would be possible, if we knew the particulars of his life, for this Meir to have learned from all three of the scholars named (if Ibn ‘Ezra spent some time in France, as alleged). Joseph Kohen, *Hagūtō ha-fiylōšōfiyṭ*, 45–49, criticized Fleischer’s interpretation of the entire matter. His arguments are not completely persuasive. There are several errors and misconceptions in Kohen’s book, particularly concerning the little known details of Ibn ‘Ezra’s life, on which see Roth, “Abraham Ibn ‘Ezra—Highlights of His Life.”

28 *Essays*, 158–60 (with texts and translations of the various versions in the notes). See also the text in Ben-Menahem, *Mi-gitze Yisraēl ba-Vaṭiyqan*, 21 ff., and especially 25 and 27 (the author believed the text to be authentic). The poem was also edited and translated by Rosin (*Reime und Gedichte* pt. 2: 81–82), with reference to earlier publications. It was also mentioned by Žvi Edelmann, introduction to Edelmann and Dukes, eds., *Ginzey Oxford*, xvi (note), who, nevertheless, misinterpreted it and also dismissed, without reason, the statement in the manuscript that Ibn ‘Ezra died on “the second day [Monday], the new moon of [the month of] Second Adar” of that same year (1167). David Kahana was also misled by that poem (which he reprinted, Ibn ‘Ezra, *Qōvēs* 1: 35), which claims that the commentary was completed in Rome, into believing that Ibn ‘Ezra died in Rome in 1167 (ibid., 2, part 2: 74; he there reprinted, 67–68, the above colophon); and so also Graetz, Brody and others. However, the poem also appears in manuscripts of his grammatical work *Safah berūrāh*, which misled many to believe that the work was written in Rome in that year. See J. Fleischer’s correct assumption that this poem was an addition by a copyist in Rome; introduction to (Ibn ‘Ezra), *Ṣēfer… le-Šemōt*, xxxvi–vii, and his “Eyfāḥ mēt Rabēnu Avraham Ibn ‘Ezra”; yet in his “Matay ve-eyfāḥ ḥibēr Ibn ‘Ezra ‘Safah verūrāh’ shelō” 85, he peculiarly seems to have believed that the poem was authentic and belonged to the Torah commentary. See further his first article on this, “Be-eyzu shanah mēt Rabēnu Avraham Ibn ‘Ezra.” Aaron Mondschein, “‘Iyunīym be-ḥasruzot ha-petiyḥah,” discussed the poem in detail.

29 Friedländer, *Essays*, 154, argued that the two commentaries are not different “recensions,” but entirely separate commentaries “probably based on the same [lost] original,” a theory which is no longer tenable. The first complete edition of the “short” recension, *Biyūr ‘al sēfer Šemōt niqqa ha-qasēr* was edited by I.S. Reggio (Prague, 1840; this has been very poorly catalogued by many U.S. libraries as *Handschriftlicher kommentar über Exodus*, with no mention of the editor, Hebrew title, etc.), and a corrected edition according to new manuscripts by Fleischer, *Ṣēfer Ibn ‘Ezra le-Šemōt*, although there are problems with that edition also. Fleischer’s text was simply reprinted by Krinsky, *Mehōqeqey Yehūdah* (conveniently incorporated into the regular commentary, but marked to indicate it) and Weiser, *Peyrūshēy* 2: 139 ff., with some of his own notes. Prijs, “Biyūr meqomot qashiyim be-feyrusho ha-qasār,” offered some important corrections and additions to the explanations of Fleischer in his edition; these were unfortunately ignored by Weiser. Naftali Ben-Menahem obtained pages of a manuscript
owned by Jacob Toledano (see Toledano, Ōṣar genaziym, 206–07) which has important variations (according to him, it is the best of all extant manuscripts), which he published in Otsar Ōṣar yehudey Sefarad 4 (1961): 91–107; reprinted in his Inyaney Ibn ‘Ezra, 29–55, also ignored by Weiser. Ben-Menahem decided, contrary to the opinion of Toledan, that the manuscript was not written in the lifetime of Ibn ‘Ezra, but perhaps in the fourteenth century. Toledano (loc. cit.) mentioned that he had shown the manuscript to Ben-Menahem; it would have been helpful had he then or later expressed his views to Toledano as to the date.

30 Friedländer, Essays, 152. He followed earlier writers in maintaining that this recension was not intended to be a part of the standard commentary on the Torah (see Fleischer’s introduction to his aforementioned edition, where he discussed this position of some earlier writers). If, in fact, there was a (lost) “original” text of a commentary on Exodus (see previous note), then that was also written in Italy and as part of the complete Torah commentary. It is again hard to explain how this “original” text disappeared entirely. In any event, Ibn ‘Ezra clearly wrote his “long” commentary after he had written his commentary on Psalms, which he cites on Ex. 20.8 (ed. Weiser 2: 136). Fleischer proved fairly conclusively that the “short” recension was not written at the end of his life, as previous scholars insisted, but rather much earlier. It may well be that this was part of the planned commentary mentioned above (the age of 64 not being, perhaps, exact and so off by one year), and perhaps he started that with Exodus and never wrote any more. As for the date, there seems little reason to question the manuscript evidence. Sela and Freudenthal, “Chronology,” 21, date it as Rouen, 1155–57 (ignoring Golb’s claims, see following note). Incidentally, all of this was overlooked, except for Fleischer’s cited introduction, by Simon, “La-darkho ha-parshaniyt shel ha-RAb”‘A”; see especially 93 and notes.

31 Golb, Tōldōt ha-yehudiyim ba-’iyr Rūan, 52, and Jews in Medieval Normandy, 269, concluded that Ibn ‘Ezra composed the “long” recension on Exodus (in 1153) in Rouen (Normandy).

32 Note that Yeda’yah b. Abraham “Bedersiy” (=“of Béziers”; ca. 1270 or after-d. ca. 1340) in his “apology” stated that Sefer ha-shēm was written for scholars in Béziers (in Ibn Adret, She‘ēlot 1, no. 418, f. 57a). Modern writers have overlooked this. He also stated, loc. cit., that the “great men” of the land (Provence) rejoiced when Ibn ‘Ezra came there and that he wrote the commentaries on the Torah and Prophets “for them,” i.e., the scholars of Provence, “and in every place where he sensed a contradiction [in the texts] he elucidates it [literally, ‘arouses; stirs up’], whether with a complete explanation or slight hint, as is necessary” (it is interesting that Yed’ayah makes no mention of the commentaries on the “Writings”). We know that Ibn ‘Ezra was in Béziers (Provence) in the same year, or nearly so, that he wrote the second recensions of his commentaries. He wrote most of his scientific works in Provence. Golb, Tōldōt, 46–47 n. 121, insisted that all the works said specifically to have been written in Béziers were actually written in Bordeaux, an untenable position; elsewhere he indicated they were written in Rouen (which, of course, is not in Bordeaux). However, he did not notice, or at least did not mention, the above statement of Yeda’yah “Bedersiy.” (See generally on Ibn ‘Ezra’s writings Sela and Freudenthal, “Chronology,” there, 21; they also accept Golb’s theory about Rouen.)

33 For these citations or references, see Lipshitz, ’iyāniym, 80–110. Lipshitz there examined all of the extant texts of the biblical commentaries of these French rabbis, which no one previously had done, and see n. 44 on citations from David Qimhi. There are, in addition, frequent citations of Ibn ‘Ezra in the actual Tosafōt; see the index to Urbach, Ba’aleh tōsafōt. I have not investigated these to
determine if their citations are accurate since this can easily be done by anyone interested.

34 See Friedländer, Essays, 187. The commentaries on the “Scrolls” are found in editions of the Pentateuch with commentaries, in Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy at the end of each book. There is a critical edition by Gómez Aranda on Ecclesiastes, Comentario... al libro del Eclesiastes, with an excellent Spanish translation (see Bibliography). The introduction and the notes to the translation are particularly important. The same scholar has done a critical edition and translation of the commentaries on Esther. Gómez Aranda, “Influence,” has shown that Ibn ‘Ezra was dependent to an extent on the earlier commentary of Isaac Ibn Ghyaṭh (correct spelling). In “Aristotelian Theories,” the author provides (43 ff.) an important comparison with scientific works of Aristotle. For complete bibliography of all his commentaries, see my Dictionary, 261–92, to which there are now a few additions. See also Bibliography here.

35 Reconstruction des Commentars Ibn Esras, i.e., not actually his commentaries but a reconstruction of fragments based on references in his other commentaries and writings, and also to some citations by others. See also Ochs, “Die Wiederherstellung des Kommentare Ibn Esras.” M. Perani, “Frammenti,” discovered what he thought were fragments of his commentary (or by one of his students) on Jeremiah and Ezekiel; however, these are actually from the commentaries of Menahēm b. Simon of Posquieres, who may have been his student (see here Chapter 3, n. 19 and 20). There has been some debate about whether, in fact, Ibn ‘Ezra ever wrote commentaries on most of the books mentioned. ‘Ezra b. Solomon Gatiño (not “France” but Zaragoza, 1356), author of one of the super-commentaries on Ibn ‘Ezra, wrote that no such commentaries on those books existed and everything said in Ibn ‘Ezra’s name about them is fictitious (“like a prophetic vision”); in Jellinek, Aaron. Qunīrās ha-mazkḥiy (Vienna, 1893), 23; cf. Ben-Menahem, Mi-ginzey Yisraēl ba-Vatīyqan, 70. See also Lipshtiz, ‘Īyniym, 24 n. 71, for references to the opinions of modern scholars on this (however, his citation of Herzog there is incorrect). Nevertheless, Naḥmanides cited some statements from Ibn ‘Ezra, apparently from such commentaries (e.g., on Judges 11.31, in Moses b. Naḥman, Peyrūshey, ed. Chavel 2: 193). Ibn ‘Ezra’s commentary on the story of Yiftāḥ (“Jephthah”), Judges 11.31, is referred to both by Naḥmanides (Lev. 27.29) and by Ibn Kaspiy, Gevia’ Keseφ, 30 (text), 220 (tr., and see n. 21); these are not noted in Reconstruction. A fragment of the alleged commentary on 1 Chron. 29.11–13, edited from manuscripts, is in Friedländer, Essays, Hebrew appendix, 71–72. Mondschein, “ha-Umnam katav RAB”A peyrush,” denied that Ibn ‘Ezra wrote a commentary on Chronicles. However, the same author later wrote a lengthy article arguing that the fragment on 1 Chron. 29 (Friedländer, above) as well as that on Lev. 23.15 (ibid., 69–71) are authentic and a later separate writing (“‘Le-kha H’ ha-gedūlah’”, concluding with a “critical ed.” of the texts). The brilliance of the article notwithstanding, I am still not thoroughly convinced that these texts are authentic. The very similarity to a text of Sa‘adyah, pointed out by the author, is only one reason for skepticism. It should be noted that Reuben b. Hayyim (thirteenth century), teacher of Menahēm b. Solomon “ha-Meiyriy,” cited Ibn ‘Ezra precisely on 1 Chron. 29.11 (Sēfer ha-tamiyd, ed. Jacob Toledano in Otsar [Ōṣar] ha-hayyim 11 [1935]: 1–42; and offprint, without t.p. [Deva (Hungary), 1935]; rpt. [with t.p.] Jerusalem, 1966/67; 24, but in a confused text which was corrected by Judah Fleischer in a note at the end of the book, 41). On alleged manuscripts of the commentary on Chronicles, see Valle Rodríguez, “La exégesis de Abraham Ibn Ezra,” 314.
I am somewhat skeptical about Ibn 'Ezra's authorship of this introduction (in bibles with commentaries; so-called **Miqra’ot gedolot**), or at least this part of it, since not only does it not reflect his actual interpretation of the book but the term **ha-maqöm** for God, while found in rabbinical literature (and in **Sêfer yesi-yrah**, the “old” text, 4.2; section 5 of Hayman’s edition – see Bibliography), is not one he used elsewhere, as far as I know; in only his introduction to Esther did he state that God is not called **maqöm** (place) anywhere in the Bible, but that the sages used the term because every place is full of his glory (cf. Gen. **rabah** 58.9: “he is the ‘place’ of the world and the world is not his ‘place’”). On the term **maqöm**, see the detailed discussion by Marmorstein, *The Old Rabbinic Doctrine of God* 1: 92, 129–53. Interestingly, Maimonides in his discussion of the equivocal meanings of **maqöm** (“Guide” I. 8) does not mention the rabbinical reference to God. Qabalistic writers, particularly Baḥya b. Asher Ibn Ḥallāvā, frequently used the term.

The most immediate sources for this notion (neither is mentioned specifically by him) are the Aramaic translation (**Targum**) of Song of Songs 5.1, where **keneset Yisraël** is likened to a bride, and (midrash) Song of Songs **rabah** 5.1.1, where, however, only one rabbi’s opinion is quoted as interpreting “garden” as God’s “bridal chamber” and **keneset Yisraël** is not mentioned. Philip S. Alexander, in his very important “Tradition and Originality in the Targum of the Song of Songs,” in Beattie and McNamara, eds., *Aramaic Bible*, discussed (322–23) this verse in a different context (art., 318–39). The *E.J.* article on Song of Songs (15: 147) claims that interpretation of the book “necessarily” begins with the allegory of “the love of God for His people.” In fact, this “necessary” interpretation is hardly found, or is given a secondary place, in our medieval commentators. It is, however, in Sa’adyah’s commentary (an anonymous Hebrew translation in Wertheimer, ed., *Ginzey Yerushalayim* [1981 photo rpt. of the original], 173, etc.).

Similarly, in the briefer introduction to the “first recension,” when he says that the third way of his interpretation will be “on the paths of the midrash” he does not, of course, refer to a specific midrash (such as Song of Songs **rabah**), but rather allegory; he uses the term **midrash** in that sense also elsewhere in his commentaries. Luis Girón Blanc briefly examined the “first recension” in relation to Song of Songs **rabah** and found only a few instances of possible influence (“El comentario a ‘Cantar de los Cantares’ de Abraham Ibn Ezra y el ‘Midrash Sîr ha-šîrîm,’” in Díaz Esteban, ed., *Abraham Ibn Ezra y su tiempo*, 121–28); this and a short summary of the commentary by Stefan Reif, ibid., 241–49, are the only presentations in that conference volume which relate specifically to any of his biblical commentary (M. Orfali, 225–32, made a few observations on some authorities cited in his Torah commentary). Cohen, *Three Approaches to Biblical Metaphor*, mentions (263–64) only in a casual and unsatisfactory way the commentary on Song of Songs. In his *Opening the Gates*, he again barely refers to it, 206–07, hastening on to a discussion of Maimonides but with no suggestion of a connection between the two.

And so in the introduction to the “second way” in the first recension, ed. Mathews, 9 (text). The numerous rabbinical statements about the “sanctity” of Song of Songs, etc. are quoted by Louis Finkelstein (in Hebrew) in Scholem, *Jewish Gnosticism*, 118–23. There was, in fact, debate among the sages as to whether the book deserved inclusion in the canon of the Bible (**Yadaim** 3: 5; **Megillah** 7a).

Abraham Ibn ‘Ezra

41 Simon, *Arba’ gıyshōt*, and in translation, devotes a lengthy chapter to Ibn ‘Ezra in which he discusses some of his other biblical commentary, other books and poems (and with digressions on medieval poetics and other matters), but says very little about Ibn ‘Ezra’s actual “approach” (*giyshah*) to interpreting the Psalms. Other aspects of Simon’s book are more valuable. The most important contribution is the publication, 237–43 (in the translation, 308–29), from manuscript of the extensive version of Ibn ‘Ezra’s introduction to his commentary on Psalms. The influence both of Sa’adyah and of Ibn Ghiyāth on the first introduction to the commentary was noted by Simon. See further on this Distefano, *Inner-Midrashic Introductions*, 168–70.

42 Translated in Fenton, *Philosophie et exégèse*, 316. It is unlikely that this work was written before Ibn ‘Ezra’s commentaries (Fenton in his detailed analysis says nothing about possible dates). I do not mean to suggest that he saw Ibn ‘Ezra’s written commentary, but perhaps he learned of the explanation orally, e.g., from Judah ha-Lévyy.

43 Seidler, “Literary Devices in the Psalms,” calls attention to various devices recognized in the commentary, particularly parallelism (see index here for this).

44 The actual text is clearly as cited by Qimḥi

for it mentions the corners [directions] of the world, behold it mentions the heavens and the earth, and they are two corners, above and below, and it mentions north and west, and [Mt.] Tabor which is in the corner of the west, that is, “behind,” and [Mt.] Hermon in the east, that is, “eastward”; thus, six corners are mentioned. And this is what is written in *Sēfer yeṣiyrah* ‘sealed with six rings.

(Qimḥi, *Peyrūš ha-shalēm ‘al Tehiliym*, 197)

See Lipshitz, *‘Iyũniym*, 34–35, on this and other citations by Qimḥi which indicate the correct text in Ibn ‘Ezra’s commentary on Ps. 17.15 and 46.3. Simon, who did not here consult Lipshitz or Darom’s edition of Qimḥi, said nothing about any of these citations. It is interesting that in the “other recension” of his commentary on Gen. 2.6 (ed. Weiser 1: 166, from Friedländer, *Essays*, Heb. appendix, 35) Ibn ‘Ezra gave a different schema: six “corners” (directions), which are above (or upward), before, right; these are the “honored” directions, and presumably the others are their opposites: beneath, behind and left (however, that is something of an esoteric interpretation there).

45 Dan. 11.4. In spite of this, see the extensive historical insights in his commentary on Dan. 1.1, 6.1, 7.11, 8.14 and 9.24. The statement that knowing the past does not help in the present seems also to contradict much of what he wrote in his commentary on Psalms, as mentioned above. The explanation is that this need not be taken too seriously; it is merely a “pious” denial of the value of history, such as we find in Bahyah Ibn Paqudah (see Bibliography) and even more strongly in Maimonides (see also Simon, *Arba’ gıyshōt*, 190 n. 154, unfortunately missing in the translation, *Four Approaches*, where the notes have been renumbered). For Maimonides, see his introduction to his commentary on *Sanhedrin* 10.1, translated from the original Arabic in my *Maimonides*, 50: “Extra-canonical books”. See in general Salo Baron’s classic article “The Historical Outlook of Maimonides.” Simon, “*Peshāṭ* Exegesis of Biblical Historiography,” briefly discussed Ibn ‘Ezra’s historical approach but failed to mention Dan. 11.4; however, see his useful comments, 177* and n. 16, concerning Ibn ‘Ezra’s reference to (pseudo-Josephus) *Sēfer Yōṣīfūn*. On the exilarchs, incidentally, see Rhode, *Arabic Versions of the Pentateuch*. Particularly of interest in relation to Hebrew and/or Jewish traditions are manuscripts discussed there, 80–81, 92–93 (note the gloss that after the Roman siege of Betar [135 C.E.], in the Land of Israel, “the chiefs
of the descendants of David” took the Torah and went to Baghdad “and they are living in Baghdad unto this day,” and there they made copies of the Torah and sent them “to every band” of the Jews.

46 See especially Ibn ‘Ezra on Dan. 2.39 and 7.6; for the background in Jewish sources, and a discussion of Ibn ‘Ezra in that context, see my Jews, Visigoths & Muslims, 205–09. Contrast the polemical interpretation of Yafet (Yefet) b. ‘Ali, cited there 208–09, with the more dispassionate and historical interpretation of Ibn ‘Ezra. Simon, in his notes in Ibn ‘Ezra, Sheney peyrūyšey...Trey-ʿAsar, 175, incorrectly claimed that in his remark on Gen. 27.40 (“those who sleep, who have not awakened from foolishness, think that we are in the exile of Edom”) he opposed the traditional identification of Edom with Rome; however, that is not the case: rather, he meant that actual biblical Edom had long since disappeared (metaphorically, he identified Greece and Rome with Edom, as noted; and see Num. 24.24, ed. Weiser 2: 190 n. 91). On Naḥmanides’ disagreement with Ibn ‘Ezra, see his commentary on Num. 24.20, ed. Chavel 2: 302, and see Lipshitz, Pinqey ʿiyūn, 27 and cf. 85; it is surprising that Naḥmanides (Gen. 37.25) overlooked the passage in Pinqey de-Rabiy Eliʾezor (Chapter 38) cited by Lipshitz, since he frequently quoted that midrash. Other authorities commented on this topic as well.

47 Essentially the same statement is repeated in his Yesōd mōra, ed. Waxman, 20 (tr. Strickman, 174); ed. Kohen, 204–05. For other statements by him on this, and related sources, see A. Lipshitz, ʿIyūnim bi-ʾshōnōt ha-RABʾA, 21–22). Little of significance has been written on the interpretation of divine names in medieval biblical exegesis.

48 Commentary on Gen. 2.12, end; ed. Weiser 1: 22. Yesōd mōra, loc. cit. There is an erroneous (not to say potentially damaging) translation by Strickman there: “This name [YHVH] refers only to the God of the Hebrews” (my emphasis). The text actually reads “Moses only mentioned to Pharaoh the ineffable name which [who] is the God of the Hebrews”; thus, in this context it is necessary to explain that Moses referred to the “God of the Hebrews,” not that there is any other God or that YHVH is only the God of the Jews. In Sēfer ha-shēm 8.4 (Ibn ‘Ezra, Yalqūṭ, 428), he cited a slightly different text, “how pleasant are the words of our predecessors who said that by half of the Name the upper world was created and by half the lower world.” See Levin’s notes, 438, referring to Menahot 9b and other sources; cf. also Ibn ‘Ezra, Shiye’y ha-qōdeṣ 1: 137, lines 13–14: “two worlds were created by it [the Name], for by it were created / the supernal world by Yōd Hē [the first half of the Name] and the lower world by Vav Hē,” concluding “But I am not able to explain, and the soul will understand it.”

49 “Other recension” in Ibn ‘Ezra, ed. Weiser 1: 158; ed. Friedländer, Essays, Heb. appendix, 23. Ibn ‘Ezra, Sēfer ha-shēm, Chapter 8.2 (Yalqūṭ, 427). The special name (YHVH) was “withheld,” as it were, from the world until Adam produced offspring, which guaranteed the survival of the species, according to Moses Ibn Tibbon’s commentary on Ibn ‘Ezra here (ed. from manuscript as Appendix II in Moses Ibn Tibbons Kommentar zum Hohelied, 611–12, line 29 ff.). The difficulty with this, of course, is that it calls into question God’s omniscience and providence (even “general” providence, hashgaḥah kelaliyyt). Note that Ibn Tibbon was commenting on the version of the “other recension,” which is not the explanation given in the “standard” version, according to which this problem does not present itself.

50 See also his commentary on Ex. 9.30 on Moses only mentioning the ineffable name of God, and 3.13 on Moses and miracles. See also on Ex. 3.15, end (ed. Weiser 2: 35), that only two books in the Bible contain no mention of God: Esther and Ecclesiastes (the last verse, of course, was added by the rabbis; he
Abraham Ibn ‘Ezra did not mention Song of Songs probably because of Rabbi ‘Aqiva’s well-known statement that all of it is holy and contains the names of God. Ibn ‘Ezra, introduction to his commentary on Esther, explained that when Mordecai wrote the scroll (Esther), which was to be sent to all the provinces of the kingdom, he was concerned that the Persian scribes would substitute the name of one of their gods and therefore made no mention of God. Abraham b. Isaac of Narbonne (ca. 1110–59) cited this same explanation in the name of “the gaon” (Sêfer ha-eshkôl, pt. 2: 62); this is in fact in Sa’adya’s commentary on Esther, Book of Conviviality in Exile, 111 (tr.). As for Ecclesiastes, Ibn ‘Ezra explained that it speaks of deeds (ethical behavior) and there is nothing new, only “supernal knowledge” (God’s knowledge) and no mention of miracles or the like. On the “enduring” nature of the soul in relation to his belief in resurrection, see below “Three Worlds.”

51 Elôhiym is also not a proper name but descriptive (commentary on Ex. 18.19, where he explains that, nevertheless, through frequent use it came to be considered as a proper name); cf. also Ex. 4.16, where he said that Elôhiym everywhere in the Bible stands either for the “proper (ineffable) name” of God or for his “angels.” In his commentary on Ps. 72.19, he explains that there is in no other language the “essential” name of God, and also (in Hebrew) “Elôhiym” and “Shaday” are adjective (descriptive) names. Judah ha-Lévy also wrote that all names of God except the Tetragrammaton are descriptive attributes (Kuzariy II. 2; tr. Hirschfeld, 83). Ibn ‘Ezra generally used the expression shêm ha-tô’ar when he intended “adjective” (and so it is used today), and not tô’ar ha-shêm; however, he sometimes used the terms interchangeably; cf. Prijs, Grammatikalische Terminologie des Abraham Ibn Ezra, 142–45. (Curiously, Kreisel, in his otherwise excellent article “On the Term Kol in Abraham Ibn Ezra,” 39, mistakenly wrote tô’ar ha-shêm, in Hebrew, and “adjective” in discussing this passage.) See also the detailed discussion by Samuel Zarza (see index here on him), Megôr ha-hayiym 29b–30a. In his aforementioned commentary on Ex. 3.13, Ibn ‘Ezra stated that Moses sought to know which of the names of God he should reveal to the Israelites, “since by the name Œl Shaday signs [miracles] cannot be performed, only by the ineffable name.” Naḥmanides vigorously objected to this that God had not yet told Moses to perform any signs, only that he should lead the Israelites from Egypt which he could do using the name Œl Shaday (Peyrûshey, ed. Chavel 1: 290). On some ridiculous modern theories as to the meaning of Shaday, see above, Chapter 1, n. 86.

52 Ex. 3.15, ed. Weiser 2: 24, 25; cf. also on Gen. 1.26; Ex. 6.3, 23.21, and 34.6. Elliot Wolfson, “God, the Demiurge, and the Intellect,” 103, discusses the commentary on Ex. 3.15 and gives a different interpretation, that “all” here refers not to existing things but to the “Hypostasis of the Intellect.” I adhere to what he admits is the traditional interpretation of earlier commentators and most modern scholars (and see below on God’s knowledge of particulars).

53 So also in his Sêfer ha-shêm, Chapter 2, he again cites Ibn Naghrîllah on this and explains the “essential” names and “adjectival” names of God (ed. Lippmann, 4b; Ibn ‘Ezra, Yalqût, 421). On Ibn Asad, see Chapter 1, n. 26, on the unusual reference to him as “Rabbi.” Ibn Asad and also the Qaraite exegete Yafet (Yefet) b. ‘Allî were apparently the source for Ibn ‘Ezra’s interpretation of na’asch (Gen. 1.26) as “was prepared, made” rather than “let us make” (nif’al of the verb rather than future first person plural), so that the meaning is that man was made in the image of God (Gómez Aranda, “Controversies,” 289–90; the article as a whole is a lucid discussion of the topic in other early commentaries).

54 (I use the term “number” here for clarification; actually, one is not a number at all in his thought). See Ex. 33.21 (“long recension”), ed. Weiser 2: 215; other statements there are discussed elsewhere here and see the following note. See also
“long recension” on Ex. 3.15, that one is the sōl (here not “secret” but “source” or elemental grouping) of every number and its foundation (ed. Weiser 2: 26; see, incidentally, Visi, “Early Ibn Ezra Supercommentaries,” 53, on the Paris manuscript of this commentary which must be consulted) and see the important observations of Samuel Zarza in his supercommentary Megḥōr hayiym, 30–31; in Ibn ‘Ezra, Margaliyōt fōvah, 45a. Note also Ibn ‘Ezra on Ex. 26.6, the Tabernacle is called “one, including all, for every body is not a singular thing, [rather] composed of individual [parts]; and thus the ‘honored Name’ which is one including all… and so the microcosm [man] and the macrocosm [universe]” (cf. on Gen. 1.26: “blessed is the Name [God], who began with the large [macrocosm] and finished with the small [microcosm].” In Sēfer ha-shēm, he stated simply that one is the “reason” for all numbers and is not itself a number (Yalqūṭ, 422; and see Levin’s explanation there that according to the Pythagoreans one is not a number since that which measures cannot itself be of the measured); see also Sēfer ha-ḥad, Chapter 1 (Yalqūṭ, 399), and Yēsōd mōra, 18; ed. Kohen, 186–87 (the note, 187, probably by Uriel Simon, is taken without acknowledgment from Levin in Yalqūṭ; this is true elsewhere in that edition) and the index (“sibat”) to his Sheney peyrūshey. See also Abraham b. Ḥayya, Obna encyclopédica ʿYēsōd ha-ṭāḥbūn,” 12. Krinsky, Meḥōqeqey Yehūdah 4: 233b n. 38, added that every power consists of action and upon; he also notes another text, according to which the reading of the commentary on Deut. 32.4 (“tamīyam paʿālāḥ”: “all is two except the Former of all”) is not “two” (shenayim) but “different” (shōniym), according to which the meaning is that everything changes except for the “Former of all” (God). This is certainly the correct reading. Kreisel, “On the Term Kol,” 50 n. 63 (who did not mention Krinsky), suggested that possibly it relates to Ibn Gabīrol’s view that all existents consist of matter and form (this is, of course, Platonic), or Ibn Šīnā (“Avicenna”) that all existents are in a sense composite and God alone is a necessary existent. See also in detail on all of this Ruiz González, “Letras.”

Commentary on Num. 20.8 (ed. Weiser 3: 171, bottom; I follow the reading of the Paris manuscript cited in n. 33 there, which obviously is correct, and see parallel references cited in that note). Kreisel, Prophecy, 188, incorrectly read the word as devēqūt and claimed that it is here used in the sense of “conjunction” (indeed, that is a common modern translation of that term, but that is not what Ibn ‘Ezra wrote); see further the index here, “devēqūh.” Clearly, “knowing” God here is not to be understood in a simple sense; rather, complete “attachment” and perfection of knowledge. Elsewhere he wrote that “there is no doubt” that the Patriarchs knew the essential Name, “only this name [Shaday], which is an adjective, they did not know” (Ex. 6.3; ed. Weiser 2: 47), which of course contradicts the plain meaning of the text and also what he said here (the supercommentaries, as well as Weiser, say nothing about this; Sela, Astrōlōgiyah u-fardhanūt, 171, discusses the passage from a different perspective). It also appears to contradict what he wrote there previously (ed. Weiser 2: 46), where he also said that the beyt of be-Ēl Shaday “is as if it were written ‘and by my name D [=YHVH] I was not known to them,’” which is also found in Judah ha-Lēvy, Kuzariy II. 2 (tr. Hirschfeld, 86); again, this does not mean “borrowing” but probably the result of discussion between them. Wolfsön, “God, the Demiurge, and the Intellect,” 106, also mentioned this but insisted that the “adjective” name here is the “Intellect”; however, Ibn ‘Ezra clearly states “this name,” which means the form he is discussing, which is Shaday. This has nothing to do with “Intellect,” which he does not mention, but refers to God’s actions. On Ex. 23.25 he wrote that serving God is to fulfill all the commandments, to love him and to cleave to
him (cf. Yesōd mōra, Chapter 10.2; ed. Kohen, 175, “this is the foundation of all wisdom”), and explained the four “rewards” which apply to the physical body for this. On Deut. 11.22 he commented cryptically “‘to cleave [attach] to Him’: to the end, and it is a great secret.” “To the end” means to the end of life (cf. his commentary on Deut. 5.30 and 13.5: “in his heart”; to know God, “at the beginning and end” of life); he apparently viewed this as a promise of reward for those who live in fulfillment of the commandments.

56 Num. 22.28 (ed. Weiser 3: 181). Those who claim the ability to perform miracles: his aforementioned “short” recension on Ex. 3.13 (ed. Weiser 2: 245). Joseph b. Eli’ezer “Bonfils,” Ṣōfnat pa’nēah” 1: 199, correctly related this (at least, in part this was the intent) to the famous responsum of Hai (Hayyē) Gaōn on the mystical numbers of the letters of the names of God (in Ashkenazi, Ṭa’am zekhēniym, 57a; the complete text is edited from a manuscript in Teshūvōt ha-geōniym ha-ḥadashōt, 134, and see there also 124–25, and the notes there). See also Rapoport, Sēfer tōldōt, 176 (he cited the abridged version of Joseph’s commentary in Ibn ‘Ezra, Margaliyōt fo‘ah, 45a). A statement by Ibn ‘Ezra in his Yesōd mōra may seem to contradict what is said here that the divine names cannot be used to perform miracles; there he wrote that in confronting Pharaoh in Egypt Moses used the name YHVH “for one who receives its power has the ability on earth to create wonders [mōftiym]” (12.2; ed. Kohen, 205). Strickman completely mistranslated this: “Anyone on Earth under the influence of this Divine Name can create wonders” (Secret of the Torah, 175). Ibn ‘Ezra, of course, did not intend that at all; rather, in the unique case of Moses he was able to do this (and even then, as previously noted, he said that the miracles of Moses had corresponding examples in nature). Strickman also erred (n. 47) in claiming that for Ibn ‘Ezra the name Elōhiym (God) represents divine power “as it is revealed in natural law” and YHVH as revealed in “the supernatural.” There is no “supernatural” for Ibn ‘Ezra, nor is it clear that he had a concept of natural law. See further on Ibn ‘Ezra and determinism, also miracles, in Chapter 8 of Sela, Aṣṭrōlōgiyah u-farshantūt (however, that it is possible to escape astral decrees by “supernal wisdom,” or by knowledge of the zodiacal signs [161], is not supported by any of the passages discussed there). Ibn ‘Ezra had certain very definite mystical leanings (see my “Abraham Ibn ‘Ezra–Mysticism”) and occasionally in his commentaries he hinted at “secret” or esoteric meanings, also sometimes using expressions such as “ha-maskiyl yaviyn” (see index here). A. Mondschein has written a lengthy article, “Yesh lo sod ve-ha-maskiyl yadom,” dealing with Ibn ‘Ezra in relation to some statements about Jacob’s concubine Bilah. Much better is the section, 18–22, on “secrets” in Visi, “Early Ibn Ezra Supercommentaries.”

57 Gen. 18.21; about which he also added “there is a great secret.” Lipshitz, Pṣiqey ‘iyūn, 32, discussed this in relation to Naḥmanides on that passage. In his commentary on Ps. 1.6, Ibn ‘Ezra clearly states that “there is no doubt” that God knows both generalities and particulars, but explains that by generalities is meant the individual soul of all created things, and particulars “each individual species by itself” (my emphasis; cf. also on Ps. 73.12); this is similar to Moses Ibn Tibbon’s explanation of what Ibn ‘Ezra meant on Gen. 18.21, that God generally knows all that exists and that will happen in the world, but not individual particulars which change (his commentary on Ibn ‘Ezra, Moses Ibn Tibbons Kommentar zum Hohelied, 613, line 16 ff.). There is nothing in the comment on Psalms there which contradicts what he has said in the passage in Genesis, and elsewhere, namely, that God “knows” only in a general way (the statements of Ibn Moṭôt and others cited by Lipshitz, 33–34, fail to reflect the entire comments of Ibn ‘Ezra, and thus are not an adequate “reply” to the correct interpretation).
To save Ibn ‘Ezra from the charge of “heresy,” clearly he did not deny that God knows the “particular,” but that knowledge is only in a general way and not (prior) knowledge of what each individual will or will not do. Julius Guttmann, in his article on Ibn ‘Ezra in the Hebrew Encyclopedia (cited by Kohen, Hagato ha-fiylosoftyt, 23), claimed that he derived his concept from Ibn Sīnā (“Avicenna”), but this is not necessarily so. In fact, it is somewhat similar to what Maimonides described as the opinion of Aristotle (“Guide” III. 17; however, see the commentary of Shēm Ṭōv Ibn Shēm Ṭōv, in the Hebrew translations of Mōreh with commentaries). See also al-Fārābī, Aphorisms, sections 81 and 82. Later, Ibn Rushd (“Averroes”), On the Harmony of Religion and Philosophy, 54–55, tried to save the Greek philosophers from al-Ghazālī’s similar charge of heresy; a way out of the dilemma was proposed by him in his little treatise Damīma (appendix there, 72–75; on the Hebrew translation of that, see St., H.U., 182), God’s knowledge differs from human knowledge in that it is causative (causes the existence of beings) and not merely effective (brought about by existents) and thus change in the nature of things does not affect God’s knowledge. Maimonides, often in agreement with Ibn ‘Ezra, definitely did believe in individual providence.

58 Yesōd mōna, 16 (10.2); ed. Kohen, 175–76; tr. Strickman, 143. The attainment of the soul after death: commentary on Ex. 33.21, ed. Weiser 2: 216 (there is a remote possibility that this might have influenced Maimonides); this is in conjunction with the Active Intellect. The notion of the mind as a “blank tablet” (tabula rasa) is often credited to Locke, An Essay Concerning Human Understanding (Book II, Chapter xxii); actually it originated with Aristotle (De Anima 3.4.430). Although Ibn ‘Ezra spoke in terms of the “soul” rather than “mind,” he may have influenced Locke (it is not impossible that Locke knew the Yesōd mōna, in two sixteenth–century editions: Constantinople, 1529, and Venice, 1566; on Locke’s knowledge of Hebrew see Crnston, Maurice, John Locke [N.Y., 1957], 21–28). Only one scholar to date has mentioned, although only in passing, this concept in Ibn ‘Ezra: Hughes, “Three Worlds,” 6, although he incorrectly claims that this is a “commonplace” in Jewish Neoplatonism. In fact, it is not found in the sources he cites there (Ibn Gabirol’s “Keter malchut,” section 34, should presumably be 35). Thus, Ibn ‘Ezra is the unique Jewish source. In fact, he may have been influenced by Ibn Sīnā’s (“Avicenna”) concept of the evolution of the human intellect, on which see Davidson, Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes on intellect, 38 ff. See also al-Ghazālī, Ih yā ‘ulūm al-dīn, book 21, tr. as Wonders of the Heart, 53: knowledge is engraved by Allāh on the pages of the heart; “knowledge is not achieved within the heart of the youth before the age of discretion only because the tablet of his heart is not yet prepared to receive the engraving of knowledge.”

59 See, e.g., Friedländer, Essays, 6–24; Weiser’s notes in his ed. of Peyrūshey 1: 11, Heb. text (the explanation in his n. 8 is not correct, however). The most important, and thorough, analysis is that of Prijs, Abraham Ibn Ezra’s Kommentar zu Genesis Kapitel 1. N. Ben-Menahem offered as an example of his planned “critical ed.” of the commentary on the Torah (never done) Gen. 1.1–2 in Otsar [Ōṣār] yehūdey Sefarad 2 [1959]: 43–54; rpt in his ‘Inyaney Ibn ‘Ezra, 9–28, which was utilized by Prijs but not, apparently, by Weiser. Important also are the detailed notes of Krinsky, Mehōqeqey Yehūdah 1: 2b ff., also mostly overlooked by Weiser and Prijs. Valuable also are the chiefly scientific observations of Sela, Aṣṭrōlōgiyah u-farghanāt, 234 ff. (with no mention of any of the above).

60 This idea apparently originated in 2 Maccabees 7.28: the world was not made out of things (so) that existed (previously). While that text influenced early Christian sources (some writers claim that the idea appears first in Christian
sources), it had little or no impact on medieval Jews, who generally did not even
know of its existence; in Christian Spain it was part of the canon of the
Christian Bible, and also in Jewish Spanish translations of the Bible in the fourteenth
and fifteenth centuries (and later). The first to use the now familiar Latin term
ex nihilo, “out of nothing,” was Tertullian (Adversus Manicionem II. 5: actually
de nihilo, “from nothing”). See in general H. Wolfson, “The Meaning of Ex
Ex Nihilo,” who ignored Wolfson and many important sources. The same is
ture of Ben–Shammai, “Maimonides and Creation Ex Nihilo,” who cites neither
Wolfson nor other important sources or articles on Maimonides; his article is
valuable for its survey of Muslim philosophical sources. The actual Hebrew ex-
pression “yēsh me–‘ayin,” something out of nothing (which does not appear in the
Babylonian or “Jerusalem” Talmud), was apparently first coined by Ibn Gabirol
(1021/2–1053 or 1056/7), “Keter malkḥūt,” 9, line 97 (in Selected Religious Poems,
88; there are numerous translations but this is perhaps the most accessible): “to
draw forth matter something from nothing,” and cf. line 101 and see the note
there, 177; also 29, line 357; ibid., 105: “for from fire was the soul created and
went forth from nothing to something”), and his Fons vitae III. 3.6; cf., however,
Babya Ibn Paqudah (ca. 1052–1120; Zaragoza), Duties of the Heart, 120; Ḥōvōt
ha-levavōt, 113 (“Sha’ar ha-yiyḥūd” Chapter 5). The most important discussion
of Ibn Gabirol’s theory is Laumakis, “Avicebron (Ibn Gabirol): Creation Ex
Nihilo.” Ibn ‘Ezra apparently took the expression from Ibn Gabirol (thus, when
he says “the majority of commentators” explained bara thus, he means concep-
tually and not those actual words); in one of Ibn ‘Ezra’s piyūṭiym appears the
line: “From you [God] nothing became something [yēn le–yēsh]; and if not [from
God], from whence?” Divan, ed. Egers, 90, no. 201; peculiarly, not in Levin’s ed.
of Shirey ha-qōdeš). Cf. also his introduction to Job: “every being is created
me–yēsh u–me–‘ayin” (unlikely a copyist’s error for yēsh me–‘ayin; apparently he means
that everything is created from a mixture of both existence and non-existence,
soul and body, form and matter); also apparently a rejection of the concept of
creation “ex nihilo” (cf. Gómez Aranda, “Exégesis filosófica en las interpreta-
tiones de Abraham Ibn Ezrá al libro de Job,” 369).

61 Ed. Weiser 1: 11. Incidentally, there are some errors in Weiser’s edition: line 6
should read Jer. 27.1, but more serious is “and the reason will be explained to
you in the second verse” (lines 7–8), which means that the earth and the heavens
were not in fact created until the second day; Weiser in n. 8 misunderstood this
(cf. also the “other recension” in Friedländer, Essays, 10, line 4 from the bottom;
in Weiser 1: 147, line 12 from the top).

62 In English translations, both are understood as “eat,” but Prijs, Abraham Ibn Ezra’s
Kommentar, 4, explains it more correctly as “divide” or select (cf. also 1 Sam.
17.8). Ibn ‘Ezra explains “alef in place of hē”; i.e., the word is bara and should be
understood as barah. Weiser (already in a 1958 article), and after him Prijs, “cor-
rected” this, but the correction makes no sense in terms of what Ibn ‘Ezra said.
He undoubtedly had a text of Samuel which read bara instead of barah (many im-
portant records of medieval variant textual biblical readings are lost by modern
editorial “correction”) and that must have been a common reading or else those
who read his commentary would not have understood what he meant; see, in
fact, [Bible. O.T. Hebrew], Tōrah, Neviyyim u–Ketūviyyim, ed. Snaith from Spanish
manuscripts, 2 Sam. 12.17: bara, and so in the “Second Rabbincical” Bible ([Bible.
O.T. Hebrew, 1524]); and see Ben-Menahem, Mi–ginzez Yisraēl ba–Vatīyqan,
16–17. The meaning of “cut,” or separate something out of another thing, thus
applies to both senses of the verb (cf. Prijs, 5). In the “other recension,” Ibn
Abraham Ibn 'Ezra

114

Ezra clearly explains the term (Num. 16.30) as “like a separated thing which was cut out” (again, Prijs ignored that commentary; see the text in Friedländer, Essays, Heb. appendix, 19; ed. Weiser 1: 155, and cf. 139: “and when I searched [the meaning of] the word beriyah, it is like ’cut,’ as I shall explain the words bereshiyt bana’"). See also the commentary of David Qimḥi on Ezek. 23.47, which undoubtedly was influenced by Ibn ‘Ezra (unfortunately, his own commentary on Ezekiel is lost). The later supercommentaries on Ibn ‘Ezra understood this to mean that a boundary was established separate (“cut out”) the waters from the earth, or more correctly to separate the “upper” from the “lower” waters; see examples in Schwartz, Yashan be-ganqan hadash, 104 ff. Of particular interest is the argument (Solomon Franco and ‘Ezra Gatigno, see in Chapter 3 here: “Supercommentaries” on them) that creation is not discussed, nor indeed mentioned, in the Torah because of the philosophical nature of the thing, and the Torah was intended for all and not only for philosophers (ibid., 109).

63 Chavel said (in his ed. of Moses b. Naḥman, Peyrūshey [sic] 1: 547, additional note on 53 line 8) that the Zohar is the “source” of the expression ha-maskiyl yaviyn. As mentioned elsewhere here, Chavel held the ultra-orthodox view that the Zohar is actually the work of talmudic sages, instead of (in fact) a fourteenth-century forgery by Moses de León (and possibly other contributors). On the influence of Ibn ‘Ezra’s commentaries on the Zohar, see Bacher, “L’Exégese biblique dans le Zohar.” The expression is related also to Dan. 1.4. An alternative expression which he also frequently used is ve-ha-mēviyn yaviyn (“he who understands will understand,” which was also copied by later writers, particularly Naḥmanides).

64 Prijs provides a brief, and generally accurate, discussion of this, op. cit., 6–7. Weiser made no comment on it at all. Prijs provides a brief, and generally accurate, discussion of this, op. cit., 6–7. Weiser made no comment on it at all. However, it is not entirely correct (Prijs, 7 n. 30) that Ibn ‘Ezra only alludes to the unchanging (eternal) nature of the world of the spheres (e.g., commentary to Ps. 148.6), since it is clearly implied, even stated, in the commentary on Ps. 19 (and elsewhere) that the “world” (universe) is unchanging. He notes that some have said that the laws of the heavens will disappear and God will create a new heaven and earth, but this contradicts specific biblical passages, and he mentions the opinion of Judah Ḥayyūj that the generalities will remain eternally but the individual parts (apparently the actual physical heaven and earth) will disappear, with which he agreed (Ps. 102.27). Ibn ‘Ezra’s position on eternity is not entirely clear, whether he was in complete agreement with “Aristotelianism” or not (and see below on his definite belief that the universe has a beginning). The belief in a pre-existent matter, however, is “neo-Platonic.” Ibn’Ezra is usually said to have been a “neo-Platonist,” but such rigid distinctions with regard to medieval Jewish writers are not helpful; both Aristotelian and “neo-Platonist” concepts are found (see also on this Kreisel, “On the Term Kol,” 30–31, 33, and Tzvi Langerman’s article on Ibn ‘Ezra: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ibn-ezra/) (see Section 5, “Characteristics of his thought”). There was a tradition that there were “many worlds” which were “created and destroyed” before the present world was created (Gen. rabah III, § 9; Midrash Tehiliym, ed. Buber, § 34 [f. 123a]), which is directly contrary to Aristotle; and even though in his introduction to the “regular” commentary (ed. Weiser 1: 7) Ibn ‘Ezra rejects such an explanation, in the “other recension” (Gen. 1.1, ed. Weiser 1: 157) he cites A. Z. 3b that God created 18,000 worlds (see on this also Judah b. Barzilay, Peyrūshey sēfer yesiyrah, 174; cf. Eccles. rabah 3.13). Samuel Ibn Tibbon, who (ca. 1231) held a very sophisticated view of eternity, also believed that many worlds were created and destroyed (see Freudenthal, “Samuel Ibn Tibbon’s Avicennian
Abraham Ibn ‘Ezra

Theory”). As mentioned in Chapter 1, Isaac Ibn Ghiyāṭh believed absolutely in the eternality of the universe. Naḥmanides and, following him, Bahya b. Asher obviously did not (for the latter, see his Biyūr, ed. Chavel 3: 57). Yet Naḥmanides (and Bahya), even more clearly than Ibn ‘Ezra, believed in pre-existent matter from which the heavens and the earth were created, as we shall see in Chapter 4. In his first (“other”) recension of his commentary on Genesis, Ibn ‘Ezra wrote a more simplistic interpretation, that we do not need to inquire into the order in which things were created, but only to “believe” that God created them, “and we do not investigate whether they were created from something,” that is, a pre-existent matter (ed. Weiser 1: 157, bottom).

65 This is found only in the “other” recension, ed. Friedländer, Essays, 26–27 (Heb. section), complete in Peyrūshey, ed. Weiser 1: 160. Surprisingly, Sela, Astrōlōgiyah, made no mention of this. Prij did not include this recension, nor any discussion of it, in his aforementioned edition. “ハウス,” whose opinion Ibn ‘Ezra here cites, and disagrees with, is apparently the Qaraite Yafet (or Yefet) b. ‘Alī, “ヤフェト” being an approximate Hebrew equivalent of Ar. ハウス (see Weiser’s note on this). On the other hand, Ibn ‘Ezra frequently cited ハース b. マル as an on scientific matters (see Appendix I to this book). ‘Ezra Gaṭigno, a fourteenth-century author of supercommentaries on Ibn ‘Ezra, suggested the influence of Ibn Sinā (“Avicenna”) on the notion of the drying of the earth by the sun during creation (“Sōd Adōnah liy-nē’av;” section on Genesis, ed. Schwartz, “Le-darkhey ha-parshānu ha-ḥiyey sof怡,” 93; also in Schwartz, Yōsh bē-qanqan hadadāt, 108, and again in his Qemīyōt, segulōt ve-sikhletan ūt, 290. “Averroes,” whom Schwartz also mentions there, is of course irrelevant since he lived long after Ibn ‘Ezra). Samuel Ibn Tibbon, writing about 1231, wrote exactly the same interpretation as Ibn ‘Ezra, without mentioning him, but indeed under the influence of Ibn Sinā (see Freudenthal, “Samuel Ibn Tibbon’s Avicennian Theory,” 52 ff.; Freudenthal does not mention Ibn ‘Ezra in this regard.

66 In his third (astronomical) reply to David b. Joseph of Narbonne (ed. S.D. Luzzatto and M. Steinschneider in pseudo-Maimonides, Sēfer sheney ha-me’ōrōt [Berlin, 1847; photo rpt. Jerusalem, 1972], 3); see also Ibn ‘Ezra, Sēfer ha-‘ibūr, 5b: that “size” refers to amount of light, not physical size, since Jupiter is 90 times the size of the earth while the moon is 1/39th of the size of the earth. He gives both an astrological and a mystical explanation (which is cited verbatim by Ibn Moṭṭo in his supercommentary, end of parašaḥ “Pinḥas”). See also Pirke (Pirqa’) de-Rabiy Eli’ezer, Chapter 6 (and sources cited in the English tr., n. 1) and “Midrash sōd ha-‘ibūr” in Jellinek, ed., Beyt ha-midrash 2: 39–44.

67 On Ex. 33.21 (ed. Weiser 2: 218); on the example there of the city flooded see Sela, Astrōlōgiyah u-farshānu, 98 ff. In one of his astrological treatises, Ibn ‘Ezra wrote that a scholar who understands the zodiacal signs and observes in his horoscope that, for example, he will suffer a fever can take precautions, such as not eating hot food and drinking cooling beverages, to prevent this. However, he may still err in his understanding, whereas one who trusts in God with all his heart can be saved by God from harm predicted in his horoscope (Sela, Science, 173, citing a manuscript). Sela referred this to a responsum by Sheriyrah and Hai (Hayyē), in Harkavy, ed., Zikhron la-righōniym, mahberet 4, 206–07, part of which was quoted, along with parts of Ibn ‘Ezra’s aforementioned work, by the scholars of Lunel in their questions to Maimonides about astrology (Sela, “Queries on Astrology,” 98, text; 99, tr. and 132–33, notes). The same statement about “fear of the Lord” (Ps. 111.10) protecting one from astral determinism is found in the introduction to his Reshit hokhmah [sic] (The Beginning of Wisdom 2: v); see Sela, Science, 196. Through complete and pure faith it is possible not to change...
decrees but to bring it about that God will affect the change. Sela, “Avraham Ibn ‘Ezra ve-gilguleyhem shel mishpatey ha-mazalot,” discusses his use of the term “mishpatiyim” for astrological judgments, and mentions inter alia his comment on Ps. 19.10 that astrologers believe in the connection of the planets with the sun and that there are sometimes conflicting judgments; he criticized the ba’aley diyn (possibly astrologers, as Sela thinks, but more likely “masters of the religions,” idolatry) for this, contrasting the statement “the judgements of the Lord are righteous altogether.” The entire context of his long comment on that verse is to deny the influence of astrology on those who observe the commandments. The denial of absolute astral determinism is, nevertheless, inconsistent with some of his astrological writings; see also Rodríguez Arribas, “Imágenes de la influencia astral en los escritos de Abraham Ibn ‘Ezra,” especially 241 (“Yitzhaq” as cited there, or ‘Ben Yitzhaq,” in her bibliography, is correctly Bakkal [Bak’al], Meir, ed. Sefer mishpatey ha-kōkhaviym [Jerusalem, 1971]). However, Rodríguez’s claim that a belief in astral determinism is found several times in Ibn ‘Ezra’s biblical commentaries is not, in fact, substantiated (the article, 231–46, discusses a few allegorical statements in the commentaries). Even worse is James Robinson’s erroneous characterization of Ibn ‘Ezra’s important philosophical commentary on Ecclesiastes as a “disquisition on astral determinism” (introduction to his translation of Samuel Ibn Tibbon’s Commentary on Ecclesiastes, 35, 70; see, however, 75). This is somewhat corrected in his “Philosophy and Science in Medieval Jewish Commentaries on the Bible” (hardly all of them) in Freudenthal, Science in Medieval Jewish Cultures, 459 (454–75), but he wrongly claims that Ibn ‘Ezra wrote that one may be saved from determinism through “prophecy.” Note Ibn ‘Ezra’s clear condemnation of all forms of magic, including calculating auspicious times (on Lev. 19.26). See further on his views in connection with Naḥmanides in Chapter 4, section “Magic and Astrology.” Ibn ‘Ezra did, nevertheless, state that there is a zodiacal sign (or fate, mazal) for every nation and city, except for the Jewish people (Deut. 4.19).

Isa. 40.21; Friedländer’s translation there, 177, is not accurate; shiyqul ha-da ‘at is not “common sense” in Ibn ‘Ezra’s terminology, but rather “reason,” or even sometimes philosophical or scientific knowledge, and there are other errors there. This was borrowed, in essence, by David Qimḥi, who wrote that there are three means of knowledge: that which one understands by himself (reason), or learns from others, or hears from those who transmit tradition (commentary on Isa. 40.20, at the beginning). Prior to Ibn ‘Ezra, Sa’adyah also categorized “sources of truth,” or rather the knowledge of truth, as three, but these are somewhat different (cf. Husik, History of Medieval Jewish Philosophy, 27). Ibn ‘Ezra elsewhere added sensory perception as a means of acquiring knowledge; see below, “Miracles.”

See Avicenna’s Psychology, Chapter 3, and Judah ha-Lēvy, Kūzariyy V. 12 (tr. Hirschfeld, 263). It is, incidentally, not “strange” to apply the term “internal sense” to fantasy, as Wolfson, “Internal Senses,” 97 thought; it is found in Aristotle, and see Avicenna’s Psychology, 78, note. Wolfson, “God, the Demiurge, and the Intellect,” 104 n. 105, explained that Ibn ‘Ezra’s statement “he who knows the secret of the Name knows that ‘the one is higher than the other’ refers to the fifty-five” (Eccles. 5.7) is probably to be understood as the number of spheres (55) according to Aristotle (Metaphysics XII: 8.1074a, 10–12 [actually, 13]), and that Ibn Sīnā also referred to this. Ibn ‘Ezra, of course, did not see the Metaphysics directly but undoubtedly did see Ibn Sīnā’s work, whose influence on Ibn ‘Ezra has been mentioned here. See, however, Ravitzky, “The Anthropological Doctrine of the Miracle in Medieval Jewish Philosophy,” 239–40, and Kreisel, “Miracles in Medieval Jewish Philosophy,” 117 n. 60 (both cited also by Elliot
Abraham Ibn ‘Ezra

Wolfsen, 106–07 n. 114). As noted by Gómez Aranda, “Aristotelian Theories in Abraham Ibn Ezra’s Commentaries,” 49, Ibn Moṭṭoṭ in the introduction to his supercommentary (see here on him) already observed that “Ibn ‘Ezra’s opinions are like those of Aristotle’s and in the secret of creation he followed Avicenna. For this reason, his words are hidden and his secrets are marvelous.” Gómez Aranda discusses many important issues, including a comparison with Samuel Ibn Tibbon’s theories of creation (see Chapter 4 here), also in relation to Ibn Sīnā, on which see Freudenthal, “Samuel Ibn Tibbon’s Avicennian Theory of an Eternal World.”

70 See my “Two Notes on Ibn ‘Ezra.”

71 It should be noted that neither here (see following note for the source) nor elsewhere does he, as some modern interpreters have suggested, use the terms “miṣvōt ha-sikhliyōt” (rational commandments) or “miṣvōt ha-shimiyōt” (received commandments; those for which there is no obvious reason), found later in Judah Ibn Tibbon’s translation of Sa’adyah, ha-Emunōt ve-ha-dēōt III (and cf. the fragment of Sa’adyah’s Kitāb al-ghari’a, “Book of Commandments [Law],” ed. Alexander Scheiber and Y. Han in Tarbiz [Tarbiyṣ] 28 [1958–59]: 50–51); and in Moses Ibn ‘Ezra(h), as noted in Chapter 1. The terms are similar but by no means identical. Curiously, Ibn Tibbon generally seems not to have been influenced by Ibn ‘Ezra’s terminology; this requires a separate study. So also Judah ha-Lēvy wrote that the commandments are divided into “social and rational laws;” the purpose of which is generally known, and “divine” laws not known by reason (Kūzariy III. 7; earlier he also stated that the “rational laws” are the “basis and preamble” for the divine laws; II. 48); in both instances the term for “rational law” is nomos, the Greek term for “custom, proper behavior,” but interestingly in II. 48 he refers to “divine” law as (Ar.) shari’a, or general religious law (Maimonides used the same word).

72 Commentary on Ex. 20.1, the first commandment (ed. Weiser 2: 130–31), and cf. his introduction to the commentary on the Torah, the “third way,” ed. Weiser 1: 6, and also his commentary on Deut. 5.16 (ed. Weiser 3: 231) and Yeṣōd mōnā (Chapter 7, ed. Kohen, 136). His term with regard to “positive” commandments is not precise, and should be understood as “actions” (miṣvōt ma’asīyōt), a term he uses elsewhere; indeed, he here explains that this category also includes positive and negative commandments, like the other two categories (see in more detail on all of this Chapter 7 of his Yeṣōd mōnā). See also his commentary on Ex. 31.18 (ed. Weiser, 203) that people “think that action is the essence, and it is not, rather the heart [understanding] and action, and the heart and the tongue to guide [it; action],” and Deut. 5.30: “the essence of all the commandments is the belief of the heart” (and his explanation of “heart” as knowledge; Deut. 6.5); also Deut. 30.14. Baḥya b. Asher appears also to have borrowed from Ibn ‘Ezra; see his Bīyūr 3: 442–43 (Deut. 30.14), although his basic source may have been Abraham b. Ḥayya as indicated in Chavel’s note. There is a certain superficial similarity to the previously mentioned statement of Menāḥēm Ibn Sārūq on the commandments (see Chapter 1). Somewhat similar is the categorization by Baḥya Ibn Paqudah of commandments as “duties” of the heart and of the limbs. Herring, ed. and tr., Joseph Ibn Kaspi’s Gevī’aKesef, 22, claimed that Ibn Kaspiy also adopted this division from Ibn ‘Ezra (“Sēfer ha-mūsar,” his “ethical will,” in Ibn Kaspiy, ‘Asanah keley keṣef 2: 63). However, it is not really the same; there he speaks of commands of action (miṣvōt ma’asīyōt), of the heart, and of thought (or intellect; miṣvōt ha-‘iyūnīyōt). However, in his Maskiyōt kesef (in ‘Amūdey kesef u-maskiyōt kesef, 134, Chapter 31; photo rpt. in Kafiḥ, ed., Shelōshah qadmōney mefūrshey ha-Mōreh), he does refer to Ibn ‘Ezra’s division of commandments of “speech” and “action.” For the places where he indeed
adopted Ibn ‘Ezra’s position, see Mesch, Studies in Joseph Ibn Caspi [sic], 85 n. 27. In Yeṣōd mōnā (Chapter 6; see also n. 154) he provided a different threefold division of commandments: those clearly expressed in the Torah, those in the Torah but understood only by tradition (from the rabbis) and those known only by oral tradition.

73 Ibn ‘Ezra, Sheney peyṛẓhe.y…Trey-‘Asar, 58–59 (the editor inexplicably chose the incorrect reading “she-lo’ yihšōv” [that he should not think] rather than the obviously correct reading in the apparatus, attested by numerous manuscripts; his comments are derived from Friedländer, Essays, 168 n. 1, without acknowledgment). Elyḥniyim and shefēliyim are terms used frequently by Ibn ‘Ezra for the “upper,” or celestial world, the world of “God’s glory,” and for the “lower,” or material world in which man lives. There is also a “middle” world, that of the planets and stars (cf. “long” commentary on Ex. 3.15, 20.1 [ed. Weiser 2: 132] and Dan. 10.21); see also Friedländer, Essays, 13 n. 2, and see my article on “Three Worlds.” The notion of “glory” (kavōd) as the upper world may also be influenced by Sa‘adyah’s commentary on Sēfer yeṣiyrah, although it is somewhat different (see Scholem, Kabbalah, 38). There is a strong possibility of the influence of Ibn ‘Ezra here on Maimonides concerning the “service” of God from love constantly in one’s daily life (M.T., Ahavah: “Teshūvah” Chapter 10, and especially law 5; and cf. “Guide” III. 51; tr. 624). Very likely there is also an influence of the notion of “cleaving,” or attachment (see index here, devēqah).

74 Ed. Weiser 2: 203.


76 See especially his lengthy commentary on Ex. 20.1; in the “short recension” (ed. Weiser 2: 282). Commandments are divided into three kinds: “of the heart” (mind), “of the tongue” (speech) and “positive” (actions). There is a similarity to the famous division of commandments as “obligations of the heart” and of the “body” by Bahya Ibn Paqudah, Ḥōvōt ha-leṣavōt (“Duties of the heart”), a work known to Ibn ‘Ezra. See also n. 149. Zev (Warren) Harvey, “ha-Dibur ha-rīḥon ve-elohey ha-hiṣtoriyyah” discusses Ibn ‘Ezra and ha-Lévy briefly on this, with lengthier discussion of Maimonides and Crescas. See Deut. 5.16; ed. Weiser 3: 231 (on Ex. 20.1, he gave a more “traditional” explanation, mentioning this as one of the difficulties, but finally stating that all the Ten Commandments were said by God, and that those who say “I am the Lord your God” is not part of the commandment against making idols err, for it is all one commandment (ed. Weiser 2: 126, 128). Nahmanides wrote that “I am the Lord your God” is a separate commandment (ed. Chavel 1: 388), and yet in his (earlier) strictures on the “book of commandments” of Maimonides he concurred with Simon Qayyara, Halakhōt gedōlōt, that it is not a commandment; see on this Chavel’s note there, and cf. Krinsky, Meḥōqeqeq Yehūdah 2: 147b. See further on Nahmanides and the “Ten Commandments” in Chapter 4 and see the index here). Harvey, in the aforementioned article, overlooked all of this and therefore somehow reached the erroneous conclusion, 207, that Ibn ‘Ezra actually believed that “I am the Lord your God” is a separate commandment.

77 Only briefly alluded to in his commentary on Lev. 19.18 and Deut. 10.19, but in more detail in his Yeṣōd mōnā, Chapter 1, and see the notes to the English translation, 10–11. Joseph Qimḥī “borrowed” this verbatim in his grammatical work Sēfer zikaronō (Berlin, 1888; photo rpt. Jerusalem, 1968), 19, and in his commentary on Prov. 4.27 (Peyṛẓhīyim le-sēfer Mishle.y le-heyt Qimḥīy, 25). See also Lipshitz, Pirqey ‘iyūn, 10–11; note also the commentary of Nahmanides
discussed there, 11 n. 65. Hermann Cohen and Martin Buber both went beyond this interpretation, noting, for example, that rē’ah also does not mean “neighbor” but the one dealt with in any particular situation, who must be treated as one would himself desire to be treated. It is not impossible that one or both may have been influenced by the interpretation of Ibn ‘Ezra (both, although later non-traditionalists, received a good education in Jewish sources). A better translation of the famous commandment might be “Give love [act lovingly, responsibly] to your companion as you [would to] yourself.” The important thing is that it is not a “feeling” but an obligation requiring action.

78 Ibn ‘Ezra referred to the “merit” (ma’alah; the word implies eminence, virtue) of the Land in his commentary on Gen. 23.19, and see the observation by his student Joseph b. Jacob Moudeville (or Morrville) in Friedländer, Essays, Heb. section, 65: the purpose of the story of Jacob’s desire to be buried in the Land of Israel (Gen. 47.29–31) is “to strengthen the hearts of people concerning the Land of Israel, to make it precious in their eyes to be there in life and death, for the majority of the commandments are dependent on the Land.” On Gen. 33.19 Ibn ‘Ezra stated that the Land has great merit “and whoever has a portion there, it is as important as a portion in the world to come.” On these, and other passages where he spoke in praise of the Land, see Lipshitz, Pinaqy ’iyūn, 34–35, 143; and Langermann, “Some Astrological Themes in Ibn ‘Ezra,” 42–49. For attitudes of other medieval commentators, see the index here, “Israel, Land of.”

79 Ex. 25.40, ed. Weiser 2: 176–77. This is similar in some respects to Judah ha-Lēvy’s comparison of the parts of the body to the vessels and implements of the Temple (Kūzariy II. 24). See also Ibn ‘Ezra, “other recension” on Gen. 4.13 (ed. Weiser 1: 172): “there are places which receive the upper power more than another place,” citing various verses in support of this (and so in a shorter form in his “regular” commentary on Gen. 4.14; ed. Weiser 1: 32). Sela, Astrologiyah, 328, also quoted these passages but erred in the verse number of the first (4.14 instead of 4.13).

80 A very similar idea was expressed by Judah ha-Lēvy (quoted in Chapter 1, on Judah Ibn ‘Aknīn), Kūzariy II. 24; tr. Hirschfeld, 100–01; also III. 17, tr. Hirschfeld, 152. On Ex. 26.1, Ibn ‘Ezra also said that while the “glory of God fills all the world” there are places in which the power of God is seen more than elsewhere, because of either the ability of the “receiver” or the upper (divine) power over the place. “Receptivity” in Ibn ‘Ezra’s thought would be an interesting topic for further research; see, for example, his introduction to the commentary on Ecclesiastes (Halbertal, Concealment and Revelation, 45, claimed that Dov Schwartz and Moshe Idel thoroughly discussed this in the works he cited, 176 n. 2, but in fact they did not there deal with this at all; incidentally, he twice, 44, 45, gives the wrong citation, Ex. 28.40 instead of 25.40).

81 Ed. Weiser 1: 166, from Friedländer, Essays, Hebrew appendix, 35.

82 Commentary on Deut. 31.16, and see Weiser’s note there, 3: 304 n. 27, where he cites similar statements in Judah ha-Lēvy’s Kuzaray. Indeed, Ibn ‘Ezra stated (Lev. 18.26): “and if you have a heart you will understand” that Jacob taking two sisters as wives or ‘Amram who married his aunt in Egypt did not violate any laws (since this was before the giving of the Torah) and outside of the Land of Israel. Joseph Ibn Kaspiy (1279/80–ca. 1340) in his commentary on the Torah disagreed specifically with Ibn ‘Ezra here concerning the marriage of Jacob and explained all sexual prohibitions in the commandments as related to maintaining peace among families (Maṣrēf le-kesef, 231). Curiously, he ignored entirely the “philosophical” explanation given by Ibn ‘Ezra. Samuel Żarza (discussed later here), in his supercommentary on Ibn ‘Ezra, said that he had discussed
all of this in “a book which I was aroused to compose” (“Megōr ḥayiym,” in Margaliyot tovah, 32b); possibly he referred to his (unpublished) “Mikhāl yōfiy.” On Naḥmanides on this, see Chapter 4, n. 233, and Ravtizky as cited there on other writers who discussed this. In his sermon on Ecclesiastes, Naḥmanides cites with approval Ibn ‘Ezra here (Kitvey 1: 202). On the possible astrological implications of Ibn ‘Ezra’s explanation, as expressed in various manuscripts of subsequent supercommentaries, see Langermann, “Some Astrological Themes in Ibn ‘Ezra,” 47 n. 51.

83 “Short” recension to Ex. 20.17; ed. Weiser 2: 280.

84 Judah ha-Lēvy also maintained that miracles are a change in nature (Kūzari II. 54; tr. Hirschfeld, 116). In a reply to some German scholars concerning magic and other things, Hai (Hayyē) Gaōn also discussed “signs” and “wonders” and stated that signs given to the prophets were a change in the customary order of nature (in Aschkenazi, Ṭa‘am zeqēnīyim, 55b). For the various opinions of our commentators on this, see the index here, “miracles, change in nature.” In discussing the false prophet (Deut. 13.2), Ibn ‘Ezra wrote that some say even if the sign or wonder came to pass he is not to be believed because (what he said) is “a thing opposite to reason.” He adds, “and in my opinion there is a sign [‘ot], also wonder, which is like an indication [siyman; cf. n. 19]”; that is, not like a miracle outside the laws of nature but an indication of something to come (ed. Weiser 3: 252 and see his note there). See generally the important article of Ravitzky, “Miracles.”

85 Sēfer ha-‘ibūr, 10a. There is a strong possibility that this influenced similar statements of Maimonides; e.g., introduction to his commentary on the Mishnah, with reference to signs performed by false prophets: “the intellect which gives his lie to his testimony is more reliable than the testimony of the eye that saw his signs” (Haqdamōt le-feyrūsh ha-mishnah, 14); see translation, from the original Arabic, in my Maimonides. Essays and Texts, 44, first paragraph, and 16, and see there generally the discussion of false prophets, 15, 22, 27, and note his statement, 14, that many, including some of the “knowledgeable” (sages), incorrectly think that a prophet is recognized by signs he performs. Among the sages who believed this was not only Sa‘adyah Gaōn (see n. 11 there) but also Ḥēfeğ b. Yaṣliyaḥ (tenth century; see on him Baron, Social and Religious History 6: 93–96 and notes); see M. Zucker, “Sēfer ha-miṣvot le-R’ Ḥēfeğ b. Yaṣliyaḥ,” P.A.A. J.R. 30 (1960–61): 34, miṣvah 9; see also Maimonides, M.T., Mada’: “Yesōdey ha-Tōnah” 8.2, 3 and his Igeret Teyman (ed. Halkin, 55; the somewhat paraphrastic translation by Boaz Cohen there, xi).

86 Gen. 27.19; cf. his commentary on Hos. 2.25, Sheney peyṛūshay…le-Trey-‘Asar, 44, and see Simon’s note there to line 77, taken almost entirely, without acknowledgment, from Lipshitz in his critical ed. and English tr. of the commentary on Hosea (see Bibliography), 8 and notes. See also Simon’s note (50, top of the page) on “the end of days,” to which references should be added Ibn ‘Ezra’s commentaries on Micah 4.11–12, Obadiah 21, Zeph. 8, Zech. 13.1, 14.8 and 21. See, however, Ibn ‘Ezra’s commentary on Isaiah, much of which is said by him to be on the “future,” the messianic age (see especially his introduction to Chapter 52). For comparison with important positions on prophecy by other commentators, see the index here, “Prophecy, nature of.”

87 Ex. 12.1; 31.18 (ed. Weiser 2: 304). In this, he appears also to have shared the opinion of Judah ha-Lēvy, who wrote that Moses, Aaron and Miriam and others, including the heads of the tribes and even the 70 elders, Joshua and “many others” were endowed with the spirit of prophecy (Kūzari I. 95; tr. Hirschfeld, 66). That “a great many commandments” were given by the hand
of Aaron may seem somewhat an exaggeration. Mention of Aaron in rabbinical literature is surprisingly scarce; however, in the enumeration of commandments by Maimonides, nos. 24, 28, 40, 50 and 88 may be said to originate with commandments to Aaron (hardly “a great many,” however). In the M.T., Maimonides mentions a number of laws which derive from scriptural statements about commands to Aaron and the priests which are, nevertheless, not in the list of positive commandments.

88 Ex. 3.15, end (ed. Weiser 2: 34–35). There is another possibility for the meaning of the word as something like “contemplating, meditating,” but this generally is a later usage. This, too, is very similar to Judah ha-Lévyy, that the disciples of the prophets lived an ascetic life (Kūzariy III. 1; tr. Hirschfeld, 136). See also Ibn ‘Ezra, Sēfer ha-‘asamiym, 13, on the importance of this concept for prophecy in general (incidentally, the editor’s statement in the note there that this work is cited in his commentary on Ex. 15 is incorrect; perhaps he had a corrupt copy where this had been inserted by someone). It is not at all improbable that his concept was the source for later writers, such as Maimonides (“Guide” 1.8, tr. Pines, 34), Šhēm Ṭv Ibn Shaprūt, Pardēs rimōniym, 4b, and Ḥasdaï Crescas, Ŭr ha-Shēm 2.4.4 (all of these cited by Frank Talmage, “Trauma at Tortosa: the testimony of Abraham Rimoch,” rpt. in his Apples of Gold in Settings of Silver, 82). For the notion of “holy spirit” and its different meanings, see the index here. In his defense of Sa‘adyah against the strictures of Dunash (“Adoniym”; Ibn Tamiym, probably), Ibn ‘Ezra cited Sa‘adyah that the words of Isaiah were “pure and eloquent,” to which Dunash had objected that this was a “great error” since all the words of scripture are God’s words. Ibn ‘Ezra said that the error was Dunash’s, for the words are merely expressions which are “renewed” by God in the soul of the prophet “according to the power he receives at the beginning from God and according to his nature” (see Rosin, “Religionsphilosophie,” 500, no. 6). On Ibn ‘Ezra’s brief mystical explanation of the “brass snake” (Num. 21.8) and that while the “glory” (of God) dwells among the people, the holy spirit descends upon their leaders and they prophesy (“short recension” to Ex. 25.7; ed. Weiser 2: 313), and Solomon Franco’s important explanation of this, see Schwartz, Qemiyōt, segudōt ve-sikḥletanūt, 101–02 (on Ibn ‘Ezra and the property of metals, to which Franco alludes, see my “Three Worlds”).

89 See Weiser’s note there, 2: 46 n. 5. Maimonides also wrote that the difference between the prophecy of Moses and that of other prophets was that all of their prophecy was in a dream or vision, whereas Moses was awake (M.T., Mada‘; Yēsōdey ha-Tōrah 7.6). Note also the similar statements in Judah b. Barzilay, Peyrūḵ, 36. On Ps. 17.15 Ibn ‘Ezra wrote that the meaning of “beholding Your face” is “to recognize the works of God, for they are all universal [or generalities; kelaliyym] and made in wisdom and endure forever” (cf. commentary on Ps. 1.3, end), adding that this “beholding” is not in a dream, rather in waking, and this vision is not by seeing with the eye but seeing by comprehension [shiqqīl ha-da‘at; reason], which [is] the true vision of God; and these things cannot be understood except by one who has learned the “wisdom of the soul” [ḥakhmat ha-nefesh] by which he probably means commentaries on Aristotle’s De anima and the like.

See on this also E. Wolfson, Through a Speculum, 160–61.

90 There is no doubt that the views of Maimonides are similar, if not identical, to those of Ibn ‘Ezra here; the only question is the possible influence of certain statements in Aristotle and in Muslim philosophy, certainly on Maimonides and possibly also on Ibn ‘Ezra (who certainly knew some of the works attributed to
Aristotle; see, e.g., Sela, *Astrōlogiyyah*, 246–47). The essential philosophical views of Maimonides on prophecy are in “Guide” II. 32 and subsequent chapters, and see Chapter 35 on the distinction between Moses and the other prophets, and Chapter 42 on prophecy and dreams, and I. 21 on “seeing” God’s face. The qabalist Shēm Ṭōv b. Joseph Ibn Shēm Ṭōv (d. ca. 1430) objected to Ibn ‘Ezra’s interpretation here (without citing the exact source) as “worthless words, contradicting scripture” (*Sēfer ha-emūnōt*, 87b). As we shall see in the following chapter, Naḥmanides also disagreed sharply with Maimonides on this. More surprising is that Samuel Ibn Tibbon, intimately acquainted with the philosophical views of Maimonides, also disagreed in his commentary on Ecclesiastes (tr. Robinson, 292; see here Bibliography: Sources); “the sage Rabbi [sic] Abraham” (Ibn ‘Ezra) asserted that man is not capable of occupying himself with wisdom since he cannot go beyond what the “ancients” already knew. On the contrary, Ibn Tibbon argues, man constantly increases his capacity by increasing his knowledge. He admits that he does not understand what Ibn ‘Ezra meant. (Robinson apparently had no idea who “the sage Rabbi Abraham” was and so made no comment.) I can only add my own perplexity as to what Ibn Tibbon thought he understood from Ibn ‘Ezra, since all of this is directly contrary to anything he ever wrote and there is no disagreement between them. Later (363), he again criticizes Ibn ‘Ezra (this time using his full name) for misinterpreting *mi-qedem* as “eastward” in Gen. 2.8 and 3.24, whereas according to Ibn Tibbon the correct meaning is “before” (man’s creation). In the “other” recension on Gen. 2.8 (ed. Weiser 1: 166), Ibn ‘Ezra in fact says “there are those who explain *mi-qedem*, before man was created” and others say it is east of the equator. (Robinson in his note says that Ibn ‘Ezra “attributes an astronomical view to Saadia” in this commentary.) Not content with this, Ibn Tibbon (364) criticized Ibn ‘Ezra’s interpretation of the cherubim and flaming sword (Gen. 3.24). Visi, “Early Ibn Ezra Supercommentaries,” 41, notes Ibn Tibbon’s preference for Ibn ‘Ezra’s interpretation of Gen. 1.1–3 over that of Maimonides, but ignores all of the above.

91 See, e.g., *Kūzari* I. 87 (tr. Hirschfeld, 61) and III. 65 (tr. 186–7) that prophecy only appeared in “extraordinary times” to special people in whom the *Shekhinah* (divine “presence”) found “a worthy abode” whose existence helped their contemporaries attain a degree of prophecy; and see Lobel, “Dwelling Place for the Shekhinah,” 108–09. I say “Maimonides’ idea,” but of course it did not originate with him but with al-Fārābī (*Al-Farabi on the Perfect State*, 224/225, and Walzer’s comments, 440–41); to some extent it is also akin to ideas expressed by Ibn Sīnā (“Avicenna”); see *Avicenna’s De Anima* [*Ibn al-nafs*], 248–50, and the translation of that by Pines, *Beyn māhshevet Yisrā‘el le-māhshevet ha-‘amīyim*, 281 (*ḥads*, untranslated there, is Ar. “intuition, conjecture”). On some medieval ideas on prophecy, see Kreisel, *Prophecy*; however, he perhaps exaggerates the differences between ha-Lēvy and Maimonides, overlooking such statements as the above. Lobel’s article appeared too late to have been consulted by Kreisel; he decided not to discuss Ibn ‘Ezra (see 22–23 in his book), but it should be noted that his views on prophecy are not confined merely to his commentaries. Other important figures are missing, because of which the book can hardly be considered the history of the medieval Jewish concept of prophecy.

92 Ibn ‘Ezra, *Sēfer ha-‘āsamiym*, 12. This is quite similar to ideas later expressed by Maimonides; e.g., “Guide” II. 36.

93 Ex. 12.10 (“long recension”). The locale mentioned is Wargla, or Wārglān (Ouargla), an important caravan crossroads, according to Hirschberg, H. Z. “Qehiyloṭ Yisrā‘el be-na‘ot ha-midbar gḥel Algeria,” in J. L. Maimon, ed.,
Abraham Ibn ‘Ezra

Sinai–Sēfer ha-yovēl (Jerusalem, 1958), 344. It was largely inhabited by Berbers in Ibn ‘Ezra’s period, but also had a heretical Jewish population, mentioned also by Ibn Dā‘ūd, Sēfer ha-qabalah, 93 (tr.); he apparently refers to Qaraites, although not by name.

Marvin Pope devoted pages in his commentary (Song of Songs, Anchor Bible series [Garden City, N.Y., 1977]) to a discussion of the “blackness” of the woman, including mention (308) of the views of Rashi, the “Provençal (!) Frenchman,” but without mentioning Ibn ‘Ezra (Rashi, of course, was never in Provence).

Ben–Menahem, ‘Inyaney Ibn ‘Ezra, 219, cites the opinions of Steinschneider and D. Herzog that Hodu (India) is an error and that no such custom existed in India. Nevertheless, while as mentioned later here he was never in India, he may well have heard from travelers or read in the numerous Arabic stories concerning India about such a custom; see below, “Geographical Information.”

Nahum 3.2; see on this my Jews, Visigoths & Muslims, 260 n. 98.


Simon, following a mistaken statement by Wilensky, did not believe that Ibn ‘Ezra was in Egypt (Arba‘ giyshōt, 136 n. 43 (tr. 264 n. 39); see also his “Peshat exegesis,” 197* n. 49). See Wilensky, Mordecai. “‘Al davar sefer ha-yesod ve-sefer seft yeter le-R’ [sic] Avraham Ibn ‘Ezra,” K’S 3 (1926): 79, but note Judah Fleischer’s rebuttal there, 168.

Commentary on Isa. 52.14, end, and 53.3 (ed. Friedländer, 91; his translations are not exact). David Qimhī repeats this in Ibn ‘Ezra’s name. He of course explains Chapter 52 of Isaiah (see especially 52.13) as not referring to Jesus, as the Christians think, and gives good reasons why this cannot be so, but in a dispassionate manner free from polemical criticism. On 52.13 Ibn ‘Ezra says that “many” interpreted this as referring to the messiah (possibly he means the Christians) and explains that this cannot be the meaning, and cites Sa‘adyah that it refers to Jeremiah, “and well he explained.” In a manuscript of one of his astrological works, he refers to the conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter “which gave birth to the man whom they think is God,” clearly a reference to Jesus (cited by Sela in his ed. and tr. of Ibn ‘Ezra’s Book of Reasons, 161 note on “Edom”). In his commentary on Gen. 18.1–2 he rebuked those (Christians) who err in saying that God is the three men who appeared to Abraham when in fact they are described as “angels.” On the Muslims, in his “short recension” on Exodus 18 (ed. Weiser 2: 265):

and it is enough for us the distress in which we [find ourselves] with Muslim scholars who say, How is it possible that from 55 males [who went out from Egypt] that in 210 years 600,000 males could be descended.

He gives a not entirely satisfactory reply, and concludes that the whole statement is derash. Perhaps this reflects an actual debate he had with Muslims, either in Spain or in North Africa.

Cases of abandoned children who grew up with dogs have been reported recently. An interesting case cited by Sieveking is that of Misha Defonseca, a “Jewish” orphan who, from the ages of 7–11, supposedly wandered in Europe during the Holocaust living on wild berries, etc., and sometimes living with wolves (see her Misha: a Mémoire of the Holocaust Years [Boston, 1997]). The only problem is that, long before she wrote his account, that story was proven to be a hoax. There is reason to be skeptical of all such reports, of course; see, for instance, Benzaquén, Adriana S. Encounters with Wild Children: Temptation and Disappointment in the Study of Human Nature (Montreal, 2006). Although she cites Sieveking, she in fact discusses none of the cases he mentions (he is not cited, nor are the cases, by the other writers mentioned here). Ibn ‘Ezra’s account is, of course, not mentioned by any of the above.

101 Moritz Steinschneider wrote about this in detail, “Ist Ibn Esra in Indien gewesen?” Z.D.M.G. 20 (1866): 427–32. He was of the opinion that Ibn ‘Ezra did not mean India as we think of it, but this is not correct. There was a general fascination with India in the medieval Muslim world, and particularly among the Jews of Muslim Spain, and indeed it is already mentioned several times in the Talmud (see also Herzog, David. “Bemerkungen zu ibn Esra der ‘Historkiker’,” M.G.W.J. 81, Hft. 5 [1937]: 433). Of course, many Jewish merchants, again particularly from Spain, traveled frequently to India; knowledge of this came to light from discoveries in the Cairo Genizah, long after Steinschneider wrote. Incidentally, Ibn Dāʾūd mentions among the “rabbinite” (traditional, non-Qaraite; sometimes spelled “rabbanite”) communities Dedan (Sefer ha-Qabbalah, tr. 92), which Gershon Cohen there identified as “probably India.” However, the authoritative work of Simon, J. The Geographical & Topographical Texts of the OT (Leiden, 1959), 21, § 60, indicates that it is apparently in northern Arabia (modern al-ʿUlä). Nevertheless, the Muslim theologian and writer Ibn Ḥazm (eleventh century, Córdoba) translates Dedan (Gen. 10.7 [6]) as “Hind” (India) (Kitāb al-faṣl 2: 250).

102 See Gross, G. J., 459; nevertheless, the statement is not in the first edition of Aaron b. Joseph ha-Kohen, ʿOrḥō hayyim in the place cited; possibly Gross saw a manuscript. Krinsky, Mehūqeqey Yehūdah 1: 20 n. 18 cites it in the name of David Abudrahma (correctly Ibn Abī Dirhām). If Joseph ha-ʾĀzōbiy made the statement, it was probably in his (lost) Sēfer ha-miliyyim, allegorical explanations of the commandments. Concerning the legends of Ibn ‘Ezra in India, see the aforementioned article of Steinschneider. As to the name of the kingdom, Weisser accepted the evidence of two texts for the reading of al-ṣakhr-yr; the first edition reads al-N-ṣ-yr-y. I was unable to identify any Arabic geographical name which might correspond to either of these (Golb, Jews in Medieval Normandy, 284, suggests al-ṣakhirā, the Sahara; but this does not describe a kingdom). Ibn ‘Ezra’s remark that the location of Mt. Sinai “is known” is interesting, since of course that is a matter of great debate in modern scholarship.

103 See Uriel Simon’s explanation of how he arrived at the conclusion about the destruction of Edom and Egypt, in Ibn ‘Ezra, Sheney peyrūṣey le-Trey-ʿAsar, 175; however, he cited an eighteenth-century Tunisian writer on the storehouses of Joseph, but overlooked the fact that this was taken from Ibn ‘Ezra on Ex. 12.31, quoted here.

104 See Roth, Jews. Visigoths & Muslims, 163, 228. Once again, the correct English spelling is “Almoravids” and not “Almoravides,” which is Spanish.

105 Friedländer’s statements in his introduction to Ibn ‘Ezra’s Commentary on Isaiah about all the lands Ibn ‘Ezra is supposed to have visited, including India and
Abraham Ibn ‘Ezra 125

Arabia (no less), may be discounted; the claim that he was in the Land of Israel is also based on Friedländer’s misunderstanding of the statement he cited there. In his commentary on Zephaniah 1.11, Ibn ‘Ezra wrote that all the streets in Jerusalem have names, known by every inhabitant; but this does not mean that he was in Jerusalem since he probably got this information from travelers. The only modern scholar who has raised the possibility that Ibn ‘Ezra may have gone to the Land of Israel is Naftali Ben-Menahem, in an article in *Sinai* 10 (1942): 276 ff., rpt. in his *Inyaney Ibn ‘Ezra*, 182–90, who after dismissing as inconclusive several statements made by Ibn ‘Ezra, nevertheless, decided that it was at least possible. However, if he had been there he certainly would have mentioned this specifically.

In his commentary on Zephaniah 1.11, Ibn ʻEzra wrote that all the streets in Jerusalem have names, known by every inhabitant; but this does not mean that he was in Jerusalem since he probably got this information from travelers. The only modern scholar who has raised the possibility that Ibn ʻEzra may have gone to the Land of Israel is Naftali Ben-Menahem, in an article in *Sinai* 10 (1942): 276 ff., rpt. in his *Inyaney Ibn ‘Ezra*, 182–90, who after dismissing as inconclusive several statements made by Ibn ‘Ezra, nevertheless, decided that it was at least possible. However, if he had been there he certainly would have mentioned this specifically.

Incidentally, the opposite was the position of Asher b. Yehiel of Toledo (late thirteenth century), who probably had not read Ibn ʻEzra, who was asked whether the “Great Sea” on which the Mishnah requires reciting a blessing is the *Oceanus* or “our Great Sea [Mediterranean] by which one passes to the Land of Israel or Egypt,” to which he replied that it is the *Oceanus*.

However, on Nahum 3.8 Ibn ‘Ezra explained that *Yam Ṣūf* is the same as *Yam Sefarad* (the sea of Spain), which is called “the Great Sea” (Num. 34.6). See also Ibn ‘Ezra on Gen. 1.6 on *Oceanus*, and Prijs, *Abraham Ibn Ezra’s Kommentar zu Genesis* 1, 40.

The Mediterranean was also referred to as the “Roman sea” or the “Syrian sea”; cf. Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah* 1: 98, 139. Ibn ‘Ezra’s younger contemporary in Barcelona, Joseph Ibn Zabara, who undoubtedly originally came from Muslim Spain, also wrote that the “yam shel Pelishtiym” (sea of the Philistines) is very bitter and salty (*Sefir sha‘ashū’im* [“Book of delights”], ed. I. Davidson [N.Y., 1914], 110). Davidson in his note there (5) went to great lengths to find a source for this expression (salty) and concluded that it is only found in the (fourteenth-century) *Sha‘ar ha-shamayim*, but that it is impossible that the Dead Sea (in Hebrew, “sea of salt”) could be called this (sea of the Philistines) since the boundary of the Philistines never reached that far. He apparently did not see Ibn ʻEzra here, who clearly applies the term to the Mediterranean; see, in fact, Ex. 23.31. Abraham Avronim in his notes on Davidson’s edition, in *ha-Tzofeh* (*Ṣōfeh*) 11 (1927): 177, also doubted that Muslims used the term “asphalt,” suggested by Davidson (in fact, the Greeks called it the “Asphaltite Lake”), and surmised that the Mediterranean is intended. Chavel (in his ed. of Bahya b. Asher, *Biyyūr* 3: 98) wrote that Maimonides calls the Mediterranean the “sea of salt,” citing his commentary on the mishnah *Keliym* 15.1, that the sea between Alexandria and the Land of Israel is the *yam ha-melekh*. Chavel also could have indicated the famous responsum of Maimonides concerning travel by boat on the Sabbath, where “seas of salt” is more correctly “sea of salt” according to the unpublished Arabic text (*Teshūvōt*, ed. Friedman, no. 67; ed. Blau 1: 567, line 1; see M. Friedman, “Qeṭa‘iym ḥadashiym min ha-genizyah me-shu’ar ha-Rambam,” *Ḥiqqey Ḥever ve-‘arav* [J. Blau jubilee vol] (Jerusalem, 1993), 457, and the other sources cited there. Judah ha-Lēvy mentioned “Yam Pelishtiym” (the Mediterranean) in one of his poems on his planned journey to the Land of Israel (“Lekha nafshiy be-ṭūḥah,” *Divan*, ed. H. Brody [Berlin, 1894–1930] 2: 170–71, no. 11, line 11).

See on this Simon’s observations, Ibn ʻEzra, *Sheney peyrūqey le-TreyˈAsar*, 111–12, note to line 34, citing numerous other passages where Ibn ʻEzra made the same
mistake and others in relation to the geography of the Land. As Simon mentions there, in his commentary to Jonah 1.2 Ibn 'Ezra cites the opinion of “sages of the Land of Israel in Greece” (probably Byzantium) who identified Nineveh with Assur (not Troy, as Simon thought, taken probably from Friedländer, Essays, 191 n. 1; see Natan b. Yehiyyel of Rome, ‘Arūkh ha-shalēm, ed. A. Kohut [Vienna, 1878] 1: 335; of course part of the addition to the original), adding “and I do not know,” whereas in the commentary to Zeph. 2.11 he agrees with that identification and adds that this is proof that Assyria is north of the Land of Israel. Simon also cites the opinion of Fleischer that because Tunis was referred to as “Ashīr” in Ibn ‘Ezra’s time this may have caused the confusion; however, this seems unlikely, since even though Ibn ‘Ezra was never in the Land of Israel he certainly was in North Africa (nor is Fleischer’s statement entirely accurate). Note also the peculiarity that David Qimḥi, who elsewhere disagreed when Ibn ‘Ezra stated that Assyria was to the west of the Land of Israel, on Hos. 11.10 accepted this as an alternative possibility.

There is no denying that Ibn ‘Ezra himself had an expert knowledge of the calculation of latitude and longitude, to which he referred in many of his scientific treatises; see Sela, Astrōlogiyah, 280–82. Nevertheless, this knowledge was still derived from earlier sources. Sela there discusses some, but by no means all, of Ibn ‘Ezra’s geographical references in his commentaries but does not comment on the serious errors. On Ibn ‘Ezra and Abraham b. Ḥayya, see index and also Appendix for citations of him.

109 There is no denying that Ibn ‘Ezra himself had an expert knowledge of the calculation of latitude and longitude, to which he referred in many of his scientific treatises; see Sela, Astrōlogiyah, 280–82. Nevertheless, this knowledge was still derived from earlier sources. Sela there discusses some, but by no means all, of Ibn ‘Ezra’s geographical references in his commentaries but does not comment on the serious errors. On Ibn ‘Ezra and Abraham b. Ḥayya, see index and also Appendix for citations of him.

110 Isa. 14.13, and see also his comment on Ps. 48.3; Friedländer, in Ibn Ezra’s Commentary on Isaiah, tr. 71 n. 12, tried to “save” Ibn ‘Ezra’s explanation by claiming that Mt. Zion is identical with the Temple mount and therefore in the north of the city (cf. Ezra 40.2). But see Ibn ‘Ezra on Lev. 1.11: “many erred in thinking that Mt. Zion was in Jerusalem,” which obviously makes Friedländer’s explanation incorrect. On the whole issue, see Roth, ed., Medieval Jewish Civilization, 491.

111 Sefat yeter, 17b, no. 54. On the astrological explanation, see also Lipshitz, ‘Iyōniym, 17.

112 Gen. 2.11. Thus, Gihon was “close to the Land of Israel” when in fact it is said to surround the land of Cush (probably Ethiopia). This was discussed by Ben–Menahem, Inyaney Ibn ‘Ezra, 212 (originally in Tarbiz [Tarbiyah] 27[1957]: 513–14), who apparently confused the river with the spring of Gihon in Jerusalem and suggested that a抄yst of Ibn ‘Ezra’s commentary incorrectly wrote Ereq Yisraēl instead of Jerusalem (remotely possible, if his text had the abbreviation y’ for Yerushalayim, Jerusalem, and he misunderstood it as “Yisraēl,” although this would represent a very peculiar reading, instead of the usual “Land of Israel”). Joseph b. Eli’ezer “Bonfils” (fourteenth century), who wrote his supercommentary on Ibn ‘Ezra in Jerusalem, thought that because of this error about the location of the river Gihon Ibn ‘Ezra “did not come to the Land of Israel until the end of his life after he wrote his commentary” (Sōnat pa’nēḥah 1: 50–51, and cf. 2: 8); this, of course, is not the case, since in fact he never was in the Land of Israel. In his commentary there, Ibn ‘Ezra criticized Sa’adyah’s translation and geographical names, and stated that “we do not depend on his dreams” (erroneous interpretations), and possibly he wrote this (in Arabic) “in order that they [Muslims] should not say that there are words [so, apparently, not “commandments”] in the Torah which we do not know” (ed. Weiser 1: 21–22, and see n. 42* there; whatever the correct text, the meaning is difficult). On the other hand, there is a possible
“esoteric” significance to his statement that the Garden of Eden was south of the equator; see the important philosophical treatise “Ma'amār gan 'Ēden” by Hayyim (b.??) Israel (or possibly Ibn Israel, fl. ca. 1272, Toledo and Zamora), 24–26, on the location of the physical garden of Eden. This is cited also by Samuel Ibn Mūṭṭīḥ in his supercommentary on Ibn ‘Ezra (in Margaliyyāṭ tōvah, 11). So also Naḥmanides wrote that gan ‘Ēden is in this world, a real physical place, and that “experts of measurements; geographers” [ḥa'āley ha-miydōt] had already said that it is below the equator (“Sha'ar ha-gemūl” in Moses b. Naḥman, Kitvev 2: 295, bottom). This probably means that there were earlier sources for the notion of the location of Eden below the equator, or else he took this from Ibn ‘Ezra and did not want to mention him.

113 “Other” recension on Genesis (2.11), ed. Weiser 1: 167; cf. Peyrūshey rabeynū Sa’adyah Ga‘on ‘al ha-Tōrah, 14. Friedländer, Essays, Heb. appendix, 37 n. 2, thought that there was an error in the text and that Ibn ‘Ezra did not say that the three known rivers flow from east to west; but this is no error, of course. Neither Friedländer nor Weiser made any comment on “south of the equator.” It is possible that he misunderstood certain Arabic geographical texts which refer to these rivers as being located “after” the equator (meaning, of course, north of it, beyond), such as that of Ishāq ibn al-Ḥasan Ibn Abīl-Ḥusayn al-Zayyāt (tenth century, al-Andalus), tr. Francisco Castelló Moxó in Vernet, Juan, ed., Estudios sobre historia de la ciencia árabe (Barcelona, 1980), 149–50 (derived chiefly from Kitāb ṣūrat al-arḍ of the famous Muḥammad al-Khwarizmī, ninth century). The actual source of the Nile was unknown, of course, until modern times.

114 Baḥya b. Asher, Biyūr ‘al ha-Tōrah 1: 298 (on Gen. 36.6). See also Lipshitz, ‘Iyyūniym, 72 (the citations given by Chavel in his ed. of Baḥya are incorrect). Baḥya, who frequently quoted and otherwise relied upon Ibn ‘Ezra, certainly did not invent the quotation; probably this is another example of corrupted or interpolated texts of his commentaries.
In the first chapter we examined some of the classifications of biblical exegesis in the writings of Spanish Jewish scholars. Ibn ‘Ezra was also briefly touched upon. However, his analyses are by far the most important of all and deserve here a fuller treatment.

In the introduction to his commentary on the Torah,¹ he compares the various groups in relation to the “circle” and the “point” which is its center; as he explains in his introductory poem,² truth is like a point within a circle (of concentric rings).

The first group are those whose commentaries are traditional but contain an excess of extraneous matter and digressions and who lack sufficient learning for some of the subjects they mention (“let those who wish to understand secular knowledge learn it from the works of experts,” he comments). He criticizes in this regard “heads of yeshivot in Muslim lands,” especially a certain “Yaḥaq” (Isaac), as well as the geoniym, particularly Sa’adyah, and Samuel b. Ḥofniy.³

The second category is the rejection of tradition by those who rely entirely on their own reason; these are the Qaraites and other heretics (he discusses at great length some of their errors, and in one place in his commentary recalls at length a debate he had with a Qaraite whom he convinced of the error of his ways).⁴ Yet even though he criticized the views of the Qaraites throughout his commentary, he nevertheless respectfully cited some other Qaraite scholars,⁵ particularly Yafet (or Yeſet) b. ‘Alī (ca. 950), frequently cited here.⁶

The third group, the “way of darkness,” is that of those who delight in mysticism (“invent from their hearts secrets for everything”; the expression bodatym mi-libam comes from 1 Kings 12.33 and implies falsification; it was often used about enemies of the Jews) and reject the simple meaning of the text (even matters concerning which there is a “secret,” as he himself often stated, are also – perhaps primarily – to be understood according to their simple explanation); “and why should we invert [transpose] things which are seen to things hidden,” that is, why give an esoteric interpretation to what can be explained logically? He adds: “only in one thing were they correct, that every thing [regarding] a small or great commandment [misyvaḥ qatanah o gedolah] must be weighed in the balance of the heart [reason].”⁷
The fourth category is that of scholars, particularly in “the lands of the Greeks” (Byzantium and the islands) and “Edom” (Christian Europe), who do not care about grammar but interpret everything allegorically. Here, he particularly mentions the work *Leqaḥ tōv* of Ṭūvyah (“Tobias”) b. El’azar (eleventh century Kastoria, in northern Greece, then in the Byzantine Empire) and Ḍr ʿeynayim (unpublished) by Ṭūvyah’s student Meir; it is quite possible that he found these works in Italy. He objects that these midrashic interpretations have already been provided by earlier sages, and why repeat this? Additionally, many things are “secret” and beyond explanation (which appears to contradict what he said above), and there are instances of derash contradicting derash. After giving examples of numerous allegorical interpretations which have been given concerning creation, he concludes: “the end of the thing, there is no end to derash” (ṣōf devar ʿēyn le-derash sōf; this kind of play on words was a favorite stylistic feature of his writing).9

Elsewhere, he also expressed skepticism about midrashiym; as in his comment on Ex. 2.22:

> what is written in *Divrey ha-yamiym de-Mōsheh* [a medieval midrash on Moses] do not believe; and I will tell you a rule: any [early] book which was not written by the prophets, or the sages in accord with tradition, is not to be relied upon; also because there are things in them that contradict correct opinion, and so Sēfer Zerubavel and also Sēfer Eldad ha-Daniy.10

The fifth way, which was his own (although other Spanish commentators preceded him), was to combine the literal meaning with common sense and tradition, where applicable. It is noteworthy that he praises in this respect the Aramaic translation (throughout his commentaries, he often cites these translations, on the Torah and the other books). Above all, this “way” is based on proper grammatical understanding of the text, but he is extremely critical of the “masoretes,” whose corrections are not necessary and are fit only for “infants.”11

As we shall see, Ibn ‘Ezra did not always follow his own statements here, since his commentaries contain several digressions and he was often critical of tradition.

In the introduction (written in 1146) to his “other” (shorter) recension of his commentary on Genesis, he gave a different arrangement. The first method of interpretation is that of the Christian scholars who claim that the entire Torah is to be interpreted allegorically (*ḥiydot ve-meshaliyyim*; “parables and metaphors”). Each interprets the text according to his own thoughts and according to theological notions. In contrast to this, he says that it is best to explain each passage as it is written “if it is close to reason” (i.e., does not contradict reason), although there are things about which there are “secrets” (esoteric interpretation), such as the garden of Eden and the tree of knowledge.

The second method, or way, is that of the “Sadducees” (Qaraïtes) who deny the words of the sages; sometimes they are within the “point” (center of
the circle; i.e., they interpret a text correctly) and sometimes they go around it or are completely outside it (he mentions specifically “Benjamin”; i.e., Benjamin al-Nahwandi, ninth century). Ibn ‘Ezra criticizes specific interpretations of Benjamin, as well as of ‘Anan, the founder of the Qaraite sect, and launches into a general attack against their denial of the “oral Torah” (the laws of the Talmud), the festivals, etc. (On “Ben Zūṭa” [Sahl b. Maṣliyah] mentioned there, see n. 5.) The third method is that of the “heads [chief] of the geōniym” (he means Sa’adyah Gaōn, whose comments he often criticized), who used “external wisdom” (secular knowledge) to explain the text, such as philosophical and astronomical knowledge (on the particular passages cited here, such as Gen. 28.12, we do not have his commentary), and also that he discussed the opinions of Gentile sages concerning creation, “and of what value is that to believers in God and his Torah?”

The fourth way is that of “our predecessors,” the talmudic sages. Sometimes they explained a passage according to its simple meaning (peshaṭ) and sometimes allegorically or in an esoteric meaning. The final method is his own, to explain everything according to its meaning and grammar, and only in matters relating to commandments and laws to rely on the judgment of predecessors; he says that only when there is no such issue does he mention the “correct” commentaries of others. This, of course, was not actually his practice; rather, he frequently criticized other interpretations. In spite of his condemnation of allegory, he sometimes engaged in allegorical interpretation, as we shall see. He also wrote that because the “scholars of our generation” (the scholars of Italy and France) did not engage themselves in grammar, he was presenting a summary of grammar and its rules.

It is interesting to compare this with the earlier statement of Moses Ibn ‘Ezra(h) in his unpublished philosophical-rhetorical work “Maqālat al-hādiqa.” There he distinguishes between explicit (obvious) and ambiguous verses and gives four principles according to which a figurative interpretation must be sought: (1) if the literal (ẓāhir) sense results in a contradiction of meaning; (2) if there is a contradiction between the traditional interpretation and the rational understanding; (3) if a comparison of the (apparent) meaning is contradicted by sound inferences (deductions), istidlāt ṣahīḥ; (4) if there is a contradiction between the plain meaning of one verse with another.15

**Influence on Maimonides**

While Maimonides never mentioned Ibn ‘Ezra by name, there is no doubt that he knew his commentaries.16 His influence on Maimonides was already known to at least some medieval authors.17 Some modern writers have also called attention to instances of the apparent influence of Ibn ‘Ezra in various texts of Maimonides, and I have already suggested others here.18 There are more, which like the examples previously mentioned here have not been discussed elsewhere, as far as I know.
Ibn ‘Ezra explained that the “attachment” of man to God is the sole reason for which he was created (and see above on Names of God, and index here, “devēqah”), “for he was not created to acquire wealth nor to build buildings and leave them to strangers while he ‘dwells’ beneath the ground [after death], nor to enjoy himself in various foods” or sexual intercourse. Therefore, he must seek everything which brings him to the love of God and to learn wisdom. This may well have influenced Maimonides in his similar statements.19

Certainly the similarity between Ibn ‘Ezra’s theories of knowledge and those of Maimonides (particularly the cognition of God),20 and the aforementioned statements about knowledge of science and nature leading to knowledge of God, is obvious. Whether or not this means there was direct influence on Maimonides remains to be shown, however.

Maimonides wrote that one who perfects himself and “enters Pardēs” (the mystical “garden” in the upper world; from this Persian word derives English “paradise”) and engages only in the contemplation of those mysteries, not thinking at all about the unnecessary things of this world,

rather his thought is always turned above, attached to the [heavenly] throne to understand those pure holy forms and contemplates the wisdom of the Holy One, blessed be he, all of it from the first form to the navel [ṭābur] of the earth, and knows from these [God’s] greatness, immediately the holy spirit rests upon him.

(M.T., Mada’e: “Yesōdey ha-Tōrah” 7.2)

This notion of the “forms” is derived from Ibn ‘Ezra.21 Maimonides’ discussion of Isa. 13.13–14 was also perhaps influenced by Ibn ‘Ezra, who said more simply that this is “by way of parable, for one who flees finds no rest.” However, when Maimonides applied these verses to Sennacherib he seems not to have taken note of Ibn ‘Ezra’s statement that all the commentators interpret this as referring to the wars of Gog and Magog, and only Moses Ibn Chicatilla thought the reference was to Sennacherib. On Isa. 30.26, Maimonides again relates it to Sennacherib, where Ibn ‘Ezra again says that all commentators refer the verse to the messianic era except Ibn Chicatilla, who applied it to Sennacherib; however, at the end of the verse he says either Gog and Magog or the Assyrians. There is, however, no doubt that Maimonides there refers to Ibn ‘Ezra when he says that “the commentators” have explained the “light of the seven days” as a “multiplicity” of light.22

Similarly, Ibn ‘Ezra’s interpretation of Isa. 20.3, in which the prophet saw himself walking naked, as a vision, rather than literally (and cf. his commentary on Hos. 1.1); as well as the statement there about Abraham (Gen. 15.1), and Hosea taking a wife and children of harlotry (Hos. 1.2), all of which may have influenced Maimonides.23 Also, it is not improbable that Ibn ‘Ezra’s views on resurrection (see n. 119) influenced Maimonides.
Finally, it has been suggested that Maimonides was perhaps influenced by Ibn ‘Ezra’s “messianic” interpretation of certain verses, such as (Num. 24.17), “I see it, but not now; I behold it, but it is not near: there shall come [literally, ‘step forth’] a star out of Jacob,” concerning which Ibn ‘Ezra said this is a prophecy about David, and that many explained it as referring to the messiah, “and those lacking knowledge” complain that to apply it to David is a denial of the coming of the messiah, but that belief is already firmly established in Daniel; “and there is no need for any prophet in the world [to establish this] besides the words of Moses... [Deut. 30.4–5].” Maimonides (M.T., Shōftiym: “Melakhiym,” 11.1) also interpreted Num. 24.17 as a reference to David, but added that the next part of the verse, “and a scepter shall rise out of Israel,” means the “king messiah.” He also cited the same reference to the words of Moses. While Maimonides of course could have arrived at these interpretations on his own, the coincidence is remarkable.

However, there are important topics where we might expect to find an influence but there is none. The most significant of these is the aforementioned lengthy analysis of the word bara (see above, “Creation”; another is the nature of miracles).

Supercommentaries

More commentaries were written on Ibn ‘Ezra than any other Iberian biblical exegete, and in fact more than on such works as the “Guide” of Maimonides. Unfortunately, most remain in manuscript. Judah Mosconiy (see below on him) claimed to have seen about 30 such commentaries. Joseph Solomon Delmedigo (1591–1655) listed 24. In fact, 36 are known; there are at least 15 anonymous ones. The most important of these (not all from Spain), in chronological order, are here discussed briefly.

Moses Ibn Tibbon (Montpellier, mid-to-late thirteenth century) wrote on the “secrets” of Ibn ‘Ezra’s commentary on the Torah, of which only a fragment survives. Judging from the part which is extant, this in fact is less a commentary on Ibn ‘Ezra than a vehicle for Ibn Tibbon’s own philosophical ideas.

El’azar b. Matityahu (Matathias), or Matatyah (thirteenth century?). According to Abraham David, both El’azar and his father are to be identified with the “French scholars” who signed the “Taqanōt Candia” in 1228 on their way to the Land of Israel. Surprisingly (for a French rabbi, if that is what he was), he was apparently an ardent enthusiast of the philosophy of Maimonides and condemned Nahmanides for his criticism of Ibn ‘Ezra and Maimonides; this alone casts serious doubt on his identification as “French.”

Solomon b. David (not Abraham) Ibn Ya’ish of Guadalajara (mid-fourteenth century). His commentary on Ibn ‘Ezra is cited by Samuel Zarza; of particular interest are his remarks concerning the four divisions of the year in relation to the ages of man (stages in one’s life). Shēm Ṭov Ibn Šaprūt (see
below on him), in his unpublished commentary on Ibn ‘Ezra, cited Solomon Ibn Ya’ish as having seen a biblical commentary of Ibn Gabirol (see Chapter 1, n. 150). Joseph b. Eli’ezer saw Ibn Ya’ish’s commentary in Crete in 1375 and copied the manuscript, which he complains had many errors of transcription. Solomon also wrote a (lost) commentary on the Torah (see Chapter 4).

Joseph b. Abraham Ibn Waqār (Toledo, fl. 1290–after 1358) wrote a now lost supercommentary in Judeo-Arabic, cited by Samuel Zarza and Ibn Moṭṭoṭ (see below on them). The philosopher Moses b. Joshua Nahoniy (ca. 1300?–d. ca. 1362) wrote of him: “Also when I was in the praiseworthy city of Toledo, the glory of Israel, I spoke about this [regel, ‘foot,’ as a term for the ‘throne of God’] with the elderly sage don Joseph called [Ibn Waqār].”

Solomon Franco wrote (before 1360) a commentary, or explanation of particular topics in Ibn ‘Ezra, and also a reply to Abraham Ibn al-Ṭabbīb who had accused him of deviation from the teachings of the sages and misinterpreting certain ideas of Ibn ‘Ezra. In his reply, he mentioned that a “certain scholar” had behaved as if no one understood Ibn ‘Ezra as well as he did “and when he heard that I was in Toledo to learn from the pious [ḥasiyd] scholar Joseph Ibn Waqār of blessed memory” Ibn al-Ṭabbīb wrote to Franco to ask that he consult that sage on these matters and then send him his opinion. Franco explained to Abraham that these interpretations were what he had written.

Judah Leon Mosconi (1328–77) wrote a supercommentary, of which only part remains. Mosconi claimed to have seen a supercommentary by one Aviyshay of Bulgaria, who he said lived “close in time” to Ibn ‘Ezra, and also refers to what he had heard about a (lost) book by Ibn ‘Ezra himself, on astral magic, in which he allegedly gave details of his entire life; that work, “Kohot ha-adam,” is in fact spurious. In reality, this Aviyshay was not a contemporary of Ibn ‘Ezra, but lived in the fourteenth century, at the same time as Mosconi himself. Judah mentioned that in Majorca he found the supercommentaries of Moses Ibn Tibbon (see above on this) and Joseph Ibn Kaspīy (1279/80–ca. 1340), and in Perpignan also that of Samson de Chinon of Marseille (possibly Samson b. Isaac, a well-known rabbi). Ibn Kaspīy’s supercommentary (“Parashat keseṭ,” as he called it in his list of his writings), written at the age of 20, remains unpublished, on another supercommentary attributed to him, see below “Anonymous.” Mosconi also mentioned a commentary by David Bonet Bonjorn of Perpignan, father of the famous astronomer and translator Jacob b. David Pœl. Several others are mentioned that need not concern us here.

Joseph Shalōm (Toledo, Zamora? mid-fourteenth century; student of the aforementioned Ḥayyim (b.?) Israel, or possibly Ibn Israel, fl. ca. 1272, Toledo and Zamora). To date, known only for his replies to the polemical letters of the converso Alfonso de Valladolid (Abner of Burgos), he apparently also wrote a supercommentary, cited by Samuel Zarza.

Samuel Zarza, not “Ibn” Zarza (Palencia; second half of the fourteenth century), lived also in Barcelona, Zaragoza and Perpignan. In the
introduction to his (unpublished) “Mikhlul yofiy,” written in 1359, he says that he was called in Hebrew “Ibn Seneh” (seneh, “thorn bush,” Hebrew equivalent of Sp. zarza), and he referred to himself as “youngest of the young.” If this is not just a pious expression of humility, then he probably was born not earlier than 1339 or so. He completed his Megor ha ayin, in 1368. The author was thoroughly familiar with previous and contemporary philosophical authors, such as Samuel Ibn Tibbon, Shem Tov Ibn Falquera, Isaac Albalag, Moses Narboniy, Joseph Ibn Kaspuy and even David Ibn Bilia, his contemporary who was born in Portugal but also lived in Perpignan. He did not know Arabic, even though he lived for a time in Zaragoza and Perpignan; for instance, he cited a work of Ibn Rushd (“Averroes”) in Hebrew translation.

Samuel b. Sa’adyah Ibn Mott (Matut) wrote his supercommentary, Megiylat setariym, in Guadalajara in 1370. He also wrote “Meshoven netiyvot,” a commentary on the mystical work Shefer yeqiyyah, and a supercommentary (unpublished) on Bahya b. Asher. In addition, he translated some works. Of Lunel (Meshulam b. Makhiyr, later a rabbi in Perpignan, d. 1306). 47

Hayyim of Briviesca (near Burgos) was a student of Menahem Ibn Zerah (ca. 1310–85), and also apparently studied with the renowned philosopher and scientist Levy b. Gershon (“Gersonides”) of French Provence, and lived for a time in Salamanca. He wrote a commentary, “Esh hayyim,” the main purpose of which was to refute the criticisms of Ibn Ezra by Nahmanides. 48

‘Ezra b. Solomon Gaetigno (possibly Gattegno), also known as Astruc Solomon, was the son of Solomon Astruc and lived in Zaragoza. He wrote two separate supercommentaries, “Shefer ha-zikhrayn” (“book of remembrances,” simple explanation) and “Sod Adonay liy-re’av” (“secret of the Lord to those who fear him,” philosophical or more profound), written in Agramunt (so, correctly), Spain in 1372. He was a student of Joseph Ibn Vivas, better known by his full name, Joseph b. Joshua Ibn Vivas al-Lorqiy (d. before 1372), a scientist and translator and father of the notorious apostate Joshua (Jeronimo de Santa Fe). Gaetigno also mentions what he had “heard” from the aforementioned Joseph Ibn Waqar and frequently cites Solomon Franco (sometimes disagreeing with him) and Joseph Ibn Kaspuy, as well as a lengthy section from Ibn Motta and part of the commentary of the aforementioned Solomon (b. David) Ibn Ya’ish.

In his supercommentary, he noted the difficulty of the extreme ages assigned to certain figures in Genesis, a topic which he says had bothered him for many years. He mentions the explanation he heard from “an intelligent man in Teruel [in southeastern Aragon]” that these statements do not refer literally to the ages of the individuals but rather that their memory and teachings were not forgotten for that period of time; thus it is said (Berakhoth, 18a; Eccles. rabah 9.4) “the righteous even in their death are called living.”

His interest in philosophy is demonstrated by the fact that he copied the translation of the abridgement of Ibn Rushd (“Averroes”) on Aristotle’s
“Logic” in 1356, and also of his middle commentary on Aristotle’s “Generation and Corruption.” These and other works, such as a commentary of Ibn Sinā (“Avicenna”), are also cited in his supercommentary. He also wrote a commentary on *agadē* of the Talmud (unpublished).

Matityahu (Matathias) b. Moses “ha-Yiḥarīy” (late fourteenth to early fifteenth century), one of the participants in the Tortosa disputation and author of an important commentary on Psalm 119 and on *Avot* (“Ethics of the Fathers”), wrote notes on the supercommentaries of Gatigno.57

Joseph b. Eli’ezer “Bonfils” (“Ṭōv ‘Elem”) lived in then French Provence, although he was of Spanish background. He wrote his supercommentary in Jerusalem, before 1386.58 His commentary is perhaps the most elaborate, on virtually every verse on which Ibn ‘Ezra wrote. It demonstrates his own extensive knowledge of science and philosophy, yet it only sometimes sheds significant light on Ibn ‘Ezra’s possible intention (it is cited here where appropriate on his commentary). A greatly abridged version of the commentary, “Ōhel Yōsēf,” appears in *Margaliyōt ṭūvah* (see Bibliography).

Shēm Ṭōv b. Judah Ibn Mayor of Briviesca wrote “ha-Me’ōr ha-gadēl,” described by Simon as a commentary on the Torah, but in fact it is a supercommentary on Ibn ‘Ezra, completed in 1384.59 The author’s strong opposition to qabalah is to be noted.

Shēm Ṭōv Ibn Shaprūṭ (Tudela, Tarazona; late fourteenth century), a physician and scholar who also made a Hebrew translation of the gospel of Matthew, wrote a commentary on Ibn ‘Ezra, “Sōfit pa’nēah” (unpublished).60 Not surprisingly, his commentary is philosophical but also insome respects allegorical, as well as containing mathematical and astronomical insights. He utilized both the first and second recensions of Ibn ‘Ezra’s commentary on Genesis and Exodus.

“Simon” of Provence (it is uncertain if this is the name of the author or of the copyist of the manuscript), fourteenth to fifteenth century (Provence then was French, of course). The manuscript contains explanations of “secrets” in Ibn ‘Ezra.61

Profiat Duran (Isaac b. Moses ha-Lēvy, late fourteenth to early fifteenth century) lived in Perpignan and perhaps Majorca. He was an important grammarian, mathematician and author of an anti-Christian polemic, as well as of a commentary on the “Guide” of Maimonides. He also wrote a supercommentary on Ibn ‘Ezra, of which only fragments remain (in manuscript).62

Shalom b. Solomon “Yerushalmiy” lived in Syracuse, Sicily (which then was part of the kingdom of Aragón), at the end of the fifteenth century. His “Shabat Shalōmi” (unpublished) is an explanation of mathematical and astronomical aspects of Ibn ‘Ezra’s commentary on Genesis and Exodus.63

Solomon (b. Isaac) Hayate (Ḥayyat) at Peñafiel in Castile in 1449 wrote a “large grammatical and philosophical” supercommentary, sometimes quoting his (unnamed) teacher.64
Mordecai Comtino, or Khomatiano (Constantinople; ca. 1420–d. before 1483), wrote commentaries on “all” the works of Ibn ‘Ezra, according to his grandson, Joseph Solomon Delmedigo of Candia (1591–1655). It is, of course, improbable that he actually commented on “all” the works of Ibn ‘Ezra. He was at some point the student of the Catalan rabbi Ḥa n o k h Saporta and the teacher of Elijah Mizraḥi (ca. 1455–1525/6), a famous rabbi and mathematician in the Ottoman Empire (Mordecai himself was adept at mathematics and astronomy and composed several treatises on both).

Anonymous

The “Peyrush ha-sōdōt shel ha-Rab’a ‘al ha-Torah” (“commentary on the secrets of Ibn ‘Ezra”), attributed to Joseph Ibn Kaspiy, is actually by an unknown author. The anonymous commentator lived approximately at the same time as Ibn Kaspiy; however, since we have no idea who he was or where he lived, there is no reason to discuss this in detail here.

A supercommentary “Avat nefesh” (manuscript) has been attributed to various authors, including Yeda’yah “Bedersiy” (see index on him), Asher b. Abraham Crescas (Bonan Crescas, not to be confused with Bonet Crescas mentioned above; probably French Provence, late fourteenth to early fifteenth century) or Lēvy b. Gērshōn (“Gersonides”). However, its careful investigation has shown that all of the attributions are in error and that it is an anonymous work, probably written in Provence in the late medieval period—not then part of Spain.

Incidentally, the famous philosopher and scientist Lēvy b. Gērshōn also wrote profound philosophical commentaries on the Bible, but he lived in Provence at the time when it was no longer part of Spain (he was born in 1288, probably, and although he may have lived the last few years of his life in Perpignan he had already long before concluded his works).

One anonymous commentary of interest is apparently by one of the students of Solomon Ibn Adret, the great rabbi and talmudic scholar of Barcelona (ca. 1233–1310).

Conclusion

Abraham Ibn ‘Ezra remains perhaps the most important biblical commentator of all time. It is no exaggeration to say that many biblical verses (or indeed whole books) cannot be understood correctly without consulting his commentaries. He combined knowledge of grammar, languages, philosophy, mathematics and astronomy in a way unique in exegesis, and indeed his commentaries are independently important for investigation in each of these areas. As we have seen, Maimonides utilized his commentaries, and this in itself testifies to their importance, and even a non-rationalist like Naḥmanides, while disagreeing with many of his philosophical interpretations, showed
great respect for his exegesis and more often agreed with him, as we shall see in the following chapter.

Notes

1 See Ibn ‘Ezra, Peyrūshey ha-Tūrah, ed. Weiser 1: 1–10 (Heb. page numbers) and the extensive notes there. See also the edition, not used by Weiser, from several manuscripts in Ibn ‘Ezra, Reime und Gedichte 1: 24–48, with translation and important notes. A manuscript which belonged to S.D. Luzzatto had four ways of interpretation mentioned in the introduction instead of five, since the fifth way (see below) was Ibn ‘Ezra’s own (note in Kerem hemed 4, cited by Krinsky, Meḥōqeuy Yehūdah 1: 42b); however, as noted below, other Spanish interpreters also followed the “fifth way.” Friedländer, Essays, 148, and see 156, argued that this introduction was written in 1145/46. A good translation (Spanish) of the introduction is in Valle Rodríguez, “Exégesis,” 326–35. There is an English translation by Strickman and Silver in vol. 1 of their translation of Ibn ‘Ezra’s Commentary on the Pentateuch. A superficial synopsis of the introduction in both versions of Ibn ‘Ezra’s commentary is given also by Cohen, Three Approaches, 229 ff. Moses Mendelssohn, the famous eighteenth-century Jewish philosopher, made a German translation of the introduction, which was turned into Yiddish in that version of his Bible translation published in St. Petersburg (actually in Vilnius) in 1852.

2 This poem does not appear in Krinsky’s or Weiser’s ed. nor in the standard eds. of the commentary in bibles with Hebrew commentaries; nor is it in the aforementioned English translations. It was first published by M. Mortara in Otsar [Ōṣar] neḥmad 2 (1857): 209 (his ed. of the “other recension” of Ibn ‘Ezra on Genesis), which was reprinted in Friedländer, Essays, Heb. appendix, 1; and in Ibn ‘Ezra, Reime und Gedichte 2: 56–57, with German translation (it is surprising that Krinsky did not see this or include it in his edition).

3 The identity of “Yiḥṣaq” (Isaac) is discussed in Appendix 1 to this book (the section on Ibn ‘Ezra). He cites specific explanations by him; for example on Gen. 1.3 he referred to the “belief of the masters of light and darkness” (probably the Zoroastrians; see Krinsky, Meḥōqeuy Yehūdah 1: 24a [erroneously printed as “44”] n. 9), of which Ibn ‘Ezra said “and he walked in darkness and did not recognize it.” The meaning is apparently that Isaac had utilized certain secular sources which were irrelevant to the topic of the discussion (in Genesis). On Samuel b. Ḥō基金份额 as exegete, see Brody, “The Geonim of Babylonia as Biblical Exegetes,” 81–82 and bibliography cited, 74–75. See also the index here. Ibn ‘Ezra’s criticism of Sa’adyah apparently relates to the gaōn’s cosmological ideas associated with Gen. 1.14; (cf. Peyrūshey rabeynū Sa’adyah Gaōn ‘al ha-Tūrah, 12 and n. 13; see also Weiser’s ed. of Ibn ‘Ezra’s introduction, 2 notes 19, 20). However, Ibn ‘Ezra clearly states that he does not object to secular knowledge, only to the discussion of it by those who lack sufficient preparation and study.

4 As had earlier writers, he refers to the Qaraites as Ṣaddūqīym (“Sadducees”), because like that sect of the talmudic era they rejected the authority of the sages and denied certain fundamental beliefs. Note also Ibn ‘Ezra’s discussion (Ex. 12.1) of the calendar, against the views of the Qaraites (see Friedländer, Essays, 109–10). In the “short recension” on Ex. 35.3 (ed. Weiser 2: 350–51) he records a lengthy debate he had with a Qaraite over the meaning of “day” with regard to the Sabbath, in which he showed that it is impossible to prove that the Sabbath begins with the evening except through tradition (the “oral Torah”); cf. the “regular” commentary on Ex. 16.25 and Gen. 1.1. Judah ha-Lēvy wrote at length about
the Sabbath beginning at sundown, but insisted that this is calculated from sunset at Sinai (Kūzari II. 20; tr. Hirschfeld, 93 ff.). On statements attributed by Ibn ‘Ezra to Qaraites which may not actually be by them, see Chapter 2, n. 22. Critical remarks about Qaraites (“those who contradict,” and other things) are found throughout his commentaries and other writings; e.g., Ex. 20.21; 21.24; 32.15 (ed. Weiser, 224 line 2; 350); Num. 6.21; 7.48; Lev. 7.20, 18.11; 22.22; 23.11; 25.9, 20; Deut. 6.6, 8; 12.17; 16.1, 7; 23.12; 24.6; 25.4; Esther 9.30; Yesōd mōra, 1 (ed. Cohen, 70). He criticizes the Qaraites for their lack of knowledge of grammar, and that each one interprets the text according to his own desire. So also with regard to their understanding of the commandments he says “and how can one rely on their opinion about the commandments, when every moment they change from side to side according to their thought”; that is, they change their opinions about what are or are not commandments in the Torah (ed. Weiser 1: 2). On Lev. 7.20, he discusses a debate he had with a Qaraite concerning fat (ḥēlev) prohibited by the Bible. At the end of the discussion, the Qaraite swore an oath to abandon his own interpretation of scripture and rely in the future only on that of the sages. The debate relates also to his discussion of Lev. 3.9, that the “tail” (alyah) is called “fat” (halbō ha-alyah means “the fat which is the tail”), where he says “and the ‘Sadducees’ erred about this, as I shall explain.” This was erroneously understood by some to mean that Ibn ‘Ezra did not believe that the prohibition on eating the fat of sacrificed animals is a biblical prohibition (see his similar debate with a “heretic,” probably a Qaraite, concerning sacrifices, commentary on Ex. 20.21). Naḥmanides on the same passage (Lev. 3.9) stated that he wished to “close the mouths” of the “Sadducees” (Qaraites who of course were no longer in Spain nor did he probably have any idea who they were) but disagreed harshly with Ibn ‘Ezra’s interpretation, “correcting” his grammatical explanation; however, he misunderstood what Ibn ‘Ezra meant to say: not that both words must have the same form (either both possessive, “its fat” and “its tail,” or neither possessive), but rather that ha-alyah clarifies and denotes halbō. Naḥmanides’ explanation (“the fat that is in the tail”) is correct with regard to the law, but the grammatical problem remains; see the excellent discussion of this, including the opinion of Naḥmanides and of some of the supercommentaries on Ibn ‘Ezra, in Lipshitz, ʻIyunim, 51–56 and his Pinqey ʻiyun, 65–67; see also Krinsky, Meḥoqeqey Yehudah 1: 19 n. 13 citing Shēm ʻṬov Ibn Shaprūṭ’s supercommentary.

5 Qaraite scholars he specifically mentions are ‘Anan, the founder of the sect (early eighteenth century); Benjamin [al-Nahawandi] ben Mašliḥah (an opponent of Sa‘adyah, he lived apparently in Baghdād) and Abu’l- Farāj (Joshua b. Judah) Furqān Ibn Asad, the previously mentioned scholar and biblical translator (see Chapter 1, n. 26 and the Appendix here). Ibn ‘Ezra cites him simply as “R [rabbi] Yeḥu‘ah” (also sometimes “ha-Yerushalmiy” – the “Jerusalemite” – in other writings); “rabbi” is an unusual mark of respect for a Qaraite, which may indicate that Ibn ‘Ezra did not know who he was (Uriel Simon’s explanation that the term indicating he was a rabbi is an addition by a copyist is not likely, since the term appears in every citation of him by Ibn ‘Ezra and not just in the commentary on Hosea; see Simon’s ed. of Ibn ‘Ezra, Sheney peyrūshey… le-Trey-‘Asar, 67). Ibn ‘Ezra no doubt particularly appreciated his severe criticisms of Sa‘adyah, whom he himself criticized. Another important Qaraite strongly condemned by Ibn ‘Ezra was “Ben Zūta” (Sahl b. Mašliḥah) of Jerusalem (910–50; see on him in the index to Roth, ed., Medieval Jewish Civilization, and see “Appendix 1” here; the correct identification was made by Israelsohn in R.E.J. 23 [1891]: 133–32). See also Leon Nemoy’s article “Sahl b. Mazli‘ah” in E.J., but with no mention of Ibn ‘Ezra’s citation (already
noted by Pinsker, Simḥah. *Liqṭey qadmaniyyōt* [Vienna, 1860], 43; however, his references are incorrect. He was cited also by Ibn Bil'am on Ezekiel. Ibn ‘Ezra in his *Šefer ha-‘ibūr*, 7a, said of him that he “groped in the Torah as a blind man gropes in the darkness.” He criticized a grammatical explanation of his and said that he “thought to ascend the ladder of wisdom in his folly but his ‘nakedness’ [ignorance] is revealed, and so may this happen to every heretic who does not believe in the words of our predecessors [talmudic sages]” (commentary on Ex. 20.23, and see his remarks in the “short recension,” ed. Weiser 2: 287). Other Qaraites cited by him are Judah “the Persian” (ninth century), one of the first Qaraites, and Moses “the Persian” (see on Moses in “Appendix 1” here). Ibn ‘Ezra mentions Judah’s treatise on numbering of years and months according to the solar instead of the lunar system (introduction to his commentary on the Torah, “path two,” ed. Weiser 1: 5); in more detail on Ex. 12.2, Lev. 25.9, Num. 3.39 and in his *Šefer ha-‘ibūr*, 8a. More significant was “Ḥārūn Abu‘l-Farāj” (sic); i.e., the eleventh-century grammarian Abu‘l-Farāj Ḥārūn Ibn al-Farāj; cited on Isa. 28.12 and 48.25.

6 See “Appendix 1” here on sources cited by Ibn ‘Ezra. The name is biblical, but punctuated by the masoretes (punctuators of the text) sometimes “Yafet” and sometimes “Yefet.” The form “Japheth,” which is nineteenth-century German, continues to be used by many modern writers (e.g., the E.J.; Sirat, *History*, 38–55 and Frank, *Search Scripture Well*, throughout); it is nevertheless incorrect when writing in English. ‘Alī is an Arabic name (not ‘Eli or ‘Ēlî, as almost always written by modern scholars). It is peculiar that he is not cited more frequently in Ibn ‘Ezra’s commentary on Psalms, and see Simon, *Arba’ giyshōt*, 139 (tr. 160), and his extensive analysis, 67–95 (tr. 72 ff.), of Yafet’s “approach” to Psalms. Simon’s doubts that Ibn ‘Ezra saw Yafet’s commentaries are without foundation, inasmuch as Ibn Chicatilla already had it and cited it, and there is no question that even if Ibn ‘Ezra did not see Yafet’s commentaries in Spain he certainly obtained copies in North Africa or Egypt (Simon does not believe he was in Egypt, but that is incorrect).

7 This has nothing to do with Christians, who are neither mentioned nor alluded to in the text:

the second path was chosen by the perverse [cf. Deut. 32.5, and see Ibn ‘Ezra’s commentary there], although they are [ve-im hēm] Israelites [Jews], who thought that they stood on the center [of the allegorical circle] itself, [but] they did not know [even] its place.

The entire statement, as Ibn ‘Ezra makes clear, refers to the Qaraites, who, although Jews, are heretics. The third “path” is allegorical interpretation, and refers quite clearly to Jews. Rabbinical tradition distinguished between “small” and “large,” or great, commandments. Now, if those who adhered to this path maintained such a concept, clearly he is not talking about Christians, as some have maintained, according to whom all of the commandments, great or small, were “abrogated” with the coming of Jesus (on the difference between the third path here and the first path of the “other recension,” which actually does refer to Christians, see below). Cohen, *Three Approaches*, 36–37, also erroneously interprets this “third way” as referring to Christians, also ignoring the “other recension” which really does refer to them.

8 See the citation from Judah Mosconiy’s supercommentary on Ibn ‘Ezra in *Lqah tōv*, ed. Buber (see Bibliography) 1: 10, and Buber’s discussion, 11, of his place of residence (Thessalonika); see also on him Baron, *Social and Religious History* 6: 173–75. Nothing further is known of Meir, other than Mosconiy’s statement that he also lived in Kastoria, the home of Ṭūvyah.
The expression, misunderstood by some writers, simply means that there is no limit to the possibilities of homiletic explanation of texts. Ibn ‘Ezra himself frequently cited such interpretations, often disagreeing but also sometimes accepting them.

Ed. Weiser 2: 20. The first midrash mentioned, stories about the life of Moses, was edited by Jellinek, Beyt ha-midrash (rpt. ed.) 2: 1–11; text also in Eisenstein, ed., Ozar Ŷṣar midrashiyim, 357–61. On the “Cushite” wife of Moses, see also Ibn ‘Ezra on Num. 12.1 (ed. Weiser 3: 147), and cf. Josephus, Antiquities II. 10.2. Sēfer Zerūbabel is an apocalyptic midrash; texts in Jellinek 2: 54–57, Eisenstein 1: 159–61, and with extensive notes in Even-Shmuel, Judah [so], ed. Midrashey geūlah (Jerusalem, 1954), 71–88. Eldad the “Danite” was a ninth-century traveler; concerning him, and bibliography of the texts and studies, see Roth, ed., Medieval Jewish Civilization, 238–40. In the introductory poem (published with the text) to his commentary on Lamentations, Ibn ‘Ezra wrote about midrashiyim that all their words are gold and silver, but “some of them are fine as silk and others thick as sackcloth”; that is, some offer acceptable insights while others merely obscure the meaning. N. Allony (in Otsar Ŷṣar yehūdey Ṣefarad 6 [1965]: 68) showed that this derives from a Muslim statement about poetry. An interesting example of Ibn ‘Ezra’s “reinterpretation” of midrash in scientific terms relates to his explanation (in one of his scientific works) of Gen. 1.16, where the moon is referred to as both a “great” and a “lesser” luminary. The midrashic interpretation (also in the Talmud; Ḥullin 60a) is that the moon was reduced in size after complaining to God about its position in relation to the sun (Genesis rabah 6.3; Pirqe de-Rabiy Eli.ezer [see Bibliography], Chapter 5), with which Ibn ‘Ezra disagreed and argued on scientific and astrological grounds (see the excellent explanation of this by Sela, Science, 48).

On the “masoretes,” see the index here. See also his sarcastic criticism of those who diligently study the masoretes and know all of their signs and symbols and words written in one way but read in another, Yesōd mōra, Chapter 1 (beginning); tr. 8–9, ed. Kohen, 67. He there compares the masoretes to “a camel bearing silk; he does not benefit it nor does it benefit him.” He admits, however, that they performed a valuable service in preserving the text, but that one should rather investigate the meaning of scripture.


Weiser’s note there claiming that this is the same as his “third way” in the regular recension is incorrect. Friedländer, 144, noted that in the margin of the manuscript it was indicated that the text had been censored. Ibn ‘Ezra refers, of course, to the allegorization of the Bible, particularly of commandments, often found in Christian commentary (see also Rosin’s notes, Reime und Gedichte). Levin, ‘Amaham Ibn ‘Ezra, Ḥayyav ve-diyvatō, 27, claimed that “the alleys of the Jewish quarter in Lucca” taught Ibn ‘Ezra about the “intense hatred and aggression” of Christians, bent on “destroying” the Jews. Lucca, a beautiful little Tuscan town, has no narrow “alleys,” and there is no evidence of any hostile attitude at that time.
to Jews, much less an intent to “destroy” them; nor does the polemical passage in the commentary on Isa. 53.7, 10, cited by him, permit the conclusion that Ibn ‘Ezra was talking about Christians in Lucca, or even in Italy at all. In general, Ibn ‘Ezra has almost no anti-Christian polemical statements in his commentaries, aside from Gen. 27.40 and a few statements in the commentary on Isaiah.

14 See on him Roth, ed., Medieval Jewish Civilization, 98, 551; see also Steinshneider, Polemische und apologetische Literatur in arabischer Sprache (Leipzig, 1877), 335 n. 50. Weiser apparently did not realize to whom Ibn ‘Ezra referred here; nor did Friedländer, 145, make any observation about this. It seems doubtful that Ibn ‘Ezra actually read al-Nahāwandī, however, and I would suggest that he based his reference on Sa’adyah’s commentary on Genesis; see Peyrūshey Raw Sa’adyah Ga‘ōn le-Berēshiyyt, Heb. tr. 253. The most objectionable idea attributed to Benjamin was the belief that God emanated an angel which created the world, which nevertheless is directly related to ideas of Philo. Benjamin is briefly mentioned as one of the leaders of the Qaraites by Judah ha-Lēvy, Kūzariyy III. 38 (tr. Hirschfeld, 169).

15 Fenton, Philosophie et exégese, 308–09 (ṣāḥīḥ does not only mean “healthy,” as Fenton translated, but also “proper, credible”). As Fenton noted, it is possible that Ibn ‘Ezra(h) derived all of this from Sa’adyah’s similar discussion. The Hebrew title, ‘Arugat ha-bōsem, “bed of spices” (Song of Songs 5.13; cf. Ar. basam, “spice”), was given to the work by Ibn ‘Ezra(h) himself, although he wrote the work in Arabic; see Pagis, Dan. “‘Al musag ve-meqoriyot be-shiyrat Sefarad,” P.A.A.J.R. 37 (1969): 38 n. 22 (Heb. section); however, this was already noted by Harkavy, Ḥadashiyyam gam yeshaniym, 140 ff. See M. Cohen’s exhaustive review-essay of Fenton in J.Q.R. 93 (2003): 533–66 (only 545 ff. is relevant for biblical exegesis).

16 For example, the explanation of tenses in his commentary on Job 3.1 was copied by Maimonides, without citing him by name, in his commentary on the mishnah of Ye’amot 2.8. Abraham, the son of Maimonides, in his Milḥamot ha-Shēm (in Maimonides, Qōvēṣ III, 15d), wrote: “the rabbi [sic, probably a copyist’s addition] and sage Rabbi Abraham Ibn ‘Ezra…who commented on the Torah and other biblical books and composed other works on wisdom [ḥakhmah, secular, apparently] and grammar.” In the critical edition of that work (ed. Reuben Margulies, Jerusalem, 1953), 49 the text reads: “and our rabbi Abraham Ibn ‘Ezra who commented on the Torah and other biblical books,” with no mention of “wisdom” or grammar. This is also evidence that Maimonides knew the legacy of Ibn ‘Ezra.

17 Yōm Ṭōv Iṣḥālī (born ca. 1210) stated (Sēfer ha-zikaron, ed. Blau, 51–52; ed. Kahana, 91–92) that Maimonides “very much” followed the position of Ibn ‘Ezra (not that Ibn ‘Ezra followed Maimonides, as Chavel mistakenly understood in Moses b. Naḥman, Peyrūshey 2: 395, note), “as one knows who feels [understands] his secrets, and even though they did not know each other; and the great man [Naḥmanides] who did not know that this was the way of this sage [Maimonides] strays in many things from his intentions, and ‘it is sufficient for the servant to be like his master’” (citing Berakhoth 58b and elsewhere.), and see Ibn ‘Ezra, Sheney peyrušheyy le-Trey-‘Asar, 26, note (careless editing has left the error “eved” instead of “evad” in the text there); i.e., Naḥmanides should have shown more deference toward him. The “letter” of Maimonides to his son Abraham is, as is well known, a forgery, and so the reference to Ibn ‘Ezra there is false (see text in Moses b. Maimon, Qōvēṣ II, 39d, 40a; for some peculiar reason Visi, “Early Ibn Ezra Supercommentaries,” 35, and “Ibn Ezra, a Maimonidean Authority,” 91, cites this from the supercommentary of Judah Mosconi in a text which has even more obvious forgeries; Visi bases several pages on this corrupted text). It is that letter
to which M. Blau referred in his note on “secrets” in Ishbīlī, Sēfer ha-zikarōn, 51. Senior Sachs claimed that it should read simply “Avraham b'r Mēir” (but not “Ibn ‘Ezra”) since Ibn ‘Ezra was (supposedly) a close friend of Abraham b. David of Posquières, the critic of Maimonides, and thus was never cited by Maimonides (Sachs, Shīr ha-shīyryim uṣhēr le-Shelōmōh [Paris, 1868], 29–30, note). However, this friendship with the Provencal rabbi is imaginary. Another reference to Ibn ‘Ezra in a forged letter is that of Maimonides to Ibn Tibbon (the introduction of which is a forgery), Qūvēṣ III, 27a. Joseph Ibn Kaspī (1279/80–ca. 1340) referred to the mention of Ibn ‘Ezra in the “letter” of Maimonides to his son, which means that the forgery was made already before his time (Ṭīyrat kesef, 138). Shēm Tōv Ibn Shaprūṭ in his unpublished supercommentary on Ibn ‘Ezra stated that he heard that if Maimonides had seen Ibn ‘Ezra’s commentary he would not have written the “Guide,” since everything there was already contained in that commentary (see Friedländer, Essays, 222); this statement may have been made by someone, but certainly not by Maimonides himself. El‘azar b. Matityahu (or Matatya), an early thirteenth-century author of a supercommentary on Ibn ‘Ezra (see below on these), wrote that Maimonides in “Guide” III. 46 derived his explanation of the Egyptian “abominations” and their worship of the sign of Aries, and the custom of Indians “to our own time” not to eat meat, from Ibn ‘Ezra’s commentary on Ex. 8.22 (cited by Simon, “R' Avraham Ibn ‘Ezra–ha-meforēsh she-hayah le-mefurash,” 395; see other similarities mentioned by Visi, “Early Ibn Era Supercommentaries,” 36). It should be noted that El‘azar visited the family of Maimonides in Egypt, and thus perhaps he was reporting a tradition he learned from them; however, the statement is not necessarily correct. Ibn ‘Ezra cited “Joshua” (the Qaraite Abu'l-Faraj [Joshua b. Judah] Fūqrān Ibn Asad) on the worship of Aries, and it is possible that Maimonides also saw his interpretation; the only question is whether Maimonides borrowed the information about India from Ibn ‘Ezra or whether this was, in fact, well known. As previously mentioned, there was constant travel to India by Jewish merchants at this period. Howard Kreisel, having mentioned only the above forged letters of Maimonides, was of the opinion that “no conclusive evidence has yet been produced that Maimonides was acquainted with Ibn ‘Ezra’s work… and in all likelihood he was not” (“Judah Halevi’s Influence on Maimonides,” 97). Hopefully the discussion here will provide the “conclusive evidence”; as for Judah ha-Lēvy, it is far less likely that Maimonides knew of his work (see also Kreisel, 104 but somewhat contradicted by his conclusions, 120).

18 Particularly important are the probable influence of the idea of God as “knower” and “known” and the concept of serving God with all one’s power and at all times (at n. 159). See generally Friedländer, Essays, 54–55; Bacher, Rambam ke-farshan ha-miqra; and more specifically Bromberg, “Haqbalot be-Rab”“a u-va-Rambam.” Most of the “similarities” cited by Bromberg are remote or merely coincidental. More recently, Isadore Twersky wrote an article (Heb.) in which he reviewed some of the similarities suggested by some medieval and early modern sources and adduced a few additional ones (in Twersky and Harris, eds., Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra…, 21–48, Heb. section). Some of the examples which he suggested are also remote in the extreme. Twersky’s article has been misinterpreted to mean that he denied any possible influence (Visi, “Early Ibn Ezra Supercommentaries,” 34; “Ibn Ezra, a Maimonidean Authority,” 90; Herman, “Situating,” 34 n. 10). Kreisel, loc. cit., referred only to an unpublished paper by Twersky in which he apparently was undecided, but did not mention this article. The subject requires a thorough treatment, based on careful examination of all of the writings of both Ibn ‘Ezra and Maimonides. The influence of Ibn ‘Ezra on Maimonides is
specifically denied by Cohen, *Opening the Gates*, yet with no mention of any of the above (although some are in his bibliography). Visi also denied any influence, again without mention of anything cited here.

19 Yeṣōd mōra, 13; ed. Kohen, 149–50 (the editors made no comment on this); tr. 106–07 (my translation differs slightly). Cf. his commentary on Ex. 6.21 (ed. Weiser 2: 47) and Deut. 11.22, end (ed. Weiser 3: 248 and see notes there). Maimonides wrote very similar words in the introduction to his commentary on the Mishnah (see my *Maimonides*, 46; translated from the original Judeo-Arabic text). The similarity to Maimonides is even closer in Ibn ‘Ezra’s commentary on Ps. 73.17: “man was not brought into this world to enjoy himself or to be a king or to be wealthy.” The possible influence of Yeṣōd mōra generally on Maimonides has been suggested by J. (Yeruḥam) Perla, introduction to Saʻadyah Gaon, *Sēfer ha-miṣwōt* (Warsaw, 1914–17; photo rpt. N.Y., 1961/62), 15–16. However, Maimonides (in essence, following certain talmudic statements) appears to have had a different concept of “attachment” to God, that it is fulfilled by “cleaving” to the sages and serving them (*M.T.*, Ahavah: “Dēʻōt,” 6.2).

20 There are few studies of importance relating to Maimonides on knowledge. See for the present the chapter “Knowledge of God and God’s Knowledge,” in my *Maimonides*. A completely untenable position was advanced by Shlomo Pines, “The Limitations of Human Knowledge According to Al-Farabi, ibn Bajja, and Maimonides,” in Twersky and Harris, eds., *Studies in Medieval Jewish History and Literature* 1: 82–109; especially 90, where, after a good discussion of the “lightning flash” metaphor, he somehow thought that all of this results in Maimonides maintaining that the cognition of God by prophets is “different in kind” from that of philosophers and may be “beyond their [philosophers’] ken.” In fact, according to Maimonides the cognition of prophets is still at best only a vision, whereas that of philosophers is clear understanding of the truth. The superiority of the prophet, if any, is in his reception of divine “overflow” which enables him to “know” what God proclaims at a specific time. According to Pines, Maimonides held that God is essentially unknowable, or cannot be grasped by human intellect; but this is the result of very selective reading in one part of the “Guide.” See, on the contrary, “Guide” I. 18 (tr. 43), biblical terms which “signify the union of [human] cognition with what is cognized”; in this case, God (some other writers have also completely misunderstood this aspect of his thought). The limitations which he mentions (tr. 49) are rightly understood by the medieval commentators to refer not to theoretical speculation but practical science. See also ibid., 67–68. See also the criticism of Pines by Davidson, Herbert. “Maimonides on Metaphysical Knowledge,” *Maimonidean Studies* 3 (1992–93): 49–99.

21 The attentive reader will have seen throughout, and in the notes, the special use of the term “forms” by Ibn ‘Ezra. The entire statement of Maimonides is influenced by Ibn ‘Ezra, in fact. There is therefore no need to compare this with the mystical *Sēfer ha-haḥiyyur* (composed long after Maimonides), as Scholem, *Origins of the Kabbalah*, 55 n. 10, thought.


24 Bromberg, “Haqbalot,” 70.

25 On Maimonides’ various approaches to the subject see Nehorai, “Maimonides on Miracles”; Kasher, “Biblical Miracles and the Universality of Natural Law” and especially Langermann, “Maimonides and Miracles,” a brilliant article which discusses other aspects of his thought as well (although curiously mentioning works which are known forgeries, as does Kasher). The apparent lack of influence of Ibn ‘Ezra on these important subjects requires investigation. Maimonides, of
course, went further than Ibn ‘Ezra in his skepticism about miracles. Important is the observation of Joseph Ibn Kaspîy, who remarked on Maimonides’ statement that such things mentioned in the Bible which are wondrous are so in our eyes and are in one of two categories: impossible or possible, and when he said (‘Guide’ III. 24) that God only desires what is possible, he certainly did not contradict himself since his meaning was what is possible for God, not for us, since nothing that happens is “wondrous” to God. Ibn Kaspîy’s own approach to miracles was skeptical, but he said that if one wants to believe that all such references in the Bible are to things impossible from a human perspective, there is no harm in that (Adney kesef 1: 59–60); this was not cited in the above articles.

26 This term refers to commentaries written upon other commentaries, usually biblical; although such commentaries are also found on legal works and other writings.

27 Friedländer, Essays, 213 ff., gives the most complete details; he lists (214 n. 1) the names of the authors cited by Stein Schneider, “Supercommentare zu Ibn-‘Ezra,” but only in the first article and then citing the Germ. summary and not the original text (see Bibliography), and his notes in H.B. 16 (1876): 131, 108 on Mosconiyy (Simon, “Interpreting the Interpreter,” 95, questions the veracity of that statement without reason). “Abner of Valladolid” in the list is, of course, the notorious apostate Abner of Burgos, ca. 1270–1350 (Alfonso de Valladolid after his conversion); it is doubtful that Abner wrote such a commentary. “Johannes” of Valladolid is undoubtedly the converso Juan de Valladolid (ca. 1335–after 1374), not to be confused with the fifteenth-century converso poet of the same name; (see Soto Rábanos, José Maria and Valle Rodriguez, Carlos del. “La maldición de los herejes - birkat ha-minim de Juan de Valladolid. La disputa de Burgos de 1375,” Iberia judaica, 32–217 (2010): 2 and edition of the Latin text, 233–41); the supercommentary, if by him, would have been written before his conversion, of course. Others named there are, for the most part, authentic. On Menahêm Tamar of Salonica, see Rosanes, Salomon. Divrey Yisraël be-Tōgarmah (Tel-Aviv, 1930) 1: 52 n. 30. Valle Rodríguez, “Exégesis,” 317 n. 28, indicates MS. Leiden Warn. 29. Interesting is a commentary by Moses “ha-gōleḥ” (Moses b. Jacob of Kiev), fifteenth century, the first-known Jewish writer from Lithuania (Harkavy, Ḥadashiyim gam yeḥaniyim, 7; also Valle, loc. cit., n. 30). Fleischer, “Pērushiyim le-fērūsh R’ Avraham Ibn ‘Ezra le-miqra,” provides some additional information on the supercommentaries. See also Ben–Menahem, “Inyanei Ibn ‘Ezra,” 149 ff., only on printed commentaries. Simon, “R’ Avraham Ibn ‘Ezra–ha-meforesh she-hayah le-mefurusăh,” includes a bibliography (406–11) of most of the extant supercommentaries to the modern period; however, not all those commented are in fact “supercommentaries.” His “Interpreting the Interpreter” is an anonymous English translation of that article (published before the Heb. version). None of these studies is complete or free from errors. Visi, “Early Ibn Ezra Supercommentaries,” is an important study. de Lange, Nicholas. “Abraham Ibn Ezra and Byzantium,” in Díaz Esteban, ed., Abraham Ibn Ezra y su tiempo, 181–92, discusses manuscripts of supercommentaries written or copied in the Byzantine Empire (fourteenth to sixteenth century); several of our Spanish commentators are included. There are errors in transcription of names, and (191) the ‘Arūgat ha-ḥakhmah u-fārdēs ha-meziyimah (correct title) is not by Ibn ‘Ezra but rather Isaac Ibn Lāṭīf. A sixteenth-century manuscript of an anonymous supercommentary is in St. Petersburg (Gintsburg, Каталог еврейских рукописей епіфрах, 59–60, no. 177). Other literature will be cited below.

28 In Moses Ibn Tibbons Kommentar zum Hohelied, 609–14. It is also cited by Zarza, Megōr hayyit, 53b, 54a, etc. (in Ibn ‘Ezra, Margaliyyot tōvah, 79b, bottom and
elsewhere) and is quoted extensively in the supercommentary of Judah Mosconi on Ibn ‘Ezra; see Simon, “Interpreting the Interpreter,” 103; Visi, “Early Ibn Ezra Supercommentaries,” 100. It appears that parts of Ibn Tibbon’s supercommentary are also cited, anonymously, in that of Solomon Ibn Ya‘ish (on whom see below); cf. Simon, ibid., 108; Visi, “Early Ibn Ezra Supercommentaries,” 75, 101, and “Ibn Ezra,” 118. See Chapter 4 on Ibn Tibbon’s commentary on Song of Songs and lost commentary on the Torah.

29 See Berliner’s ed. of a portion of his introduction in Otsar [Óṣōaṣ] čov, supplement to Magazin für die Wissenschaft des Judentums 2 (1877): 81–82, and citations in Friedländer, Essays, 245; and see Steinschneider, “Supercommentare zu Ibn-Ezra” (in Pleyťat sōfiyom), 52. Simon, “R’ Avraham Ibn ‘Ezra–ha-meforesh,” 394, cited a passage which proves that the author was not a Qaraite, and stated that this is contrary to the opinion both of Friedländer and Ben-Menahem, Mi-ginzey Yisnaĕl ba-Vaṭiyqan (38), but that is an error; Ben-Menahem there said (see also 33, no. 3) that it is “one of the most interesting and important” commentaries on Ibn ‘Ezra, and specifically stated that the author was not a Qaraite. The commentary is found in MS.Vat. ebr. 54, fols. 161r–229v. The text has been edited, along with some other supercommentaries, in Kreisel, ed., Ḥamiyshah qadmōney mefōrega R’ [sic] Avraham Ibn ‘Ezra. Passages from his commentary are translated by Visi, “Early Ibn Ezra Supercommentaries,” 36, 111, 112, 208 ff., and another passage in his “Ibn Ezra, a Maimonidean Authority,” 95; this defends Maimonides against a criticism of Naḥmanides and seeks to find support in Ibn ‘Ezra’s interpretation. Visi, “Early Ibn Ezra Supercommentaries,” included also an important discussion (237) on El’azar on Ibn ‘Ezra on creation and (238–40) on the very complicated cosmological-astrological commentary on Deut. 7.9 (certainly one of the most important parts of his dissertation).

30 David, A. “Le-toldotav shel R’ El’azar b. he-Ḥasiyd R’ Matityahu,” K"S 63 (1990–91): 996–98; see Tągany Candia, ed. Hartum and Casutto (Jerusalem, 1943), no. 40, lines 64–68. Simon, art. cit., 388, cited these, and also the dissertation of Elhanan Reiner according to which Matityahu was perhaps a dayan (judge) in Egypt, mentioned in “Mordecai” (Mordecai b. Hillel, Germany) on Mo’ed qatan Chapter 3, no. 937. In fact, his knowledge of philosophy and Arabic raises the possibility that he was from Provence, or indeed Egypt as Reiner believed.

31 A portion of his supercommentary was edited by Ben-Menahem, Mi-ginzey Yisnaĕl ba-Vaṭiyqan, 41–50. His father, David b. Abraham, is cited by Asher b. Yeḥiel (d. 1327), the famous rabbi of Toledo, She’čelōt u-teḥāvōt (Venice, 1607; the authoritative, corrected ed.), no. 13.20 (at the beginning erroneously, “Abraham b. Abraham,” but cf. f. 25a: David, correctly; cf. also 68.11 and 107.6). Solomon is also cited as still alive by Asher’s son Judah (1270–1349), Zikhron Yehūdah (Berlin, 1846), f. 12a. There has been considerable debate and confusion as to the identity of the author of the supercommentary. There was yet another Solomon Ibn Ya‘ish, a rabbi in Toledo (fl. 1230–1250), who is not known to have written any works. St., A.L., 167–68, and H.U., 64, etc., was inclined to believe that the author of the supercommentary was Solomon b. Abraham (Seville, d. 1345), who was a physician, mathematician and translator; a treatise on geometry by him (manuscript) does refer to Ibn ‘Ezra on Ex. 3.15 (Friedländer, Essays, 240). Simon, “R’ Avraham Ibn ‘Ezra–ha-meforesh,” 406, no. 5; “Interpreting the Interpreter,” 123 n. 12, confused him with Solomon b. Abraham Ibn Ya‘ish (perhaps based on the erroneous article of that title in J.E.); and, apparently following Ben-Menahem, with a non-existent “Solomon b. Meir” (ibid., no. 6). Solomon b. David in fact was called “Solomon the younger” (ha-baḥūr) to
distinguish him from Solomon b. Abraham. Visi, “Ibn Ezra,” first identified him (118) as Solomon of Guadalajara and then (119) as Solomon of Seville (nor was he aware of the sources and studies noted here); yet in his earlier dissertation he first correctly said Solomon of Guadalajara (“Early Ibn Ezra Supercommentaries,” 52), but later, 147 ff., again wrongly as Solomon b. Abraham. However, there is conclusive proof that the author of the supercommentary was Solomon b. David of Guadalajara (and in fact he is so cited in some other supercommentaries). There is a complete manuscript of the commentary at Cambridge University; see Reif, *Hebrew Manuscripts at Cambridge University Library*, 110 [Add. 510.2]; as well as in other libraries; important is Oxford, Hunt. 293 (Neubauer, *Catalogue* 1: 42–43, no. 232), apparently copied by the aforementioned Joseph b. Eli ‘ezer “Bonfils” (so Beit-Arié), although the manuscript, f. 71, seems to indicate that he copied only the commentary of Joseph Ibn Kapiz. The scribe, whoever he was, was indicated his displeasure with the copy of Ibn Ya’ish with which he had to work and corrected several errors in it (see M. Beit-Arié, “Transmission of Texts,” 49). See also Richler and Beit-Arié, *Biblioteca Palatina*, 103, no. 545. He was also, probably, the author of a commentary on *Arot* (Neubauer, note in *J.Q.R.* [o.s.] 5 [1892–93]: 709, mentioned that in the list of Hebrew manuscripts owned by “the famous Cardinal Grimani” [Domenico Grimani, 1461–1523] was a commentary on *Arot* by “ben Yaish”).

32 *Meqōr hayiym*, 87a, col. a; in Ibn ‘Ezra, *Margaliyot tōovah*, 113a. He also cites him concerning Ibn ‘Ezra’s interpretation of the priestly breastplate, ibid., 78–79; *Meqot hayiym*, 54b (see Chapter 4, n. 172 on this).

33 Ibn Shaprūṭ, in Steinschneider, “Supercommentare zu Ibn-Ezra” (in *Pleytāt sof-rīyym*), 49. Joseph b. Eli ‘ezer, *Ṣōfnat pā’nēah*, editor’s (German) introduction, xv; contrary to Friedländer, *Essays*, 240, who assumed that the copy was not made by “Bonfils.” See below on his own supercommentary on Ibn ‘Ezra. ‘Ezra b. Solomon Gāṭigno (see below on him) also quoted Ibn Ya’ish on Genesis; see Schwartz, “Le-darkhey ha-parshanut ha-fiylosofiyyt,” 101–03 (text); Gāṭigno lived in Zaragoza, where Arabic was still known, and thus was able to read this commentary. Ben-Menahem, *Inyaney Ibn ‘Ezra*, 150, did not mention the citations of his commentary noted here. Schwartz, *Yashan be-qanqan haddash*, also mentioned none of the above (he briefly discussed some of the authors of supercommentaries, in no chronological order). Peculiarly, Beit-Arié described the comments of Joseph b. Eli ‘ezer in his copy of the commentary, yet had no idea who he was, nor (of course) did he cite any of the works mentioned here (“Transmissions of Texts,” 49).

34 Zarza, *Meqōr hayiym*, 87, and in Ibn ‘Ezra, *Margaliyōt tōovah*, 113b. This and the commentary of Solomon Ibn Ya’ish, cited ibid., 87a (113a) and elsewhere, were translated for Zarza as he says by Jacob b. Solomon Ibn al-Fandarī, a well-known translator, who also translated for him Ibn ‘Ezra’s *Sēfer ha-‘asamīyīm* (see St., *H.U.*, 448). Possibly he was a relative of Frahen (Ephraim) and Çağ (Isaac) Alfantary of Guadalajara; see Baer, *Juden* 2: 282. Ibn Moṭot, *Megiylat sōtriym*, 26a. Moses Narboniy: his commentary in Moses b. Maimon, *Mōreh nevōḵiym* (Berlin, 1791), 1.28, f. 24a (there is an error in the spelling of Joseph’s name, as realized already by Steinschneider, *C.B.*, no. 6023). That commentary was reprinted in Sulzbach in 1800 and 1828; and Vienna, 1828. The text is extremely corrupt, and was (incredibly) simply reprinted by Kafiḥ, Joseph, ed. *Sheʾlošah qadmoney mefōrshe ḥa-Mōrḥ* (Jerusalem, 1960). See the ed. (from manuscript) and tr. of this chapter in Hayoun, Maurice-Ruben. *Moše Narboni* (Tübingen, 1986), 138 (text), 49 (tr.). Ibn Waqār was an important qabalist; see on him and his still unpublished works St., *G.S.*, 171–80 (for his published works and articles about him, see my Dictionary, 413).
35 Excerpt quoted by Simon, “R’ Avraham Ibn ‘Ezra–ha-meforesh,” 399–400; on extant manuscripts of the work, see ibid., 407. See also, and in more detail, Friedländer, Essays, 242–43; note there his rather harsh criticism of some of Ibn ‘Ezra’s interpretations, and his comment that the “learning of Torah needs to be far removed from philosophy.” Franco’s commentary was also mentioned by Fleischer, “Pêrushiym,” 12: 48–49 and Ben-Menahem, Mi-ginzey Yisraĕl ba-Vaṭiygan, 69–70. On Ibn al-Ṭaybīb, see Michael, ʻOr ha-ḥayyūm, 13, no. 46; and Schwartz, “R’ Avraham Altabib [sic]–ha-ish u-foʻalo,” including texts of the controversy; see also his article cited in n. 3 there (some of this is repeated in his Yashan be-qanqan ḥadash, 46–48; and in more detail in his Qemiyōṭ, segulōt ve-sikhletanūt, 94–115; there he cites excerpts from a manuscript of Ibn al-Ṭabīb, “Shaʻar ha-hagadōt”); the complete text of Franco’s response is edited there, 317–80. From this it appears that much of Ibn al-Ṭabīb’s polemic was directed against the commentary of Ibn ‘Ezra itself, as much as against the interpretations of Franco. Schwartz, art. cit., noted the emphasis on astrology in Ibn al-Ṭabīb’s writings, and concluded that he may even have written a separate commentary on astrological interpretation in Ibn ‘Ezra. Note especially (ibid., 1392) his quarrel with Franco over the interpretation of the Sabbath and the Sabbatical and Jubilee years as being a testimony, or remembrance, of creation rather than merely for benefit of rest, and his denial that the Land of Israel is under the influence of Saturn (and see Franco’s statement that astrologers said that Saturn, which dominates on the Sabbath, has or confers special intellectual powers, because of which the rabbis said that an “additional soul” is granted then; cited by ‘Ezra Gaṭigno, “Sōd Adōnay liy-rē’av,” section on Genesis, ed. Schwartz, “Le-darkhey ha-parshanut ha-fiylosofiyt,” 97). Ibn ‘Ezra himself stated that the Sabbath was a remembrance of creation (Yēṣōd mōrō, Chapter 5; see n. 163). On the significance of Saturn in the astrological writings of Ibn ‘Ezra, see Sela, “Abraham Ibn ‘Ezra’s Appropriation of Saturn” and Sela, Astrologiyah, all of Chapter 6. See also Chapter 3, n. 206. There is a lengthy citation of Ibn al-Ṭabīb, then still living, in the supercommentary of Samuel Zarza (see below), Meqor ha-ḥayyūm, 79b. col. d; in Ibn ‘Ezra, Margaliyōt tôvah, 106b; he was also cited in the supercommentary of Ḥayyim of Briviesca (see below on him).

36 His name is not “Ibn Mosconi,” as incorrectly in Simon, “Interpreting the Interpreter,” 95; the error is in the original Hebrew article, 373, 403, 407 (even though Steven Bowman, cited by Simon, spelled it correctly; in a recent article, Bowman argued that Mosconi is not a “family name” but a reference to his father’s name, Moses). Even worse is “Juda [sic] or Leo ibn Moshkoni” (de Lange, Abraham Ibn Ezra y su tiempo, 183, etc.). Judah was born in Okhrida (Ohrid; Bulgaria). After a period of wandering, he arrived in Majorca and became physician to the king. In 1365, he moved temporarily to Tlemcen (North Africa; Tilimsān in Ar., Tremecen in Sp.), although his wife remained in Majorca. He was a renowned physician who left behind a substantial library, the catalogue of which has excited much scholarly comment. The introduction of his commentary was published by A. Berliner in Otsar [Ōṣar] tôv (1878): 1–10 and excerpts, 24–25 and 41–42; his commentary on Gen. 1.1–2 was published by N. Ben-Menahem in Otsar [Ōṣar] yeḥūdey Sefarad 2 (1959): 48–54; rpt. in his ‘Inyaney Ibn ‘Ezra, 17–28. See also Berliner, “Super-Commentare zu Abraham ibn Ezra: Jehudah b. [sic] Mosconi”; Steinschneider “Jehudah Mosconi,” and in his G.S., 537–74. On Aviyshay, see Simon, “Interpreting,” 97.


38 On Samson, see Gross, G.J., 581–82. For Ibn Kaspīy’s supercommentary, see Renan (Neubauer), Écrivains juifs, 483–84; see also Visi, “Early Ibn Ezra

39 Meqōr ḥayyim, f. 31a col. b; in Margaliyōt ṭovah, 46b (“amar ha-mehabēr”). This is not mentioned by any who have written on the supercommentaries; however, see in passing St., G.S., 447. On his well-known replies to Abner see Shamir, Yehuda. Rabbi Moses Ha-Kohen of Tordesillas and His Book ʻEzer Ha-emunah (Leiden, 1975), 55 ff.

40 The E.J. article on Zarza incorrectly claims that he was born in Valencia instead of, correctly, Palencia. Zarza is mentioned frequently in the notes here and other chapters. He has been sadly neglected since the nineteenth century; however, there is an important dissertation by Schwartz, Dov. “Miḥnatō ha-fiyōlōfiyt-dattiy shel R’ Shemuēl Šarshah [sic]” (Bar-Ilan University, 1989). Zarza was obviously an important scholar, author of several books, most of which are lost (see the letter of a certain Solomon b. Isaac ha-Reuveniy of Barcelona, cited by Holzman, “Haqdamat sefer mikhlal yofiy,” 20–21). Needless to say, the legend about the “burning” of Zarza because of a supposedly “heretical” allusion he made, reported in a note by Samuel Shullam in Zacut, Yūḥaṣiyn ha-shalēm, 226a (bottom), is false; see on this Kaufmann, David. “Shullam’s Report of the Burning of Samuel Zara: A Legend Based on a Name,” J.Q.R. (o.s.) 11 (1899): 658–62; and in further detail, including other sources of the legend, Reinach, Solomon. “Samuel Zarza,” Revue d’anthropologie (1889): 28–56; rpt. in his Cultes, mythes et religions (Paris, 1905) 1: 415–25. It appears that Zarza did, in fact, believe in the eternality of the universe, as evidenced from his comments on Gen. 1.1 in Meqōr ḥayyim and in “Mikhlal yōfiy” (B.N. MS., part 1, f. 24b ff.), according to Reinach, 424. Both the fifteenth-century figures Isaac Abravanel and the Portuguese preacher Joseph Yaʿavēṣ condemned his “heresy” in allegedly denying the truth of miracles (see Schwartz, Yashan be-qanqan ḥadash, 72 n. 31). Meqōr ḥayyim actually is a commentary on the Torah, but its abridged inclusion in Ibn ʻEzra, Margaliyōt ṭovah created the misconception that it is a supercommentary on Ibn ʻEzra.

41 Thus, and not “Ibn Sina,” as Friedländer, Essays, 219; others have also made this error. His “Spanish” name is also not “Carça,” which is an old form of the Spanish word (see Steinschneider, H.U., 299 n. 227), much less “Carca”; nor does it mean rose or other things (so Schwartz, Yashan be-qanqan ḥadash, 53). A letter from Isaac Ibn Alḥadib (or Alḥadib) to Samuel Zarza requesting a copy of his “Miḥkal yōfiy” was printed in Zarza, Meqōr ḥayyim, f. 130; rpt. in Fünn, S. Sōfrey Yisraēl (Vilnius, 1861; Tel-Aviv, 1970), 98–100; and in Ibn Alḥadib, Shi’rey, ed. Raanan (Lod, 1988), 135–38; and ed. and tr. Carlos del Valle Rodríguez in Iberia judaica 2 (2010): 244–50. The Miḥkal yōfiy definitely should be published; the introduction, only, was published by Holzman, “Haqdamat sēfer miḥkal yofiy”; the statement cited is on 37 of the text there.

42 From a Munich manuscript in Ibn Verga, Shēvet Yehūdah, ed. Wiener (Hanover, 1924), 131–32, and Baer, Die jüden 2: 200–01. There were apparently two different printings of Megor ha’yayim; see, ‘Inyaney Ibn ʻEzra, 151. From another statement in the introduction to his “Miḥkal yōfiy,” cited by Holzman, art. cit., 21 (cf. text there, 37), we learn that he wrote Meqōr ha’yayim first but apparently finished or
revised it at the later date. The entire text of this extremely important commentary should be reprinted. Its excerpts are in Ibn ‘Ezra, Margaliyot ṭovah. Zarza has been accused, unjustifiably, of “plagiarizing” the earlier commentary of Solomon Ibn Ya’ish, see Friedländer, Essays, 219; nor is it correct that he merely inserted a large part of the “Guide” of Maimonides into his commentary, although he cited it often.

43 Ibn Falquera, cited frequently. Isaac Albalag, in “Meqūr ḫayyīm,” in Margaliyōṭ ṭovah, 12a and 12b; Ibn Bilia, ibid., 12b, 18a, 31a (both more frequently in the complete text; see the dissertation of Schwartz, 29 and 30); see also Zunz, ha-Paliyṭ (see Catalogues in Bibliography), 31–33 (notes by S. Sachs). Moses Nahoniy called “maestre Vidal,” 21a, 92a, 100a, and see especially 81b (Meqūr ḫayyīm, Mantua ed., 55d), citing Nahoniy that Mt. Sinai is so-called because of the burning bush (seneḥ in Hebrew) and that all the rocks of the mountain have the figure of a bush imprinted on them; “one of the honored inhabitants of Barcelona, of the Ibn Ḥasdai family, brought with him [apparently from a trip to the Land of Israel] one of those rocks and showed [it] to me,” and not only was the figure imprinted on the rock, but when it was broken in pieces the figure appeared on each piece, and so down to the smallest division of pieces of the rock. This text is found in Nahoniy’s commentary on the “Guide,” in Moses b. Maimon, Mōreh ha-nevōḵīyim (Berlin, 1791–95), 62a (II. 66, end). The Ibn Ḥasdai family in Barcelona was an influential one, including the renowned translator and author Abraham Ibn Ḥasdai ha-Lēvy. Again, none of this was mentioned by Schwartz.

44 “Meqūr ḫayyīm,” in Margaliyōṭ ṭovah, 95b; cf. Steinschneider, H.U., 675 n. 152. See also n. 34 on his use of translations of Arabic works. He seems also to have been familiar with the theories of Ibn Sinā (“Avicenna”) on emanation; see Schwartz, Yashan be-qanqaṭ hasadā, 78–79, and compare this with the more explicit statement of Shēm Tōv Ibn Mayor, ibid., 111 (see below on him). There is no hint of any of this in Ibn ‘Ezra’s own commentaries. In “Mīḵẖal yōḥīy” he cited even more philosophical sources, Aristotle and Plato as well as the Muslim philosophers, all from translation obviously (see Holzman, “Ḥaqdamat sēfer mīḵẖal yōḥīy,” 22).

45 Venice, 1553 (never reprinted). Excerpts are in Ibn ‘Ezra, Margaliyōṭ ṭovah. Note that there are extant manuscripts which differ from the edition; see Friedländer, Essays, 221, 232. See also Steinschneider in H.B. 16 (1876): 109; Schwarz, Hebräischen Handschriften...Wien; Rief, Hebrew Manuscripts, 111; Richler and Bejt Arié, Biblioteca Palatina, 101–03. There is a need for a critical edition. He knew and cited many of the other works of Ibn ‘Ezra. He appears to have been a resident of Buitrago, northwest of Guadalajara, if he is the “don Samuell Matut” who is recorded there in 1401 (Baer, Jüden 2: 278, bottom); if so, his name should apparently be transcribed Matut. Vajda noted that the earliest Hebrew sources for his name do not support the reading “Moṭṭoḥ,” but his suggestion of “Meṭṭoṭ” is incorrect (“Recherches sur…Samuel Ibn Moṭṭoṭ,” 29 n. 2). Samuel also wrote his own commentary on Exodus (ibid., 30), which perhaps should be edited.

46 On Mešṭāwōv netiyyōṭ, see Steinschneider, C.B., 108; Schiller-Szinessy, Catalogue, 136–42; Schwarz, Hebräische Handschriften...Wien, nos. 33, 38–39; see Vajda, art. cit., 30 for other manuscripts (he overlooked these). This work was written during his imprisonment (for reasons not explained) “in the city of N-ṭ.u.-yṣ-s-ā,” possibly Nisa in Portugal; less likely Nevers or Noves in France (see Gross, G.J., 387–88). It has been edited and translated by Israel Sandman (dissertation, University of Chicago, 2006; 4 vols.), which I have not seen. A translation by Samuel of some chapters of the Spanish Muslim philosopher ‘Abdallah b. Muḥammad Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawī (correct spelling), Kitāb al-hada’iq,
found at the beginning of his “Meshővēv netiyvōt,” was published by Kaufmann, 
_Spuren al-Batlajûsi’s_, Heb. text, 2 ff. (the left-hand column is Ibn Moṭṭ); see 
also A. Marx in _Z.f.h.B._ 10 (1906): 175–78. Incidentally, Ibn Moṭṭ substituted 
biblical verses for the quotations from the Qur’ān in the original, as was com-
mon with Jewish translators and adapters of Muslim works. He also translated 
(from Judeo–Arabic) at least part of Abraham Ibn Dā’ūd’s philosophical treatise, 
_Emunah ha-ramah_ (Chapter 5 of this translation was published by J. Eizenberg 
[Jerusalem, 1986]). Finally, he also wrote a commentary on the prayers entitled 
“Tehiylōt Adōnay” (see Vajda, loc. cit., for manuscripts). From the introduction 
of “Meshővēv netiyvōt,” it is obvious that he was at least influenced by qabalah, 
claiming that its “truth” was proven by the teachings of Sēfer yeṣirah, and in 
his translation of al-Baṭalyawsī he also sought to reconcile Jewish esoteric and 
philosophical ideas, following in the footsteps of Joseph Ibn Waqār (Vajda, art. 
cit., 33); see also _Megiylat setariym_, f. 36a, col. a. As Vajda there demonstrated, 
this combination of concepts also applies to other aspects of his interpretation, 
including such things as prophecy.

47 See Gross, _G.J._, 289, no. 26; Renan (Neubauer), _Écrivains juifs_, 54–55. S. Sachs 
in _Kerem Ḥemed_ 8 (1854), cited by Gross, quotes the manuscript of a commentary 
on Judah ha-Lēvy’s _Kūzari_ by Natanēl Kaspiy (1387) which cites the comment-
yary on Ibn ‘Ezra by Bonet Crescas; however, as Gross noted, Sachs erroneously 
believed that this was Yeda’yah b. Abraham “Bedersiy” (see below on anonymous 
supercommentaries). Bonet Crescas (Mesulam), who later lived in Perpignan, 
was apparently an important rabbi. Abba Mariy of Lunel, a major figure in the 
“Maimonidean controversy,” sent a lengthy letter to Perpignan eulogizing Bonet 

Menaḥēm was a student of Judah b. Asher in Toledo, and later a rabbi and the 
author of a short compendium of “practical” laws and ethical admonitions, 
Ṣēdah la-derekh (“provision for the way”). On Ḥayyim’s supercommentary, see 
Friedländer, _Essays_, 244–45; St., _Cat. Munich_, no. 207 and St. in _H.B._ 17 (1877): 
62 (he is not mentioned at all by Simon). J.H. Schorr saw a manuscript of it in 
Odessa which he attributed to Ibn ‘Ezra himself (note in _Kerem Ḥemed_ 8 [1854]: 
63; incidentally, where now are all the other manuscripts mentioned there?). 
Neubauer published brief excerpts of Ḥayyim’s commentary ( _Israelitisches Letter-
bode_ 2: 85–86). In his introduction, he stated that he intended to answer the criti-
cisms of Ibn ‘Ezra by Naḥmanides (see Chapter 4), except for Ex. 18 through Lev. 
1 because “that text of his disagreement is not the text which I explained”; i.e., 
perhaps he thought that Naḥmanides had a different text of Ibn ‘Ezra’s com-
mentary on those passages (peculiar in any case, since aside from his strong disagree-
ment with Ibn ‘Ezra concerning the ‘ūriym and tūmiym of the priestly breastplate, 
Ex. 28.30, Naḥmanides hardly disagreed at all with him on those sections). He 
concludes by acknowledging that he had learned most of his interpretation from 
his teacher Menaḥēm, and also from “other sages” (could this refer to Lēvy b. 
Gērshōn? That would be important evidence for the influence of Ibn ‘Ezra on 
him). On Deut. 34.1, Ḥayyim mentions an astrological work of Ibn ‘Ezra that he 
saw in Salamanca (there is now in the university a manuscript of Spanish trans-
lations of some of his astrological works). Abraham (Ibrāḥīm) Ibn Zarzār (not 
Zarzal) mentioned there (see text in Neubauer, 85) was the Jewish physician of 
Muḥammad V of Granada, and when that ruler was forced into exile in 1359, 
Abraham went to the court of Pedro I of Castile, whom he served as physician 
and in 1364 as ambassador to the restored Muslim ruler Muḥammad (see on him 
and also Joseph Ibn Waqār, my “Jews and the Trastámara Civil War,” 148). The story 
there about Aristotle’s supposed retraction of his views is also reported at
length by Gedalyah Ibn Yahya (1515–1578), an unreliable chronicler, *Shalshelet ha-gabalah* (Venice, 1587, f. 103; Warsaw, 1881, 48a). See also St., *Jewish Literature*, 276, on Abraham b. Eli’ezer ha-Lēvy (ca. 1460–ca.1529; a qabalist whose works were written after the Expulsion, in Jerusalem and Greece), who made Aristotle a “student” of Simon the Just, and Judah Mosconi’s skepticism about the “letter” of Aristotle to Alexander (included in Ibn Yahya and in earlier works). On Joseph Ibn Shēm Tōv on this same story about Aristotle, see my “’Theft of Philosophy’ by the Greeks from the Jews,” 57. On Ḥayyim’s notes to the canons of Lēvy b. Gērshon, see Chabās and Goldstein, *Astronomy in the Iberian Peninsula*, 50–51 (the last cited page mentions a private communication by Tzvi Langermann that Ḥayyim’s teacher, simply “Lēvy,” cannot have been Lēvy b. Gērshōn, but this is open to debate). Ḥayyim apparently later went to Portugal, but certainly not as a result of the Expulsion as has been erroneously suggested, as he would have been long dead by then (see Chapter 4 on a Judeo-Portuguese work dedicated to him). Judah b. Moses b. Ḥayyim, a rabbi in Toledo, is mentioned in the responsa of Asher b. Yeḥiel (see Bibliography), no. 80; he may possibly be a grandson of this Ḥayyim.

49 On ‘Ezra, see especially Schwartz, “Le-darkhey ha-parshanut ha-fiylosofiyt,” 80–102; essentially summarized in his *Yashan be-qanqan ḥadash*, 51–53, and see his *Qemiy’ot*, 80–93. See also Munk, *Mélanges*, 351; St., *G.S.*, 1–7 and *H.U.*, 436; unknown to Steinschneider, surprisingly, is that ‘Ezra also copied in Zaragoza, 1356, a manuscript of the Hebrew translation of a work by al-Fārābī on demonstrations (Paris B.N. héb. 1008/3) and another of a compendium of commentaries of Ibn Rushd (“Averroes”) (Modena Est. J. 6.23); on which see Sirat, “The Modena manuscript” (the Paris MS. is not discussed). “Gatigno” is apparently the Heb. form of Gateño, or Gatenyo; cf. Marquéz Villanueva, *Investigaciones sobre Juan Álvarez Gato*, 48 n. 12. However, there was a Leon Gattega or Gattegno in Rome in 1517 (Toaff, “The Jewish Communities of Catalogna [Catalonia], Aragon and Castille [sic] in 16th-Century Rome,” 252). Toaff made no mention of Judah Gatt[te]gno and his son Abraham in Rome (probably sixteenth century) who acquired a Bible codex written in Arles in 1202 (Gottheil, “Bible Mss. in the Roman Synagogues”, 178 n. II; 179 n. VI). A Gattegno family was very prominent among Sephardic Jews in Greece in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and this may be the correct spelling. In medieval Aragón-Catalonia and Navarre there were various forms of the name: Gateyn, Gatheyno, etc.

50 Ben-Menahem, *Mi-ginzey Yisraēl ba-Vaṭiyqan*, 69, said that the expression “who is called Astruq Shelomoh” in the commentary does not refer to ‘Ezra but to his father, but this is erroneous. On his father’s commentary on the Torah, see Chapter 4.

51 On manuscripts of his works, see St., *H.U.*, 54, 247 (n. 994), 436; Ben-Menahem, *Mi-ginzey Yisraēl ba-Vaṭiyqan*, 69–72; Richler and Beit Ariē, *Biblioteca Palatina*, 103, nos. 545, 546; Richler, *Hebrew Manuscripts in the Vatican*, 76 (Vat. ebr. 106.3, 4). See also St., *Cat. Munich*, 6–7, no. 244.15; Neubauer, *Catalogue*, nos. 230, 231 and Friedländer, *Essays*, 231–32, 238, 239 (241, no. 236.2 is erroneously attributed to his father). The section on Genesis of “Sōd Adōnay liy-rē’av” was published by Schwartz, “Le-darkhey ha-parshanut ha-fiylosofiyt,” 103–14 and again in his *Qemiy’ot*, 287–316; see also the discussion in his *Yashan be-qanqan ḥadash*, 52–53. The introduction, only, was published by Jellinek, Adolph. *Qīnṭrēs ha-mazkhiyr* (Vienna, 1893), 23–24. Friedländer, 241, mentions a manuscript with notes by Matityahu *ha-Yiṣhariy* (early fifteenth century, one of the participants in the famous Tortosa disputation; see below and Chapter 4 on him); that is MS. Bodl. 16372 (Neubauer, *Catalogue*, no. 236.2). It is unfortunate that these important supercommentaries have not yet been published.
See on him index to my *Conversos*; St., *H.U.*, 436, 681 (Schwartz, “Le-darkheyy ha-paršhanut ha-fiylosofiyt,” apparently did not know who Ibn Vivas was). In spite of this, ‘Ezra declared that he was himself ignorant of mathematical matters (see Friedländer, *Essays*, 233). He cited an interpretation of his father on Ibn ‘Ezra and eclipses, excerpt in Jellinek, *Qāmīš ha-mazkhiyỹ*, 23.

It is unlikely, or nearly impossible, that he actually “heard” this from him; more likely, he found it cited by Franco. See, for example, Jellinek, loc. cit.


“Sōd Adōnay liy-rē’āv,” in Schwartz, *Qemīỹ", 305. Such rare statements indicating the sophistication of learning of ordinary people are very valuable.

Schwartz, “Le-darkheyy ha-paršhanut ha-fiylosofiyt,” 80, notes 37 and 38. On the commentary on “Logic,” see St., *H.U.*, 54; but it is strange that he made no mention of ‘Ezra’s alleged translation of the middle commentary on “Generation and Corruption” (see ibid., 131 on known translations).

See Friedländer, *Essays*, 241 (possibly also a separate commentary by Mattityahu); cf. Neubauer, *Catalogue*, no. 236.2, 236.3. His commentary on Ps. 119 (important) was first published in *Midrash Tehilliym* (Salonica, 1515), and in a critical edition by D. Rappel (Tel-Aviv, 1978). The second manuscript referred to by Friedländer there apparently contains a “responsum,” or perhaps rebuttal, by “Duran” (certainly Profiat Duran) on Ibn ‘Ezra on Ex. 25.40. He also wrote a commentary, or sermons, on the Torah (J.T.S. MS 10401). Excerpts of the commentary have been edited by Jacob Moses Finkelstein in *Yeshūrūn* 17 (2005): 59–79 (art. 55–79); see further details in Chapter 5, n. 32.

*Ṣōtna pa’nē’ah* 2: 8; see Herzog’s introduction, 2: xvi n. 6 (and not as Ben-Menahem thought no earlier than 1387; see his “Rabīy Yūsūf Tov–‘Elem vesifro…,” *Sinai* 9 [1941–42]: 353–55); this error was repeated by Schwartz, *Yaḥan be-qaṇaṭ ha-dāshah*, 50. He in fact did not use either the name Bonfils or the Hebrew version “Ṭōv’ Elem”; see Wilensky, “Has Joseph b. Eliyser Hasefaradi [sic] a Surname?” *H.U.C.A.* 12–13 (1937/38): 537–38 and see Friedländer, *Essays*, 219 ff. Simon, “R’ Avraham Ibn ‘Ezra–ha-meforesh,” 404 n. 179, correctly rejected the theory of Reuben Bonfil (“Sēfer ‘aliyot devariym,” *Eshel Be’er Sheva* 2 [1980]: 229–64), that the work he discussed, a critique of Ashkenazi piety and ignorance of Maimonidean philosophy, was written by Joseph b. Eli’ezer (Schwartz, op. cit., n. 87, agreed with Bonfil and appears not to have seen Simon). See also Gutwirth, “Fourteenth-Century Supercommentaries,” with numerous misspellings and other errors (in spite of the title, the short paper deals only with Joseph). Gutwirth, 148–49, pretends that only he discovered the fact that the author did not live in Toledo, which was already noted by others. Worse, he relied on the abridged version of the commentary rather than Herzog’s complete edition. Romano’s study, mentioned by him (148 n. 2), was published in 1987; the *Leshōn ha-zahav* (not “Lashon zahav”) of Isaac Ibn Alḥadib (or Alḥadab),
Ibn ‘Ezra, Part 2 153

mentioned 150 n. 7, has been published by Ya’aqov Spiegel in the scarce journal Be-kal darkheykha da’ēhu (Bar-Ilan University) 12 (2001): 12–34; the same scholar did a splendid edition also of Isaac’s commentary on the Haggadah, published as Haggadah shel Pesah. Pesah shel dōrōt (Jerusalem, 2000), Isaac (fl. ca. 1350?–1429?), who was a student of the grandson of Asher b. Yehiel of Toledo, later moved to Sicily, where he lived from 1396 to ca. 1429 (Roth, Cecil. “Jewish Intellectual Life in Medieval Sicily,” J.Q.R. 47 [1957]: 324). He was a poet and author of some scientific and other works. It is probably to his ”Mikhāl yōfī” that Zarza refers in “Meqōr hayyīm,” in Ibn ‘Ezra, Margaliyōt tōvah, 112b.

59 “R’ Avraham Ibn ‘Ezra–ha-meforesh,” 408, no. 16; see there for manuscripts; see also Friedländer, Essays, 239, and cf. 244 (not noted by Simon) and Neubauer, Catalogue 1: 41, no. 228. See also Steinschneider, “Supercommentare,” 122–23 with important excerpts. His father’s name was not “Joseph,” as erroneously in Schwartz, Yashan be-qanqan hādāsh, 59 (he cites Friedländer, who in fact had it correctly). In the introduction, he enumerates four categories of supercommentaries (following in the footsteps of Ibn ‘Ezra in the introduction to his Torah commentary), denigrating the first three and adhering to the fourth, treating respectfully what Ibn ‘Ezra wrote (see Schwartz, ibid., 60). Not surprising is his knowledge of philosophical sources, but something of a surprise is his citation of the Torah commentary and the philosophical treatise of Lēvy b. Gērshōn of Provence (1288–1344), about which he doubtless heard from the aforementioned Ḥayyīm, also of Briviesca. As far as I know, no other Spanish authority cited Lēvy at all. He also cites Ḥayyīm (b.?) Israel, on whom see Chapter 4, n. 48.


62 On his life and polemics see my Conversos, 192–93, and index and see further in Chapter 5 here. See the introduction to his grammatical treatise, Ma’āsēh ēfōd, 11. Renan (Neubauer), Écrivains juifs, 398 (744) claimed that part of an esoteric explanation of Lev. 23 and part of the commentary on Num. 22 are in Ma’āsēh ēfōd, 47, but this is incorrect (he merely cites some grammatical explanations by Ibn ‘Ezra from Exodus). Gross, “Rashiy u-mesoret liymud ha-Torah,” 44, citing Duran’s praise of the commentary of Naḥmanides (Ma’āsēh ēfōd, 17), was of the
opinion that he deliberately refrained from mentioning Ibn 'Ezra, as if he disagreed with him, but he failed to note his supercommentary on Ibn 'Ezra.

63 Simon, “R’ Avraham Ibn ‘Ezra–ha-meforesh,” 408, no. 23. The term “Ye-rūshalmiy” (of Jerusalem) indicates either that he or his father originated from Jerusalem.

64 Oxford, MS. Mich. Add. 27 (Neubauer, Catalogue 1: 45, no. 238); he did not identify the town. See Peña Barroso, “Judíos de Peñafiel,” 278, no. 17; on a record concerning Solomon; see 270–71. He and his brother also owned mills there.

65 “Miktav aḥūz,” in Geiger, ed., Melō’ hafnayim, 12. See also Friedländer, Essays, 218–19. A manuscript of the commentary, “Keter Tōrah,” is cited by Shabbetai Bass (1641–1718), Siftey yeshēniym (my copy, Zolkiew, 1806 ed., 25b [no. 70]). Simon (“Interpreting the Interpreter,” 88–89) insists that he did not write a “supercommentary” at all, but rather his own commentary on the Torah; although he quotes his statement that he relied only on the interpretations of Ibn ‘Ezra. This may be correct; there is a manuscript of what purports to be his commentary on the Torah in St. Petersburg (Gintsburg, Ҝатаłог веpьеяскиx рукописей снoф yт pах, 57, no. 168); cf. also Attias, Commentaire biblique. Mordekhai Komtino. Attias thinks it is another title for his commentary on the Torah (“Keliy yāfy‘”). Attias devotes two lengthy chapters to Ibn ‘Ezra, noting that Khomatiano also criticized as well as praised him. The introduction and Chapter 10 of Khomatiyano’s commentary on Ibn ‘Ezra’s Ye-soḏ mōra were edited by Ben-Menahem, Mi-ginzey Yisraēl ba-Vaṭiyqan, 63–68, 176–85, and Chapter 1 by him in his “Pirqey R’ Avraham ben ‘Ezra,” 213–20 (neither is mentioned by Attias, nor does he mention Hanokh Saporta or note that Khomatiano was in Catalonia). The complete commentary has been edited by Dov Schwartz as Peyrush qadmōn ‘al Sēfer yesōḏ mōra. The name is erroneously transcribed “Komtino” by Attias and Simon, or his translator, “Interpreting the Interpreter” (other names are also incorrectly spelled there), and as “Komtiyano” in the English title of Schwartz’s edition. The name is properly Khomatiano, according to Bowman, Steven. The Jews of Byzantium 1204–1433 (University of Alabama, 1985), 149. In spite of the well-known reliability of this scholar, neither library catalogues nor other researchers have corrected their spellings of the name accordingly. He also wrote a commentary on Ibn ‘Ezra’s Sēfer ha-shēm (MS. Parma 2446; 2217.4; Richler and Beit Arié, Biblioteca Palatina, 360, 480) and see 360 on his commentaries on Ye-soḏ mōra (also Paris B.N. MS. héбр. 681, also with the commentary on Sēfer ha-shēm) and Sēfer ha-ehad (all of these are mentioned by St. H.U.). See also a treatise he wrote refuting an opponent, in which he praises Ibn ‘Ezra and says that some write things in his name which he never said (Leiden MS. Warn. 41.22; St., Catalogus codicum hebraeorum [Leiden, 1858], 203 ff.; the name there is also Khomatiano). His commentary on Maimonides’ treatise on logic was published with the text (Biyyūr milōt ha-higayōn [Warsaw, 1865]; again as Be’ur malekhet ha-higayōn [Kiryat Ono, 1997]). His commentary on the “Guide” has also been edited, Peyrush le-mōreh ha-nevōkhiym, ed. Schwartz and Eisenmann (Ramat-Gan, 2016).

66 Friedländer, Essays, 226 ff., discusses three anonymous commentaries he saw and analyzes at length the first one; see also Steinschneider, Cat. Munich, no. 61.2.

67 Friedländer, Essays, 228–32; St., Cat. Munich, no. 61.4. See the introduction to that work in Ibn Kaspiy, ‘Asarah keley kesef 2: 146 (text, 145–72), and see Ben-Menahem, Mi-ginzey Yisraēl ba-Vaṭiyqan, 59–60 (text of the introduction from a Vatican manuscript); and Friedländer, Essays, 228–29. Kasher, “Le-ghe’elat mehāber shel ‘Biyyur ha-sodot’,” gave a thorough analysis of the reasons
why the commentary cannot be by Ibn Kaspiy. She edited there, 97–108, additions to the excerpts published by Last in his cited edition. Last and other scholars already knew or suspected that the work is not by Ibn Kaspiy, yet Saul Regev still referred to it as “his book” (“‘Ta’amei [sic; Ta’amey] Ha-Mitzvot” in R. Avraham Ibn-Ezra’s Commentary: Secrets,” in Díaz Esteban, ed., Abraham Ibn Ezra y su tiempo, 234, 236). Schwartz discussed the part “philosophical” (rational) and part allegorical approach of this commentary, “Le-darkhey ha-parshanut ha-fiylosofiyt” 73–79. On a possible actual commentary by Ibn Kaspiy on Ibn ‘Ezra, see n. 54. Visi, unaware of any of the above except Kasher, devoted several pages to the anonymous supercommentary, with translations of excerpts (“Early Ibn Ezra Supercommentaries,” 123 ff.); yet while acknowledging that the supercommentary is only attributed to “Caspi” (Ibn Kaspiy), he nevertheless repeatedly refers to it as his. Of interest are the remarks in the introduction of the anonymous commentary that some foolish men in his time condemned Ibn ‘Ezra as a heretic who denied the Torah and traditions of the sages (Visi, 128). Such remarks are found in other supercommentaries, as noted already by Friedländer.

68 William G. Gärtig’s excellent article, “The Attribution of the Ibn Ezra Supercommentary Avvat Nefesh to Asher ben Abraham Crescas Reconsidered,” H.U.C.A. 66 (1995): 239–57; see the author’s dissertation, “A critical edition with English translation of the Genesis portion of Avvat nefs” (unpublished; Hebrew Union College, 1994). This was still unknown to Simon, “R’ Avraham Ibn ‘Ezra—ha-meforesh,” 403, 408 (no. 22), who erroneously listed Asher Crescas as one of the authors of a supercommentary on Ibn ‘Ezra. Richler, Hebrew Manuscripts, 39, unaware of the aforementioned works, still maintains the erroneous identification. The commentary was earlier attributed to Yeda’yah “Bedersiy”; see, e.g., Friedländer, Essays, 214 n. 1 (and n. 47). However, see Renan (Neubauer), Écritains juifs, 54 ff. and Ben-Menahem, Mi-ginzey Yisraēl ba-Vāṭiyqan, 30 ff. Ben-Menahem, 73, mentions a Vatican manuscript (Vat. ebr. 107, fols. 1–57a) of a supercommentary on Ibn ‘Ezra by “Asher Ibn Bonan [sic] Crescas”; this, too, is an erroneous identification; cf. also Valle Rodríguez, “Exégesis de Abraham Ibn Ezra,” 317 (the commentary, in manuscript, attributed to Isaac b. Joseph “Israeliy” mentioned there is also erroneously attributed; cf. Reif, Hebrew Manuscripts at Cambridge University Library, 113 [Add. 1509.2]). That attribution to Asher Crescas is still maintained in Richler, Hebrew Manuscripts, 77. Valle mentions also a Joseph b. Abba Mariy, supposedly in the same manuscript, but this is an error. On the erroneous attribution of a supercommentary on Ibn ‘Ezra on Genesis by Yeda’yah “Bedersiy” see Visi, “Early Ibn Ezra Supercommentaries,” 76–77; “Ibn Ezra, a Maimonidean Authority,” 119–21. In both the former article (142 ff.) and the latter (121–22) he argues that the author of the supercommentary known as Avvat nefesh is Yeda’yah “Bedersiy,” who is identical, or at least probably, with “Sen Bonet de Lunel” (sen being a Catalan equivalent of don; incidentally, not attested in dictionaries). The same position is again argued by him in a more recent article, “The First Instant of Creation: Jedaiah [sic] Ha-Penini, Durandus of Saint Pourçain and the Ibn Ezra Supercommentary Avvat Nefesh,” Recherches de théologie et philosophie médiévales 77 (2010): 83–124 (85–86). It is unfortunate that the author, who reads French, did not consult H. Gross (n. 47), where he would have learned that this theory was already proposed by S. Sachs and rightly dismissed by Gross because Yeda’yah is nowhere mentioned as having been in Lunel (although he was also known by the appellative Bonen or Bonet, he lived in Béziers, Perpignan and Montpellier); see also Steinschneider, “Supercommentaries,” 124. The similarities between certain passages in the anonymous commentary and in the writings of Yeda’yah “Bedersiy” may as easily be explained
as copying, or “borrowing,” from Yeda’yah and not that he was the author. The text of the supercommentary has now been edited in Kreisel, ed., Ḥamiyshah qadmōney mefōrshey R’ [sic] Avraham Ibn ‘Ezra.

69 See Friedländer, Essays, 233–35. It is unfortunate that this has neither been studied nor edited. The author obviously had a good foundation in philosophical writings, grammar and science.
In this chapter we shall consider the commentators who lived in Christian Spain; that is, those territories conquered from the Muslims and which ultimately comprised the kingdom of Aragón-Catalonia (and sub-kingdoms of Valencia and Majorca, and later Sicily, and the region of Provence). There are no known commentators from alicia. The kingdom of Castile and León and fifteenth-century commentators will be discussed in the following chapter.

Obviously, the Bible served as a central theme in many philosophical or ethical treatises or sermons, as well as qabalistic writing and the Zohar, but such works are only referred to here in a comparative way and are not included as true biblical exegesis.

**Provence**

With the exception of some scholars and others who had migrated from the Muslim parts of Spain, the Jews of Provence (which was part of the kingdom of Aragón-Catalonia during much of the medieval period, and hardly “southern France” as many scholars are accustomed to write) did not know Arabic and so were dependent on Hebrew translations of scientific and philosophical work, particularly of Maimonides. At the risk of oversimplification, we may say that they were also divided generally between those who adhered more closely to the traditional studies of the Torah with the commentaries of Rashi and his school and the dialectic of talmudic interpretation associated with the famous sages of Provence, on the one hand, and those with interest in secular topics, such as philosophy and poetry and literature, on the other. The commentaries of Ibn ‘Ezra, some of which were written by him in Provence, were well known to this latter group, and that tradition was continued by the Ibn Tibbon family of translators-commentators. The other tradition was reflected in the biblical commentaries of the Qimḥis (David, although a supporter of Maimonides, demonstrated little knowledge of philosophy or science in his own writings).

The Ibn Tibbon family, primarily known as translators of various scientific and philosophical works, included some biblical commentaries.
Judah Ibn Tibbon (d. before 1190) originated from Granada and lived in Málaga, Seville and Lunel. The statement constantly repeated by writers that he “fled” to Provence because of the Almohad (so, not “Almohade,” the Spanish spelling) persecutions is not supported by any source and is chronologically unlikely. The birth of his son in Lunel coincides with the beginning of those persecutions in al-Andalus. Judah translated a few Judeo-Arabic books into Hebrew and is perhaps best known for his “ethical will” to his son; there he mentions in an offhand manner his commentary on the last chapter of Proverbs, of which nothing apparently survives.³

His son Samuel (ca. 1160–1232?) was born in Lunel; he lived also in Arles, Béziers and (primarily) Marseille, and traveled in Egypt and North Africa. He became an even more important translator and author than his father. Both wrote philosophical commentaries (Judah, a brief composition on the existence of God and creation; Samuel, a more important philosophical exposition of Gen. 1.9, in which he clearly expressed his view that the world was not created in time).⁴ Samuel wrote a commentary on Ecclesiastes (probably sometime before 1221). He also wrote, or at least intended to write, a commentary dealing with all the esoteric “secrets” of the Torah.⁵

Uniquely among our medieval exegetes, Samuel expressed some skepticism as to the authorship of Ecclesiastes (Kohelet), traditionally attributed to Solomon. He noted the talmudic statement (B.B. 15a) that in fact Hezekiah and his “helpers” wrote all of the books attributed to Solomon (Proverbs, Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes), and added that indeed it would have required a great deal of time to collect and arrange all the allegories and statements contained in these works.⁶ Nevertheless, he finally seems to accept the traditional attribution of all these books to Solomon.

Of particular interest is his argument that Ecclesiastes was written first, and that in it “Solomon” had doubts about the immortality of the soul, in accord with the philosophers who (supposedly) argued for its corruption along with the body, but that in Proverbs and Song of Songs he came to the correct understanding of the soul’s immortality.⁷ This nevertheless appears to contradict his earlier statements that “who knows [whether] the soul ascends” (Eccles. 3.21) refers to perfection of knowledge, which few have, but those who do have that knowledge “rise” to attain it (an interpretation based on Maimonides, of course).

As would be expected, his commentary is philosophical, but also “esoteric” in the sense that he felt certain concepts were not intended for the uninitiated, and this in fact may explain the difficult and sometimes obscure nature of his writing. He indicates that he was aware of the “dangers” in what he wrote and even of the possibility of the work being suppressed. The commentary also contains allegorical interpretations of the creation of man, the trees of life and knowledge and other aspects of Genesis.⁸ Very interesting is the statement that he wrote to Maimonides and asked him to write a commentary, or at least give a philosophical explanation, on Ecclesiastes,
Song of Songs and Proverbs, but that the letter arrived only after the death of Maimonides.9

A commentary surmised to have been written by Samuel on Proverbs may actually refer to statements he made (also on Job and Psalms) in his commentary on Ecclesiastes.10 Interesting is the fact that this commentary, along with his philosophical treatise and his son-in-law Jacob Anatoliy’s Malmad ha-talmiydiym, was mentioned by Simon b. Joseph (En Duran of Lunel) in his treatise in reply to Vidal Solomon; i.e., Menahem “ha-Meiyriy.”11

Moses, son of Samuel, like his father, was an important translator and author; dates uncertain, but after David Qimhi (ca. 1160–ca.1235), whom he cites. It should be noted that he is mentioned in a responsum (ca. 1252–53) of Ibn Adret.12 He lived in Montpellier and also briefly in Naples. Moses, like his father and grandfather, was fluent in Arabic in spite of being born in Provence. He must have learned Arabic from his father. Isaac b. Jacob de Lattes (fl. ca. 1370) said that among his other works Moses wrote a “very wondrous” commentary on the entire Torah.13 His supercommentary on Ibn ‘Ezra has been mentioned in Chapter 3.

His only surviving commentary is on Song of Songs.14 In his introduction, he says that it is intended to follow the method of Maimonides in his interpretations of passages of the book, and that of his father (Samuel). In fact, he cites his father, but this does not necessarily mean that he wrote a commentary on Song of Songs, as it could be from his commentary on Ecclesiastes, mentioned above.15

The introduction discusses the separate intellects, the “coupling” (in a physical sense, metaphorically) of form and matter, a type of metaphor to which he returns frequently in the commentary (for instance, kissing in the first verse is a metaphor for the conjunction of the soul with the separate intellect).16 Among the sources mentioned there, in addition to Aristotle, is a work by al-Fārābī and also by Ibn Rushd (“Averroes”). Although his commentary is entirely philosophical allegory, he cited some other commentators (Ibn ‘Ezra, particularly; also David Qimhi, 13a; Ibn Janāḥ, 21b); earlier sources include midrashiyim and the mystical Sēfer yeṣiyrah. As noted previously, he also “borrowed” from Ibn ‘Ezra’s commentary on Song of Songs without acknowledgment. He did not apparently know of Ibn ‘Aknīn’s previously discussed commentary. He was at least one of the first (possibly the first) of the Spanish commentators to cite (11a and elsewhere) the midrash Yelamdēnu. Most of the names of rabbis he cites are from the Midrash (if not otherwise specified, Song of Songs rabah, or so-called Midrash ḥaziyi).

The Qimḥi family17

Joseph (ca. 1105–d. ca. 1170) was born probably in al-Andalus (he also did not “flee” persecution in Muslim Spain) but lived in Narbonne, which then was part of Spanish Provence (Bas–Languedoc).18 Joseph had as his students
his two sons Moses and David and also Menaḥēm b. Simon of Posquières, who composed his own commentaries on Jeremiah (1191) and Ezekiel. These are of considerable interest particularly for their citations of earlier commentaries and grammatical works (Ibn Chicatilla, Ibn Janāḥ and others), most of which information was derived from the commentaries and other writings of Ibn ‘Ezra, on whom he was heavily dependent (he may have been his student). He also cited Moses Qimḥi frequently in both commentaries. Menaḥēm uniquely maintained that Ezekiel’s entire prophecy was in Babylon, and not in the Land of Israel. Joseph’s nephew Moses [b. Solomon?] wrote grammatical works derived in part from Menaḥēm.21

Joseph Qimḥi wrote a commentary on the Torah, of which only fragments survive, also in some citations from later writers, and on (all or part?) of the prophets (lost) and apparently on the Psalms. A commentary on Song of Songs has also been attributed to him. His other extant biblical commentaries consist of excerpts on Job and Proverbs. His interpretations are frequently cited especially by his son David, including perhaps things which he heard from him (e.g., on Isa. 48.14, 51.6). He was adept, if not skilled, at poetry, and cited some “Judeo-Arabic” works in his writings.25

Of interest is his reference to “philosophers” who said that God created Wisdom and gave it the power to create the heavens and earth, which opinion he of course rejected. On the notion of providence, he wrote that even if a person does everything in his power, his “protection” is in the hands of God, who nevertheless commands him to do everything in his ability and knowledge for his own success, and when this has been done God then protects him (very similar to the modern proverb “God helps those who help themselves”). As with other commentators, he was influenced by Ibn ‘Ezra, for example (on Prov. 3.27) “borrowing” his previously mentioned explanation of Lev. 19.18 without mentioning his name.

Moses (d. ca. 1190) also lived in Narbonne. He wrote commentaries on Job, and also on Ezra, Nehemiah and Proverbs (all of the latter three attributed to Ibn ‘Ezra). It is easy to understand why his commentary, particularly on Proverbs, was long attributed to Ibn ‘Ezra, since it is very similar to his style, being far more grammatical in content than the commentaries either of his father or his brother and sometimes employing phrases coined by Ibn ‘Ezra. There, however, the similarity ends, for there is little of interest in any of his commentaries, which give the simple meaning, as he understood it, no matter how obvious, of every sentence.

David (ca. 1160–ca.1235; Narbonne). His extant commentaries are on Chronicles, Psalms, “early prophets,” “later prophets” and Genesis – apparently written in that order. A commentary on Proverbs attributed to him is probably not his, nor is one on Ruth. His grammatical works, written prior to his commentaries, also contain explications of biblical passages, of course. As in the case of Joseph, these have been excerpted as a “commentary” on Job. In addition, he wrote a work on the masōrah and accents of the Bible.
As did other scholars and commentators, he made a special effort to find accurate biblical manuscripts; e.g., his commentaries on Gen. 1.31, 4.26, 5.24, 25.1, 30.15, 31.2; Joshua 1.1; Judges 6.19; 2 Sam. 3.35; 2 Kings 4.25; Isa. 43.14; Zech. 6.11; Ps. 109.10; 1 Chron. 2.55.

He sometimes cites what he heard from his father (on Isa. 52.14 he cites his written works), but more often his brother Moses, to whom he refers as his “teacher.” He also frequently cited earlier Spanish commentators (see in the Appendix, names cited by Qimḥi), and particularly Ibn ‘Ezra who was the source for much of his commentary, even when not specifically named. Surprisingly, he did not mention any of the French commentators, including Jacob b. Meir (“Rabēnu Tam”) or his brother Samuel (“Rashbam”), although his father had cited the former; nevertheless, the influence of Rashi has been demonstrated. Unlike his father and his older brother Moses, he did not know Arabic, which limited his access to some commentaries. He therefore did not mention Qaraite works.

Qimḥi became, after Ibn ‘Ezra, the most widely known commentator (although only for the prophetic books and Psalms; his real value is for those books on which we do not have commentaries by Ibn ‘Ezra), and since his style of writing is much simpler his commentaries also became, after Rashi, the most popular. His approach is generally that of “peshaṭ,” or simple explanation, with only rare references to midrash (he, like earlier commentators, often used the term derash to refer to talmudic interpretations); in spite of the fact that it has been claimed that he had a “complex tradition” as to the meaning of peshaṭ, involving grammar, lexicography and comparison with other biblical texts.

However, he was also aware of a deeper “hidden” (esoteric) meaning relating to such things as the nature of creation or the nature of God. In the “introduction” to his commentary on the Torah (the commentary itself apparently was never completed), he indicated his intention to write a separate treatise on this, which in fact he did. In addition to the “introduction,” he also wrote an “allegorical” commentary on Genesis.

He also discussed the ma’asēh merkabah (“work of the chariot,” first chapter of Ezekiel; published in so-called “rabbinical” bibles, with commentaries, at the end of Ezekiel). Although he mentioned “revealed” (nigleh) and “hidden” (nistar) aspects of the Torah, in fact his “allegorical” interpretation of the first few chapters of Genesis is more philosophical than esoteric. The garden of Eden is a parable for the “Active Intellect” (see index) but this Aristotelian concept is immediately combined with a neo-Platonic one: man was created as “pure matter” and placed in the garden as first, or head, of all the lower forms (2.8). These ideas were probably taken from both Ibn ‘Ezra and Maimonides, as indeed his discussion (2.9, 16) on knowledge as a ladder to ascend to (cognition of) God was “borrowed” from Ibn ‘Ezra (see my “Two Notes on Ibn ‘Ezra”). On Isa. 40.21, he engages in a lengthy discourse comparing the world to a “house,” in which man is a guardian or tenant, and if he is wise he will consider what the will of the “master” of the house is and take proper care of it and observe the commandments he is given.
Qimḥi’s “rationalist” method of exegesis has perhaps been exaggerated. He approvingly cited the statement of Samuel b. Ḥofniy (d. 1034; head of the Sura yeshivah in “Babylon” [Iraq]) that if the words of the sages contradict reason we are not required to accept their interpretation; but this is found already in the commentary of Ibn Bil’am (which of course he could not have known) and Ibn ‘Ezra, as noted. He was more polemical than any other biblical commentator, primarily directing his attacks against the Christians (particularly in his commentary on Psalms) but also against the Muslims. He cites his father (Isa. 24.22) that the text refers to the exile of the Jews between the Christians and the Muslims, and after many years in exile God will have mercy on the Jews and redeem them. From his commentary on Isa. 33.24–34.2, it appears that he expected a major war between the Gentiles (possibly Muslims and Christians) which would precede the redemption of the Jews.

Of interest are his strong emotions about the redemption from the exile (see in index here) and the restoration to the Land of Israel, when the distress of the exile will be “a fleeting dream in our eyes because of the great rejoicing which will be ours in our return to our land,” as he explained in the name of his father (Ps. 126.1, and see the end of the commentary on verse 6). He made other comments about the sanctity of the Land, such as his statement that only the people living there is able to achieve perfection of the intellect, noting that the habitation (of the earth) is divided into seven parts, the central zone or climate being that of Jerusalem and therefore its air is beneficial for health and wisdom (Ps. 7.3; see index here “climates”).

**Prophecy**

There is a difference between “prophecy” and “holy spirit” (rūḥḥa-qōdesh): prophecy comes to a man who is “wise, perfect in his qualities” and it comes usually in a dream; if it comes to him while awake, he loses all his powers of sense and is removed from the ways of this world. In that state, it seems to him as if a man is speaking to him, or he sees visions or else he only hears a voice speaking to him. Holy spirit” comes upon a man who is engaged in godly things but he remains in control of all his senses and speaks in a normal way. However, the spirit causes him to speak words of praise and thanks to God, words of intellect and moral instruction, and also about the future. It was with this spirit that the Psalms were written. Even though David is called “man of God” (Neh. 12.24), which is only said of a prophet, nevertheless his Psalms were inspired by this “holy spirit” (and not prophecy; apparently Qimḥi did not agree with Ibn ‘Ezra that David was, in fact, a prophet). Furthermore, there are levels of prophecy; for example, Daniel did not achieve the level of Isaiah, Ezekiel and the other prophets. Therefore, the books of Psalms and of Daniel are included in the “Writings” and not among the Prophets. See the index here, “holy spirit,” for other observations on this.
Some passages are interpreted by him as referring to the messianic age; e.g., Isa. 14.1, which he says is to be interpreted in two ways: a literal reference to the return from the Babylonian exile and also the future messianic era. Isa. 30.26 he claims was interpreted “by the majority of commentators” (he copied this from Ibn ‘Ezra) as referring to the future and some took it literally, “and this is not correct.” Some understood it to refer to the good to come in the days of the messiah, “and so it is,” but it can also be understood to refer to the days of Hezekiah; he states that this was also the opinion of Maimonides. So all of Chapter 41 is understood as referring to the future, or indeed to God’s protection of Israel in every generation. By contrast, Ibn ‘Ezra interpreted all of these as a historical reference to Cyrus of Persia. Many of the Psalms are also interpreted by Qimḥi as referring to the messianic age, and in this also he differed completely from Ibn ‘Ezra.

**Miracles**

While some miracles were a change in the laws of nature, the majority were not (commentary on Joshua 5.2). Yet as previously mentioned, elsewhere he wrote that among the things one must believe is “the change of nature in signs and wonders” (Ps. 111.10). In general, he believed literally in miracles; the created “nature” of things allows the possibility of a miracle “in potentiality”; that is, when God deems it necessary.

**Ibn ‘Ezra and Qimḥi**

As mentioned, he “borrowed” extensively from the commentaries of Ibn ‘Ezra, only occasionally citing him by name. In his commentary on Psalms, he cited Ibn ‘Ezra repeatedly. He “borrowed” the lengthy explanation of Ps. 119.1, including the explanation of the various numbers, and the expression “ma’amad har Siynay,” entirely from Ibn ‘Ezra without crediting this; also on Isa. 63.19.

**Maimonides and Qimḥi**

Not only did he borrow extensively from Ibn ‘Ezra, but also from Maimonides, especially the “Guide”; see also Qimḥi’s lengthy discourse on idolatry (commentary on Isa. 40.21) – that no one actually believed that idols had power; rather, the early generations used them as symbols of the stars, etc., which they believed had power, and later generations forgot this and came to believe in the idols themselves; all of which is also taken from Maimonides. Indeed, Maimonides “illuminated our eyes about [many things] concerning which we walked in darkness before he came.”

In his “introduction” to the commentary on the Torah, he states that God created the world in (with) wisdom, for he and his wisdom are one, “not that
he is one thing and his wisdom another.” This recalls specifically the statement of Maimonides that God and his knowledge are one (and see Chapter 2 on Ibn ‘Ezra on this). Qimḥi there also stated that the days (of creation) were given their names, or numbers, only after all were created, since “in the movements of the heavens was [the beginning of] time.”

In his commentary on Ps. 104.2 he explained further that the “upper heavens, which are the nine spheres” were created before the light on the first day, together with the “four foundations” (or elements: earth, air, water and fire) and these “circled” for 12 hours, because with the movement of the spheres time was created “at the end of twelve hours” (the obvious difficulty of how these 12 hours could be counted if time did not yet exist is not explained). Maimonides also stated, although in a much more sophisticated explanation, that “time belongs to the created things,” which also was the opinion of Ibn ‘Ezra.

Qimḥi was not only strongly influenced by the views of Maimonides, but he was one of his ardent defenders. In the controversy over Maimonidean philosophy, launched first in Castile by Meir Abulafia (ca. 1165–1244), and then taken up again in the thirteenth century in Aragón–Catalonia, he sided against the powerful rabbi of Montpellier, Solomon b. Abraham, who led a condemnation of the “Maimunists,” and in spite of his advanced age Qimḥi went to Spain (proper) to defend them. His travels took him as far as Ávila in Castile, where he exchanged correspondence with Judah Ibn al-Fakahār (so is the correct spelling), a leader of the Toledo community and a staunch opponent of Maimonidean philosophy. Although Qimḥi had some success in Catalonia, he failed to convince Judah. He died soon after this.

Menahem b. Solomon “ha-Meiyriy” (1249–1306) of Perpignan and Montpellier, which then still belonged to the kingdom of Aragón–Catalonia, was an important scholar who wrote extensive commentaries on the Mishnah and Talmud, as well as other works. He wrote commentaries on the Pentateuch, Psalms and Proverbs, and apparently wrote, or intended to write, also on Job and perhaps Song of Songs.

In his introduction to the commentary on Psalms, he explains that all the books in the “Ketuvim” (“Writings”) were written by divine inspiration (“holy spirit”), and discusses the talmudic debate over Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes concerning this.

He also discusses at length the nature of prophecy, which only comes to one who is perfect from birth in imaginative and rational faculties and becomes perfected in knowledge insofar as humanly possible. At the time of prophecy, when the prophet is awake the sensual powers are dormant in most cases, and sometimes it seems in his imagination that a man speaks to him or that he hears a voice speaking. By contrast, divine inspiration comes to one perfect in his words of praise (of God) or intelligence or ethical instruction, and God then arouses a spirit in him causing him to speak. David was an example of one who was not a prophet but was granted ruḥ ha-qōdesh.
(all of this, of course, is verbatim from David Qimḥi’s introduction to his commentary on Psalms discussed above). In his introduction to the commentary on Proverbs, he said the same about Solomon.

In the introduction to his commentary on Proverbs (6), he explains Prov. 7.11 ff.: the two “women” are allegorically form and matter (evil, or despicable, matter in the case of the isḥah zarah; “foreign woman”); this was the interpretation of Maimonides. Very insightful is his realization that Prov. 1.20 (ḥakhmah be-ḥūṣ) refers to Torah; few modern commentators have understood this.

With respect to astrology, or more specifically astral determinism, he warns that one must not be deceived to attribute the power of dominion to the heavenly forces (maʿarakhōt; upper orders, or constellations), “whether generally or particularly, seeing in them [the cause of] actions on the earth, but should know and recognize that all of their actions are by the command of God.”66

The influence of both Ibn ʿEzra and Maimonides is seen throughout his commentaries. He says (commentary on Psalms, 47) that faith must be based on one of three things: what is felt (sensed; ha-murgash), what is known (or evident, ha-mefūrsam) or what is received (ha-meqūbal), which is taken from Ibn ʿEzra (see Chapter 2, on Knowledge). Directly from Maimonides is his explanation (commentary on Proverbs, 16) of mēshariym (Prov. 1.3) as meaning that if one goes to one side excessively he must incline completely to the other side in order to find the right path, and “the philosophers” (e.g., Maimonides) compared this to a thin rod which bends to one side and cannot properly be made straight until it is bent to the other side (cf. “Guide” I. 59). Also, on the verse “God established the earth by wisdom” (Prov. 3.19) he explains (41) “wisdom” as an allusion to the existence of everything by means of the separate intellects (cf. “Guide” II. 6); cf. also on Prov. 8.22. There are other frequent references to or citations from the writings of Maimonides.

He also sometimes cites, or alludes to, the commentary of Moses Qimḥi (attributed to Ibn ʿEzra). As was his way also in his mishnaic and talmudic commentaries, he never mentions anyone by name. He sometimes borrowed from Jacob Anatoliy’s aforementioned Malmad ha-talmiydiym. He apparently saw, and alludes to, the commentary wrongly attributed to Joseph Qimḥi (e.g., commentary on Proverbs, 20 and 23 and many others) and cites David Qimḥi, Ẓhorashiyim; as well as Saʿadyah’s commentary (frequently), from which it is evident that he read Arabic (which he would have learned in Perpignan) since that commentary was never translated. He also alludes to Ibn Gabirol, Mivḥar ha-peniyniym (frequently), and other works dependent on Arabic proverbs such as Mūsrey ha-fiylōsōfīym and Ben ha-melekh ve-ha-naziyr (frequently).67

He also quotes a story from “Mishley ʿArav” (“proverbs of Arabia,” or of the Arabs), but it is not in Isaac Ibn Crispin’s collection of that name and is perhaps a Hebrew translation from an Arabic work68 (or he saw another
collection of Arabic proverbs), and there are other citations of Arabic proverbs (e.g., commentary on Proverbs [fols. 106, 134, 169, 185, 221]). These same works are also cited in his large treatise on repentance, *Hibûr ha-teşhûvah*, written much earlier than his commentaries. His commentary on Psalms is of interest for numerous French, or Provencal, words (these may easily be found in Latin letters in the footnotes provided by the editor).

**Miscellaneous—Provence**

The commentary on Chronicles attributed to Rashi in Hebrew bibles with commentaries is not by him but by an unknown author, probably of German origin, who lived in Narbonne in the first part of the twelfth century. That commentary also cites explanations which he heard from one Isaac b. Samuel, also of Narbonne.69

There are fragments of a commentary attributed to Abraham b. David of Posquières (*RABBaD*), Narbonne, ca. 1125–98; he lived at Posquières, Lunel, Montpellier and Carcassonne, all in Provence, and of course was famous as a commentator on the Talmud and a harsh critic of the legal code of Maimonides.70 Apparently Asher b. Saul of Lunel (dates unknown, early thirteenth century?) wrote a biblical commentary of which nothing remains. This is unfortunate, since judging from his other writings it probably contained qabalistic references.71 In Montpellier around 1240 an unknown author composed a commentary on the Torah, “*Leqeṭ qaṣar*,” which has not been edited. Apparently it also contains anti-Christian polemic and a certain amount of “mystical” interpretation; not, however, qabalistic. The author predicted the coming of the messiah in 1240.72 Finally, there is a brief commentary by Joseph b. Isaac “*ha-Seniyriy*” (thirteenth-century Provence) on Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings. While not particularly profound, this manuscript also contains some 172 Provençal words.73

**Aragón-Catalonia**

The Jews of Aragón and Catalonia, exclusive of Provence, were also somewhat divided. In Aragón (only) there were communities where Jews still used Arabic in their daily lives, due to the relatively significant Muslim population. However, while cities like Zaragoza produced both Jewish translators of Arabic work and, to some extent, philosophers, few biblical commentaries survive from Aragón – a phenomenon for which I have no explanation. Catalan Jews generally did not know Arabic and tended to be more “traditional,” with some literary and scientific work being produced by Jews who originated from Muslim communities elsewhere in Spain, but in general adhering to rabbinical interpretation and the study of the Talmud. In the thirteenth century, another element was introduced, the mystical and esoteric doctrines
of “qabalah.” First emerging in thirteenth-century Provence and the so-called “Gerona circle” (see n. 82), it was widely disseminated through the commentaries of Naḥmanides. While the commentaries of Ibn ‘Ezra were known and quoted, not only by scholars but by “ordinary” Jews, they were incorporated into the new esoteric emphasis rather than contrasted with it.

There was widespread interest in the study of the Bible, but again with an emphasis on esoteric interpretation and such minutiae as interpreting the “crowns,” or decorative strokes on the tops of certain letters in the Torah. Naḥmanides, for example, quotes the Midrash about a book which explained this and adds: “and this book is known and found [in the possession] of every man,” and contains many “deep secrets,” referring to the book known as Sēfer tagiyn (or tagey). This work deals with the special “crowns,” or strokes, on the tops of seven letters in Torah scrolls (see Menahot 29b). The book, which in fact includes other letters besides those mentioned in the Talmud, was attributed to (biblical) Joshua, and is actually of uncertain authorship. The earliest text is that copied into the Maḥzōr Vitry by Simḥah of Vitriy, a student of Rashi. However, this does not explain the statement of Naḥmanides that it is “found in the hands of every man.” Obviously, the “hidden,” or esoteric, aspect attributed to this work made it popular.74

Joseph Ibn Zabara (so, not “Zabarra”), born ca. 1140 either in Barcelona or perhaps in upper Castile, is famous as the author of an important Hebrew literary work, Sēfer sha’shūʿiym (“book of delights”). He was also a physician, knowledgeable in astronomy, and possibly wrote commentaries on the Bible or at least parts of it (perhaps only Proverbs). This is evident not only in his own work but in two citations of him by the aforementioned Joseph Qimḥi.75

Moses b. Shēshet (early thirteenth century), possibly the son of Shēshet b. Isaac Benvenist of Barcelona, wrote a short commentary, chiefly grammatical, on Jeremiah and Ezekiel; however, he moved to Iraq, and it is not clear whether he wrote his commentary there or in Spain.76

‘Ezra (b. Moses (?) or b. Solomon (?)) of Gerona; the name of his father, as well as the dates of his own life, are uncertain.77 He wrote a qabalistic commentary on Song of Songs, long erroneously attributed to Naḥmanides, and apparently on Job; as well as the famous Igeret ha-qōdesh (on sexual intercourse), also wrongly attributed to Naḥmanides.78

A somewhat rambling and obscure poetic introduction to the commentary on Song of Songs nevertheless contains some interesting information; for instance, he writes that from the time of the revelation (of the Torah) there has never been a generation in which wisdom, knowledge of the divine Name, was not transmitted. There could be here more than meets the eye, since the German mystic Rabbi El’azar b. Judah of Worms described an actual ceremony of the transmission of the secret of the Tetragrammaton to a disciple.79

He enumerates three classes of interpreters of Song of Songs: those who saw it as “words of profane love,” whom he condemns harshly; the second
interpret it as the love of God for Israel (he does not deny this interpretation, only their application of it to the entire book); the third approach, that of the sages, is allegory and revealing the “mysteries and secrets” of the book. He, obviously, intends to follow that path. There is, however, more to it than that; undoubtedly this was part of the qabalistic propaganda of attempting to crown their mystical doctrines with the authority of the talmudic sages.

Since his commentary is readily available in translations, there is little need to give a detailed account of it (important instances of his disagreement with Ibn ‘Ezra, and his apparent influence on Naḥmanides, and also on Isaac Ibn Sahūla of Castile, are discussed in the relevant places here). 80

**Moses b. Naḥman** (1194?–1270), known as RaMBaN and “Naḥmanides,”81 was born and lived in Gerona (Girona in Catalan), where he earned his living as a physician. He was descended from a long line of scholars, including the renowned Isaac b. Reuben al-Barjilūnī (“of Barcelona”). His mother was the sister of Abraham, the father of Jonah Gerundiy (on whom see later here). Naḥmanides was never a rabbi, a fact which he proudly declared, but he was one of the most important medieval talmudic scholars and taught many outstanding students. In addition to his talmudic commentaries and short treatises on aspects of Jewish law, he was a devotee of qabalah, and while no traces of that are to be found in his talmudic commentaries or legal writings, it is reflected in his biblical commentary. Judah b. Yaqar, a French or Provençal rabbi, one of his teachers, apparently introduced him to qabalah; although there is also a tradition that he learned qabalah from ‘Ezra of Gerona (nevertheless, it appears that this may be incorrect).82

He began his commentary on the Torah in Spain but completed it in the Land of Israel, where he went in 1265 (or soon thereafter) and where he died.83 This commentary has been published many times, including some of the first books ever printed, but is still in need of a truly critical edition. 84 Other than this, he is alleged to have written a commentary on Job.85 As previously noted, the commentary on Song of Songs attributed to him is actually by ‘Ezra of Gerona. There are important observations on biblical passages also in various sermons.

He stands in sharp contrast to Ibn ‘Ezra and yet bears comparison with him in some ways. He did not, of course, have Ibn ‘Ezra’s background in philosophy and science, nor his knowledge of languages; the few Greek terms he mentions were taken from Natan b. Yeḥiel of Rome’s dictionary or other sources (and see below, “Angels and Astrology” on Meṭatron). The same is true of at least one Arabic term, Ḍarjinī (actually Persian, but Natan listed it as Arabic). Contrary to some, Naḥmanides himself did not know Arabic.86

However, he also had a brilliant mind, honed by talmudic and qabalistic study if not by secular sciences. His Torah commentary was influential in other lands (Meir b. Barūkh of Rothenburg [ca. 1220–93], for example, cited it in at least two of his responsa) and in subsequent centuries, particularly among qabalists, even outside of Spain; Moses b. Jacob of Kiev (1449–ca. 1520),
a qabalist, in a poem praised Naḥmanides that he received ten portions of the mystical intelligence which descended to the world and that he was the third after Elijah the prophet in receiving the secrets of the ten sefiyrōt. 87

**Relationship to his predecessors**

It is no surprise that he often disagrees with Ibn ‘Ezra 88 (whom he calls “Rabbi Abraham,” although like Naḥmanides himself he was not a rabbi, such titles were often merely a term of respect), although most often agreeing with him; 89 but it is surprising that while clearly basing his own commentary on what Rashi wrote, he almost always differs with him. Yet his disagreements are rarely harsh, 90 merely stating the interpretation of one or the other of them and saying “and this is not correct,” or “and what is correct is...,” or “what is correct in my view”; both expressions, among several others, borrowed from Ibn ‘Ezra. However, not only did he borrow terminology from him, as mentioned elsewhere here, sometimes he borrowed an explanation without acknowledgment (e.g., Ex. 20.3, ed. Chavel 1: 390, that “no other gods” means the angels and all the heavenly host); some instances of his dependence on Ibn ‘Ezra have been noted in Chapter 2. One of Ibn ‘Ezra’s students was Meir of Trinquentaille (France), whose son Natan became, ironically, one of the teachers of Naḥmanides in spite of which he apparently felt no obligation of respect for his teacher’s teacher.

His frequent disagreement with Rashi contradicts the pious claim in his introductory poem that he closely follows his interpretation, which he there extols. He also refers there to Ibn ‘Ezra, with whom “we will have open chastisement and hidden love”; in fact, he agreed with him far more than he did with Rashi, to the point where it is possible to say that one of the main purposes of his commentaries was to refute those of the latter. 91 Indeed, it is quite probable that Ibn ‘Ezra’s own harsh view of the commentary of Rashi influenced Naḥmanides. Even in his talmudic commentaries, he also sometimes disagreed with Rashi.

Not only did he quarrel with the two “giants” of biblical exegesis, he also stated (based on the criticism of Ibn ‘Ezra) that what Sa’adyah Gaon had written on Num. 22.20 is not correct, but neither is what Ibn ‘Ezra said there (Ibn ‘Ezra there cited Sa’adyah). It should also be noted that just as he had a sometimes faulty translation of Maimonides’ “Guide” (see below), so also he cited texts by Ibn ‘Ezra which are not to be found in our present editions. 92

He frequently relied upon statements by Abraham b. David of Posquières, especially in his “strictures” on the Mishneh Tōnah of Maimonides; although in his earlier talmudic commentaries and legal writings he had constantly disagreed with Abraham. 93 He rarely cites David Qimhi’s commentaries except for a few places: in one instance he cites him indirectly as “one of the grammarians” (Gen. 6.4; Deut. 15.1), and he mentions him directly on Gen. 35.16, and borrowed an explanation from him (“he was a young child of
24 months”) on Ex. 2.6, without citing him; and possibly he is intended (“some say”) on Ex. 16.4. He also borrowed from his commentaries without mentioning the source in several other places.94

Even more surprising, given his general opposition to “philosophical rationalism,” is that he frequently cites Maimonides with great respect and often in agreement, not only with his legal interpretations but also with statements in the “Guide” (the exceptions to this usually have to do with commandments where he disagreed with him also in his “strictures” on Sēfer ha-mišvōt [Book of Commandments]). As noted, sometimes his disagreement with a statement in the “Guide” was the result of a faulty translation of the Arabic text, apparently either that of Judah al-Ḥarīzī or that of someone else.95 In places where he had serious disagreements in matters of law, he often referred indirectly, or by allusion, to Maimonides and it was left to the reader to understand.96

**Characteristics of his exegesis**

His approach is entirely different from that of Ibn ‘Ezra in that on the one hand it is far more “traditional” (that is, dependent on rabbinical teachings, especially midrash). Of the “fourfold interpretation” previously discussed, he employs derash (homiletic, or rabbinical, exegesis) and sōd (esoteric meaning) far more than the other two, although he is at pains sometimes to indicate that he gives the pešaṭ, or plain meaning of a verse.97 He justifies his use of derash by stating that the example of Rāshi gave him permission to do the same.98 On the other hand, it was equally innovative in a different way, by introducing (or at least propagating) qabalistic interpretation.

While it is incorrect to label his exegesis as “theological” (there were no real Jewish theologians in the medieval period, and certainly no systematic theology such as is encountered in Christian writings),99 his commentary set the standard for what might be called “religious-traditional” and “religious-esoteric” interpretation. By the first term, I mean the essence of his commentary as closely adhering to rabbinical interpretations found not only in both the Babylonian and “Jerusalem” Talmud but also in such works as Sifre (Sīpriy), Sifra, Midrash rabah (unlike Maimonides, he had access to all of these medieval biblical homilies100), Pirgey de-Rabiy Eli’ezer, Mekhīta (although some references to this are apparently to another no longer extant midrash on Exodus), Midrash Tannūmah and Midrash Tehилиyım, among others. He utilized the Aramaic Targʿum Onkelos, for which he had in some places a different text (this would be important for scholars dealing with that translation). He did not always agree with these midrashic interpretations, although usually he did and his reverence for them contrasts with the position of Ibn ‘Ezra (see Chapter 3, text at n. 10). Naḥmanides was a “literalist,” accepting as literally true every statement in the Torah (and the Bible in general) and in most of these midrashic sources.
His esoteric approach explains his otherwise surprisingly harsh rejection of the accepted rabbinical principle *eyn mūqdam ū-me’ūḥar be-Tōrah* (“there is no ‘early’ or ‘late’ in the Torah”); that is, chronological relationships are not strictly maintained. Contrary to this, he wrote: “this is the correction [the explanation] of these passages...for it is impossible to cut them with a knife to antedate or defer a thing,” and particularly not to suggest that a passage belongs elsewhere in the text (as did *Rashi* there).101

Interestingly, the alleged commentary on Job (see n. 85) contains little qabalistic interpretation, and as previously noted the qabalistic commentary on Song of Songs attributed to him is actually by ‘Ezra of Gerona.102 There are times when Naḥmanides used the word *qabalah* in its normal meaning, simply “tradition”; the same is true of such expressions as “by way of truth,” which often simply means the correct understanding of a word or verse (e.g., Lev. 23.36, 25.23, 26.15; Num. 14.14). This is true of other qabalists, who often used such expressions in their normal meaning. Most recent writers have focused, however, on the esoteric or qabalistic aspect of his commentary (and thus primarily on Genesis), which in fact is only a small part of the total, ignoring the fact that its central characteristic is religious-traditional.103 Once again, to understand Naḥmanides solely as a qabalistic innovator is completely to misunderstand him.

**Esoteric, or qabalistic, interpretation**

There are few references in his commentary to strictly qabalistic ideas only remotely connected with passages discussed, and these properly belong to a discussion of qabalah in general.104 Here we are concerned only with esoteric interpretation of texts and his overall approach. There is no question that Naḥmanides developed an interpretation (not essentially qabalistic) of the Torah which was on the one hand traditional and on the other innovative, according to which virtually every statement in it can be interpreted on different levels. As one writer put it quite well:

Torah [according to the position of Naḥmanides] thus provides the marker according to which human existence, in general, and the history of the Jews, in particular, can be measured, compared, and examined. At the same time, it provides insight into the workings of the material world.105

It appears that, unlike other commentators, he had little concern with being understood by ordinary readers, particularly with regard to his often lengthy esoteric explanations (see also below, on the Sabbatical year). Thus, he wrote in his introduction not to “reason reasons or think thoughts” about any of the “hints” contained in his commentary, for he was certain that no one could understand or grasp his words at all other than from a “wise recipient” transmitting
them to the ear of an “understanding recipient,” where that term (*mequbal*) can have the double meaning of one who has learned tradition or (obviously here) an adherent of qabalah.\(^{106}\)

Naḥmanides quotes also the well-known saying of the sages:

In that which is greater than you do not seek, what is stronger than you do not investigate, what is wondrous to you, you shall not know, what is hidden from you, do not ask; understand what is permitted to you, for you have no business with hidden things.\(^{107}\)

A mishnah (*Ḥagigah* 2.1) which he does not cite says that one who investigates four things is as though he were not alive: what is above (the heavens), what is beneath (the earth, or the netherworld), what is before (the creation) and what is after (the end of the world). In this regard, it is strange that he cited in various places a responsum of Sheriyrah Gaôn that it is forbidden to explain such things as the secret of the chariot (of Ezekiel) and mysteries of the Torah except to one “in whom are seen the signs that he is worthy of this”; yet in his commentary and elsewhere Naḥmanides wrote about these things, whether or not the reader understood.\(^{108}\)

### Secrets of the Torah, or the Torah as secret

The Torah, all of it given by God to Moses, predates the creation (a rabbinical tradition which was developed into a qabalistic doctrine).\(^{109}\) It includes such things “in prophecy” as the “act [secrets] of creation” (*ma’asēh berēshiyt*) and the “act of the chariot” (*ma’asēh merkabah*; the vision of Ezekiel).\(^{108}\) This apparently relates to his earlier statement in a sermon that he did not know any place in the Torah which alludes to *ma’asēh merkabah*, the “upper chariot” (knowledge of God); but the “chariot of the palaces” (a mystical notion; “ascent” to the heavenly throne) was “perhaps” an oral tradition until Ezekiel and Isaiah gave it support.\(^{109}\)

Naḥmanides also cites the statement that the Torah “was written in black fire upon white fire” (J. Talmud *Sheqaliytm* 6.1; Song of Songs *rabah* 5.11). His student Solomon Ibn Adret, in his rebuttal to the polemical challenge of the Muslim writer Ibn Ḥazm of Córdoba (eleventh century) that if the Torah was literally written in fire, then it was a physical thing and could not thus have existed without space (thus, prior to creation), replied that the statement that the Torah was written as black fire upon white fire is an allegory and symbol, although metaphorically the Torah is compared to fire in various biblical passages.\(^{110}\)

All of the “secrets” of creation, including the functions and nature of everything created, were revealed to Moses, apparently including the secrets (*ṣīṭrey*) of the “chariot.” Solomon also received all of his wisdom from the Torah and from it learned the “secret” of the natures of everything, which
would seem to make him equal to Moses, clearly contradicting the talmudic tradition, and statements of Naḥmanides himself elsewhere, that only Moses achieved such a level. The only difference between Solomon and Moses, according to what Naḥmanides said here, would be that Moses received his knowledge directly through revelation, but the end result of the degree of knowledge would be the same for both. He cites a translated book called Ḥakhmata rabata (Aramaic, “great wisdom”) of Solomon. This, of course, is the apocryphal book *Wisdom of Solomon*, originally in Greek.¹¹¹

Not only does the Torah contain allusions to, or symbolism of, everything which exists in the earth below and the heavens above, “we have in our hands a tradition of truth that all of the Torah is entirely names of the Holy One, blessed be he” (my emphasis).¹¹² In the introduction to his commentary, he explains that the “oral Torah” or interpretation received by Moses along with the written Torah provided the explanation of these names (that is, apparently, he considered the “oral Torah” to be esoteric interpretation of the written Torah). This is consistent with his general approach to the Torah; everything in it may be interpreted on two levels: literal and metaphorical (including, but not exclusively, esoteric meaning).¹¹³

Since not only every word but every letter in the Torah contains great mysteries, he wrote that a scroll of the Torah is not fit to be read in the synagogue if even a single letter is missing or incorrectly written, even if it is a letter the presence or absence of which does not alter the meaning of the word. This opinion was accepted as law by Yōm Ṭov Ishibli (born ca. 1210, lived probably all of his life in Zaragoza), who wrote that thus he had received from both his teachers (Aaron b. Joseph ha-Lēvy and Solomon Ibn Adret, students of Naḥmanides).¹¹⁴ This is the only instance (in medieval Spain) known to me where a qabalistic notion was used as a basis for law; in later centuries, of course, attempts were made to introduce such concepts, and also from the Zohar (a forgery by Moses b. Shēm Ṭov de León, d. 1305, and others), into legal decisions.

**Magic (Theurgy)**

Of course, the concept of various divine names, composed of combinations of certain letters, is an ancient one in Jewish tradition but Naḥmanides goes far beyond this into the realm of magical qabalah. In his previously mentioned sermon he stated: “all of the Torah in its entirety is the names of God and in every section [parashah] is the name by which the thing was formed or done or in which that matter was established.” There is, he says, a special book called *Shimūsh* [read *Shimūshey*] Tōrah (“use[s] of the Torah”) which explains which divine name is found in each section and how that name is to be used; but “we have a tradition” that the entire Torah literally consists of the names of God.¹¹⁵ This “magical,” or theurgic, teaching includes the idea that in Ezekiel are revealed the “names” by which a man may resurrect the
dead, and the knowledge of the “name” of 72 letters by which the “righteous
of the generations” can kill and bring to life.116

He gives further explanations of how various names of God were used to
perform miracles, and the difference between Jacob, who used only the name
Shaday (see below, “God and Miracles”), and Moses (Gen. 17.1). Without
ever saying so, he clearly disagreed on this also with Ibn ‘Ezra (and with Hai
[Hayyē] Gaōn whom he cited), who wrote that “whoever says that by (using)
the name of God great deeds (“miracles”) can be done does not understand
the meaning of the name.” Maimonides went even further, asserting that
some had made “lying statements” putting together whatever letters they like
to form an alleged divine name which has magical powers.117 Naḥmanides’
views will be detailed further in the Section “Magic and astrology.”

Not only was he an adherent of qabalah, he shared some of the most ex-
treme superstitions of his age, such as the belief that on “the night of the seal”
(the holiday of Hoshana Rabah) the head of a person who is to die during the
year does not cast a shadow; see his commentary on Num. 21.9 (this from a
physician!).118

Typology

Typology, sometimes called “prefiguration,” has long been used by Christian
scholars in relation to the reinterpretation in the Gospels and Pauline letters
of Jewish biblical events or symbols as a “sign” or foreshadowing of events in
the life of Jesus, or eschatologically (apocalyptically) for future events. Sim-
ilarly, Christian writers from the early Fathers through the medieval period
(and indeed beyond) have employed such symbols, often in polemics against
Jewish teachings. Yet only recently have Jewish scholars become aware of
this concept in relation to the commentary of Naḥmanides, chiefly due to an
article by Amos Funkenstein.119

In agreement with a long tradition,120 Naḥmanides (Gen. 2.3) refers to
the six days of creation as a sign for the six ages of the duration of the world,
6,000 years. However, he also gives a unique esoteric interpretation to this:
during the first two days of creation the world was entirely water and nothing
was perfected in it, which symbolizes the first 2,000 years in which no one
“called on the name of God,” except for the creation of light on the first day
which symbolizes the millennium of Adam who recognized his creator. The
third day represents the third millennium, from the time when Abraham “at
the age of 48” began to call on the name of God and concluding with the
revelation at Mt. Sinai; the fourth that of the two Temples; the fifth began
“172 years after the destruction of the [first] Temple, in which the nations
began to rule.”

Aside from the fact that this generally differs from other such schema, and
particularly the Talmud,121 there are serious problems with the chronology
of the last part. According to this, the date would be 241 C.E. (using to
medieval calculation of the date of the destruction of the Temple as 69 C.E.),
at which time nothing significant happened with regard to the Jews; the
dates, however, are symbolic: the second Temple was begun 172 years after
the destruction of the first one, according to him, and thus another period of
172 years is needed to balance the symbolism.122

Yet the sixth millennium is said to be the period at the beginning of which
was the rule of the “beasts,” the kingdoms who did not know God, and at
the end of which (or, apparently, in the tenth part) will come the redemption
from exile at the hand of the messiah “ben David,” specifically 118 years after
the beginning of the millennium (or 5118; 1358 C.E.).123 The seventh day,
the Sabbath, alludes to the world to come.124 His disciple (follower, not liter-
ally his student) Bahya b. Asher Ibn Ḥallāwa, writing in 1291 (ironically, the
very year when Nahmanides elsewhere had predicted the coming of the mes-
siah “ben Ephraim,” see note), copied all of this almost verbatim in his own
commentary, changing it only to observe that this prediction possibly refers
to the coming of the messiah “ben Joseph” and that by 1403, at the latest,
will the messiah “ben David” come. Nevertheless, he later contradicted this
and calculated the year of the “redemption” as 1336.125 See further “Exile
and Redemption,” at the end of the section “Non-esoteric interpretation”.

From Ibn ‘Ezra Nahmanides learned another “mystery,” that of the shem-
ḥiyṭah, or Sabbatical year (Lev. 25.1), which is like the Sabbath day and this
is one of the great “secrets” of the Torah. While acknowledging Ibn ‘Ezra,
he nevertheless proudly asserts this as his own innovation: “bend your ear to
hear what I am permitted to let you hear about this in the language which I
will let you hear, and if you merit it you will understand.” The great “secret”
is that the Sabbatical year, like the Sabbath, is intended for rest and contem-
plation of God and the creation, and each day of the week alludes to the days
of creation and so the six years leading up to the Sabbatical year allude to the
six millennia as mentioned above, and the Sabbatical year itself is a sign, or
figure, of the world to come.126

There is nothing unique in his “typology” of the things which occurred
to the Patriarchs being interpreted prophetically to relate to later generations
and events, quoting a midrash (see note): “everything which happened to the
‘fathers’ is a sign for the ‘sons’.” When one of the prophets understood such a
sign and it was brought forth from the “power of decree” to an imaginative,
or simulated, deed (by which he means the kind of symbolic actions engaged
in by various prophets), the corresponding “decree” (what is to happen to the
people) will also be fulfilled.127

A surprising aspect of this is his insistence that Abraham “sinned” in tell-
ing Sarah to say to the Egyptian ruler that she was Abraham’s sister instead
of his wife (Gen. 12.13), and also that he “sinned” in leaving the Holy Land
because of famine (since God would have provided for him), and that because
of these “sins” God decreed exile in Egypt for his descendants. Judah b. Mo-
ses Ḥallāva (fourteenth century, Tortosa), whose father was a great scholar,
objected to this interpretation that it was contrary to specific talmudic state-
ments governing punishment (and illogical to assume that all of his descend-
ants would be punished because of his alleged wrongdoing). On the contrary,
he claimed, the descendants of Abraham in Egypt were righteous and the
reason they were brought there (by God) was to strengthen them and prepare
them, in their servitude, for service to God.128

Indeed, for Naḥmanides the Torah contains “prophecies” of all future
events which were to happen to the Jews, for everything is contained in it.
Ibn ‘Ezra had also used “typology” in his previously mentioned statement
that the Song of Songs contained allusions to all the events from Abraham to
the time of the messiah.

General esoteric interpretation

God. He explains that Ėl and Shaday (Gen. 17.1) are both descriptive (adjecti-
val) names (not necessarily disagreeing with Ibn ‘Ezra, who can also be un-
derstood to mean that Ėl is not a “proper” name of God; see Chapter 2 on his
discussion of God’s names). The name Ehyeh, which God told to Moses (Ex.
3.14), indicates the divine attribute of justice and is the same as the ineffable
name Y-H-V-H, but combined in that is also the attribute of mercy.129 See
also below, “Miracles,” on the meaning of Shaday; there he stated that God
did not make himself known to the Patriarchs by his special name, which in
fact they knew “but not by prophecy” in the manner that Moses did. The
Shekhiynah (“divine presence”) is in the “upper Temple” (allegorically, the
heavenly Temple, corresponding to that on earth) and is called ṣedeq (“just-
tice” or “righteousness”).130 He also states “and God forbid that the thing
called Shekhiynah or glory [kavōd] is created external to” God (as Maimonides
stated).131

Miracles. He cites both the “Guide” of Maimonides and the explanation
of Ibn ‘Ezra, particularly in the name of Ibn Naghrīlah about the meaning of
Shaday (see Chapter 2, n. 51), saying that this is correct, “for it is the attribute
of might [gevūrah] which conducts the world” and it is the name (or attribute)
by which the “hidden miracles” are done for the righteous, “to save their
souls from death and keep them alive in [times of] famine, to ransom them
from the sword in war, like all the miracles performed for Abraham and the
fathers” and all the miracles in the Torah. Also on Ex. 6.2 he cites at length
the same explanation of Ibn ‘Ezra, which clearly was the source (except for
the notion of changes in nature; see below) for his own theory of miracles;
although even there he had partially to disagree with him (“he prophesies and
does not know”).132

According to Naḥmanides, there are two kinds of miracles, “hidden” and
“revealed.” The first includes those ordinary blessings given to the individ-
ual, such as food and health, and of these he says “all the Torah is full of
them.” The second are the general blessings promised to the entire people.
In both cases, they are granted only when the recipient is righteous. From these “open,” or revealed, miracles, one admits also the “hidden” miracles which are the “foundation of the Torah”; he again repeats that all the blessings of God are “hidden miracles,” for there is nothing in nature which demands that the rains should fall, etc.133

“Hidden miracles,” therefore, are all those events which might be thought to be natural or by natural causes, and even those obviously contrary to nature are considered “hidden” if not previously announced by a prophet, such as “Jochebed” (Yōḵheved) giving birth to Moses at the age of 130. He gives the explanation for this later (Gen. 46.15), citing Ibn ’Ezra who expressed astonishment at this midrashic interpretation, finally rejecting it and the like either as agadic exaggeration or the opinion of an individual. Nahmanides says he must answer him, “lest he should appear wise in his [own] eyes” (cf. Prov. 26.5) in contradicting the rabbis, asserting that she was literally the daughter of Levi and thus “very old indeed” when she gave birth to Moses. This is one of the “hidden miracles” which are the “foundation of the Torah.”134

So important was this concept of “hidden miracles” that he repeated the idea, and even the very words, elsewhere.135 All the miracles performed by a prophet who announces them first, or an angel acting at God’s command, are mentioned in the Bible, but those which are “done in themselves” to aid a righteous person or punish (“destroy”) an evil one are not mentioned in the Bible (Gen. 46.15).

As stated in his previously cited sermon, everything in nature and all that happens to us is a miracle, without any aspect of “nature” in it, and this belief is incumbent upon all who wish to have a “portion” (be considered faithful) in the Torah. According to the position he then held, there is really no nature (natural order), and since everything that happens is a “miracle,” all these miracles involve a change in the nature of the world; however, this is not recognized ordinarily, as were such dramatic events as the splitting of the sea for Moses. He expressed his “amazement” at Maimonides “who diminishes miracles and strengthens nature” in claiming that miracles were not eternal but only for a specified time.136

Nevertheless, he changed his position in his later biblical commentary. While still maintaining that everything which happens is a miracle, these “miracles” do not, however, involve a change in the laws of nature. The only miracles which are a change in the laws of nature were those performed by Moses, such as the splitting of the sea. Here he apparently agrees with Ibn ’Ezra (although as noted his position on this was ambiguous). He also made a simple distinction between ʾōṯō, “signs,” which were first told to the people before a prophet performed them, and mōšʿtīyim, “wonders,” which are a change in nature (performed not only by Moses but also by Elijah and Elisha).137

There is another important difference between the “ordinary” miracles of health and long life, etc., for the individual, since even evil people may
sometimes enjoy these, and the “general” miracles for the entire people; for when it is seen that rains always fall in the appropriate time (in the Land of Israel) and there is peace and well-being and victory over the enemies of the Jewish people, it will be understood by all the world that this is from God. This is also where he made his oft-cited observation that if Israel (the Jewish people) is “perfect” (righteous), none of the things which happen to them would be according to nature, “not in their bodies and not in their Land and not in their generality [population] and not in individuals,” for God gives everything as a blessing; however, (the people) Israel never merited this, neither generally nor individually.138

Langermann is certainly correct that the main purpose in what Naḥmanides repeatedly wrote was not to defend the veracity of miracles (self-evident) but rather “the integration of natural phenomena…into a comprehensive system that includes the supernal and divine realms” (actually, these are the same; supernal and lower realms would be better) and the description of the interaction between the various “components” (that is, the upper forces, nature, man, etc.).139 But it is not just that the causality “described by the Greeks in their books” is recognized by Naḥmanides; in fact, it is not a complete understanding of the world (and is therefore rejected by him). Rather, the “causative” forces are themselves part of the miracle. Furthermore, the interaction depends, in large measure at least, on the proper behavior of the Jewish people. This is not to say that others are excluded, but that to a greater degree the operation of the “miraculous” occurs in the historical life, and indeed the daily life, of the Jews.

Creation. The creation itself, as well as the account of it, contains mysteries. The world was created with (or through) the ten spheres (sefiyrōt; qabalist term denoting the “emanations” of God’s powers or attributes; not the same as the nine astronomical spheres). Ṭēshiyt (Gen. 1.1; “beginning”) is the sefiyrah called Ḥakhmah (“Wisdom”) “by which everything is established.”140 Yet he immediately offers the “simple” explanation that God created the world from absolute nothingness, “and there is not in our holy language [to describe] bringing forth something from nothing [yēsh me-‘ayin; see, Chapter 2, n. 101 on this] except the [word] ‘create’.”141 However, he then denies this traditional concept and states that nothing in the heavens above or below (the earth) was made from nothing; rather from absolute nothingness was brought forth a “very thin matter in which there is nothing of substance.”142 This is the power of formation “to receive the form and bring it from the potential to actuality; and this is the prime matter, called by the Greeks hīyuliy [Gr. hylē].”143 Elsewhere, he gave a somewhat different explanation of hīyuliy, erroneously attributed to Ibn ʿEzra but in fact derived partially from Maimonides.144

Here is an interesting combination of qabalist notions and philosophical ideas. According to both of the concepts mentioned by Naḥmanides, the universe was emanated and not literally created. Not surprisingly, he was severely condemned for such an idea.145 Thus, curiously, Naḥmanides here
sides with the very philosophers whom he elsewhere reviled, and against accepted Jewish tradition.

He cites *Pirqey de-Rabiy Eli’ezer*, and also *Genesis rabah*, that the heavens were created from the “light of the garment [malbush; livusho] of the Holy One, blessed be he,” which opinion he criticizes since the heavens are a moving body [composed of] matter and form and they were created from nothing, but the light of the garment is the first created thing from which the actual matter of the heavens issued, and [God] gave to the earth another matter not of the thinness of the first [the heavens], and this is the snow which is under the throne of glory, for the throne was created and from it the snow underneath it and from that was made the matter of the earth, which is the third thing in creation.146

The qabalistic doctrine of the “divine garment” is more fully developed in later writings (and see below on Prophecy).

He was opposed to the opinion of those of “little faith” (actually, Aristotle) that the universe came into existence of necessity. At the beginning of his aforementioned sermon he also referred to those who had no knowledge of God, like the inhabitants of “Rumaniyah,” or the Tatars; or the Sabians, who believed in the eternity of the world; and the “thinkers” (ba’aley ‘iyūn; philosophers), who never heard [so] the Torah.147

According to him, eternality of the universe (in the sense of no beginning), as opposed to creation, would not allow for divine providence nor for the possibility of change in nature; furthermore, one who believes in this denies the essence of the Torah.148

Something which as far as I can determine has not been noticed is his belief that the creation was not necessarily a single, completed act in the past but theoretically could continue in the future. He may have been influenced by what Ibn ‘Ezra wrote about this.149

The Soul. In various writings, he maintained (in agreement with a midrash) that all of the souls ever to exist were created already on the first day of creation.150 The special human soul (*neshamah*) is not made from the “elements” (fire, air, water and earth), as is the animate soul (*neshesh*) shared with animals; nor (and this is very important) is it evolved, or emanated, from the separate intellects, but rather it is the “spirit of God, from his mouth, knowledge and understanding” (cf. Prov. 2.6).151 He mentions the opinion of “philosophers” (Aristotle) as to the three divisions, or classes, of “soul,” and also the opinion of “those who say” that there is only one soul which combines in it the three “powers.” In the end he decides in accord with the midrash that there are two souls, combining the various powers.152 The soul, like the separate intellects, is eternal, depending on the observance of the commandments, and its “reward” is both in the “world of the souls” (after death) and in the “world to come,” after resurrection.153
Elsewhere he wrote that the animate soul of man and beast are the same, and there is one death for all, and he mentioned the path of “the Greek” (Aristotle), according to which “investigators” (philosophers) considered the soul to be from the Active Intellect, “a sparking [hitnōṣēs] of an effulgence [ziyv] and brilliance, very clear and bright, and from it came forth the spark [niṣōṣ; usually niṣōṣ] of the soul of the beast [animate soul].” This view he rejects, although here only implicitly, as is clear in his other writings. The more strictly qabalistic notions regarding the soul (e.g., Gen. 49.33) belong properly to a thorough historical study of qabalah in medieval Spain, which remains to be done.

**Prophecy.** In his commentary on Yevamot 49b (“all the prophets saw [God as if] in a glass which is not clear, but Moses saw in a glass which is clear”), he explains that Moses saw “the glory and beauty of the Shekhiynah” (the “Divine Presence”) and sought to see more but was not allowed, as stated in Midrash Leviticus rabah (1.14). He also there cites Ḥananēl b. Ḥūshiyēl of Qayrawān (d. 1050; cited by earlier Spanish authorities) that to see the glory of the Shekhiynah “is not given to everyone, only to one who is wise, understanding from his own knowledge.” Not surprisingly, Naḥmanides disagreed with this (very close to the ideas of Ibn ‘Ezra and Maimonides), and wrote that the true explanation is that what the prophets saw “with the eye” was similar to “the appearance of the glory of God…like a consuming fire,” just as scripture says “[God] is seen eye to eye” (Num. 14.14); for the word “eye” in many places in the Bible means appearance (this explanation is found in Ibn Janāḥ, which Naḥmanides could conceivably have read in the Hebrew translation). In his commentary on that passage in the Bible, he gave a simple explanation that “eye” is like “appearance” and cited similar usages. What Moses intended in that passage, he says, was that the “appearance” of God is his name, by which he is “attached” to keneset Yisraēl (“assembly [people] of Israel”), as it is said there, “for my name is in their midst.” Moses, however, “saw” through a clear glass with a vision of knowledge, which is tiferet Yisraēl (“beauty of Israel”). These terms are close to, but not quite, the qabalistic sefiyrōt (“spheres”) of Knowledge and Beauty. Similar ideas are found in several places in his biblical commentary, and discussed at length in Joshua Ibn Shu‘ayb’s supercommentary on Naḥmanides.

Important is his criticism of Maimonides that not all prophecy was by the agency of angels (Maimonides excluded Moses from this), although he agreed with him that when the Bible mentioned an angel appearing or speaking this was in a dream. Naḥmanides cites numerous examples where prophecy was not in a dream nor was it by an angel (this does not contradict the previous statement that prophecy is usually by a dream; here he says only that some is not), and adheres to the rabbinical explanations of the differences between the prophecy of Moses and that of all others. However, in the case of the angels called “men” (anashiyim), or the angel wrestling with Jacob, a special “glory” (kavōd) is created in them, called malbūsh (“garment”). They then
may be seen by certain people worthy of this, such as the righteous or the “sons [disciples] of the prophets.” Nahmanides says that he is “not able to explain” this; that is, he is unwilling to do so. This is similar to, but not identical with, the “divine garment” mentioned above.

Angels and Astrology. On Ex. 12.12, he explains “gods of Egypt” as the “upper angels,” quoting Isa. 24.21 that there are angels of the heavens and angels on the earth. These were the angels who controlled Egypt, and the “fortune” (mazal) of the Egyptians and the angels of fortune over them were brought down. In accord with rabbinic tradition, every nation has its own “minister,” or angel and, he adds, its own mazal (which can also mean planet or zodiacal sign) in the heavens. Since traditionally there are 70 nations, so the heavenly host consists of 70 angels which control them (Num. 11.16; cf. Septuagint, Deut. 32.8; Sanhedrin 17a; etc.). In more detail, on Lev. 18.25 he wrote that God gave “power of the lower ones [ha-tahtōniym] to the upper ones [ha-elyoniym],” that is, power over them, and gave to each people in its land a certain star and mazal, “as is known in astrology” and these are called angels (or princes) of the nations.

Only the Land of Israel, which is the center of the habitation and a special treasure (segūlah) to God, has no angel or governing power over it. There is also no guardian angel for the Jewish people; the archangel Michael, for example, is said to watch over and seek mercy for the people but does not rule them; see below on “eyn mazal le-Yisraēl.” This view is similar to that of another contemporary qabalist, Asher b. David (grandson of Abraham b. David of Posquières and nephew of Isaac “the Blind,” both important qabalists who had significant influence on Naḥmanides).

He also accepted the views of Ibn ‘Ezra and Maimonides (without mentioning either) that the angels are the “separate intellects,” adding “and it is known that some of them rule over the nations.” The angels, which are separate intellects, are not seen by the eye because they have no body, and when they appear to prophets or “men of the holy spirit, like Daniel,” they are apprehended “in the appearance of the intellecting soul” when it reaches the level of prophecy (Num. 22.23).

In his explanation of ‘Azazēl (Lev. 16.8), he also mentions that all of this can be understood fully only by an investigation of the “separate intellects” and the “spirits within them” according to the wisdom of “necromancy” (apparently magic or divination in general). He concludes there:

and I am not able to explain, for it would be necessary to muzzle the mouth of those who think themselves wise in the sciences of nature, who follow after the Greek [Aristotle] who denied everything other than what was sensed by him

and he and his “evil students” thought that everything which they did not understand was not true.
He also discusses (Ex. 12.12) the name of the “messenger” of God who performs all sorts of actions, the “great angel” Metatron, the meaning of which he says is “showing the way,” as in the homiletic work Sifriy: “the finger of God” which showed Moses all the Land of Israel (he adds that he “heard” that in Greek a messenger is called mitator; it is possible that he got this information from a Greek-speaking Jew, either from Byzantium or Crete, for instance; however, it is not Greek but Latin). He believed literally in the various classes of angels and their powers (cf., e.g., Ex. 3.2). The only “allegory” he is willing to admit is that the “court of God,” or the divine attribute of judgment (midad ha-diyn), is sometimes referred to as an angel (Ex. 14.19), but even this he understood literally that it “walked” before the Israelites to light the way for them.

**Magic and Astrology.** As mentioned above, Naḥmanides was a believer in qabalistic magic, and also believed generally in the truth of magic and astrology (if he was aware of the harsh condemnation of astrology by Maimonides, he gives no indication of it). Concerning the magicians of Egypt (Ex. 7.11), he cites an opinion in the Talmud (Sanhedrin 67b) that these were deeds of sorcerers and by the agency of “angels of destruction,” or angels of fire which work in a man without his awareness; “and possibly are so called the angels who dwell in the air in the spheres of the elements,” who are called “ministers” (sariym).

While the Torah clearly prohibits consulting an “enchanter,” or soothsayer (me’onēn) or “diviner” (menahēsh) in the Land of Israel (Deut. 18.9–10), he there explains that these are not an “abomination” for which the Canaanites were dispossessed, “for all men desire to know their future, and engage in many wisdoms [knowledge] to know” this. In marked contrast, his cousin Jonah b. Abraham Gerundiy wrote that all “soothsaying,” determining propitious or auspicious days or times for any action, or consulting astrologers or diviners, is forbidden; specifically adding that these were the practices of the Canaanites for which they were dispossessed from the Land, exactly the opposite of what Naḥmanides maintained. Another difference is that while Naḥmanides considered the prohibition to apply only to the Land of Israel, it is clear that Jonah saw this as a general prohibition for all times and places.

One of the forms of idolatry which he says was practiced by ancient nations was the worship of the stars and planets, since God “appointed them to all the peoples and gave to each a star or planet,” but not to be worshiped by them; they nevertheless made images of them according to the astrological “power” of each of these. The first class of idolatry, according to him, was the worship of angels, “which are the separate intellects.” Note that only the worship of these things is condemned by him, not the belief in their efficacy.

He cites “the book of the moon,” by a scholar of “necromancy” (magic in general, especially prediction of the future), according to which when the moon is in a particular zodiacal sign, one may make a “picture” (astrological chart) indicating the time and the name of the angel (the names of the angels
as found in that book) controlling the sign to predict what will happen in a particular case.

Magicians, or sorcerers (*mekešefīyim*), however, are able to change the appearances, or the powers, of the “upper forces” and therefore it is proper that the Torah prohibited this in order that the world should remain according to its natural order (not literally “natural,” of course, since as explained above everything is a miracle). “Many have ‘made themselves pious’ in stating that there is no truth in magicians at all” (Ibn ‘Ezra, see below; also, especially, Maimonides, *M.T.*, *Mada*; “‘Avodah zara,” 11.16); but, Naḥmanides says, “we are not able to refute things which are widely known to the eyes of those who see.”

Astrologers also know the future by signs of the zodiac, and so also magicians who know signs of birds or their voices by which to predict the future. The obvious question, which he does not address, is that if magicians are able to control the upper forces, why is this not a limitation on, or at least an interference with, the power of God?

Only at the end of his lengthy discourse (Deut. 18.9–10) does he state that while none of this was prohibited to the Canaanites, or other nations, and on the contrary it is knowledge which Solomon “learned” from those nations, it is prohibited to the Jewish people, for whom God has instead appointed prophets to whom are revealed what will take place. Nevertheless, there is truth in what sorcerers, magicians and the like do. This is also intended to contradict Maimonides (above), who wrote:

> all these things are lies and deceit, and [one] who believes in these and similar things and considers that they are true and things of wisdom, but [only that] the Torah prohibited them, is only one of the fools and lacking in knowledge.

Thus, while not denying the truth of astrology or magic, he believed that these were prohibited to Jews, and this explains his harsh disagreement (Ex. 28.30) with Ibn ‘Ezra concerning the ‘ūriym and tūmiym of the priestly breastplate (which Ibn ‘Ezra, on 28.6, appears to have explained astrologically; and see the “short recension” of his commentary on Ex. 28.30), yet he also disagreed with Ibn ‘Ezra’s explicit statement that there is no truth in magic and that the Torah did not prohibit things which are true but those which are false. According to Naḥmanides, astrology and magic are “true” but prohibited, but this prohibition apparently does not extend to qabalistic magic.

It is surprising that he ignored the talmudic prohibition of this, particularly the statement of Rabbi ‘Aqiyva about astrologers (those who try to determine the propitious time for performing an activity). Also surprisingly, he makes no mention of the famous rabbinical statement “*eyn mazal le-Yisraḥ*”; that is, Jews are not controlled by astrological signs or fate.

However, in his aforementioned responsum (see n. 174) he cites the contrary opinion in *Shabbat* (156a) that Jews are controlled by fate, and notes that
although the binding decision is not like that, nevertheless belief in fate and astrology is not in the category of magic. This was certainly not the view of one of the leading scholars of Lunel of the preceding generation, who wrote very sharply against the minority opinion in the Talmud that fate does control the Jews, stating that it is contrary to biblical passages and to tradition (*qabalah* here does not refer to the esoteric doctrine) and to “what is seen to the eye,” that God responds to individual appeals, but he explained that even righteousness does not prevail in the case of one born under a constellation which decrees that he should be lacking in the things mentioned.\(^{176}\)

Yom Ṭōv Ḫishbīlī, the previously cited student of Naḥmanides, wrote that because of this dictum, Jacob and Esau were born as twins, so that the world should understand that the righteousness of Jacob was from himself and not by control of a planet or from the nature of his father and mother (i.e., they were undeniably righteous but this had no influence on Esau and thus also not on Jacob).\(^{177}\)

Baḥya b. Asher, who usually agreed with Naḥmanides, wrote extensively on this in his commentary and did cite the prevailing talmudic opinion, but stated that this only applies to “Israel [the Jewish people] in general,” but not to individuals; further, he wrote that Israel indeed is affected by “fate” but is not under the “dominion” of the planets and stars since they and everything were created for the “righteous,” but the planets do have dominion over the nations and idolaters. Yet elsewhere he apparently contradicted this and wrote that God established the order of the stars and gave them power over the lower orders, according to which they cause good or harm in this world; possibly he there also referred to the other nations and not to Israel.\(^{178}\)

Ibn ʿEzra, although he wrote at length about astrology, strongly opposed the belief in astral determinism, noting that God removes the Jewish people from the influence of the stars (planets) as long as they observe the commandments, and thus the sages said “*eyn mazal le-Yisraʾēl.*”\(^{179}\) Menahēm b. Solomon “ha-Meiyriy,” who often depended on Ibn ʿEzra, wrote nearly the same thing. Jacob b. David Provençal (late fifteenth century, Marseille and Naples, which then were under Spanish control) wrote that the *mazalot* and “ministers” (angels) are “guardians” of the world, but that the light of the “wise soul” is very thin and pure, and if the body is drawn after it (adheres to it), then the “ministers” will not recognize it and the *mazalot* will not find it, and therefore the rabbis said “*eyn mazal le-Yisraʾēl.*”\(^{180}\)

It is likely that Baḥya, and perhaps also Ibn ʿEzra, was influenced by Abraham bar Ḥayya, who explained that while all the “nations” have a particular astrological sign governing them, the Jewish people do not have either a sign (*mazal*) or a star which governs them. “This is clear, for it has already been established that the planets [signs] and stars and all the world were only created for Israel [the Jewish people].”\(^{181}\)

In his sermon “*Ṭōrat ha-Shēm temiymah*” Naḥmanides expressed his belief in astrology in even stronger terms, condemning the “chief of the
philosophers [Aristotle], may his name be blotted out” (! an expression used only for an enemy of the Jewish people), who denied many things of this kind “which many saw and [of] which we have seen their truth and which have become manifest in the world.” He further denounces that “notorious man” (Aristotle) who believed only in knowledge acquired by the senses and not “spiritual” knowledge and thus said that magic and sorcery is nothing and only natural forces act in the world, concerning which Nahmanides says it is “well known” that this is not so.182 There he mentioned that “even among the philosophers” was yet another magical work, “Sēfer a-l-ṭ-l-s-m-s” (Ar.ṭalīsmāt, astral magic or the “drawing of celestial forces upon terrestrial ones”183), which may refer to an unknown translation of such a work. 184

Non-esoteric interpretation

As noted previously, by no means is his commentary entirely, or even primarily, of an esoteric nature. Almost the entire books of Leviticus and Numbers, for example, are explained in a straightforward manner, with some important implications for legal matters (particularly on the Sabbatical and Jubilee years; later given a qabalistic interpretation by his disciple Baḥya b. Asher). In the “traditional” approach, he was concerned to explain the “simple,” or contextual, meaning of a verse, especially in contrast to what he considered to be the incorrect interpretations of Rashi and sometimes of Ibn ‘Ezra. While he often referred to midrashic or rabbinical interpretation as allegory, primarily he accepted literally everything in the Torah, or more accurately, everything has both a literal and allegorical meaning. This in itself is not new, of course; Rashi and other commentators also interpreted the text in this manner.

Some of his explanations are of a grammatical nature (although he was by no means an expert in Hebrew grammar and relied on earlier writers); for example, his discussion of āṣiylūt (“refusal, taking away”), explaining that even though it is stated that God “spoke” to the elders of the people and “took of the holy spirit” for them (Num. 11.17; he understood this in the medieval meaning of “impart”), they did not hear directly from God but from Moses. He criticizes the “copyists” (translators), who gave a different interpretation, by which he apparently means the Aramaic translation attributed to Onkelos.185

Of interest is his explanation of the “Ten Commandments” as being divided equally between those which are for the “honor” of God and those for the benefit of man, and that the first five refer to the (commandments of) the written Torah and the remainder to the “oral Torah” (the Talmud). He states that “probably” they were written thus on two separate tablets, five commandments on each.186 Yet even here he introduces esoteric explanations, citing Sēfer yeṣiyyrah and various rabbinical allegories, concluding “and the discerning will understand the secret.”
More important is the disagreement over the nature of the “giving” of the commandments. According to Maimonides (“Guide” II. 33), all of the Ten Commandments, except the first two, were heard from God only by Moses, who then repeated them to the people (even the first two commandments, said together as one, were repeated by Moses so that they could be understood separately); thus, only the first “voice” (the combined first two commandments) was heard by the people directly from God. Naḥmanides disagrees and insists that “certainly” all the Ten Commandments were heard by the people from God, including the first two which they “understood” (separately) as did Moses. The rest of the commandments, however, they did not “understand” and Moses had to explain them. The argument did not end here. Another disagreement is on “Guide” I. 27, and related statements, discussed at length by Naḥmanides, where his criticism is apparently correct. Note his observation that what is said in the Aramaic biblical translations “are things known in qabalah, and their secret to those who know hidden wisdom.”

He borrowed, without mentioning this, from Maimonides (M.T., Mada‘: “Yesōdey ha-Tôrah,” 8.2, 3) that Moses is not the key figure in the reception of the Torah. In contrast to other religions and attitude to their founders, Jews do not “believe” in Moses or the signs he used but rather in “what our eyes saw, and not a stranger’s; what our ears heard, and not another’s,” citing Deut. 5.4: “face to face God spoke with you” (the people, and not Moses alone). The revelation, or “gathering at Mt. Sinai” (ma‘amad har Siynay; see index here) alone is the proof of the veracity of the prophecy of Moses; that is, all the people witnessed it. Naḥmanides says that this is a great commandment, since if we believe in the prophecy of Moses alone and because of “signs and wonders” he performed, were another prophet or “dreamer of dreams” to arise and command the opposite of what is in the Torah and give signs and wonders, it might arouse doubt. However, since the Torah came to us directly to our eyes and ears without an intermediary any such attempt to contradict it can be defeated.

As stated, his commentary on Leviticus (and most of Deuteronomy) is almost devoid of qabalistic explanations, and at times the lucid style of his talmudic commentaries is to be found here, as when discussing in detail the types of forbidden fowl (Lev. 11.13, cf. his commentary on Hullin 62b where he mentions that he personally inspected various birds). His discussion of viable life at birth (Lev. 12.2), important for the history of medicine, clarifies a problematic rabbinical statement (Niddah 31a) “if a woman produces seed first, the fetus is a male,” which according to him does not mean that the rabbis believed that women actually produce seed, but refers to the blood of the womb (of course, even according to his explanation the statement is biologically inaccurate). Incidentally, his attitude toward women was definitely chauvinistic; note his explanation of the punishment of Eve in Gan ʿĒden (“paradise”) being that women would not complain about the pains of
pregnancy or childbirth and that they would always obey their husbands and never again command him in anything (Gen. 3.16).

Certain passages which one would think virtually “demand” a qabalist interpretation are interpreted literally, or at least in accord with the homiletic interpretations of the midrash or Talmud; such as Ex. 17.16 (“the hand on the throne of God”) and, even more so, the revelation at Mt. Sinai (Ex. 19.11–20) and the “creed” (Shema’ Yisraēl; Deut. 6.4 ff.), concerning which there is not a word of esoteric comment. Also surprising is that he made no comment at all on Ex. 20.15, that all the people “saw the voices” and the voice (sound) of the shofar; possibly because the explanation of Ibn ‘Ezra appeared conclusive.

On Deut. 11.22, he explains “to cleave [attach]” to God as a prohibition or warning against idolatry (disagreeing again with Ibn ‘Ezra) and that one should not imagine that there is any “essence” or reality in foreign gods – adding that it is possible that included in this “warning” is that one’s thoughts should be constantly on God, when walking in the way and in lying down and rising up, and possibly people of such a level are “bound in the bundle of life” (1 Sam. 25.29; usually a reference to eternal life) also in their lifetime, “for in themselves they are a dwelling place for the Shekhiynah.”

A rare example where he combined the possibilities of “plain” explanation with the esoteric is Gen. 6.4, the nefiliym, explained in tradition variously as giants or as the “fallen” angels. After citing the explanations of Rashi and Ibn ‘Ezra, both of which he implicitly rejects, he offers his own rational explanation (although incorporating midrash) of the decline of generations from the time of the flood (nefiliym thus being interpreted as “inferior”); while agreeing that “sons of God” refers to human beings of the generation prior to the flood, not literally sons of God but a superior category of people. Then he cites Pirqey de-Rabiy Eli’ezer concerning the fallen angels, adding that this is the best explanation but that there is a necessity to discuss at length the “secret” (sōd) contained in it.

Very interesting in this respect is that the qabalist Isaac b. Samuel of Acre (who came to Spain in 1305 following the Christian conquest of Acre [Akko, in the Land of Israel]) is said to have explained the cause of the “fall” of the angels as due to their saying “What is man that You are mindful of him?” (Ps. 8.5). He then added that his teacher had told him that toward the end of Naḥmanides’ life a student of Naḥmanides and a qabalist, “Rabbi Shēḥet” (Shēḥet b. Isaac Gerundiy, ca. 1240–1325), went to Acre, where Naḥmanides then lived, to ask the meaning of this secret, and he explained that he did not remember, since in his youth he had relied on memory and had not written it down. Shēḥet was the author of a commentary on Proverbs, of no particular importance, written in very simple Hebrew for an apparently uneducated audience; he also wrote a supercommentary on Naḥmanides on the Torah.
Exile and redemption and the Land of Israel

According to Nahmanides, all of the oaths in Lev. 26.16 are allusions to the first (Babylonian) exile; the 70 years of that exile were in retribution for the period in which the Sabbatical years were not observed, and the redemption from that exile was only due to God’s recollection of the covenant of the fathers and the (merit) of the Land of Israel. There was no promise to forgive the people their sins and restore his love of them as previously, nor even that all the exiled would be redeemed, for in fact only the tribes of Benjamin and Judah were restored; nor did even these repent with a full heart. However, the covenant of Deuteronomy refers to “this our [present] exile and to our redemption from it.” There is no specified time for its end, nor was there a promise of redemption from it, but it is dependent on repentance (nevertheless, see above, on “Typology”).

This second exile, at the hand of the Romans, was not due to idolatry, adultery and murder, said by the rabbis to have been the cause of the first exile, but due to non-observance or incorrect observance of the laws or due to “groundless hatred,” as the Talmud states (Yoma 9b). Furthermore, it was at the hands of a people far distant from the Land and who spoke a language (Latin) not known to the Jews (untrue, of course), and they were scattered abroad among the peoples to the ends of the earth. But with regard to the redemption from this second exile, there is the promise that all of the people will be redeemed, not just a part, and a promise of retribution against “your enemies,” which are “the two nations who pursue us always”; i.e., the Christians and the Muslims. There is the further promise “that our Land does not receive [tolerate] our enemies,” for ever since the exile “it has received no other people or language, and all try to settle it and it is not in their power” to remain.

Nahmanides not only believed that the commandments may only be fulfilled completely in the Land, but that it is at the present an obligation to live there and even to fight against its conquerors.

In general, he believed that the commandments were given to be observed in the Land. Note also his explanation (Num. 35.33) that while some laws were given to be observed both in the Land and outside it, transgressions in the Land bring special severe consequences (and see n. 196) because of the “glory of the Shekhiynah” (presence of God) which is there; all of this is similar to Ibn ‘Ezra’s statement (see Chapter 2, “Commandments and the Land of Israel”). In some places he alludes to, and once specifically states, that the “essence” (‘iyqar) or main purpose of all the commandments is (for) the Land (Deut. 4.5); cf. Ibn ‘Ezra on 4.10 “for God knew that [the people] could not fulfill the commandments properly while they are in lands that have dominion over them.” However, he clarified this by explaining that certain commandments, such as those pertaining specifically to use and care of the land, apply only in the Land of Israel, whereas others (“obligations of
the body,” including study of the Torah) apply everywhere; cf. also on Gen. 26.5: “obligations of the body,” such as tefillin, marriage, etc., any law which is not specific to the Land, but apply also outside of the Land (cf. also on Deut. 11.18). However, these are observed only that they should not be forgotten when the Jews return to the Land.199

Although he did not mention it, clearly he also included “obligations of the heart,” or commandments not related to a specific action, as obligatory everywhere. Interestingly, he does not give an esoteric or qabalistic explanation of the categories of commandments generally, which his disciple Ibn Adret did not hesitate to do.200 Important is his statement that there is no prophecy except in the Land of Israel, which also was repeated by Ibn Adret.201

As noted previously, more than any other commentator or medieval figure in general (except, perhaps, Judah ha-Lēvy), Naḥmanides has been associated with a love of the Land. There are numerous statements throughout his commentaries which show the centrality of the Land in his thought. However, what has not apparently been realized is that he derived much of this from Ibn ‘Ezra. For example, the notion that Abraham had observed all the commandments by the “holy spirit” even though the Torah had not yet been given, while influenced generally by the Talmud and midrash, was stated in those specific words by Ibn ‘Ezra (Chapter 2, n. 71), and this was repeated by Naḥmanides.202

**Customs mentioned**

He sometimes refers to current customs, such as wearing signet rings and other such things, or that women wore their nails long and painted them (on Deut. 21.11). Incidentally, it is important to point out that his reference (Gen. 38.24, end) to the custom “in some lands of Spain” that an adulterous wife is handed over to her husband to kill her or let her live, as he wishes, does not refer to Jewish custom but rather that of the Gentiles (nor does it refer to Castile, where the law clearly demanded execution by the authorities for such an offense). While such law existed in parts of Aragón–Catalonia from early times, it also certainly was not normally practiced in his own period.

He notes the custom everywhere of buyers bringing different types of currency to the market or to merchants to buy goods (Gen. 44.23).203 However, his alleged letter from Acre discussing coins in biblical times is almost certainly a forgery.204

In his discussion of the language in which Joseph spoke to his brothers in Egypt (Gen. 45.12), which in his opinion was Canaanite (contrary to the opinion of all the commentators), he notes that “it is the way of kings and rulers to know languages,” which was true to an extent in Spain, but generally not elsewhere; even in Spain the kings needed Arabic interpreters, but many knew Latin, at least.
He comments (Num. 26.13) on the custom of the Muslims “and all Jews living in their lands” to associate a family name with the patriarch or ancestor (such as Ibn ‘Ezra or Ibn Susān; “ibn” meaning son, or descendant, in Arabic).

It is the custom of armies going to war that the soldiers eat all manner of abominable things and steal and engage in illicit sexual activity (ed. Chavel 2: 458). Gentile hunters often make wax images of their dogs to place before religious statues to ensure success in their hunt (ibid., 461). Again while some may have done these things in Spain it certainly was not standard practice, or he may have been reporting what he had heard was the practice in other countries.

**Aragón-Catalonia: other exegetes**

**Joseph Ibn Kaspiy** (so, not Caspi; ca. 1279/80–ca.1340/45), also known as Bonafo de l’Argentera or simply Sen Bonafo, was probably born in Largentière (not Argentière, in the Alps) in then French Provence, but lived also in Tarascon, Arles, Perpignan, Barcelona, Majorca and Valencia. He was a prolific author, whose works include commentaries on most of the Bible.

He went to Egypt in 1315 with the hope of visiting and learning from Abraham, the great-grandson of Maimonides, but he was not successful in that plan. However, probably while there (or later in Perpignan), he learned Arabic. Upon his return to Provence (Arles) in 1317 he wrote his first work, Ṭiyrat kesef, originally called Sēfer ha-sōd (“Book of the secret”). This work is an explanation of exegetical and philosophical principles for the understanding of the Bible. Its chief purpose was to explain what he called the “secrets” in the Torah, yet these are not esoteric interpretations (certainly not in the manner of Naḥmanides, or even Ibn ‘Ezra), but more philosophical or rational explanation of stories contained in the Torah.

This book aroused opposition from Kalonymos (not “Qalonymos,” the name is Greek) b. Kalonymos, also of Arles, and his teachers, important rabbis in Salon. Kalonymos wrote a reply (Teshuva), criticizing Ibn Kaspiy for daring to set down philosophical interpretations for the public to read and thus potentially leading them astray from traditional beliefs.

Later, Ibn Kaspiy composed a commentary on the Torah, Maṣrēf le-kesef, which is essentially a simple explanation (although often verbose) of each verse – relatively devoid of philosophical content other than several references to Maimonides and some other works.

As a companion to Ṭiyrat kesef, he wrote a commentary on the Prophets, intended to explain the “allegories and secrets,” which he called Sēfer ha-mashal and then changed to Adney kesef. In fact, this is very much a general commentary on the prophetic books, with very little in the nature either of allegory or esoteric explanation. Because this work was written in (then) French Provence, there are some French (rather than Catalan) glosses in it.
Ibn Kaspiy spelled out in great detail his exegetical methodology. Essentially, this involved using the principles of formal logic, understanding of Hebrew grammar and etymology (he considered this separate from grammar). He claimed that he viewed all of the Bible “in its simple [peshaṭ] meaning, like the books of logic and nature [Physics] of Aristotle, except when the simple meaning is impossible” to convey the intent. Unlike Maimonides, and other interpreters, he declared that he found no “secrets” or esoteric meanings in Proverbs, which he compared to the medieval anthology Mūsrey ha-fiyōsīyım.

He was above all a rationalist, and while frequently making comparisons with philosophical concepts his general approach to exegesis was to adhere to the “plain” or simple meaning (nevertheless, like his predecessors he also found allegorical meanings, particularly in Song of Songs; and perhaps Esther). In one place, he wrote that he did not wish to elaborate, “for all elaboration is of no benefit to fools and conciseness suffices for the wise” (Adney kesef 1: 81). Nevertheless, in several places in his commentaries he alludes to (rarely explaining) “secrets.” For example, on Isa. 6.1–3 he alluded to the “work of the chariot” (ma'asēh merkabah; the vision of Ezekiel) and criticized “Ibn Tibbon” (“may his honor rest in its place”), which refers to Samuel Ibn Tibbon’s aforementioned commentary on Ecclesiastes.

He insisted that “miracles,” or “signs,” mentioned in the Bible were not things that were contrary to nature; and in general he opposed the tendency of his time to elaborate the miracles and increase those mentioned. Nevertheless, he confessed that he could not understand some of the “signs” or wonders performed by Moses or later prophets.

In addition to his commentaries as such, he wrote separate works devoted to specific topics in the Bible or interpretations in various philosophical works. Examples of the former are his works on the “work [act] of creation” (ma'asēh ha'bereshiyyt) and the ma'asēh merkabah. Some of his exegetical writings have not survived. Geviyya' kesef (see Bibliography: Sources) is an interpretation of certain specific topics in Genesis and an explanation of “secrets” in the Bible alluded to in the writings of Maimonides.

While he was an ardent follower and admirer of Maimonides (referring to him, or specifically to the “Guide,” as “the enlightener of the entire world,” ha-mēiyr le-'ōlam kūlō), he was not afraid to disagree with him in several instances. An example of the influence of Maimonides is also his commentary on the ladder of Jacob (Gen. 28.12), previously mentioned in connection with Ibn Gabirol’s interpretation (see, Chapter 1, at n. 152 and Chapter 2, at n. 132). The entire universe is represented as a “ladder,” adding a reference to the Muslim philosopher al-Baṭalyawṣī (see index here on him) and two different explanations by Maimonides.

Second to Maimonides, the greatest influence on Ibn Kaspiy was Ibn ‘Ezra, whose commentaries he accepted above all others (although sometimes disagreeing, particularly in his Torah commentary Maṣrēf le-keseft).
Nevertheless, at the beginning of his first work, *Tiyrat kesef*, 3, he elaborated on Moses actually having ascended not just to Mt. Sinai but to the heavens (cf. *Yoma* 4a), and returning to speak to the people and then re-ascending, and performing many great miracles. All of this is certainly in contrast, if not directly in contradiction, to the views of Ibn ‘Ezra. He also had great respect for David Qimḥi, although in his grammatical work he criticized him (also others) for lack of knowledge of logic and of the Muslim philosopher Ibn Rushd (“Averroes”).

He was himself severely criticized for some of his ideas, including his alleged comparison of the Bible with philosophical books, but note that he specifically said that “we cannot compare or equate the Torah to other books,” although it is possible to find a relation to other books by way of analogy. He also wrote that whoever does not have a thorough knowledge of all of the Torah has no wisdom at all.220

**The Land of Israel**

Ibn Kaspiy had a unique understanding of the relation of the ancient Israelites to the Land of Israel (see the index here, “Israel, Land of” for other views). He comments on the “equivocal” (homophonetic) words *gōzal* (“young dove”) and *gazal* (“stole”), in relation to Gen. 15.9 (and cf. verse 7). He says that this is a perfect description of the generation that entered the Land, and consistent with the statement that they are “a nation devoid of counsel” (Deut. 32.28), for that generation was compared to a *gozal* (probably a copyist’s error for *gōzel*, “thief”) in relation to their treatment of the Canaanites “in the opinion of many,” including Joshua, who said that they “pursued” the Canaanites (Joshua 2.7). Further evidence is that “Moses” (i.e., the author of Deuteronomy) compared the taking of Canaan to the taking of the Horite land by the descendants of Esau, or the land of the Rephaim by the Ammonites (both acts of force and stealing; Deut. 2.16–24).221

Elsewhere, Ibn Kaspiy had commented that “many of our people” object to having taken the Land and considering it as their own, but there also he said that this is an example of divine providence and the decision of God as to whom to give the Land and from whom to take it.222 However, what he did not remark upon was that *Rashi* had already written the accepted explanation that God had the “power” to give to the Israelites the possession of the nations, and

if the nations of the world should say to Israel ‘you are thieves who conquered the land of the seven nations,’ they may say to them that all the earth is God’s who created it and gave it to whomever was upright in his eyes.

(Commentary on Gen. 1.1)
Ibn ‘Ezra, who did not see the commentary of Rashi, gave a similar explanation for the despoiling of property of the Egyptians in the Exodus. Later in his life, he appears to have considerably altered his position and argued for the restoration of a third Temple and also of the Land of Israel. He says “and we took it from the hands of Canaan, for so God willed” and after that the “first beast” (of the vision of Daniel, the four evil kingdoms, the first being Babylon) took it from us, and so each of the other kingdoms. All of this is an example of the repeated rise and fall of nations, as with the Muslims between themselves (he refers to the battles in the Land of Israel when the Mamelukes finally conquered it), and so among the Christians and between them and the Muslims,

as in our day the Muslims [Mamelukes] took Acre from the Christians, and at first they took all of the land of Galilee and Syria, and so the Christians took from the Muslims all the kingdom of Aragón and the island of Majorca.

**Prophecy**

The nature of prophecy, a topic frequently discussed by our commentators, also occupied much of his thought, particularly the superiority of Moses over later prophets and the superiority of the prophets generally to philosophers. Important is his attempt to explain what Maimonides wrote (“Guide” II. 32) that one who is properly prepared “necessarily” becomes a prophet, but that God can nevertheless prevent this. Originally, Ibn Kaspiy said that he would accept this on the authority of Maimonides, but later he concluded that this was one of the instances where the author concealed his true view from the “masses” and wrote what would be acceptable to them. Surprisingly, he also deviates completely from Ibn ‘Ezra and Maimonides in saying that prophets could and did act in unseemly ways in order to impress their message on the imagination of the masses, citing as examples the very ones which they had explained were allegorical or in a dream.

**Bahya b. Asher Ibn Ḥallāwa** (Halleva or Aleva in Spanish; d. 1340) was a student of the renowned Solomon Ibn Adret (Rashba) of Barcelona, whom he cites in his writings, but aside from that period he lived probably all of his life in Zaragoza, in Aragón (which explains his knowledge of Arabic, since as mentioned many Jews there knew that language). It is doubtful that he was a rabbi, nor do we know of any students he may have had. He wrote many works, including a commentary on the Torah (written in 1291). In addition, he commented on various passages of other biblical books in his other writings, particularly on Job (in detail) and on Jonah and Esther. His style of writing is remarkably good, demonstrating an excellent knowledge of Hebrew, and is clear and understandable (with the exception
of a few “rare” words). This, as well as the abundance of ethical instruction, certainly explains the later popularity of his commentary. His main source is the commentary of Naḥmanides, which he frequently utilized and even copied verbatim.\footnote{H. 232} He had a substantial knowledge of talmudic and midrashic tradition, sometimes using even the most obscure minor midrashiym. Important scholars cited by him include Samuel b. Ḥofniy,\footnote{H. 233} Ḥananēl b. Hūshiyyēl,\footnote{H. 234} Isaac b. Ţodros, a student of Naḥmanides and a qabalist and author of several works;\footnote{H. 235} a certain Natan\footnote{H. 236} and Dan (b. Joseph?) Aškhenazi.\footnote{H. 237} His citation of the Zohar is of interest.\footnote{H. 238}

The influence of Ibn ‘Ezra, only sometimes cited specifically, is also evident in several places in his commentaries (some instances have already been mentioned in the previous chapter), and in his aforementioned commentary on Esther he wrote that Ibn ‘Ezra’s was the best of all commentaries on that book. Abraham bar Ḥayya (Ḥiyya) was another source.\footnote{H. 239} Maimonides is constantly cited, often in agreement but sometimes not.\footnote{H. 240} One citation of Hai (Hayyē) Gaōn on a mystical interpretation is from a forged responsum.\footnote{H. 241} He also borrowed at least once from the aforementioned qabalist Asher b. David, grandson of Abraham b. David of Posquières.\footnote{H. 242} He clearly also utilized exegetical material in the philosophical-scientific work of Judah b. Solomon ha-Kohen Mosca of Toledo, fl. ca. 1250 (see below, “Miscellaneous” on him).\footnote{H. 243}

References to the Provençal commentators are surprisingly few;\footnote{H. 244} it should be noted that his explanation of the derivation of the word tzitzit (ṣiyṣiyt, fringes attached to a four-cornered garment) in fact is from Joseph Ŭzobiy of Perpignan (thirteenth century).\footnote{H. 245} His discussion of the acquisition of knowledge is derived directly from Moses Ibn Tibbon’s translation of the aforementioned Muslim philosopher al-Baṭalyawsī (this in spite of the fact that, as mentioned, he paid little attention to Provençal commentators).\footnote{H. 246}

In at least one instance, he repeated an interpretation of Song of Songs 7.1 almost verbatim from Maimonides without mentioning his source: because the Jews were subjugated to the “four kingdoms” (see Chapter 2, at n. 46 on this), each of which demanded of them that they “turn” (convert) to the religion of that kingdom, “and we today are under the subjugation of the fourth kingdom [Esau] which says ‘turn’ (that) we may look at you’; that is, that we may make governors of you and give you all sorts of governmental office.” To this the “Shulamite” (Israel) replies that there is no honor that could be given which would compare with the revelation (ma’amad har Siynay), and that is the meaning there of the “dance at Maḥanayim” (which is the allegorical name for Sinai).\footnote{H. 247}

Curiously, while he knew Arabic, he cited few of the Judeo-Arabic commentaries except Sa’adyah (several times), and once that of Ibn ‘Aknīn on Song of Songs (see Chapter 1 on him), whom he calls “a certain philosopher of the sages of our Torah who was in Seville”; and since that commentary was in Arabic, he translated a section of it.\footnote{H. 248}
He explains the ceremony of blessing the new moon, recited while standing because then one “receives [greets] the Shekhīynah,” or “presence” of God (Sanhedrin 42a) and it also testifies to belief in creation, which is the “essence” of the Torah. He adds other qabalistic notions about the “feminine” form of the moon which receives from the “masculine” sun, etc.249

A somewhat daring qabalistic explanation is that the descent of the Shekhīynah is also “necessary” for God, since kavōd (“glory,” which he explains is God himself) receives an additional infusion of holy spirit thereby, and we have the “power” to weaken or enhance the might (gevūrah) of God according to our actions.250 It was this kind of excess which aroused the opposition of traditionalists, to say nothing of philosophers, to qabalistic ideas.

After quoting verbatim Nahmanides’ simple explanation of the stones on the priestly breastplate, he gave his own unique interpretation that not only the names of each tribe were inscribed on the stones, but also the letters of the names of the Patriarchs. The qabalistic significance of this is that thus there were six letters on each stone “to show that the six days of creation were dependent on [for the sake of] the twelve tribes,” and altogether there were 72 letters symbolizing the divine name of 72 letters “to show [instruct] about the establishment of the world which was created in 72 hours.”251

All of the vessels (table, menorah and other utensils) of the Tabernacle, and later the Temple, were made and placed in a special order, and each symbolizes a particular “name” of God or letter of a name (Ex. 37.1).252 This, and other such qabalistic interpretations of the vessels, may in part explain the prominence of the large and elaborately decorated pages illustrating them in some Spanish Jewish biblical manuscripts. The Tabernacle is divided into three sections, corresponding to the divisions of “existence”: the world of angels, the world of spheres (galgalīyām; celestial spheres) and the lower, or physical, world. The corresponding sections of the Tabernacle are, behind the great curtain, in front of the curtain, and the courtyard (on Lev. 8.23).

**Commandments**

The exoteric (*niglēh*) aspect of Torah is the “simple meaning of commandments,” whereas the esoteric (*nistar*) is the “inner” or hidden meaning which the multitude cannot understand; the first is compared to silver and the second to gold; or to “words” and “speaking” (which are the written and oral Torah). While he discusses qabalistic aspects of the commandments, he generally follows the “exoteric” interpretation of them, often with considerable originality.253 The “Ten Commandments” are given a qabalistic interpretation; they correspond to the ten spheres.254

Notable is his explanation of “an eye for an eye” (Ex. 21.24), which until the present time has been commonly misunderstood by many as a literal statement, causing denunciations of cruelty and wrath against the “Old” Testament and Jews in general. Bahya cites, of course, the rabbinical statement
that the entire commandment refers to monetary compensation, but adds his
own interpretation that were it to be taken literally it would be impossible to
impose a wound on any part of the body of the offender which would exactly
match the wound inflicted, so that the words “as he has done so shall it be
done to him” (in the companion verse of Lev. 24.19) could never be fulfilled;
thus monetary compensation is the only possible meaning.255

**Prophecy**

An interpretation which is essentially derash, and yet contains esoteric aspects,
is his statement that three prophetic “callings” (where the term “call” is em-
ployed) refer to the creation, the revelation of the Torah and resurrection.
These relate to the beginning, the “middle” and the end of time; and also
prophecy in general is a “clear proof” of divine providence, which in turn
testifies to creation.256

As did other commentators, he distinguished between “holy spirit” and
prophecy (see index here on both), also mentioning the divine voice (bat qōl)257
which is on a lower level than either of these (on Lev. 8.8). Elsewhere (on Deut.
33.8), he wrote that there are four levels of prophecy: the divine voice, the
‘ārīym ve-tūmīym (of the priestly breastplate; see index here), the “holy spirit”
and prophecy.

**Astrology**

Like Naḥmanides, he was a believer in astrology and sometimes used astro-
logical explanations in his commentary. In one such instance, he made the
important statement that God “does not change nature except from great
necessity,” which may indicate that he sided with those who believed that
miracles are not (generally) a change in nature, contrary to Naḥmanides.258

His third way of interpreting the book of Esther, that of “intellect” (sēkhel)
is, in fact, astrological and qabalistic, concluding with a discussion of the re-
demption from the present exile.259

**Land of Israel**

Moriah (Gen. 22.2) refers not only to the mountain but to the entire Land;
this is taken from Naḥmanides on the same verse (and so all of his explanation
there, although he does not mention his source). Ibn Adret also wrote “all of
the Land of Israel was the [site of] the binding of Isaac,” by which he appar-
ently referred to the statement of his teacher (Naḥmanides).260

Concerning the blessing of Judah, that his kingdom would be established
in the Land, Baḥya said that in the words of Jacob’s blessing all the letters of
the Torah are included except zayin (which as a word also means “weapon”),
“and the reason is that the essence of the victory of the kingdom of Israel
which comes from Judah is not by weapons like other nations, for the sword is the inheritance of Esau; but the kingdom of Israel does not inherit the Land by the sword and does not act according to the customs of nature and by physical power, rather according to merit [or] punishment by the power of the Almighty…,” and when they do the will of God they succeed and have no need of weapons.261 Elsewhere, he praised the “wisdom” of the Land, noting that it is referred to as “land of the south” because it is the choicest of places, in the center of the climate of the seven climates of the world.262 The Land is given to the Jewish people eternally, “and if they are exiled from it, in the future they shall return to it, for no other people or language [!] can settle or possess it.”263

Bahya, while less famous than Naḥmanides, was no less profound in his commentary and other writings (unlike his “master” he was not, however, a talmudic scholar or decisor of Jewish law).

His style of writing, while sometimes verbose, is easier to follow than that of Naḥmanides and he deserves more recognition in the history of Jewish exegesis than he so far has received.

Notes

1 I use this expression rather than the commonly used (in English only) “Crown of Aragón” for several reasons: the latter is an inaccurate description of a kingdom which included Catalonia and the other areas mentioned; it was never so called in medieval sources; it is not now so called by most Spanish scholars.

2 Provence, including Bas-Languedoc, was part of Spain from 1131 until 1258, except for Montpellier which remained in the kingdom of Aragón-Catalonia until 1293, and the counties of Roussillon (including Perpignan) and Cerdaña until 1463. See the two articles, one on French and the other on Spanish, Provence in Roth, ed., Medieval Jewish Civilization. Spanish scholars, of course, never make the mistake of referring to Provence in this period as “southern France.” Obviously, authors who lived after these periods are not included in the present study.

3 In Abrahams, Israel, ed. and tr. Hebrew Ethical Wills (Philadelphia, 1948, and frequent rpts.) 1: 68 (text and tr).

4 Judah’s “Sha’ar ha-yiydūd” in Gad, ed., Hamishah me’orot ha-gedoliyim, 159–65; a fairly platitudinous and not very original essay (perhaps part of a larger intended commentary on Genesis; such is referred to several times in his philosophical work). Samuel’s Ma’amor yiqvu ha-mayim (see Bibliography) is a more extensive and important philosophical work. See the brief analysis in Sirat, History of Jewish Philosophy, 218–21. For a more detailed study, see Vajda, “Analysis of the Ma’amor Yiqqawu ha-Mayim” and Recherches sur la philosophie et la kabbale, 13–31. Ravitsky, “On Aristotle’s Meteorologica and Ibn Tibbon’s exegesis of creation” (Heb.), 235–39 (in fuller detail in “Aristotle’s Meteorology,” 374 ff.), deals with this topic primarily in his commentary on Ecclesiastes. Freudenthal, “Samuel Ibn Tibbon’s Avicennian Theory of an Eternal World,” is so far the most important presentation of his views; see also Gómez Aranda, “Aristotelian Theories in Abraham Ibn Ezra’s Commentaries,” 49 ff. Ibn Tibbon was harshly criticized by Menahēm b. Solomon “ha-Meiyyir” (on whom see later here) for his denial of creation; see on this Halbertal, Beyn Tōrah le-hōkhmah, 69 ff., with some errors. Ibn Tibbon was quoted by Samuel Zarza (see Chapter 2 on him),
“Meqōr ḥayiyim” in Margaliyōt tōvah, 13a, 31a (three times, top and bottom) and 31b (three times). More surprisingly, his Maʿamar yiqavū ha-mayim is cited by Naḥmanides in his sermon on Kohelet (Kitvey 1: 187); it is perhaps doubtful that he actually read the work, for surely he would have been at least as harsh as Menāḥēm “ha-Meiyriy” in condemning it.

5 One manuscript, Escorial (Spain) G-II-2, which contains his Maʿamar yeqavū ha-mayim and the commentary on Ecclesiastes, also contains a commentary on Song of Songs identified as by Samuel Ibn Tibbon, but that is undoubtedly an error for Moses Ibn Tibbon; the manuscript was completed in 1398 (see Llamas, “Manuscritos hebreos de la Real Biblioteca de El Escorial,” 26–27; Barco, Catálogo 1: 203–04). On the commentary on Ecclesiastes (also in Parma MS. 272 and Esc. G-II-2), see the introduction to Anatoliy, Mālmud ha-talmiyyim; it is also cited by Menāḥēm b. Solomon “ha-Meiyriy” in the last part of his Ḥibūr ha-teshūvah, 607; and by Judah Moscato in his commentary, “Qōl Yehudah,” on the Kūzarīy of Judah ha-Lēvy (in standard eds. of the Heb. tr. with commentaries). The esoteric commentary on the Torah is mentioned several times in his philosophical treatise Maʿamar yeqavū ha-mayim (9, 13, 17, 117, 123, 128–29, 132).

Robinson, “Samuel Ibn Tibbon’s Commentary,” 118 n. 2, said that Samuel was preceded in his commentary on Ecclesiastes by Ibn ‘Ezra “and perhaps by other lesser figures as well” (my emphasis). Those “lesser figures” were, in fact, Saʿadyah Gaon, Ibn Bil'am and Ibn Ghiyāth, whose commentaries have been previously mentioned here, each of which is far more important than Samuel’s (on Ibn Ghiyāth, see Chapter 1, notes 49 and 133; on Ibn Bil'am, ibid., at n. 134). There is a translation by Robinson of Samuel Ibn Tibbon’s Commentary on Ecclesiastes, with an introductory study (with no mention of manuscripts, especially the important Escorial manuscript). Ibn Tibbon’s introduction was also edited by Ruth Ben Meir in Maimonidean Studies 4 (2000): 23–43 (introductory remarks, 13–22), who also announced plans for a complete edition. At last, Robinson’s edition was published (Jerusalem, 2016; the first part of the book is essentially a Hebrew translation of the English book). Robinson’s translation has occasional problems; e.g., translating mashal as “allegory” in Ibn Tibbon’s discussion of Proverbs (221), giving the erroneous impression that this is what Ibn Tibbon thought the word means (for the correct meaning, “metaphor,” see Chapter 2, n. 11). There are other such errors. There is relatively little actual explanation of Ecclesiastes in the entire commentary, much of which is devoted to Proverbs, Song of Songs and Genesis, all of which are given traditional and literal interpretations. Its value is certainly not for exegesis but only for some insight into Ibn Tibbon’s philosophical views. Interestingly, Ibn Tibbon utilized three treatises of Ibn Rushd (“Averroes”) in his commentary (cf. 205, 215 of translation); see Steinschneider on Zeraḥyah b. Isaac b. Shealtiel Hēn in Otsar [ōṣar] neḥnad 2 (1857): 230, apparently unknown to Robinson, who although he discusses Ibn Rushd generally fails to note this.

6 Robinson, “Samuel Ibn Tibbon’s Commentary,” text 91; tr. 104; Robinson’s tr. of Commentary, 161, 190.


8 Ravitzky, “Samuel Ibn Tibbon and the Esoteric Character of the Guide,” 103. This commentary was one of the main sources for David Qimḥi’s so-called “allegorical” (actually, philosophical) commentary on Genesis (see n. 47); the editor of that was not aware of Ibn Tibbon’s commentary. Important citations of
Ibn Tibbon, perhaps from this commentary, by Samuel Zarza (not “Ibn” Zarza) and “ha-Ḥofdyi” (i.e., Profiat Duran) are quoted by Kasher, “Petiyḥah she-be-kitvey yad,” 879 n. 29.

9 Commentary, 161; introduction, ed. Meir, 32.

10 See Ravitzky, art. cit., 88. Eisen, Book of Job in Medieval Jewish Philosophy, Chapter 4 (slight revision of his article in A.J.S. Review 24 [1999]: 263–300), offers a detailed analysis of Ibn Tibbon’s discussion of Job in his philosophical treatise. None of this concerns us here, however, since the few pages which Ibn Tibbon devoted to a discussion of Job are not exegesis as such.

11 “Ḥōshen mishpaṭ,” 167; Ravitzky, art. cit., 91 n. 15, was misled by the confused account in Sarachek, cited there, into believing that Simon had “attacked” Anatoliy’s work, which is incorrect, nor did he note the mention there of Ibn Tibbon’s commentary.

12 Manuscript cited by Gross, G.J., 373; not in the printed editions of his responsa.

13 Sha’arey Shiḥon, 42. Zunz, Zur Geschichte, 481, claimed that the manuscript existed in London, but see Renan (Neubauer), Rabbin, 596. There is a possibility that his observations on Maimonides on ma’asēh berēḏhīyit (“act of creation”) are part of this commentary; see Ibn Tibbon, Kommentar zum Hohelied, 44 n. 118, with ed. of the text, 595–602. He also wrote a commentary on the gematriyōt (meanings deduced from the numerical value of letters) of the Torah; see ibid., 46. Neither commentary is mentioned in the inadequate article on Moses (part of the article “Ibn Tibbon”) in E.J.2. Much of the bibliography is irrelevant to the Ibn Tibbon, and there are particular errors regarding Moses Ibn Tibbon. Isaac de Lattes also wrote a commentary on the Torah (manuscript), but since he lived when Provence was no longer part of Spain he is ignored here; see Tzeitkin, “R’ Yiṣḥaq diy Laṭes…,” in Shenatōn (sic, Shenatōn) 23 (2013): 223–51.

14 Peyrūsh, ed. Halberstam, with no editorial introduction or notes. There is a new edition, Moses Ibn Tibbons Kommentar. Fraisse, the editor, claimed that one manuscript, which he used for that edition, is the “original” text and all the others are corrupt, but he provided no evidence for this. He chose only one sample from the many other extant manuscripts to compare with his preferred text. The translation is also not always exact (see also the critical review by Gad Freudenthal in Aleph 7 [2007]: 346–48). The introduction contains important information on Ibn Tibbon’s writings in general. Peculiarly, and with no explanation, Fraisse has chosen to ignore Halberstam’s edition entirely and not even the notes make any reference to it (in fact, it appears that he was not even aware of this edition, since it is not in his bibliography; the “rabbis and professors” in Israel whom he consulted apparently did not advise him of that edition). Some excerpts dealing with the nature of biblical “poetic” books are translated in Berlin, Biblical Poetry through Medieval Jewish Eyes, 90–93.

15 So also is the opinion of Ravitzky, Mishnat shel R’ Zerahyah, 23, who lists several places in the manuscript of his commentary on Ecclesiastes where he commented on passages from Song of Songs. This precise page is also cited by Fraisse, editor of Moses Ibn Tibbons Kommentar, 99, but without any mention of the relationship to the commentary on Ecclesiastes.

16 Here Wolfson, “Asceticism and Eroticism,” is on firmer ground in finding “erotic” interpretation (see my criticism in Chapter 1, n. 165), although he has confused Ibn ‘Aknīn’s interpretation with that of Ibn Tibbon. Unfortunately, Wolfson neglected to include Ibn Tibbon’s commentary in his long bibliography. On “separate intellect,” see the index here.
The name is apparently derived from Heb. *qemah* ("wheat") but under influence of Ar. *qamḥ, qamḥih*, "wheat-colored") it may have been pronounced "*Qamḥi*" in Spain (including Provence), and "*Qimḥi*" elsewhere (cf. Felsenthal, "Zur Bibel und Grammatik," an important article; cf. also Neubauer, *Catalogue*, throughout spelled "*Kamḥi*," and see *R.E.J.* 35 [1897]: 128. A manuscript, dated 1347 [Madrid, B.N.] of David *Qimḥi*’s commentary on the Prophets, is vocalized "*Qamḥi*" [St. in *H.B.* 11: 133]. Nevertheless, to avoid confusion the traditional spelling of the name as "*Qimḥi*" is used here and elsewhere (library catalogues in this country use the antiquated spelling "*Kimhi*" – as also do some scholars – and even sometimes "*Kimchi*").

It is interesting that Joseph’s son David referred to his father (and not to himself) as "*ha-Sefardiy*," a term which always meant one who has left Spain, in spite of the fact that Provence was a part of Spain; however, sometimes the term *Sefanad* was used to designate al-Andalus (Muslim Spain) in particular. Little is known of the life of Joseph *Qimḥi*, but from his frequent reference to Arabic in his commentaries it is obvious that he originated from al-Andalus, perhaps Granada (like the Ibn Tibbón family). He certainly was not a student of Ibn Janāḥ, as stated by Jacob Gil, "Rabiy [sic] *Yosef* *Qimḥiy* ke-farshan ha-miqra," 272, nor was he the "companion" (!) of Ibn ‘Ezra, as claimed in a subsequent article by the same author, "Rabiy [sic] *Yosef* *Qimḥiy* sifrav ve-hashpa’otav," 369, which provides some details on manuscripts and published editions of his biblical commentaries (long known, of course, to bibliographers). There are other historical inaccuracies in Gil’s introduction there; for instance, the Almohads invaded Muslim Spain in 1145, and persecution of the Jews and Christians there did not begin until around 1160; thus, neither the departure of Ibn ‘Ezra (who was already in Italy by 1140) nor that of the *Qimḥi* family had anything to do with this. Joseph, described by Gil as “taking up his staff and wandering” because of this persecution, would have been at least 55 by that time. Furthermore, he was already in Narbonne, where his son David was born in that year. The same incorrect statement is repeated by Cohen, *Three Approaches to Biblical Metaphor*, 137, Joseph “fled from al-Andalus.” Independently, even as careful a scholar as Lipshitz, *Pirqey ‘iyūn*, 1, arrived at the same erroneous conclusions; also M. Perez (see n. 30) and, most recently, Grunhaus, *Challenge of Received Tradition*, 5. As usual with modern writers who simply repeat each other’s mistakes, this myth has now become a “fact.”

See Menahēm b. Simon (Bibliography: Sources); and Friedländer, *Essays*, 204 n. 1 on one manuscript. See M. Barol’s important study, “Menahēm ben Simon aus Posquières und sein Kommentar zu Jeremia und Ezechiel”; there (67), he cites all mentions of the author or his commentaries. Talmage, ed., *Peyrušyām*, intro. 14 n. 13, cited the offprint only of Barol (unavailable in U.S. libraries), and the editions of the commentary on Jeremiah in two dissertations, with no mention of the partial edition of I. Feinstein in *Talpiot* (*Talpiyōt*) 9 (1971): 813–41. All of this was also unknown to Uriel Simon in his article “Qeṭa’ey ha-peyrush le-Yermiyahū ve-Yehezqael”; most of the article is devoted to a rehash of things already known about presumed lost commentaries of Ibn ‘Ezra, but Simon there corrected (568–69) the assumption that manuscripts of parts of those commentaries on Jeremiah and Ezekiel had been found; these are, in fact, other manuscripts of Menahēm’s commentaries. Simon’s article is not mentioned by Rimon Kasher, “ha-Naviy Yehezqael” (therefore, his reference to manuscripts must be corrected in light of that article). Kasher deals with the introduction to Ezekiel, concluding with an edition of that. Tmima Davidovitz wrote an interesting article on the discussion of parables in the commentary on Ezekiel (in *Biqōret*
20 In the margin of the manuscript text of an important responsum of Hai (Hayyē) Gaōn, in Teshūvāt ha-ge'ōniym ha-ḥadashōt, ed. Emanuel, 135, is the statement, apparently by the copyist, concerning the letters which form the name of God, “thus I heard from Rabbi Menaḥēm who heard [it] from Abraham Ibn ‘Ezra.” Since the entire manuscript of the responsa appears to be of Provençal origin, it seems almost certain that Menaḥēm b. Simon is intended. He may well have discussed this with Ibn ‘Ezra, or even have been his student, when he came to Provence (ca. 1148 and possibly also later).

21 Talmage, Peyrūshiym, intro. 14 n. 18, claimed that Śeḳhel tōv was written by Moses Qimḥi (there are two editions, Sechel Tōb, ed. Meyer [Cracow, 1894], and Sefer Sechel-Tōb, ed. Meyer [Karlruhe, 1926]). This is actually a grammatical treatise by Moses b. Solomon, although attributed to Moses Qimḥi (note that in the 1894 ed., 19, he cites Joseph and Moses Qimḥi and, 21, “so wrote my lord [and] uncle Menaḥēm, son of my lord R’ Simon”). Talmage probably never saw these books, but was misled by the error of David Castelli, who made the same mistake with respect to B. Meyer’s edition. Qimḥi’s actual work was edited by Castelli in R.E.J. 28 (1894): 212–27 and ibid. 29 (1894): 100–10, and (Madrid. B.N. MS. and Florence MS.) ed. and tr. (Sp.) F.J. Ortueta y Murgoi-tio, Moisés Kimchi y su obra Śeḳel Tōb (Madrid, 1920). Neither of these works is to be confused with the biblical commentary of one Menahem b. Solomon (twelfth century), entitled Midrash śeḳhel tōv by its editor, S. Buber (Berlin, 1900), only on Genesis and Exodus; he was also the author of the grammatical treatise Even bōhan, written in Rome in 1143, and therefore not discussed in detail here.

22 See the references to these in Talmage, Peyrūshiym, 12–13, notes 6–7. There are several serious errors in Talmage’s introduction; see my review in Hebrew Studies 33 [1992]: 167–70 (there I also made a careless mistake in mentioning Joseph Qimḥi’s commentary on Job in an edition by Gad; it is not, of course, but rather that of Joseph Qara; on Qimḥi’s actual commentary see n. 24). In addition to what Talmage noted, there are comments on the Torah attributed to Qimḥi in Gad, ed., Ḥamishah me’ōrōt ha-gedōliym also on pages 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 16, 17 (in addition to 39–48, the only pages cited by Talmage). There is nothing of particular significance in any of these. That he wrote also on the Psalms is apparent from the commentary of his son David, who frequently cites his father, obviously not from his grammatical works. Eppenstein’s theory (“Studien über Joseph Kimchi,” 41 [1897]: 156–68; also in the translation of his collected articles, ʿiyūn ve-ḥeğer, 143 ff.) that Joseph Qimḥi personally knew Ibn ‘Ezra may be discounted, as mentioned already in the previous chapter (n. 2); more serious was his claim of similarities between the commentaries of Ibn ‘Ezra and those of Qimḥi. His attribution of some comments, for instance, the simple explanation of the two “luminaries” (Gen. 1.16), to Qimḥi rather than Ibn ‘Ezra on the basis of a remark by Jacob b. Asher of Toledo is an error. Either Jacob incorrectly attributed the remark (very likely) or else, coincidentally, Qimḥi in a now lost commentary gave a similar explanation. The question of whether Ibn ‘Ezra may, in fact, have seen the grammatical writings or even the commentaries of Joseph Qimḥi remains open. Eppenstein’s theory that Ibn ‘Ezra borrowed from Qimḥi has been thoroughly and correctly refuted by Lipshitz, Pirqey ‘yīṯun (Chapter 1); note his important observation (4 n. 16) that generally great caution must be exercised with regard to citations in the commentary of Jacob b. Asher,
particularly when he confused Joseph Qimḥi with Joseph Qara (as I myself did, as mentioned above).

23 In a Bodleian Library manuscript, see Salfeld, *Das Hohelied Salomo’s*, 74. Already Leopold Dukes, in Otsar (אֹסָר) neḥmad 2 (1857): 76–77, discussed this and although he did not expressly deny the attribution he noted that it is based on excerpts of the commentary on Job and Proverbs (on which see the following note).

24 On Job, ed. Schwarz, *Tiqvat enōsh* pt. I: 149–66 (a poor edition; cf. Abraham Geiger’s review in *Jüdische Zeitschrift für Wissenschaft und Leben* 7 [1869]: 141–50), with fragments (Job 1, 34, 17–42) from another manuscript ed. S. Eppenstein in *R.E.J.* 37 (1898): 86–102. Commentary on Proverbs, with the commentary of his son Moses, s.t. *Sēḥer ha-ḥūqah* (Breslau, 1868; photo rpt. Jerusalem, 1966), an extremely corrupt edition; there are important corrections (ignored in the photo rpt.) by Eppenstein in *Z.f.h.B.* 5 (1901): 143–46, 178–83; 6 (1902): 24–28. A “critical” edition is in Talmage, ed., *Peyrūshiyot*, 1–153; nevertheless, Eppenstein must be consulted. Probably only the commentary on Prov. 1–21.13 is by Qimḥi; the rest is by Jonah b. Abraham Gerundiy (see Chapter 5 on him). This was not discussed at all by Talmage, who basically ignored the remarks of Eppenstein, Geiger and others. Gil made the exaggerated claim that were we to compare his commentary on Job with those of modern scholars “we would not have any more detailed information on the book and its author [!]’ than was provided already by Qimḥi (’Rabīy [sic] Yōṣēf Qimḥiy ke-farshān ha-miqra,” 272). In fact, Qimḥi provides no insights about the “author” of Job.

25 Joseph also made a translation (only portions of which survive) from the Judeo-Arabic ethical treatise of Baḥya Ibn Paqudah (Zaragoza, ca. 1052–1156), first published in the Hebrew translation by Ibn Tibbon of that work, *Ḥōvōt ha-levavōt*, ed. Benjacob (Leipzig, 1846; with excerpts of the translation of Joseph Qimḥi, ed. Jellinek), and in subsequent editions. It is interesting that he cites a parable from Baḥya in his commentary on Ps. 11.29.

26 Commentary on Prov. 3.19 (ed. Talmage, *Peyrūshiyot*, 20 and see his note there). The reference is apparently to Gentile sages mentioned by Sa’adyah; see also Abraham’s introduction to Qimḥi, *Petiyḥah le-fērāsh ha-Tōrah*, 10–11; it is surprising that this was not cited by Talmage. Very puzzling is the statement by Simon b. Ṣemaḥ Duran (1361–1444), *Magēn avōt*, 8b, that Maimonides attributed a certain statement about creation to Joseph Qimḥi. It is highly unlikely that he knew of him, much less read his writings, and I have not been able to find anything in Maimonides that corresponds to Duran’s claim.

27 Commentary on Prov. 3.26.

28 Commentary on Job in Schwarz, ed., *Tiqvat enōsh* pt. I: 71–125. There is a new edition by Herbert Basser and Barry Walfish, with introduction and notes (see Bibliography). The commentaries on Ezra, Nehemiah and Proverbs, all attributed to Ibn ‘Ezra, first appeared in the “Second Rabbinical Bible” (Venice, 1524–25) and in all subsequent editions of bibles with commentaries. A manuscript written in the Ibn Ya’ish synagogue in Seville in 1474 also erroneously attributes the commentary to Ibn ‘Ezra (Parma MS. 2348; Richler and Beit Arié, *Biblioteca Palatina*, 136, no. 682). The error of the attribution of Ezra and Nehemiah was corrected in the “Rabbinical Bibles” of Venice, 1548, 1568, 1617–19, but not in later eds. A critical ed. of the text on Proverbs is in Talmage, op. cit., 154–327 (who nowhere mentioned the earlier editions). Abraham Berliner, in *Jeschurun* 6 (1868): 102–04, discussed the various scholars who had demonstrated the correct authorship of the commentary (and see already Abraham Geiger in Otsar [אֹסָר] neḥmad 2 [1857]: 21–23), and published from a manuscript part of the
in fairness, it should be mentioned that Klein, “Shiyṭat ha-pesuqiym,” went to great lengths to establish originality in one aspect of the commentary on Proverbs, his connecting “adjacent verses” in sayings which apparently have no connection. Nevertheless, only a few examples are analyzed, albeit exhaustively. However interesting, this does not save his commentary from being obvious and unimportant. It was precisely this aspect of his commentary, among others, which was already criticized by Geiger (see previous note).

30 Talmage, David Kimhi [sic]: The Man and the Commentaries is the most complete modern study; it contains some excerpts, in translation, of his commentaries. See the informative review by William Chomsky in J.Q.R. 68 (1977): 118–20, correcting some errors. Mordecai Cohen provides a general introduction in his section on “The Qimhi Family” in M. Sæbø, ed., Hebrew Bible/Old Testament 1/2: 389–415, although with much hyperbole on David’s alleged “originality” (414). Talmage was more circumspect in his analysis than Cohen; note particularly his remark that there is “very little” original material in Qimḥi’s writings, being derived from either Maimonides or Sa’adyah or Ibn ‘Ezra (“David Kimḥi and the Rationalist Tradition (I),” 179 [5 in the rpt.]). On certain aspects of his biblical commentary, see Perez, “Le-shiyṭat ha-parshaniyt shel David Qimḥi.” A more important study of Qimḥi’s exegesis is Grunhaus, “Dependence of Rabbi David Kimhi [sic] on Rashi”; and see now her Challenge of Received Tradition, on his attitude to rabbinical interpretations. There are virtually no critical editions of his commentaries, and even those which claim to be generally not based on all the extant manuscripts, or even the most important ones; some have failed to utilize extant manuscripts at all (see the following notes).

31 For a complete bibliography of all his biblical commentaries, see my Dictionary, 690–700 (there were some unfortunate printing problems). An inexplicable error crept into my short entry “Bible, Jewish” in Medieval Iberia. An Encyclopedia, ed. Gerli (N.Y., 2003), 166, indicating that Qimḥi wrote his commentaries in Castile; he did not, of course, rather in Provence.

32 In standard bibles with Hebrew commentaries (Miṣqatăt gedolōt). There is now a translation, Commentary…to [sic] Chronicles (see Bibliography), based on his “critical edition” (thesis) but following the superior reading of the Escorial manuscript not used in his edition. See also Berger, “Commentary of Radak to [sic] Chronicles” and “Peshat and the Authority of Ḥazal in the Commentaries of Radak,” which also deals primarily with Chronicles; the very title is clearly part of his ongoing polemic against Grunhaus.

33 The commentary on Isaiah was re-edited by Menaḥēm Cohen in the volume of Isaiah in the Miṣqatăt gedolōt ha-keter edition; the editor was unaware of Finkelstein’s edition (also Harry Cohen’s see my Dictionary for these) and of the following manuscripts: one written in 1324, in the collection of the Alliance Israelite (see R.E.J. 105 [1940]: 77, no. 49); also a manuscript (thirteenth century?) of the commentaries on Isaiah and the “Former Prophets” in MS. Escorial, G-III-18 (see Llamas, “Manuscriptos hebreos,” 38); also not consulted by Finkelstein. Interestingly, the commentaries on Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings are each called “Menōrōt” in a manuscript copied by Eli’ezer b. Jacob Ibn Wālid in an
unspecified city in Spain in 1378, with a separate decorative title page for each book with drawings of a menorah (candelabrum), described in Sefarad 19 (1959): 236–39. There are manuscripts of his commentary on “Former Prophets” and Ezekiel, 1300 (Spain) and fifteenth century (Schwarz, Hebräischen Handschriften, 11, no. 8 [Heb. 181]; 11–12, no. 9 [Heb. 209]). Microfilms of those manuscripts, only, are available at the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts in Jerusalem (the online catalogue is very difficult to search). A manuscript of the commentary on the “Former Prophets,” copied in Villadiego (Spain) in 1348, is in Madrid, B.N. (Valle Rodriguez, Catálogo, no. 25). There are fragments of a fourteenth-century Italian manuscript of his commentaries on the Prophets and Psalms in the Municipal Archive in Nonantola (Modena); Perani, Frammenti di manoscritti e libri ebraica, 114–18, 123. There are also numerous manuscripts in London, Paris (mostly censored), and at the Vatican. A Spanish translation of the commentary on Amos, with notes, appears in Comentarios hebreos medievales al libro de Amos (see Bibliography), an important but ignored work. There is another excellent edition of the Spanish translations by Alfonso de Zamora and Benito Arias Montano of the commentaries on Isaiah, Jeremiah and Malachi (see Bibliography: Comentarios). It goes without saying that none of these was used in the aforementioned Miqra‘ot gedolot ha-keter edition.

34 The commentary on Genesis (only partial, probably all he wrote) was first published, separately, in Berlin, 1705 (an edition apparently unknown to modern scholars who have written about Kimhi) and then as Commentar zur Genesis, ed. Ginzburg (Pressburg, 1842; photo rpt. in [Bible. O.T. Hebrew] Miqra‘ot gedolot (Jerusalem, 1958, 1968), with corrections by R. Kirchheim). This edition also has many errors (see Geiger, “Toldot Radaq,” 163, and in Keren hemed 8 [1854]: 48), and Kirchheim’s notes have other errors. It has also been reprinted in numerous later Pentateuch editions, all with faulty texts. Particularly bad is the separate edition by M. Kamelhar (Jerusalem, 1970), with excerpts on other books of the Pentateuch from his other writings (there are numerous errors and “corrections” based on his own reasoning rather than any textual evidence); see also N. Ben-Menahem on this, “Peyrushi Rabiy Qimhi y‘al ha-Torah,” with corrections. The introduction to the commentary on the Torah, first edited by R. Kirchheim, was reprinted in the Pressburg edition and again, according to the Paris manuscript (Paris B.N. MS. 193), as Petiyah le-fěrūš ḥa-Torah (see Bibliography) with valuable notes; peculiarly, this book is more scarce in Israel than in the U.S.A. The aforementioned (Chapter 2) online AlHaTorah.org text is based on the Pressburg ed. only, with additions from the Paris manuscript; important are those on Gen. 1.1–12 (the editors seem unaware of the other important sources mentioned here) and additional commentary on Gen. 49:25–30 from Moscow MS. Guensburg 495. On the “allegorical” commentary on Genesis, see n. 47. Other excerpts from his various writings have been collected by Gad, ed., Peyrushiym ‘al ha-Torah, with commentaries; also by Solomon Ibn Adret (i.e., taken from his responsa and other writings; rpt. also in Gad, ‘Asarah me‘orot ha-gedolim, 10 ff.).

35 Proverbs: edited by Talmage, Peyrushiym le-sēfer Mishley le-beyt Qimhiy, 328–427. The spurious nature of the commentary has been definitely established by Grunhaus, “Commentary of Rabbi David Kimhi on Proverbs,” whose criticism of Talmage’s several errors is correct. It also should be mentioned that the note on 329 of his edition belongs to the following page, and there are other errors in the introduction. Curiously, and without explanation, Y. Berger asserted his belief that the commentary is authentic (“Peshat and the Authority of Ḥazal,” 45 n. 16). In a new article (“The Commentary on Proverbs”), Berger again insists
on the authenticity of the commentary; incidentally, what he there calls (208 n. 16) the “standard edition” of Qimḥi’s grammatical work Mikhûl was not published in 1862 but in 1842. The attributed commentary itself is of no independent value. Geiger was apparently already aware of the questionable authenticity of the attribution; see his “Toldot Radaq,” 164 (not mentioned by any of the authors cited above). A commentary on Ruth erroneously attributed to Qimḥi was published by the Christian Hebraist Jean Mercier (Paris, 1563); a translation appears in Beattle, Derek A. *Jewish Exegesis of the Book of Ruth* (Sheffield, 1977).

36 His grammatical work, Mikhûl, in two different editions (sixteenth century) at Constantinople, followed by an edition with Lat. tr. (Paris, 1540) and other eds. of the Hebrew text. The Lyck, 1842 ed. (see previous note) was reprinted (Jerusalem, 1965), see Bibliography, and William Chomsky’s critical ed. noted there. His dictionary, Shōnashûm, saw three different editions in Italy in the late fifteenth century and several in the following century (see Bibliography for the standard ed.). Talmage, Peyrûšîyim, 19, 15, made the confusing statement that “the author of the commentary on Job attributed to” David lived in Narbonne but apparently had no connection to the family. In the first place, the work is not “attributed to” Qimḥi but consists of extracts from his various other writings, especially grammatical, and thus was not a unique work written by someone in Narbonne; nor did Talmage note that it was published many times (citing only a manuscript), including the edition of Schwarz, Tīqvat enôsh, 129–45; finally, he ignored the important observations of Geiger (see previous note). Geiger’s statement there, 164, that Joseph Yâveš (fifteenth century, after the Expulsion he went to Portugal and then Italy) mentions a commentary of Qimḥi on Job and that it may be in a manuscript in Paris is incorrect, as he later announced in *Jüdische Zeitschrift* 7 (1869): 145; but in fact, he added, such a commentary was found in S.D. Luzzatto’s library (catalogue no. 74 of his manuscripts, 9; this is the rare *Catalogue de la bibliothèque de littérature hébraïque et orientale de feu mr. S.D. Luzzatto*, ed. Luzzatto [Padua, 1868]).


38 Nevertheless, Louis Finkelstein exaggerated in stating that Qimṭi had access to an “unusually large” collection of such manuscripts and that he mentioned the origin of each manuscript he used (introduction to his ed. of Qimṭi on Isaiah, xxvii). In all of the sources cited, other than his dictionary, he merely mentioned readings found in “other books,” with no indication of origin. On Gen. 1.31 he cites a reading in the Midrash Gen. rabah from the “Torah of Rabbi Meir” (see also n. 47) and adds “and I found” a different reading in a scroll that wound up in Rome in the synagogue of Severus (see D. Loewinger’s introduction to the reprint of Aptowitzer, *Schriftwort in der rabbinischen Literatur*, xxx; his logic, however, escapes me). It is interesting that the fourteenth-century Scribe of the “Farḥî” Bible codex, written in Perpignan (discussed in Chapter 6), also cited variants from the Severus scroll (Kogman–Appel, “Scholarly Interests,” 137). Loewinger’s reference to Midrash Bereshith Rabbathi [sic] is the edition of that, Moses “ha-darshan,” *Midrash bereshiyt rabatiy* (see Bibliography: Sources); it is found there, 209, in the text, thus contradicting his argument (see Lieberman, *Hellenism*, 23, not 13 as cited by Loewinger, who mentions other sources).
The “Torah of Rabbi Meir” and “book of Rabbi Meir,” discussed by Loewinger, xxxii–iii, are of course one and the same. See further Van Seters, Edited Bible, 73 ff. and various other studies. It is not correct, as Talmage, David Kimhi, 30, claimed, that Qimḥi saw the famous Codex Hillēliy biblical manuscript in Toledo, nor is it likely that he saw the Jerusalem manuscript mentioned by Ibn Janāḥ (see Chapter 6 on these). In his commentary on Ps. 109.10, where he mentions the Hillēliy “which is in Toledo,” he undoubtedly copied that information from Jacob b. El‘azar, Kitāb al-kāmil (see Chapter 6 n. 51 on this and on the error of “Sēfer hilūliy” instead of Hillēliy). He cited Jacob in his commentary on Gen. 49.6.

39 Y. Berger argued that the fact that the author of the commentary on Proverbs attributed to David does not cite the commentaries of Joseph or of Moses does not challenge the authenticity of that attribution (“The Commentary on Proverbs,” 37–38); but on the contrary, the failure to cite either of these is a strong indication that he was not the author of that commentary.

40 On Qimḥi and Rashi, see the excellent article of Grunhaus, “Dependence of Rabbi David Kimhi on Rashi.”

41 Abramson, Mi-piy ba’aley leshōnōt, 161 ff., was of the opinion that he did know Arabic, but this is unlikely. Eppenstein, “Studien über Joseph Kimchi,” believed that David knew Arabic “very well,” and cited (165–67) two or three words for which he gave the Arabic equivalent, but he probably learned those from his brother or other sources. He was barely ten years old when his father, from whom he might have learned some Arabic, died and it takes years to learn Arabic properly. That he did not know Arabic is evident from several facts. He requested Abraham Ibn Ḥasdai ha-Lēvy (Barcelona) to translate the Arabic philosophical work of the Isaac b. Solomon “Israeli” of Qayrawān (850–953) into Hebrew; see the translator’s introduction in the edition, Sēfer ha-yesōōdōt, ed. Fried (Das Buch über die Elemente [Drohobycz (Frankfurt a. M.) 1900; photo rpt. Jerusalem, 1968]), 2 (on the work itself see the classic study of Altmann, Alexander and Stern, S. Isaac Israeli [Oxford, 1958], with excerpts of the original Ar. text). Qimḥi cited that in his commentary on Gen. 1.2, 10. Elsewhere, Qimḥi cited Jewish Arabic works in Hebrew translations. On Isa. 49.16 he cites Sa‘adyah, but that is taken from Ibn ‘Ezra there. He mentions that his father explained a word by its Arabic equivalent (Isa. 1.22; Hos. 4.14, and probably v. 13). Once (on Ps. 48.9) he refers to the Arabic names of spices, some at least of which he got from the explanations in the dictionary of Hai (Hayyē) Gaōn, but this was also certainly second hand since that dictionary was not translated; the same applies to his citation of Samuel b. Ḥofniy and responsa of the geōnīym, Jonah 4.6 and probably 1 Kings 4.39. On 1 Kings 1.2 he gives an incorrect spelling for the Ar. cognate (correctly šaḥūn). Talmage, David Kimhi, 63 ff., was also of the opinion that he knew no Arabic. An important observation was made by Netzer, “Terumato shel RD”Q le-pitron miliym,” who showed that he drew far more heavily than his predecessors on rabbinic sources for the explanation of unique words found in the Bible, probably because his lack of knowledge of Arabic precluded him from the kind of comparative linguistic analysis which they used.

42 See on this Geiger, “Toldot Radaq,” which details the sources he utilized or mentioned. On his apparent use of Moses “ha-darshan” (“the preacher,” eleventh-century Narbonne), see that author’s Midrash berēshīyt rabatīy, intro. 32. Geiger noted that Qimḥi mentioned at least one Qaraite, ‘Āli b. Judah ha-nazīyr of the Land of Israel, who was familiar with Tiberian pronunciation. Geiger thought that he may be identical with “Judah b. ‘Alan of Tiberias” in Eshkol ha-kōfer of the Qaraite Judah Hadasiy (Hadassi), but this is unlikely. Qimḥi could have learned second hand of this author, whoever he was. Geiger also erred in several of the citations (incorrect verses) of authorities and overlooked some.
43 He was, of course, cited by many later writers. Interestingly, Menahem b. Solomon “ha-Meiyri” (1249–1306) of Montpellier (then still part of Spain) cited Qimḥi far more than he did Ibn ‘Ezra in his lengthy treatise on repentance, Ḥibbur ha-teḥillah; the listing in the editor’s introduction is incomplete, but numerous citations are also found in the notes. Qimḥi’s popularity grew in the early sixteenth century, especially when Solomon Molkho (“b. Melekh,” catalogued as “Ibn Melekh”) of Constantinople wrote his famous Mikhlo’yofiy (Constantinople, 1549; Amsterdam, 1685 [photo rpt. Jerusalem, 1969/70]), a compendium of Torah commentaries based almost entirely on Qimḥi, whom he lavishly praised in his introduction. He was also apparently responsible for the still prevalent idea that the commentaries of Ibn ‘Ezra are difficult to understand (“his words are ‘closed’ [obscure] and not clear even to those who understand,” ibid.). He remarks on the popularity of Qimḥi because his commentaries included previous commentators and because they are short! Molkho’s own book became extremely influential, substituting for the study of the actual medieval commentaries (see the analysis of this book by Schlossberg, Eli’ezer. “Mikhlo’yofiy…” in Megadim 5 [1988]: 45–57; a scarce journal). With the introduction of printing in the late fifteenth century, Qimḥi’s commentaries appeared long before those of Rashi (which, of course, does not necessarily prove that they were considered more important, but does probably show that there was greater demand for his commentaries).

44 Grunhaus, “Commentary,” 319, citing Talmage’s unduly lengthy discourse on this, David Kimhi, 54–134. Grunhaus, Challenge of Received Tradition, has apparently moved away from, or at least modified, her position. All commentaries utilizing peshat incorporate the things mentioned; there is nothing either unique or “complex” in Qimḥi’s exegesis. See also Berger, “The Commentary to Proverbs,” 35–37; while arriving at opposite conclusions from Grunhaus, this is a good discussion of peshat in Qimḥi’s commentaries, whether or not he wrote the one on Proverbs attributed to him.

45 For instance, in his commentary on 1 Chron. 1.7, “Rōdaniyum,” Qimḥi notes that in Genesis (10.4) the name is written “Dōdaniyum,” and explains that because of the similarity of the Hebrew letters d and r, “of those who saw the genealogies written in early days, some read it as d and others as r” and so both readings were preserved to indicate that they are the same name (he gives other examples of this exchange of letters). Nevertheless, in his commentary on Genesis there, he said that Moses wrote it, “by the holy spirit,” with d, and in Chronicles Ezra wrote it with r because some read it one way and some the other. It should also be noted that this is not original with Qimḥi but was already discussed by Ibn Janāḥ (Sēfer ha-rqmah 1: 107, line 17; and so in that chapter the other examples, and more, of interchange in letters). Ibn ‘Ezra also rejected the idea that there was any textual significance to the differences between Dōdaniyum and Rōdaniyum, noting that they were two different names for the same people (as mentioned elsewhere, he objected vigorously to all of the “interchanges” suggested by Ibn Janāḥ). This is briefly discussed by Grunhaus, Challenge of Received Tradition, 20–21. Perez, “Le-shiyṭato ha-parshaniy shel David Qimḥiy” (which Grunhaus did not see) discusses the subject generally but without mentioning the example cited here. Important is his observation that Qimḥi, more than other commentators, placed special emphasis on the ketiyv-qerē problems of a text (words which while written one way are, according to tradition, read in another way; see a good explanation of this topic in Tov, Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible, 58–62).

46 Petiyḥah le-fērūsh ha-Tōrah, 4–5 (text), and see notes there. The introduction is not included in the aforementioned AlHaTorah edition.

47 The “Allegorical commentary on Genesis [2.7–5.1]” was edited from various manuscripts by Finkelstein as an appendix (lix–xxiv) to his ed. of Qimḥi on
Isaiah (see Bibliography). Some few minor corrections are given by Kasher, "ha-Petiyah...shel Radaq le-ma'asēh berešhiyt," 873 n. 3, none of which affects the meaning. Kasher there edited, 880–85, the first part of Qimḥi's "allegorical commentary," i.e., commentary on ma'asēh berešhiyt ("act of creation," or the nature of creation; for others who wrote more profoundly on ma'asēh berešhiyt, see the index here), earlier published in the Warsaw, 1902 ed. of the Bible, and it was cited already by Geiger, "Toldot Radaq"; neither of these is mentioned by Kasher. Very important was Kasher's discovery, 873, that Jacob b. Shēshet cited this introduction (anonymously) in his Mēšihiy devarīyim nekẖōhiyim (ed. Vajda, Jerusalem, 1968), 181 (I have that, of course, but did not think to look for this). See also Qimḥi's remarks on parable, or allegory, in Petiyah, 5–6, and the editor's note 18 on "mashal ha-qadmōniy"; also on "Torah and commandments were not said in allegory." (On the "Torah of R' Meir" which he mentions, "allegorical commentary," Ivvii, see n. 38). An entirely different aspect of his exegetical style, the use of metaphor, is exhaustively examined by Cohen, Three Approaches to Biblical Metaphor, Chapter 3, a highly technical discussion which need not concern us here. Cohen himself could well have profited from Qimḥi's correct explanation of mashal (metaphor, and not "allegory"); this confusion in Cohen's book generally has been noted previously; e.g., Chapter 2 n. 12; see also Diamond, Maimonides and the Hermeneutics of Concealment, 18. Perez, "Le-shiyṭato ha-parshāniy shel David Qimḥiḥiy," quite clearly understood the difference between allegory and metaphor, and provided some important insights, 321–22, on Qimḥi's use of the former. An interesting article, which nevertheless disparages all medieval exegetical use of metaphor as mere "decoration," compares the approach of the Qaraite Yafet (Yefet) b. 'Ali with that of Qimḥi who, Sivan and Poliaick, Meira. "Many Beautiful Meanings...", in J. Yeshaya and E. Hollender, eds., Exegesis and Poetry in Medieval Karaite and Rabbanite Texts (Leiden, 2016). The "considered conclusion" (of two authors) that Qimḥi was familiar with the Arabic commentaries of the Qaraite is of course impossible (unless his father knew them, unlikely) since as previously shown he did not know Arabic.

All references are to Finkelstein's aforementioned edition. Finkelstein, liv, note to line 8, provided a reference given him by Alexander Marx to a book by a nineteenth-century rabbi, but he should have cited Ḥayyim (b.?) Israel (or possibly Ibn Israel, fl. ca. 1272, Toledo and Zamora), "Ma'amor gan 'Ēden," 33, where after discussing Ibn 'Ezra's interpretation he wrote that it is identical word for word with the parable that Qimḥi mentioned. Kasher, art. cit., correctly suggested that Ibn Gabirol (as cited by Ibn 'Ezra) and Maimonides were the main sources used by Qimḥi (she also did not mention Hayyim Israel; nor did she mention Ibn 'Ezra, but see there, 874 n. 9). On Qimḥi's borrowing of other ideas from Ibn 'Ezra in relation to the "garden of Eden," see Chapter 2 on "ladder of knowledge."


Qimḥi on 1 Sam. 28.25. See Chapter 1, at notes 101 and 103 (Ibn 'Ezra) on this idea. The citation of Qimḥi is quoted (although the verse is incorrectly 24 instead of 25) by Talmage, "David Kimḥi and the Rationalist Tradition II: Literary Sources," 47 (=Apples, 455), but with no mention of the source in Ibn Bil'am or Ibn 'Ezra. Talmage also did not remark that immediately after quoting Samuel b. Ḥofniy's opinion, Qimḥi cited Sa'adyah and Hai to the effect that everything about the story of the witch of Endor is true, because God resurrected Samuel
to inform Saul of future events that would happen to him. Since Qimḥi did not read Arabic (the language in which they wrote), either he knew of this from his father or brother, or perhaps it was cited in Ibn ‘Ezra’s presumably lost commentary on Samuel.

51 On polemical statements in his commentary on Psalms, and a few other texts, see Talmage, “R. David Kimḥi as Polemicist.” Talmage, who appears not to have consulted Melamed’s important article, “ Peyrūḥ RD”Q le-Tehiliyām,” left out Ps. 22.17 (end), which was omitted entirely by censors in the early editions (see my discussion of it in Jews, Visigoths & Muslims, 231). Ibn ‘Ezra also polemized against Christians, as well as Muslims (for the latter, see ibid., index). See the brief discussion of Qimḥi’s attitude to Muslims in relation to the Land of Israel in the interesting article of Cuffel, “Call and Response: European Jewish Immigration to Egypt and Palestine in the Middle Ages,” 90–92; nevertheless without mention of the text discussed, or the above references. Cuffel also discusses some of the statements of Naḥmanides in this connection (see below for Naḥmanides and the Land of Israel, redemption, etc.). On Christian response to Qimḥi and other Jewish polemics in the early Reformation, see the important article of my former student Burnett, “‘Spokesmen for Judaism’: Medieval Jewish Polemicists and their Christian Readers in the Reformation Era,” particularly 45–46 on Qimḥi. On censorship of the early printed editions of Qimḥi’s commentary on Psalms, see Melamed, art. cit. and Darom’s intro. to Qimḥi, Peyrūḥ ha-shalēm.

52 He was certainly influenced in this by Maimonides (see his introduction to “Ḥē-leq” in Haqamāt le-feyrūḥ ha-mishnah, 140 ff., “ha-sōd ha-shēviy’iy” on prophecy; and M.T., Mada’: “Yesōdey ha-Torah,” 7.2). Note also the similarity, but only in some respects, to the statements of Ibn ‘Ezra on prophecy, discussed in the previous chapter. Kreisel, Prophecy, does not mention Qimḥi as part of his history.

53 Not exactly; see “Guide” II. 29 (tr. Pines, 339 and cf. 337, 338), where he applies it either to the security of Israel after the destruction of Sennacherib, or to the good brought by Hezekiah. Clearly he had in mind Moses Ibn Chicatilla for the first opinion, since Ibn ‘Ezra (Isaiah, tr. Friedländer, 143) said that all the commentators apply these verses to the wars of Gog and Magog and only Ibn Chicatilla applied all of Chapters 24 and 25 to Sennacherib. About Isa. 30.26 (end), he said that it means either the wars of Gog and Magog or it refers to the Assyrians. Note that Maimonides carefully avoids relating the “light of the seven days” to the creation, its obvious meaning.

54 While commenting on the ambiguities in Qimḥi’s interpretations of what is or is not a miracle, Talmage, “David Kimḥi and the Rationalist Tradition,” 199 [25], said that Qimḥi did not believe that miracles necessarily imply a change in nature, but he overlooked the important statement quoted here from his commentary on Ps. 111.10. On the various opinions of our commentators about miracles as a change in nature, see the index here.


56 On some examples of borrowing, see Lipshitz, Ḳiyunim, 9–10 n. 2, and disagreements with Ibn ‘Ezra there, n. 1; see some examples, quoted without discussion, by Bromberg, “ha- Radaq ka-farshan shel ha-RAb”A.” Qimḥi also cited passages from Ibn ‘Ezra and related them to places where no commentary was written by him, see Lipshitz, ibid., 25–35; these could either be errors or citations of now lost comments. On the general issue of Ibn ‘Ezra’s influence on Qimḥi, see Talmage, “David Qimḥi and the Rationalist Tradition II: Literary Sources,” 49–51 [=Apples, 457–59], which does not contain any of the references I have
mentioned here. I hardly see, however, how Qimḥi can be accused of “relative neglect” of Ibn ‘Ezra.

57 See the list of some of these in Melamed, *Mefarshe y ha-miqra* 2: 749–51. Note particularly his commentary on Ps. 19.2 (*Peyrūsh ḥa-shalēm*, 46) where he quotes the “Guide” II. 5 in the translation of Ibn Tibbon (which again proves that he did not know Arabic, incidentally). Other citations of Maimonides in the commentary on Psalms there: 63 (on 38.10) and 210 (on 94.9). On Qimḥi’s use of the translations of the “Guide” by both Ibn Tibbon and al-Harīfī, see Abramson, “Le-shiymush Rav David Qimḥi,” 689–90. Perez, “Le-shiyṭato ha-parshaniyt,” 319, remarked on the similarity between Qimḥi’s interpretation of the stories relating to Abraham and angels in Gen. 18 and the view of Maimonides that all of this was in a vision, but made no comment about the more important direct influences mentioned here and below.

58 *M.T., Mada* ’a: “Avōdah zarah,” 1, 2; “Guide,” I. 36 (tr. Pines, 83) and III. 29 (tr. 516). See the early Muslim sources on the stages of idolatry and the connection with stars and planets discussed by Genequand, “Idolâtrie, astroîatrie et sabéisme,” 111.

59 On Gen. 1.6 Talmage, “David Qimḥi and the Rationalist Tradition II,” 52–57 (=*Apples*, 460–65), gave a detailed analysis of some of the specific passages in which Qimḥi drew on Maimonides, and in the notes additional passages are cited. Nevertheless, the introduction, discussed here, is not mentioned. Talmage, 186 [12] ff., mentioned the similarities between Qimḥi and Maimonides on prophecy, but again, many of the statements quoted there (e.g., on angels) are clearly derived not from Maimonides but from Ibn ‘Ezra.

60 *Petiyḥah le-fērush ha-Tōrah*, text 6; also in more detail in his commentary on Ps. 104.2 (*ha-Peyrūsh ḥa-shalēm*, 226), and cf. Ibn ‘Ezra. Moses b. Maimon, *M.T., Mada* ’a: “Yesōdey ha-Tōrah,” 2.10 (for the implications, and sources, of the statement, as well as the correct translation, see my *Maimonides. Essays and Texts*, 69 ff.).

61 *Petiyḥah*, text 4, line 7 and note 15. Moses b. Maimon, “Guide,” 348 (II. 30); his statement that Aristotle believed that time cannot have a beginning is not exact; rather time is the measure of motion (thus, it begins when motion begins). On Maimonides on time and creation, see Rudavsky, *Time Matters*, 30 ff. (but “Guide” II. 30 is not discussed). Rudavsky does not mention Qimḥi. Much more needs to be written on this topic, including the views of Abraham bar Hayya, Ibn ‘Ezra and others. The concept of nine spheres derives from Ptolemy’s eight: Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn and the fixed stars, to which a ninth (so-called *primum mobile*, first moved, which encompasses the others) was added by the famous Muslim scientist Thābit Ibn Qurra (d. 901 C.E.). See further on all these subjects in the index here. Some early Muslim writers claimed that the Sabians (see index) directed their prayers to the nine spheres; see Genequand, “Idolâtrie, astroîatrie et sabéisme,” 115, similar to later accusations that the qabalists prayed to the (mystical) *sefiyrot* (spheres).

62 This is not the place to go into detail on the so far poorly told history of the Maimonidean controversy. Some information may be found in Silver, *Maimonidean Criticism and the Maimonidean Controversy*, Chapter 9; however, there are numerous errors and gross exaggerations, 175–79; thus, Qimḥi showed himself “a bitter man” in the correspondence – where, exactly? Equally erroneous is his presentation of Judah’s position, and his opinion that the correspondence “tells us little” about the whole controversy. Judah was a member of an illustrious family, on whom see my *Jews, Visigoths & Muslims*, 128–29. We learn from Qimḥi’s letters that he was a physician. The letters of Qimḥi are found in Moses
The date of his death has been deduced from the eulogistic letter on his death and that of Meshûlam b. Makhiyr (Bonet Cresques of Lunel) by Abba Mariy b. Moses (Minhat gena‘ōt, part 2: 31–34, no. 132). Meshûlam b. Makhiyr may be the same as sen (equivalent of “don”) Bonet of Lunel, author of a supercommentary on Ibn ‘Ezra (see Chapter 3), according to Gross, G.J., 289. This eulogy (consequently, the deaths of Menahēm and Meshûlam) was just before the expulsion of the Jews from France (1306), at which time Abba Mariy went to live in Perpignan (ibid., part 1: 179, no. 100). Moses Hershler, introduction to his edition of the first part of Menahēm’s Qiryat sēfer, unpaginated (it is section 6 there), offered objections to this based primarily on the statement of Isaac b. Jacob de Lattes (fl. ca. 1370) in his chronicle Sha‘arey Ṣiyyôn (ed. Buber, 46; ed. Havlin, 178), that “in his [Menahēm’s] days” the Jews were expelled from France, and not “at the end of his days.” This is an obviously weak argument, however, and the testimony of the letter and its context is quite clear (Hershler suggested that Abba Mariy may have written his letter after he “left” Perpignan, but we have no information that after going there himself in 1306 he later left the city). Halbertal, Beyu Tōrah le-ḥakhmah, 14, cited various earlier writers but with no mention of the above information.

See Bibliography: Sources for editions. On Job, see Meshi-Zahav’s introduction to his ed. of the commentary on Proverbs, 3 n. 6, citing the Paris manuscript. There is a manuscript of a commentary on Song of Songs apparently attributed to him; identified simply as “Menahem b. Salomon” by Steinschneider, Cat. Berlin, 13–14, no. 34. 6c, and see index, 163 (with question mark). Isaac b. Jacob de Lattes mentioned that Menahēm wrote commentaries on the entire Bible (Sha‘arey Ṣiyyôn, 46; ed. Havlin, 178). All of his commentaries were written after his great work on penitence, Ḥibûr ha-teshûvah. His commentary on Psalms copies several times from that of David Qimî (and see below); see Stein, “Zu Meiris Psalmenkommentar,” with other important observations.

See also his discussion of the difference between prophets of the nations (Gentiles), such as Bil’am (and, implicitly, Muḥammad), and biblical prophets in the introduction to his commentary on Avoth (Beyt ha-behiyrah...Avot, 15–16 [Heb. pages]), and Ḥibûr ha-teshûvah, 424–25; derived, of course, from Maimonides. The requisite perfection in imaginative and rational faculties is also from Maimonides (in addition to the “Guide,” see the statement from the introduction to his commentary on the Mishnah, translated from the original Arabic in my Maimonides, 45); cf. also Ibn ‘Ezra, Sēfer ha-aṣamīyım, 12. Kreisel, Prophecy, does not mention Menahēm.

Commentary on Psalms, 47. Elsewhere, he had admitted the causal influence of astral forces but stated that this could be overcome by “religious will” (Beyt ha-behiyrah on Shabbat 156a; cited by Bliedstein, “Menahem Ha-Me’iri,”” 65 n. 7). The statement there, which somewhat contradicts what he said in the commentary on Psalms, was obviously influenced by Ibn ‘Ezra.

Ibn Gabirol, Mivḥar ha-penīyīyn. On Anatoly, see Ben-Simon, “Al meqorotav shel ha-Meiyri le-feyrush Mishley.” On the commentary on Proverbs attributed to Joseph Qimī, most of which is by Jonah, Genundiy, see n. 24. Muṣrey ha-fiylōsōfym is the Hebrew translation and adaptation of the ethical sayings and parables of the Christian Arabic author and translator Ibn Ishāq, Nawādir
al-falāṣifah (or Adab al-falāṣifah), tr. al-Ḥarīzī (best edition is that of Loewenthal, “Frankfurt a. M.” [actually Cracow], 1896). Ibn Ḥasdai ha-Levy, Ben ha-melekh ve-ha-naziyr; see ed. Haberman [Tel-Aviv, 1952; the date on the title page is erroneous]).

Ibn Crispin’s work was published in various issues of the extremely rare journal ha-Levanōn from 1865 to 1869. There is another Hebrew translation of Arabic proverbs found in a compendium of works (manuscript written in 1389 but copied from earlier works) in Madrid; see Valle Rodríguez, ed. Catálogo descriptivo, 184 (no. 9), 188, 189, the anonymous translator’s statement “I read as a youth the books of the Muslims and their riddles” and learned their wisdom and selected this particular book which is important for their poetry (thus, apparently one of the many adab books; this refers to guides to proper conduct, general culture and the like).

Gross, G.J., 416. No further effort has been made to identify either the actual author or Isaac b. Samuel.

The fragments were published by Gad, ed., ‘Asarah me’ōrōt gedōliym, 30, but with no indication of the source. A fragment allegedly by him on Genesis was edited by Jellinek, Qintres ha-maškiyr, 20–22.


Gross, G.J., 327; see St., Cat. Munich, 45, no. 66.3.


Moses b. Naḥman, Peyrūshey ha-Tōnah, his introduction, ed. Chavel 1: 4, and on Deut. 27.3; ed. Chavel 2: 471. The talmudic source mentioned (Menahot 29b) states that the tagiyān were added to the letters by God himself because he knew that Rabbi ‘Aqiyva (important talmudic sage) would learn “mounds of halakhōt (laws)” from them. The text of Sēfer tagiyān, ed. Jean Joseph Léandre Bargès and S. Sachs (not “Zacks”), was published in Paris, 1866 (photo rpt., Jerusalem, 1975). However, this is not the version as found in the Mahzōr Viṭry. The Sachs edition, compared with that of the Mahzōr Viṭry, was reprinted in Eisenstein, ed., Otsar [ōṣṣar] midrashiyim 2: 563–69, with an important introduction. Surprisingly, Perles, “Über den Geist des Commentars,” 150, made no mention of the Sachs edition (see, incidentally, the harsh criticism by Steinschneider of this article in H.B. 1 [1858]: 34–35; in spite of which there is still much value in the article). Apparently Sa’adyah Gaon was the first medieval writer to mention the Sēfer tagiyān; see Malter, Saadia Gaon, 192. It is also cited by Judah b. Barzilay, Peyrūsh sēfer yeṣiyrah, 224; and is also mentioned in Profiat Duran (late fourteenth to early fifteenth century), Ma’asēḥ ḫōd, 12 (see Bibliography for all these). A copy of the work was appended by Shēm Tōv Ibn Gaon to his Pentateuch codex (Soria, 1312; on which see Chapter 6). Hershler, in his edition of Menahēm b. Solomon, ‘ha-Meiyriy,’ Qiryat sēfer, 43 n. 126, thought that Naḥmanides referred specifically to the (obviously spurious) “Sēfer tagiyān de Ėliy ha-Kohēn,” allegedly copied from the text written by Joshua on the stones he placed in the Jordan river (Joshua 4); that text also appears in the Paris edition, but it is obvious that this is not the text to which Naḥmanides referred. Pedaya,
Ramban, 161, briefly discusses the *Sēfer ṭagīyn*, and see her notes 12 and 13 (she was inclined to accept Sachs’s theories about mystical uses of the ornamentation; incidentally, she knew neither of the separate edition of the work nor its later reprints nor did she mention any of the other sources discussed here). 75 On Prov. 5.9 and 30.31; Talmage, ed., *Peyrūshiym le-sēfer Miḥley le-beyt Qimḥi*, 27, 151 and see his introduction, 50 (Heb. number). However, that the term *talmiyd* by which he refers (apparently) to Ibn Zabara does not here mean “student” but rather “scholar” was noted already by Israel Davidson in his edition of *Sēfer sha’asḥū’iym* (N.Y., 1914); see Judith Dishon’s introduction, 218 n. 3, to her important study of the work (Jerusalem, 1985) which, if Talmage did not see, his editors certainly should have known. Dishon there, 217–22, quotes and discusses other biblical interpretations by Ibn Zabara, all of which are nevertheless found in his literary work (except for the two cited by Qimḥi); see now Dishon’s critical edition (Jerusalem, 2018), 11. Ibn Zabara may have met Qimḥi while he was studying medicine at Narbonne, but he was not a student of Qimḥi as earlier believed; see Davidson’s Eng. introduction to his edition, 24, and especially “Appendix A” (Eng.), cix–xi. Unknown to Davidson, Steinschneider also believed that Ibn Zabara was a student of Qimḥi (Jewish Literature, 318 n. 33) – information which he may have gotten from Geiger. However, there appears to be something of a problem in accepting that Qimḥi cited a biblical commentary by Ibn Zabara, since he would have been only about 30 when Qimḥi died, and even assuming that Qimḥi’s commentary on Proverbs was the last work he wrote (for which there is no evidence), the interpretations he cited must have been written a few years earlier, at which time Ibn Zabara would have been quite young. While that is not impossible, it is unlikely. It is also strange that there are no other references by later writers to Ibn Zabara’s biblical exegesis. Talmage, Introduction, 50, also was skeptical and suggested that the references were later additions to Qimḥi’s text, but this still does not explain the lack of mention of these interpretations by any later author. It is more likely that the two interpretations cited were conveyed to Qimḥi in conversation and do not actually mean that Ibn Zabara wrote them (a young student may have insights on a few biblical verses without attributing to him an actual written commentary). 76 Driver, S.R., ed., *A Commentary upon the Books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel* (London, 1871), minor corrections by A. Geiger in *Jüdische Zeitschrift für Wissenschaft und Leben* 10 (1872): 77–80; see also Steinschneider in *H.B.* 13 (1873): 110–11. He also composed some poetry, see Schirmann in *Yed’iyōt ha-makhōn le-ḥēqer ha-shiyrah ha-‘ivriyt* 2 (1936): 179. Shēshet b. Isaac Benvenist (1131–ca. 1209?) lived in Barcelona, and was also an important government official in the service of Alfonso II. Ibn Zabara dedicated his literary work, *Sēfer sha’asḥū’iym*, to him. On the apparent reference to him in Judah al-Ḥarīzī’s *Taḥkomōniy*, see Davidson’s “Appendix A” to his ed. of Ibn Zabara, cvii n. 5. 77 Scholars who say that his name was ‘Ezra b. Solomon may have confused him with ‘Ezra b. Solomon Gaṭṭigno, who was the author of a supercommentary on Ibn ‘Ezra (Chapter 3). See the poem with acrostic: ‘Ezra b. Moses Ibn Baruqa [? (our author)] in St., *C.B.*, col. 973. He died in 1238, according to Joseph b. Śadiyq, *Qiṣṣūr zēkher ṣadiyq*, 95 (13); but in 1245, according to Abraham b. Solomon of Torrutiel, *Hashlamat sēfer ha-qabalah*, 103 (25). Vajda (see Bibliography: Sources, ‘Ezra) estimated that he wrote his commentary on Song of Songs ca. 1225–30, supposedly at the age of 50, and thus was born ca. 1175. Gottlieb’s article on him (“Ezra ben Solomon”) in *E.J.* 6: 1123–24 (rpt. in *E.J.* 2), as well as Gottlieb, *Mehqariyōn be-sīfrit ha-qabalah*, 565–66, is very inadequate and with incomplete bibliographical information. The tradition that ‘Ezra was a teacher of
Naḥmanides (as claimed already by both Joseph b. Ṣadiq and Abraham of Tortrutiel) has been seriously questioned by Moshe Idel (see n. 82); nevertheless, the influence of his commentary on Naḥmanides cannot be doubted. According to Chavel, Rabēnu [sic] Mōsheh ben Naḥman, 62 n. 83, the reference to “our writer” in Naḥmanides’ commentary on Lev. 19:19 (ed. Chavel 2: 121) is to the author of the commentary on Song of Songs (i.e., ‘Ezra); if he had been Naḥmanides’ teacher, it is very strange that he would refer to him in such an obscure and non-deferential way (this was not mentioned by Idel and would have strengthened his argument).

78 Song of Songs: first ed. Altona, 1764, with other editions after that. Natan Coronel knew that the commentary was not that of Naḥmanides (Ḥamiyshah qinṭrēšiyum [Vienna, 1864; photo rpt. Jerusalem, 1968], xi–ii). Already Steinschneider, C.B. 915 (4473.2), ascribed it either to ‘Ezra or to ‘Azriēl b. Menaḥēm of Gerona (thirteenth century). Baḥya b. Asher Ibn Ḥallāva (discussed later here) ascribed the commentary to ‘Azriēl (Biyūr 3: 102). The authorship was finally established by Isaiah Tishby in his article in Zion (Ṣiyōn) 9 (1944): 178–85; in spite of which Chavel included the commentary in his ed. of Moses b. Naḥman, Ḳitvey 2: 476–548. Chavel’s text is also faulty (see important reviews by Gottlieb in Ḳ&S 40 [1964]: 1–9, and Vajda in R.E.J. 129 [1970]: 282–88). There is a Spanish translation which I have not seen, Comentario sobre el Cantar de los Cantares, tr. Núria García i Amat (s.l. [Spain], 1998). For French and English translations of the commentary, see Bibliography: Sources. Both of those translations have problems; Vajda’s often lacks sufficient explanation and even identification of biblical verses cited, while Brody’s is somewhat free and at times marred by questionable interpretation. Nevertheless, I cite the translations because Vajda’s, particularly, is based on manuscripts and is preferable to the edition reprinted by Chavel (this was not noted by Gottlieb, who in fact claimed the opposite). ‘Azriēl b. Menaḥēm is alleged to have written a commentary on Job (in manuscript), which Scholem, Kabbalah [sic], 51, said is partly based on ‘Ēzra; however, Ben-Menahem, Me-ginzey Yisraēl be-Vatḥiyqan, 57, said that the commentary is entirely ‘Ezra’s, which seems to be the general consensus of current scholars of qabalah (interestingly, ‘Ezra discusses Job at length in the introduction to the commentary on Song of Songs). For editions and translations of Ḳigeret ha-qōdesk (also attributed to Joseph Ibn Chichatilla), see my Dictionary, 653–54. Incidentally, Joshua Ibn Shū’ayb cited at length “Abraham Ibn ‘Ezra” on conjunction with God, etc. (Derashōṭ, 48b, col. b; ed. Metzger 1: 260–62), which in fact is from Ḳigeret ha-qōdesk, and “Abraham Ibn ‘Ezra” should be “‘Ezra” of Gerona (cf. Abramson, “Ḳigeret ha-qōdesk ha-meyyuḥas la-Ramban,” and generally his introduction to the reprint of Derashōṭ, 7). Incidentally, the reference to Maimonides in ed. Metzger, 260 (n. 104) is incorrect; it should be “Guide” II. 36.

79 Commentaire, 42; Commentary, 20 (neither translator made any observation about this). On El’azar of Worms and the transmission of the divine Name, see Dan, Joseph. Tōrat ha-sōd shel hasiydūṭAshkenaz (Jerusalem, 1968), 74–76. The Talmud also records that once a week the sages transmitted to their students the “name of four letters” (YHVH); Kiddushin 71a, and see Rashi there, the pronunciation and proper writing of the name were taught.

80 Vajda provided extensive “additional notes” or commentary on various topics at the end of his translation, which are of importance on qabalistic symbolism. His error in assuming that Naḥanides commented on Job 28.28 and “derived” it from ‘Ezra, when in fact that text is an interpolation from ‘Ezra’s own commentary, is noted below, n. 102. Of interest is the suggestion of the possible influence of Abraham bar Ḥayya on his understanding of creation, and even more
certainly the influence of his contemporary 'Azriēl b. Menahēm of Gerona; see the brief note of Dreizik, Pablo Martín. “Notas acerca de la influencia del pensamiento filosófico de Abraham bar Hiyya en los Comentarios al Cantar de los Cantares de ‘Ezra ben Salomon de Gerona,” in Mossé ben Nahmān i el seu temps (symposium; Gerona, 1994 [published 1995]), 283–89. Moshe Idel did not mention any of this, although discussing the topic in relation to Bahyā Ibn Hallāwa (“Ashkenazi Esotericism and Kabbalah in Barcelona,” Hispania Judaica Bulletin 5 [2007]: 75; art. 69–113).

81 RaMBAH = “Rabbi” Moses ben Naḥman, as a mark of respect even though he was not, in fact, a rabbi (see next note). The form “Naḥmanides” is found already in Christian sources in medieval Spain. Joseph b. Ṣādiyiq, Qiyṣūr zēkher ṣādiyiq, 96 (14) incorrectly has 5002 (1242) for the date of Naḥmanides’ death, a copyist’s error, but the original manuscript may have read 5020 (1260); cf. Zacut, Yūḥaṣiyn, 121a, which also is incorrect. Chavel, Rabēnu [sic] Mōsheh ben Naḥman, 30–31, wrongly assumed that these sources indicated the date at which Naḥmanides wrote his works (all the dates in Joseph b. Ṣādiyiq, and so usually in Zacut, are for the year of death). The date of his birth is, in fact, unknown and is traditionally derived from a statement by David Ganz, a sixteenth-century astronomer and chronicler (see Chavel, 31). It is probably a mere conjecture. Chavel’s biography, while useful, also contains errors (the greatly abridged English version, Ramban. His Life and Teachings [N.Y., 1960], is of no value).

82 See Yahalom, “R’ [sic] Yehūdah bar Yaqar.” Naḥmanides was not a rabbi: see his letter in Halberstam, ed., Qevūṣat miktaviym, 172; separate photo rpt. s.l. [Haifa] s.a., 74; reprint in Moses b. Naḥman, Kitvey 1: 365 (overlooked by Yahalom and apparently all who have written about him). In 1215, Judah was in Barcelona, where he was a member of a beyt diyn (Jewish court, usually of three scholars); see Millàs i Vallicrosa, José M., ed. Documents hebraics de jueus catalans (Institut d’estudis catalans. Secció històrico-arqueològica. Memòries vol. 1, fasc. 3 [Barcelona, 1927]), 19, Doc. X (Yahalom, 82, cites this with incorrect page and lacking vol. no.). Judah may have come to Barcelona from France (or Provence, where apparently he studied with the qabalist Isaac “the Blind,” the son of Abraham b. David of Posquières, some years before), and thus Naḥmanides studied with him in Barcelona. Judah is cited by Naḥmanides only rarely in his talmudic commentaries and not at all in his biblical commentary. On Naḥmanides and his qabalistic teacher(s), see Wolfson, “By way of truth,” 176–78. It has long been believed, following Gershom Scholem’s pioneering work in the field of qabalistic research, that Naḥmanides was part of what has been called the “Gerona circle” of qabalists, including ‘Ezra (on whom see above) and ‘Azriēl. However, Moshe Idel has demonstrated that this is almost certainly false; see his “Naḥmanides: Kabbalah [sic], Halakah, and Spiritual Leadership.” All of this, including the articles cited, was ignored by Pedaya in her brief references to Naḥmanides’ teachers, Ramban, 91. His chief teacher of Talmud, Natan b. Meir of Trinquetaille, is also cited by him in many more places than Pedaya mentioned. Earlier scholars believed that ‘Azriēl was the brother of ‘Ezra and teacher of Naḥmanides. This resulted in considerable confusion. Yahalom, “Rabbi Mōsheh ha-darshan,” 139, repeats the assertion that ‘Ezra and ‘Azriēl were teachers of Naḥmanides (the article is important on his use of various midrashiyim).

83 The date of his departure results from sources which cannot be detailed here. See on Gen. 35.16; Peyṛūšey, ed. Chavel 1: 196: “this I wrote first, and now that I have merited [this] and have come to Jerusalem….” In fact, he went to Akko (Acre), since Jews were not allowed into Jerusalem (see the discussion of his activities in the Land of Israel in the article on him in Medieval Jewish
Lipshitz, *Pirqey Ṣiyān*, 21–22, has demonstrated that it is very likely that he composed two recensions, or revisions, of at least part of the commentary (and see following note). A fourteenth-century manuscript (Spain or Provence) has a notation claiming that additions to the commentary on Exodus were sent by him from Acre (Richler and Beit-Arié, *Biblioteca Palatina*, 113, no. 591 and cf. no. 594). Pedayah, *Ramban*, 88 n. 1, misunderstood Bahya b. Asher as referring to Nahmanides when he said that the commentary of “R’M” had not reached Spain (see n. 232); he of course meant a commentary attributed to Maimonides (he never referred to Nahmanides as “R’M,” and the commentary of Nahmanides was well known to Bahya, who was virtually his disciple). Additions to the commentary, written in the Land of Israel, have been edited from manuscripts by Ofer and Jacobs, *Tosefot Ramban le-feyrūshō le-Tōrah*; see also the important article of Kahana, “Hosfatot ha-Ramban,” and the earlier observations in the aforementioned *AlHaTorah* site: http://alhatorah.org/Commentators:R._Moshe_b._Nachman_ (Ramban_Nahmanides); see further details: http://alhatorah.org/Commentators:Ramban’s_Updates. Chavel wrote nonsense about Nahmanides supposedly “walking” from Jerusalem to Hebron, and other things (Introduction to the Commentary 1: 8–9). The statement by Nahmanides, cited there, that the distance (31 km, 19 miles) from Hebron to Jerusalem can be walked in half a day needs correct explanation. A person in good health (and much younger than he was) can walk three to four miles an hour. Given this, it would have taken a minimum of five to six hours to walk between the two cities (in fact, much longer, since few could keep up such a pace over that distance). However, in *Pesaḥim* 94a, Rabbi Yoḥanan stated that the distance an “average” person can walk in a day is 10 *parsangs* or 40 *miyliyn*, and since 1 *parsang* is equal to a little over 4 modern miles, in fact that would have provided Nahmanides with his estimate that it was (a bit over) half a day’s walk between the two cities. His statement there about the distance between the (traditional) tomb of Rachel and Bethlehem is also not precise.

First ed. [Rome? ca. 1469–72]; 2 vols.; photo rpt. Jerusalem, 1962, 1973. With the title Ḥiydūshey Tōrah, it was published in Lisbon in 1489, the first book of any kind printed in Portugal (facsimile rpt. s.t. *Comentários ao Pentateuco*, with intro. by Cadafaz de Matos [Lisbon, 1989]), and an edition with the same title in Naples, 1490. Numerous editions followed, usually in texts of the Pentateuch in Hebrew (and in so-called Miqra’ōt gedōlōt, bibles with commentaries). The edition most commonly cited today is that of Chavel (see Bibliography: Moses b. Naḥman, *Peyrūshō… ha-Tōrah*). Although it is not a true “critical” edition, it is based on some early editions and some manuscripts. Chavel used primarily the Rome edition, unfortunately in a defective copy at the Jewish National and Hebrew University library (that is the copy reprinted in the above 1962 and 1973 eds.) rather than complete copies available elsewhere; whereas the Lisbon edition is in fact superior. He utilized three manuscripts, the oldest and most complete of which was his main source, but he did not consult other manuscripts, one of the most important of which was copied by the famous translator ‘Ēlī (or ‘Alī) Ḥabillo of Monzón (Aragón) in 1464 for Isaac Ibn Shēm Tōv (undoubtedly the brother of Joseph, d. ca. 1480, an important philosopher; Isaac taught in a yeshivah in Aguilar de Campóo, near Burgos and was also an author). In spite of claims that his later editions were “corrected,” Chavel in fact ignored corrections published in various journals. There is an English translation by Chavel, *Commentary on the Torah*, which contains serious errors; any translations here are my own. Newman’s edition of the commentary on Gen. 1–6 (see Bibliography), with a fairly accurate English translation, is based on four
manuscripts which Chavel also did not consult; nevertheless, it offers no improved readings. Newman made serious mistakes in his introduction on the life of Naḥmanides, but his notes on the translation are of some value. I. Maarsen edited (based on manuscripts) the commentary on Genesis and Exodus, Text studiën op den Pentateuch-Commentaar van Mozes Nachmanides; Heb. title, Tiferet Mösheh (Amsterdam, 1918); and variants on Lev., Num. and Deut. in ha-Tsofeh (Ṣōfeh) 7 (1923): 133–53, also not consulted by Chavel. Also of importance is the edition by Menahem Zvi Eisenstadt of part of the commentary on Genesis (N.Y., 1959–62), 2 vols. (photo rpt. Brooklyn, 2002 in 1 vol.), with notes, and which at the beginning contains a list of additions which the editor conjectured that Naḥmanides made to his commentary. This work has subsequently been ignored by scholars, with the exception of Levine’s dissertation, “Poetics of Characterization in Naḥmanides’ Commentary on Genesis” (see Bibliography), which notes some superior readings in his text (her dissertation is on “narrative” in the commentary, how Naḥmanides tells a story or portrays character, rather than on thematic content). Kahana also dealt, more significantly, with 134 additions to the commentary, “Hosafot ha-Ramban le-feyrusho le-Torah,” and see also his ed. of Ishbili, Sefer ha-zikaron (which must be consulted for a proper understanding of the text of Naḥmanides). There is an important medieval manuscript of the commentary on Deuteronomy, also not consulted by Chavel, on which see Kahana in his introduction there, 26. Unfortunately none of the above editors has consulted the Lutzki MS. 206, dating from ca. 1440 (Italy), at J.T.S., available on microfilm in some U.S. libraries. Kahana also did not consult this, although he used more manuscripts than did Chavel. There are substantial manuscript fragments, described as “Spanish, 13th–14th cent.,” of the entire commentary on the Torah in the Municipal Archive in Nonantola (Modena, Italy); see Perani, Frammenti, 106–09 (Catalogues in the Bibliography).

The commentary on Job was attributed to him in the so-called “Rabbinical Bible” IV, i.e., with major commentaries (Venice, 1516–17), and is reprinted in Moses b. Naḥman, Kitvey 1: 17–128. There are also important comments on Job in Naḥmanides’ “Sha’ar ha-gemul,” in Kitvey 2: 275–81. A manuscript of the commentary was copied in 1432 in Spain by Isaac b. Jacob de Lattes (Schwarz, Hebräischen Handschriften, 18, no. 12); Isaac flourished ca. 1370 and must have been elderly when he made this copy. The authenticity of the commentary was called into question by an important scholar, Zechariah Frankel (“Über die Authentie des Commentars Nachmanis zum Buche Job”); see Chavel’s introduction to the commentary in which he tried to refute this, but his reasoning that Bahya b. Asher cites the commentary is hardly proof of its authenticity, nor is the above-mentioned manuscript. Many of Frankel’s objections cannot be dismissed, such as the supposed quotation from “ba’aley ha-qabalah” on the ma’aseh merkabah (ed. Chavel, 88–89), which even Chavel notes is taken from the commentary on Song of Songs “attributed” (by him) to Naḥmanides, but which in fact is by ‘Ezra of Gerona (see n. 78). Chavel also published what he misleadingly called Naḥmanides’ “commentaries” on Prophets and Writings (Jerusalem, 1963–64 and reprints), which are actually statements collected from his other writings. He never, as far as is known, wrote commentaries on any other biblical books. Brief comments on Isa. 52–53 attributed to Naḥmanides, first published by Steinschneider in Moses b. Naḥman, Vikuṭah (the spurious Hebrew account of the Barcelona disputation; Berlin, 1860), were re-edited from additional manuscripts and translated by Neubauer and Driver, Fifty-Third Chapter of Isaiah 1: 78–84 (tr.); 2: 75–81 (text). The language is somewhat suspect and no such commentary is mentioned by subsequent authors; it is undoubtedly
part of the disputation forgery. The “Ma’amar ‘al peniymiyūt ha-Torah,” a qabalist-
ic interpretation of Gen. 1, ed. G. Scholem in K’S 6 (1930): 410–11 (410–14);
rt. in Moses b. Naḥman, Kitvev, ed. Chavel 2: 467–69, is also of questiona-le authenticity. Scholem accepted the attribution while Chavel, surprisingly,
did not; however, Gottlieb, Meḥqarim be-sifrūt ha-qabalah, 129 (reprint from
78–80), attributed it to Joseph Ibn Chicatilla (correct spelling); see below on
him. Another short qabalistic commentary has also been erroneously attributed
Naḥmanides, see Campanini, “Liber de ordine Geneseos: A Short Commen-
tary on Creation Attributed to Nachmanides.”

Commentary on Ex. 30.34 (ed. Chavel 1: 499; see Nathan b. Yeḥiēl, ‘Arūkh, s.v.
“d-r-s-y-n”). See also on Ex. 30.23, ed. Chavel 1: 496, where he refers to Arabic
and “Persian or Greek” meanings of a word; obviously he did not know these
languages and derived this from Natan or other sources; and see there also (500),
a corrupted Arabic word and an impossible Latin term. Of course, as a doctor he
knew certain Arabic terms (e.g., various types of leprosy; Lev. 13.29, ed. Chavel
2: 74) which he learned from medical texts; other Arabic words mentioned also
came from either Natan’s dictionary or another such source, sometimes from
Ibn ‘Ezra. See also on Gen. 44.20, his erroneous statement about Aramaic and
his incorrect claim about Arabic eulogies, and his reference to Greek (again
from Natan’s dictionary). There are proofs from his own writings in other
writings that he knew no Arabic. Even Jospe (“ha-Ramban ve-ha-’araviyt,”
88 ff.), who argued ingeniously but unconvincingly that he knew Arabic, ad-
mitted that there is no proof from the various instances where he cited alleged
Arabic meanings of a word (all or most of what Jospe discusses is already found
in earlier writers, and the references to Arabic words already in Perles, “Über
den Geist des Commentars des R. Moses ben Nachman,” 87–88). Jospe also
mentions (85–86) the citation of Sa’adyah Ga’dn by Naḥmanides on Ex. 3.13 (ed.
Chavel 1: 292) and argues that this must be “without doubt” his own translation
from Sa’adyah’s Arabic commentary, even though he acknowledges significant
differences from the actual text; the explanation, of course, is either that he saw
this cited elsewhere or (less likely) someone translated it for him. As previously
noted, Rashi (on Rosh ha-shanah 20b) also cited the commentary of Sa’adyah, and
no one has claimed that he knew.

Meir b. Barukh, She’elōt ū-teḥavvōt (Prague, 1608), nos. 513, 514 (as mentioned
in Chapter 2, he also cited the commentary of Ibn ‘Ezra). It would be desirable
to investigate generally the writings of French and German rabbis for possible
references to Spanish exegetes, I have only examined sources to which I have
access. Moses b. Jacob of Kiev, text in Harkavy, Ḥadashiyim gam ʾyeshanīyim, 8
see there on him, 7–9, 25, 28. While he certainly did not send copies of his
commentary from the Land of Israel to one of his sons in Spain, as sometimes
claimed, he apparently sent hundreds of corrections to his students. Undoubt-
edly copies of the commentary were brought to Germany or France by the many
students at Acre.

An interesting example is Gen. 2.3, where he cites Ibn ‘Ezra’s interpretation of
God’s blessing of the Sabbath as implanting an “additional power” in the body
and “additional intellect” in the soul, which Naḥmanides somewhat sarcastically
says “is right for those who believe it,” but offers his own mystical interpretation
of an increase in all the previous “blessings” (of the days of creation) and sanc-
tification and literally an additional soul which enters into each person on the
Sabbath. See the penetrating analysis by Lipshitz, Pinqe’ iyyūn, 24–26, who also
quotes Mosconi’s commentary on Judah ha-Lévy; and Isaac Caro [correct spell-
ing], Toldōt Yiṣḥaq, f. 9a (referred to by Chavel in his notes). Caro’s astrological
interpretation is explained by Lipshitz, but his careful and correct comparison
of other statements by Ibn 'Ezra provides the proper interpretation of what he meant here without the necessity of astrological explanations. On Gen. 2.7 (ed. Chavel 1: 33), Naḥmanides also cited the “midrash of Rabbi Nehūnyah ben ha-Qanah” (that is, the anonymous medieval mystical work known as Sefer ha-bahir) that on the Sabbath all souls are “renewed.” In one case, of relatively minor importance, he wrote that Ibn ‘Ezra here abandoned his way in explaining the simple meaning “and began to ‘prophesy’ [elaborate] lies” (Gen. 9.18; ed. Chavel 1: 65). It is strange that he nowhere challenged Ibn ‘Ezra’s “audacious” suggestion of certain passages in the Torah that could not have been written at the time of Moses (see Chapter 1, text after n. 97, on this). In his (alleged) commentary on Job, Ibn ‘Ezra is cited on virtually every page, also sometimes simply as meforsheym (“commentators”), often disagreeing with him.  

89 One of the reasons that Frankel, “Über die Authentie des Commentars Naḥmanis zum Buche Job,” denied its authenticity is that it refers to Ibn ‘Ezra as “RAB”A,” etc., forms not used by him elsewhere. Several times in his authentic writings he merely cites Ibn ‘Ezra’s interpretation, without commenting, or adding “and this is correct”; rarely he says “and he explained well” (yafeh peyrash; e.g., Ex. 30.46). To counteract the prevalent view that he constantly opposed Ibn ‘Ezra (and see n. 90), one has merely to consult Chavel’s index of authorities cited (Kitvey 2: 591–92) to find positive references. An important article detailing the reliance of Naḥmanides on Ibn ‘Ezra is Sklarz, “Darkho shel ha-Ramban be-iymu Ḳivre Rab’a.” She is one of the rare authors to cite the works of Lipshitz mentioned here frequently. While Ibn ‘Ezra, of course, was no qabalist, we recall that he frequently hinted at “secrets” in the text, and in this sense Naḥmanides found in him a kindred spirit. There can also be no doubt that grammatically he learned much from Ibn ‘Ezra’s commentaries; see, for example, his discussion of the interchange of alef with ‘ayin (Deut. 21.14; ed. Chavel 2: 444). He already cited Ibn ‘Ezra once in his talmudic commentary (on Shabbat 64a ¶ 1 ha de-tanan) that the explanation of the word tōshav is given by Ibn ‘Ezra in his commentary on “parshat Lēkh-lekha” (Gen. Chapters 12–17); however, it is not there but rather on Gen. 23.4 (the error may be of a copyist who added the reference, incorrectly).  

90 Note on Gen. 6.2, “and this explanation has neither taste nor smell” (that is, it is worthless). Sometimes he accuses Rashi of an interpretation which is contrary to the Talmud (e.g., Ex. 25.39) or midrash (e.g., Lev. 25.2), and at least once of incorrectly interpreting so basic a commandment as the placing of a cord of blue (black, according to some interpreters) on the fringes (ṣiyṣṭir) required for a four-cornered garment (Ex. 28.37), noting that according to this interpretation six such threads would be required instead of one. The Torah commentary of Rashi is available in translation: (Bible. O.T. Pentateuch. Polyglot. 1929) Pentateuch with Tagum Onkelos, etc. Grossman, Abraham. “Parshanut ha-miqra bi-Sfarad be-me’ot ha-Y”G–TÄ ”V,” in Beinart, ed., Mōreshet Sfarad (Jerusalem, 1992), 110, claims that Naḥmanides showed “great respect” for the commentary of Rashi; perhaps, this “respect” did not prevent him from disagreeing with much in that commentary. More correct is the observation of Bernard Septimus (although again stressing his “reverence” for Rashi) that his commentary “is, among other things, a sustained critique of Rashi’s more midrashic interpretations of Scripture” (“‘Open Rebuke and Concealed Love’,” 16 n. 21). However, it is not only his “midrashic” interpretation which was criticized, as we shall see. Naḥmanides himself employed detarsh more than any other type of exegesis (see below on this). See also the following note.  

91 Many have claimed that the purpose of his commentary was, in fact, to refute what Ibn ‘Ezra had said. Strangely, this is also the position of Abraham Gross, “Rashiy u-masoret liymud ha-Torah,” 33, following an article by Chavel which
he cites; although he recognizes one or two places (!) where there was disagreement with Rashi. This is not a tenable position; see especially Lipsitz, Pingey’iyün, 23, particularly citing the incorrect opinion of Graetz. I do not mean to imply that the sole purpose of his commentary was to quarrel with Rashi, only that it was a part of his plan (Weiss believed that the sole purpose was to criticize Ibn ‘Ezra). To some extent he succeeded, in that the biblical commentaries of Rashi became virtually irrelevant in Spain after Nahmanides (Lawee, “Exegesis and Appropriation,” is able to find only one anonymous supercommentary apparently from fifteenth-century Spain, 504 ff.); Mordechai Z. Cohen claims that while Nahmanides proclaimed the “supremacy” of the commentary of Rashi, he actually was “bound by the ‘purer’ grammatical-rationalistic Andalusian model of peshat” of Ibn ‘Ezra (“Nahmanides’ Four Senses of Scriptural Signification,” 40); it is also incorrect that he was the first to employ qabalistic interpretation (see above on ‘Ezra of Gerona). 106. See, for example, his sermon “Tōrat ha-Shēm temiymah,” in Kitvey, ed. Chavel 1: 147 and see Chavel’s note 71 there. See n. 129, end, concerning editions of the sermon. Wherever he cited Sa’adyah, this was from the commentary of Ibn ‘Ezra.

See, for example, his sermon “Tōrat ha-Shēm temiymah,” in Kitvey, ed. Chavel 1: 147 and see Chavel’s note 71 there. Wherever he cited Sa’adyah, this was from the commentary of Ibn ‘Ezra.

See on this Yahalom, “Meqorot alumiym be-feyrush ha-Ramban ‘al ha-Torah,” specifically 273 to the end of the article.

David Qimḥi is paraphrased in the (alleged) commentary on Job 15.24. At least once there (Job 28.18) is an allusion to the commentary of Moses Qimḥi, without naming him.

Nahmanides’ citation, and criticism, of the “Guide” (III. 40) in his commentary on Ex. 20.17 and Deut. 21.4 is based on a faulty translation, as pointed out by Yēm Tōv Ishbīlī in his defense of Maimonides against Nahmanides, Sēfer ha-zikaron, ed. Blau, 48; ed. Kahana, 86 (and as mentioned by Blau there in his note, the language as quoted by Nahmanides also is not found in our current text of al-Ḥarīzī’s translation of the “Guide”). Joshua Ibn Shū‘ayb (the correct spelling of his name, meaning “help,” or “aid” in Arabic) also discussed this and noted that the translation used by Nahmanides here was faulty (Derashōt, 88a; ed. Metzger 2: 465). See also Nahmanides on Ex. 30.13, Chavel’s note that the language is not in the translation of al-Ḥarīzī (Ibn Shū‘ayb made no observation on this source). On the translations used by Nahmanides, see the important analysis by Kahana, intro. to his ed. of Ishbīlī, 28–36 (especially 29 n. 3). Chavel elsewhere claimed that Nahmanides did use the translation of al-Ḥarīzī (see references cited by Jospe, “ha-Ramban ve-ha-‘araviyt,” 67 n. 2; and see particularly the comparisons of the language of Nahmanides and that of al-Ḥarīzī, 69–78; Jospe did not mention the sources cited above). Jospe succeeded in demonstrating that in several places Nahmanides used that translation, but his claim, 76, that he sometimes “corrected” it in accord with the Arabic text is not substantiated; in fact, as stated, he did not know Arabic. Another translation of the “Guide” which he may have seen is that of Moses Ibn Tibbon (St. Petersburg-Russian National Library MS. Evr. I 528; microfilm, Jerusalem. Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts F 51029). None of the aforementioned authors and editors has noted the existence of this translation, which should be investigated. We still do not have a critical ed. of the Hebrew translations of the “Guide,” which must include a comparison of all the translations and a careful examination of the numerous extant manuscripts. Other examples of criticism of Maimonides based on a faulty translation will be mentioned here. However, Nahmanides’ sharp
attack on Maimonides (“Guide” II. 33) in his commentary on Ex. 20.16 (ed. Chavel 1: 406) appears to be a deliberate distortion of what Maimonides actually said, and not based on an erroneous translation; see Ishbīlī, ed. Blau, 33 (cited also in Chavel’s note; see also Ishbīlī’s observation, 35, on another error), and see the commentaries of Profiat Duran (“Efodiy”) and Shēm Tōv b. Joseph Ibn Shēm Tōv on the “Guide” there (in editions of Mōreh with commentaries). There are some instances where Naḥmanides sharply disagreed also with legal rulings of Maimonides, not only in the “Book of Commandments” but also in the Mishnēh Tōnah; some of these are noted below. The list of citations given by Perles, “Über den Geist des Commentars...,” is very incomplete (see Appendix 1 here for citations of Maimonides and other sources). Kahana, intro. to his ed. of Ishbīlī, Sēfer ha-zikarōn, 8–13, lists 48 places where Naḥmanides specifically cited Maimonides, in 28 of which he disagreed (not all the references to sources are correct, however). Schwartz, “From Theurgy to Magic,” 183 n. 35, by selective quoting argues that Ishbīlī considered the teaching of Naḥmanides superior to that of Maimonides; this is hardly true, except in the specific instances he cited. A. Bromberg wrote a superficial article on the relationship of Naḥmanides to Maimonides, “ha-Ramban ka-farshan ve-hashqafat ‘olamo.” An important article contrasting Maimonides and Naḥmanides on ḥūqiym (“statutes”), particularly commandments concerning sacrifices, is Stern, “Fall and Rise of Myth”; see 231, 233–40 on Naḥmanides. On his qabalistic interpretation of sacrifices, see Schwartz, Qemiy‘ōt, segalōt ve-sikhletanūti, 37 ff., and in English “Theurgy to Magic”; incidentally, the “Sikili” to whom Schwartz frequently refers is Jacob b. Ḥananēl Sikiliy (“of Sicily”), late fourteenth century, who left Spain and settled in Safed (Ṣafat) where he wrote his work. He was not a student of Ibn Adret, as Schwartz claimed (“Theurgy,” 187 and in Qemiy‘ōt, 49).

96 For example, Deut. 20.10, 11, and see Chavel’s notes there. See also Yafeh, Tekhēlet Mōrehkay, 165, particularly on the difficulty about seeking peace in wars of permission or wars of obligation in the Land of Israel, and his own explanation of the other disagreement (none of this was mentioned by Chavel, who nevertheless elsewhere cited this important modern commentary on Naḥmanides). Yafeh cites numerous other early and later sources; it is particularly important on halakhic issues but makes no comment at all on qabalistic matters. On Naḥmanides’ attitude generally to Maimonides, see my “Reacciones rabínicas,” 75–76.

97 Funkenstein, Perceptions of Jewish History, 105, wrongly said, based solely on his reading of Scholem, that Naḥmanides “carries out biblical exegesis on four distinct levels that will be called later, from the time of the Zohar onwards, ‘peshat, remez, derash, sod’ (pardes), undoubtedly under the impact of the Christian readings of the Bible.” As we have seen (Chapter 1), Naḥmanides was hardly the first to use this approach, nor did the terminology originate with him or the Zohar. For the actual meaning of remez in Naḥmanides’ exegesis (“allusion,” or implicit meaning), see Wolfson, “By Way of Truth,” 164–65; as previously mentioned, the term generally means “allegory,” and see the following note. For a different perspective, see Yisraeli, “Kabbalistic remez and Its Status in Naḥmanides’ Commentary on the Torah.” Nor was he the first to use “philosophical allegory,” as Funkenstein wrongly claimed; he was preceded in this by Ibn Ghiyāth, Ibn ‘Ezra, Ibn ‘Aknīn and Moses Qimḥi (although, of course, he only could have read the commentaries of Ibn ‘Ezra and perhaps Moses Qimḥi); see the following note for the correct statement about philosophical allegory. Apparently Josef Stern was misled by this and wrote that Naḥmanides incorporated philosophy as one of the four levels of interpretation (“Philosophy or Exegesis,” 215 n. 5).
He did not, of course; in fact, being totally opposed to philosophy. See the rather lengthy discussion of Nahmanides and peshat in Cohen, Opening the Gates, 375 ff. (he does not mention Funkenstein or Stern); basically rehashed in his “A Talmudist’s Halakhic Hermeneutics: A New Understanding of Maimonides’ Principle of Peshat Primacy,” Jewish Studies, An Internet Journal 10 (2012): 261–62, 308 (art. 257–359) and yet again (!) in “Nahmanides’ Four Senses of Scriptural Signification,” 48 ff.

98 Gen. 8.1, ed. Chavel 1: 57. While correctly criticizing Bezalel Safran for his failure to distinguish between allegory and symbolism, Wolfson (art. cit., 112–13 n. 29) appears to deny that Nahmanides employed allegory at all in his exegesis, citing his sermon on Ecclesiastes (Kitvey 1: 180), where he explained that in Prov. 1.6 “epigram” (meliṣah) is the peshat and that which is “wisdom” and “parables” (so it should correctly be translated) refers to a “secret [sōd] which is forbidden to explain.” Wolfson incorrectly claims that Nahmanides did not use the allegorical approach of Maimonides to the same passage; see, on the contrary, Maimonides, “Guide,” 11 (the biblical passage there is also not correctly translated by Pines), which is nearly identical to what Nahmanides said, and in fact obviously was his source. See also Klein-Braslavy, “Peyrūsh ha-Rambam le-Mishley 1.6”; she did not refer to Nahmanides, however. Wolfson also notes that Nahmanides further cites approvingly Ibn ‘Ezra’s statement “in [concerning] the tree of knowledge is a secret which is pleasant, [but] also the words are according to their [literal] meaning” (Ibn ‘Ezra, ed. Weiser 1: 7); that is, there can be simultaneously a “secret,” or hidden, and a literal (I prefer “simple”) interpretation; and that, in fact, is the point of his entire discussion there. This, of course, does not prove his claim that Nahmanides did not use allegory. Wolfson further cites as an example Nahmanides’ criticism of those who explain Satan as “the material principle in the world” (122–23 n. 59); yet he ignores his allegorical explanation of the serpent in the garden of Eden as symbolizing “the force of evil in the upper world” (which Wolfson himself earlier noted, 113 n. 29). These two isolated examples, if correctly interpreted, should not be extrapolated to cover his entire exegetical approach. It is more correct, as Wolfson states, that Nahmanides rejected philosophical allegorical interpretation (and he indeed contradicted his earlier statement by saying that Nahmanides did sometimes use allegorical exegesis; 123 n. 60). There is a danger in overemphasizing the qabalistic content of his exegesis, which Wolfson and others admit is minimal, at the expense of understanding his overall approach to the Bible. Wolfson’s article, 103–78, is nevertheless a major contribution toward understanding some of Nahmanides’ qabalistic interpretations.

99 This is not to deny that there may have been “theological implications” in his approach to traditional interpretation, as Caputo, Nahmanides, 67, suggests; noting that for him the biblical narrative “embodied past, present and future in more than just symbolic terms”; that is, as will be discussed below, he saw the text on a dual level of actual “history” and of typological significance. However, it is obvious that I very much disagree with the views of David Novak, who sees the commentary of Nahmanides as essentially systematic theology (The Theology of Nahmanides Systematically Presented [Atlanta, 1992]); see also the critical review by Daniel Frank in AJS Review 20 [1995]: 417–19 and the remarks of Caputo, 214 end of n. 54).

100 Some of these, at least, were probably written after the time of Maimonides. This is certainly true of Numbers rabah, which apparently Nahmanides was the first to cite; see Epstein, Mi-qadmōniyōt ha-yēḥidīym, 69. See generally about the date of that midrash 72–73, contradicting what he wrote there, 68. See also Epstein, Kitvey
1: 216. It appears that at least Chapters 1–15 of the midrash are based on Moses “ha-darshan” (Narbonne, eleventh century), see Albeck’s introduction to his ed. of Moses, Bereshit rabatiy, 1, 14, 20. Maimonides cited only Genesis rabah; in his commentary on the Mishnah and legal writings he did utilize Sifra, Sifriy and the Mehilta (on that, see Finkelstein, “Maimonides and the Tannatic Midrashim”; Finkelstein did not discuss the “Guide”). On Naḥmanides and Moses “ha-darshan,” see Chapter 2, n. 26. See the citations by Naḥmanides of some, but not all, of the midrashim and rabbinical works (such as Sifriy) in Perles, “Über den Geist den Commentars…,” 147–50 (these citations are not repeated in the Appendix here). Note that at least in one of his works he cited Midrash Shiyr ha-shiyriym (Song of Songs), but it actually is the minor midrash Shiyr ha-shiyriym zuṭa (“Sha’ar ha-gemul,” in Kitvei 2: 297); incredibly, the article “Smaller [sic, lesser] Midrashim” in E.J.2 mentions the former (as a “minor” midrash!) but not the latter (the article is generally of little value; see instead the important study of Townsend, “Minor Midrashim,” not even cited in the bibliography of the E.J. article).

101 Lev. 14.43; ed. Chavel 2: 83. This is also one of his “hidden” disagreements with Ibn ‘Ezra (see his commentary on Gen. 6.3, etc.). The rule “there is no early and late in the Torah” is found in Pesahim 6a and in the famous “32 hermeneutic principles” (Mishnat rabiy Eli’tzzer, ed. Enelow [N.Y., 1933], 40–41; with no reference in the notes to the talmudic source). None of this was mentioned by Funkenstein. See generally on this topic Melamed, Mefarshey ha-miqra 2: 939–40; and more significantly Lipschitz, Pinney iyān, 77–82. See also Isaac Gottlieb, “Eyn muqdam u-me’uḥār”; Yisraeli, “Muqdam u-me’uḥār.” Naḥmanides may have been more in disagreement with Ibn ‘Ezra, who also maintained that there is no chronological order, than with Rashi; see the enumeration of such disagreements in Elman, “It Is No Empty Thing,” 66–68 n. 65 (the analysis of Naḥmanides actually begins on 14). There is no doubt that Elman, in spite of the fact that he belabors the point, is correct that Naḥmanides did not mean that chronological relationships are always maintained, but that in most cases they are, even when this is not immediately apparent.

102 The section appended to his alleged commentary on Job 28.28 (Kitvei 1: 88–91) is obviously an interpolation, based on the commentary on Song of Songs attributed to him (Kitvei 2: 476–518); see Chavel’s notes on Job there, and particularly the reference to this excerpt cited in the name of “Rabbi ‘Azriēl” (Azriēl b. Menahēm of Gerona). It is surprising that Vajda did not recognize this (“Note Annexe VII: L’interprétation théosophique de Job, chapitre XXVIII,” in his translation of ‘Ezra of Gerona, Commentaire, 271; while citing Chavel’s text, he apparently ignored his notes). It was also ignored by Idel, “Naḥmanides: Kabbalah, Halakhah, and Spiritual Leadership.” It is also surprising that there has been such confusion about the attribution of the commentary on Song of Songs, since already Joshua Ibn Shū‘ayb in his supercommentary on Naḥmanides cited it as the work of ‘Ezra (Biyūr, 1a, col. b), which commentary was known to Chavel even though he incorrectly identified its author. Also, Naḥmanides’ so-called “commentary” on Sefer yesiyarah, cited by Chavel, is actually by ‘Azriēl (in all printed editions of that work, also in Kitvei 2: 341–48); what may be the authentic commentary of Naḥmanides on that work, unknown to Chavel, was edited by G. Scholem in K”S 6 (1930): 385–410 and has since been reprinted several times. Curiously, the alleged commentary on Job has largely been ignored by scholars, possibly because they accept Frankel’s aforementioned objections. Assis, “Darkhō shel Rambān be-havanat Shiyr ha-shiyriym,” discusses various references (especially qabalistic) to Song of Songs in other commentaries of Naḥmanides.
Only Septimus, “‘Open Rebuff and Concealed Love,’” has correctly emphasized this, although I cannot entirely agree with him that this is related to some necessity of defending the “Andalusian” – i.e., Muslim Spain – exegetical tradition; far from defending that (he of course knew of Judeo-Arabic writings only second hand, and few of those). Correct is his observation that Nahmanides “did not see kabbalistic interpretation as a universal key to the understanding of all aggadah” (19), although Septimus failed to emphasize sufficiently the centrality of halakhic as well as agadic interpretation; that is, the constant citation of and reference to talmudic authority and legal aspects of passages discussed. To understand his commentary as essentially concerned with midrash would be as wrong as to understand it as essentially qabalistic. Septimus’ attempt to find a comparison in Nahmanides’ approach to agadah (midrash) in the so-called Hebrew version of the Barcelona disputation is meaningless since that is a forgery (see n. 85). In fact, the opposite is the case; his dependence on midrash and (talmudic) agadah and his overall endeavor to find “theosophic truths” in these (as perceptively demonstrated by Wolfson) is further proof of the forgery of the so-called Hebrew “version” of the disputation (which rejects these). Chiefly by selective quoting and ignoring more important statements, Septimus offers an ingenious but unconvincing explanation to the contrary (170–76). Wolfson, “By Way of Truth,” 154 ff. (on qabalists generally), 158 ff. (on Nahmanides specifically), focused only on this qabalistic reinterpretation (or adaptation) of agadic sources, but failed to note the far more characteristic dependence of Nahmanides on traditional rabbinic teaching as found in the Talmud (or, indeed, midrash). His commentary throughout is characterized by this reliance on midrash; e.g., Lev. 14.43: “this is the correction of scripture according to their midrash, for it is impossible to separate them with a knife to make [a section] early or late which is not at all according to its meaning,” which relates to his general disagreement with the idea that “there is no early or late in the Torah”; i.e., no fixed chronological order of passages (see n. 117). Note also his statement that midrash was learned “from Moses at Sinai,” by analogy (ed. Chavel 2: 83). See generally Fox, Marvin. “Nahmanides on the Status of Aggadot…,” J.J.S. 40 (1989): 95–109; Yahalom, “Viqueḥ Baršiyonah ve-ma’amad ha-agadah be-mishnat ha-Ramban.” An interesting article on his approach to midrash, particularly in comparison with Rashi, is Miriam Sklarz, “Ramban ke-paršan ha-agada.” This includes his explanation (Lev. 18.6) of the “secret” of illicit sexual unions, a passage discussed in detail by Idel, “We Have No Kabbalistic Tradition on This,” 51 ff.

Caputo, “In the Beginning,” 68. Unfortunately, this article was not known to Pedaya, Ramban. See further Chapter 2 of Caputo, Nahmanides in Medieval Catalonia.

Ed. Chavel 1: 7 (end). This contrasts with the opinions of two of his qabalistic predecessors, ‘Azriēl b. Menaḥēm and Jacob b. Shēḥet (both also of Gerona) who endeavored to give a rationalistic and “open” explanation of qabalistic ideas, whereas Nahmanides presents a “closed” system; see Halbertal, Concealment and Revelation, 77–92.

Ed. Chavel, loc. cit.; Ben Sirah 3.19–20 [21–23 in Christian versions]; see Bibliography; cited also Hagigah 13a. In his (alleged) commentary on Job this is cited in a completely different version (Kitvey 1: 88). See also Maimonides, “Guide” I. 32; tr. 69; Ibn Paqudah, Direction to the Duties of the Heart, 143; Ḥovėt ha-levavōt, 153; ‘Azriēl b. Menaḥēm, Peyrūš ha-agadōt, 39–40; and see Abramson, “Igeret ha-qodesḥ ha-meyuḥas la-Ramban,” 239. For numerous other citations in various midrashiym and other authors, see notes to Ben Sirah, as cited. This was also
cited by Meir Abūlafia of Toledo, with whom Naḥmanides was acquainted in his youth; see the quotations in Septimus, Bernard. *Hispano-Jewish Culture in Transition* (Cambridge, M.A., 1982), 114 (Septimus considers Abūlafia’s cautionary approach, for which he apparently did not realize the sources mentioned here, to be “inherently unstable” [?] and surmises that he may after all have become a “kabbalist” [sic], for which there is no evidence whatever).

108 Introduction to the commentary on the Torah (ed. Chavel 1: 7). The responsum of Sheriyrah, apparently no longer extant, is cited first by Naḥmanides in the sermon “Tōrat ha-Shēm temiymah,” in *Kitvey* 1: 161, and again in his commentary on Gen. 5.2 (ed. Chavel 1: 47). Similarly, in the introduction to his (alleged) commentary on Job he wrote that there is a “great secret of the secrets of the Torah” concerning the problem of the righteous man who suffers, which only one “worthy” can comprehend (*Kitvey* 1: 23), after which he goes into a discussion of transmigration of the soul (Zeraḥya Ḥēn [Gracian], see on him here, disagreed with Naḥmanides’ interpretation of the “wisdom” of Eliyahu in Job in this regard, adding that this topic in his opinion is forbidden to mention, much less to believe). None of these sources is discussed by Halbertal, *Concealment and Revelation*. Eisen, *Book of Job in Medieval Jewish Philosophy*, only briefly mentioned the alleged commentary and the sermon, possibly because, in contrast to Ibn ‘Ezra (who, however, was also ignored), Naḥmanides was not a philosopher. Astonishing is the statement of Idel, “We Have No Kabbalistic Tradition,” 52 n. 3, that Naḥmanides “acknowledged his ignorance [!] on the real kabbalistic meaning of Ma’aseh Bereshit” (“act of creation,” see below on this) and thus did not write a commentary on it. In fact, he was hardly “ignorant” of this, or other qabalistic interpretations, but in this case considered it too dangerous to be disclosed to the non-initiate (see also his sermon on Ecclesiastes, preached just prior to his departure for the Land of Israel; *Kitvey* 1: 180).

109 This and the following statements are from his introduction, ed. Chavel 1: 1–3. The pre-existent Torah: e.g., *Shabbat* 88b; see also Genesis rabah 8.2. Ultimately, the idea has its origins in Proverbs 8.30 and Hellenistic Jewish writings, such as the *Wisdom of Solomon* 9.9 (apparently known to Naḥmanides; see the following paragraph) and Ben Sirah 1.4; 24.1–9. See *Midrash Tehiliym*, 391; *Pirkē de Rabbi Eliezer*, 10–11 and sources cited in n. 9 there.

110 See also Judah b. Barzilay, *Peyrūsh sēfer yeṣiyrah*, 87–89; see the parallel sources cited by Chavel 1: 2, textual note 51; the text is repeated 1: 7. Ibn Adret see the text ed. Perles, *R. Solomon b. Abraham b. Adereth*, 48 (Heb. text); for the background of this text, see my “Forgery and Abrogation of the Torah”. Joshua Ibn Ṣḥu‘ayb, whose supercommentary will be mentioned, wrote in his own “sermons” on the Torah that the explanation of the primordial Torah is based on Prov. 22.20, “I have written for you threefold” teachings, that the Torah consists metaphorically of three parts, one of which is esoteric and all other knowledge (*Derashōt*, 26b; ed. Metzger 1: 139); elsewhere he repeated his reference to this passage and added that this indicates that the Torah existed before it was written, citing also Prov. 8.30, and mentioning also the tradition of the Torah being written in black fire on white fire (ibid., 59a; ed. Metzger 2: 318–19); see the discussion of this in detail by Wolfson, “By Way of Truth…,” 110 n. 23, citing only the second passage mentioned. Wolfson made no reference to the sources cited above. On the idea (essentially in Genesis rabah 1) that the world was created “by” the Torah, see Alexander, ““In the Beginning’: Rabbinic and Patristic Exegesis of Gen. 1:1.”

111 “Tōrat ha-Shēm temiymah,” 163; and introduction to his commentary, ed. Chavel 1: 5. On the issue of Solomon’s wisdom in various medieval commentaries,
particularly Lévy b. Gershôn and Abravanel, see Berger, “Wisest of All Men.” In his “sermon” on Ecclesiastes, Naḥmanides mentions in further detail:

and we find another book [in addition to the three biblical books attributed to Solomon] called **Ḥakhmata rabata de-Shelūmōh**, and it is translated in a very difficult language [leytōn tagūm hamōr meōd] and the Gentiles [Christians] translated it from that language,

and he gives his opinion that the book was originally taken to Babylon and there “said [written] in their language” (Kitvey 1: 182). Nothing could be clearer than that he referred to an Aramaic version (“their language”), and the reference to a Christian “translation” is not Latin but Greek (so also was Chavel’s opinion there). See Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament 1: 518 ff. The sections quoted by Naḥmanides, in Aramaic, correspond there to § 544 and § 545. Naftali Herz Wessely, introduction to Ketturīym ahrōnyym, 9, said that Naḥmanides was the first Jewish author to mention the “Wisdom of Solomon”; see there for other references in some later authorities (Wessely first published his Hebrew translation of “Wisdom of Solomon,” Ḥōḵmat Shelūmōh, in Berlin, 1775, with numerous later reprints). Nevertheless, nothing is known about an Aramaic translation of the work, nor is it mentioned by Steinschneider or other authorities. Naḥmanides could not have read the Pesḥīṭā (contrary to the J.E. article “Syriac,” which claimed that it referred to the Pesḥīṭā version; the article there on “Wisdom of Solomon” erroneously said that Naḥmanides cited a Hebrew translation), and the Aramaic translation he mentions is not otherwise known; he may have quoted the title from some other source. The same book, apparently, is cited by Joseph Angelino, fourteenth-century qabalist in Zaragoza, Livnat ha-sapiyr (ed. Wertheimer [Jerusalem, 1913–14; rpt. Jerusalem, 1971], 5a and 6a; see the text and translation in Marx, “Aramaic Fragment,” 66–67). Marx at first also thought that Naḥmanides quoted from the Pesḥīṭā version, see 57–60, but finally concluded that at least the text cited by Angelino is of an Aramaic version which is perhaps translated from Greek. His confusion of the Aramaic text cited by Naḥmanides as “Syriac” is hard to comprehend, unless he copied this from the J.E. article. Following Marx, Idel also mistakenly claimed that it was “Syriac using Hebrew characters” (Ascensions on High, 125; the “Rabbi Joseph Angelet” whom he mentions there and elsewhere is, of course, Angelino). Similarly, Naḥmanides cites “Megilat Shūshan [Susan, in Persia]” (Deut. 21.14; ed. Chavel 2: 444). Chavel there quotes (n. 78) an outdated and incorrect explanation, since he failed to see the article of Perles, “Über den Geist des Commentars...,” where he explained (147) that the reference is to the apocryphal book Ḫudith. Whether Naḥmanides saw also an Aramaic, or perhaps Hebrew, translation of that work is uncertain. Pedayah, Ramban, has a vague and incomplete reference (161) to Ḥakhmata rabata de-Shelūmōh, which she apparently believes is an actual extant book, but with no mention of any of the things discussed here, or of the actual source (the obscure introduction of “Stein, Sēfer Ḥōḵmat Shelūmōh” which she mentions in her notes, but with no entry in the bibliography, refers to a pirated reprint of Wessely’s aforementioned edition with a commentary by Uri Tzvi Stein [Zolkiew, 1805]; it should be noted that the Jewish National/Hebrew University Library has all of Wessely’s editions, which she, writing in Israel, could have consulted). The aforementioned “sermon” on Ecclesiastes also contains interesting statements on derash, remez and sōd in relation to the writings of Solomon (Kitvey 1: 179–80).

112 Not that the Torah contains the names of God, but that all of it is nothing but the names of God (mystically understood); introduction, 6. Chavel incorrectly cites
the Zohar as the “source” for Naḥmanides (and so, often, in his notes to the commentary); that work was composed by Moses b. Shem Ṭov de León long after Naḥmanides. The contrary is, of course, the truth: that author borrowed probably from Naḥmanides. See also the similar notions in an early mystical work, Ōtiyōr de R’ Ḳivva, and in Abraham bar Ḥayya, cited in Scholem, On the Kabbalah, 62–63 (the first work, not to be confused with the Alfa-beyta de R’ Ḳivva, is also in Wertheimer, ed., Batey midrashōt 2: 354). The qabalist Jacob b. Jacob ha-Kohen of Soria, late thirteenth century, quoted Naḥmanides in his “Sēfer ha-Ḳoh” (critical ed., unpublished dissertation of Daniel Abrams, New York University, 1993, 218; Abrams made no comment on the source). Abraham bar Ḥayya wrote (Megilat ha-megaleh, 75):

Everyone who believes in the Torah acknowledges and knows that the lives of every generation described there and so of every letter and word in every section [parashah] has a meaning [ṭa’am; a sense of the word identical to its use by Ibn ‘Ezra; on the influence of Abraham on Ibn ‘Ezra see ch. 2 above] which is great in wisdom and secret and mystery [sōd and ṡaz] of understanding, which we do not have the strength [ability] to comprehend completely; grant that we may know a little of the much.

(the anonymous translator of Scholem’s book gave a general, but not precise, translation of this there)

He adds, significantly, that even so, we are obligated to explain the little which is “revealed” to (understood by) us and investigate the majority which is concealed. Idel, “Allegory and Divine Names in Ecstatic Kabbalah [sic],” 326–30, discusses this aspect of Naḥmanides (but without reference to the above sources), and its subsequent influence on the qabalist Abraham Abulafia (332–40), and (340–43) on his “disciple” Natan b. Sa’adyah – see his Sēfer sha’arey ṣe dq (Jerusalem, 1989), 29; according to which Moses arranged the Torah “as a continuum of letters,” corresponding to the “path of divine names.” See also Scholem, “The Name of God and the Linguistic Theory of the Kabbala” on qabalistic interpretation of the Torah, particularly the notion that the unvocalized text permits all kinds of interpretations, see Idel, Kabbalah [sic]. New Perspectives, 214, and on Abulafia, 235. Idel overlooked a non-qabalistic source on this, the commentary on Avot by Joseph Ibn Sūsan (so, not “Shoshan”), fourteenth century, Peyrūshey…Avot, 3 (he also cites the statement that the Torah is entirely names of God). Elliot Wolfson quoted a manuscript of Abulafia according to which the understanding of the Torah as “an amalgam of divine names” corresponds to the level of the prophets, for “the entire Torah is [consists of] the names” of God (“Beyond the Spoken Word,” 185, with no mention of any of the preceding; Idel’s important article was not yet published). Pedaya, Ramban, 174–75, cited some irrelevant passages from the qabalists ‘Ezra and ‘Azriël of Gerona; what Naḥmanides said has nothing to do with the sacredness of each individual letter in the Torah, much less verses which may seem irrelevant or even undesirable, but that the entire Torah is mystically composed of divine names.

113 Wolfson, “By Way of Truth,” 117 n. 44, disagrees and claims that “in this case, it does not appear that the esoteric reading has anything to do with theosophical symbolism.” He nevertheless admits that Naḥmanides’ later disciple Abraham Abulafia, who used this as a cornerstone for his qabalistic hermeneutics, did understand this in exactly the way I have stated (see Idel, Language, Torah and Hermeneutics in Abraham Abulafia).

114 Peyrūshey…1: 4. Ishbīlī, She’elōt u-tegǔrōt, no. 142. See Chapter 6 here on opinions concerning errors and invalid Torah scrolls. Ishbīlī’s defense of Maimonides
against the criticisms of Naḥmanides is cited frequently here in the notes; see also my “Reacciones rabínicas ante Maimónides,” 78–79.

115 “Tōrat ha-Shēm temiynah,” 167–68, and cf., n. 111. This is to be distinguished from the “Shiymūša tabah de-ṣefer Tōrah,” a legal work, cited in an anonymous work, Adler, ed., “Eleventh Century Introduction to the Hebrew Bible,” 695. Adler’s attribution of his text to Judah b. Barzilay has been challenged by Louis Ginzberg in Ginzey Schechter 2: 528. Azulai, Shēm ha-geḍōliym, Part I, “M” no. 174, refers to an early manuscript he saw of a work called “Ma’ayan ḥakhmah” on “shimūš ha-Tōrah” and other “exalted secrets.” On this work (in Jellinek, ed., Beyt ha-midrash, vol. 1), see briefly Scholem, On the Kabbalah and Its Symbolism, 38 (he made no mention of the sermon of Naḥmanides, however, nor did he comment on the magical use of divine names to resurrect the dead). As Scholem noted (39), this is an earlier magical or “theurgic” doctrine, accepted by the “Gerona circle” of qabalists (‘Ezra and ‘Azriel). It may be similar to the Sidrey de-shimūsh ha-raba, purporting to be a geonic work, published by Scholem in Tarbiz (Tariyyis) 16 (1945): 197–203. On similar ideas in early “Heykhalōt” mysticism, see Scholem, Major Trends, 56–57. On related texts of magical usage of the Psalms in the Genizah, see the brief mention by Shaked, Saul. “Medieval Jewish Magic in Relation to Islam,” in Benjamin J. Hary, et al., eds., Judaism and Islam. Boundaries, Communication and Interaction (Leiden, 2000), 102, but with no details; see now Sefer Shimmush Tehillim – Buch vom magischen Gebrauch der Psalmen, ed. and tr. Rebiger (Tübingen, 2010); I have not seen Barkai, Ron. “L’ūs dels salms en la màgica jueva de l’Edat Mitjana i el Renaixement: El llibre ‘Shi-mush tehillum,’” in La Cábala (Barcelona, 1989), 17–57. A fragmentary remark apparently by “Judah ha-Kohen of Toledo” (most probably Judah b. Solomon ha-Kohen Mosca, fl. ca. 1250) refers to “Sēfer shimmūsha be-shēydey de-Shelomoh,” or book dealing with the legendary “demons” controlled by Solomon (Mann, Jacob. “Glanures de la Gueniza,” R.E.J. 74 [1922]: 157, no. 10 and cf. there, 156; this is apparently a lost text) and the “philosophers” who said that there were seven (or ten) “shēdiym,” or demons, as mentioned in that book; however, this is not the work mentioned by Naḥmanides, as Mann thought. All that Naḥmanides wrote concerning these matters is directly in contradiction to the important responsum of Hai (Hayyē) Gaōn to some German scholars concerning the use of divine names to perform wonders, which the Gaōn dismissed as nonsense and not worth discussing. Hai also mentions certain “texts” which people from Rome or the Land of Israel had shown the German scholars, and says that he had seen these and similar texts (possibly those mentioned above). He also refers to their question about using names to resurrect the dead, which he dismisses as a report without proof (Aschkenazi, ed., Ta’am zeqēniym, 54b–58b; Teshuvōt ha-geōniym ha-hadalashōt, 124–25), cited also by Judah b. Barzilay, Peyrūsh, 108. Naḥmanides elsewhere specifically said that he had seen this responsum; see n. 117. His disagreement with the gaōn can only be explained on the basis of his own strong belief in magic and other superstitions. It is likely that Maimonides also knew that responsum, for he condemns the “vain imaginings of the writers of charms” and other notions about the use of names “in their stupid books” by which “miracles” can be performed (“Guide” I. 61; tr. 149); this statement, incidentally, was overlooked by Schwartz, Qemiyēt, sqēlūt ve-sikhletanīt. Even stronger is Maimonides’ condemnation of all those who attempt to combine various letters and claim that this is a “name” of God (ibid., tr. 152). Naḥmanides of course ignored this, as this is the bedrock of gabalah.

116 “Tōrat ha-Shēm temiynah,” 168. Incidentally, the statement later in the paragraph that the verse in Ex. 20.11 is not “lacking a b-” at the beginning “as the commentators said” has nothing to do with the Aramaic translation of Pseudo-Jonathan, as Chavel thought; rather, it refers to Ibn ‘Ezra; cf. Lipshitz, Pirqey
‘iyūn, 173 (however, his citation of Naḥmanides on Gen. 2.3 is incorrect). As mentioned, Scholem ignored all of this. More surprising is that so does Schwartz, Astrōlōgiyah u-magiyah, even though he deals cursorily with Naḥmanides. It was also overlooked by Trachtenberg, Jewish Magic and Superstition. The notion that the “righteous” can kill and resurrect through the use of secret divine names is certainly a profoundly magical one (there is also no mention of this in Schwartz); cf. J. Yoma 3.18b. It has a parallel, although not exact, in Midrash Tehilim 3.2 (ed. Buber, 17a) that the Torah was not given in order (i.e., the arrangement of stories and events), for had it been “all who read it would have been able to resurrect the dead and perform miracles”; that midrash in general was known to Naḥmanides. Judah ha-Lēvy wrote that if we had the ability, when speaking of or drawing a human form, to actually produce it “we should have the word of God in our power and could create,” a notion which he means to reject (Kūzariyy 4.25; tr. Hirschfeld, 229; Schwartz overlooked this passage entirely in his lengthy and generally good chapter on ha-Lēvy, 31–61). This is connected, probably, with the legendary notion of the gölem, a human-like creature produced by magical incantations (see Trachtenberg, op. cit., 84 ff., but also not mentioning the Kūzariyy); on the later purely legendary notions, see Idel, Gōlem (although he cites, 239, this part of the Kūzariyy, he says nothing about this statement) and Schäfer, “The Magic of the Golem.” Ibn ‘Ezra mentioned gölem as “without a heart, only a body” (commentary on Ps. 139.16). Bahya b. Asher refers to the form and matter combined in the gölem (Biyūr 1: 100; Gen. 6.6). The term gölem is used in an entirely different way, meaning three-dimensional substance, by Abraham b. Ḥayya, Megilat ha-megaleh, 53, 55 and Judah b. Barzilay, Peyrūš šefer yešiyrah, 14, and Maimonides (see Chapter 5 on Judah b. Moses Hallāva) and frequently by Judah b. Solomon ha-Kohen Mosca (see n. 243), and this is the traditional biblical meaning of the term. None of this is discussed by Idel. A detailed description of gölem as an actual being, “that has intelligent and ethical characteristics but they are not perfect,” etc. is in the commentary on Avōt of Joseph Ya’avēṣ, a fifteenth-century preacher in Spain who was one of the exiles who went to Portugal and then to Naples (Peyrūš ‘al…Avōt [Warsaw, 1880; rpt. in his Kōl sīfrey…, vol. 2, 120–21]). Idel, 302, attributes this to the sixteenth-century Abraham Azulay, but he obviously took it from Ya’avēṣ. There is a need for a serious scholarly investigation of the topic of gölem other than in fantastic legends. Moses b. Isaac Botarel (fifteenth century), a Provençal qabalist and notorious forger, wrote that anyone who knows the secret of the combination of names can use them (for magical purposes) and that “many qabalists” had not used this properly and were injured, or punished (commentary in Sēfer yešiyrah, f. 20c [see Bibliography: Sources]; incidentally the statement “for He is the knower and witness that He is in all and He is the all” is nearly a direct quotation from Ibn ‘Ezra on Ex. 23.21).

117 See, Chapter 2, n. 56. See on this the important explanation by Lipshitz, Pirqey ‘iyūn, 61–63. Of course, as Lipshitz has demonstrated, Naḥmanides apparently never saw the “short” recension of Ibn ‘Ezra on Exodus. However, in his critique (Ex. 28.30) of Ibn ‘Ezra’s views (“long,” or regular, recension on Ex. 28.6) on the ʿūriym and tūniym (discussed below, Astrology and Magic), where Ibn ‘Ezra said that if Rashi had seen Hai’s responsum he would not have written that this involved the names of God, Naḥmanides says (ed. Chavel 1: 475) specifically that he himself had seen the responsum of Hai. If so, he obviously did not accept his opinion. On the relation of the question to Hai with such superstitions in Italy at the time, see the sources cited by Hirschberg, H.Z. “Ha-qeshariym beyn yehudey ha-Magriyb u-veyn Ereṣ -Yisrael be-tequfat ha-geoniym,” Ereṣ Yisraēl 5 [1949/50]: 216 n. 22; also Teshōvōt ha-geoniym ha-ḥadashōt, 124 n. 5. Maimonides: “Guide” 1.62; tr. 152.
Commentary on Num. 14.9, ed. Chavel 2: 246; after first citing a rational explanation by Ibn ‘Ezra, concerning which he wrote: “and well he explained.” In his note, Chavel refers to “Baḥya 18, 2.” I have no idea what that means, but in fact Baḥya b. Asher discusses this, citing Naḥmanides, in his Torah commentary (edited by Chavel himself; see Bibliography) on the same verse (Num. 14.9).

According to mystical tradition, the “first seal” (of the celestial document of deeds done during the preceding year) is on Yom Kippur and the “second seal” on the night of Hoshana Rabah (a minor holiday). On the superstitions connected with this, see Trachtenberg, Jewish Magic and Superstition, 215; Sperber, Daniel. Minḥagey Yisraḥel (Jerusalem, 1998) 6: 173–82; again, there is no mention of this in Schwartz, Astrólogo y u-magiya. See also Magid, Shaul. From Metaphysics to Midrash (Bloomington, I.N., 2008), 207–08, on this theme in post-medieval qabalistic sources. This also appears in the Zohar. Lipshitz, ʻIyuniym... Bahya, 327 ff., digressed far afield on this but does not note any of the things mentioned here. It should be noted that while Naḥmanides indeed was a physician, he almost certainly learned his trade as an apprentice to another physician and not in a medical school (as previously stated here); therefore, he learned nothing of science or philosophy, which explains much of his exegetical interpretation and general outlook.

Funkenstein, “Naḥmanides’ Symbolical Reading of History” (a translation of his earlier Hebrew article). This was followed by Saperstein, “Jewish Typological Exegesis after Naḥmanides” and Walfish, “Typology, Narrative and History” (the article deals with the hitherto unknown commentary of a fifteenth-century qabalist, to be discussed below). In fact, prior to Funkenstein I had already written about typology in the article mentioned in the following note, and elsewhere. I cannot agree with Funkenstein that Christian typology was the “source” for Naḥmanides and see the following note. See also Caputo, “In the Beginning …,” which discusses in detail aspects of the opening chapter of the commentary on Genesis (essentially summarized in her Naḥmanides in Medieval Catalonia; the book deals chiefly with other aspects of his career). Saperstein correctly argued that the use of typology was by no means limited to the commentary of Naḥmanides but is found in sermons written in the following centuries (but only one example from Spain is discussed). E. Wolfson (“By Way of Truth,” 153 and the preceding pages) has a peculiar understanding of “typology,” altogether ignoring Funkenstein and the actual meaning of the term and relating it instead to Naḥmanides’ exegesis or “hermeneutic,” where there is an overlap of the use of pesihat and sōd in his approach to the same passage. This is undoubtedly correct, and an important clarification, but it has nothing to do with “typology” as generally understood. Pedaya, Ramban, briefly alludes (128) to his “typology,” with reference to Funkenstein (and more in detail, 213 ff., only on qabalistic aspects), but was unaware of Saperstein’s important article or that of Caputo (Walfish’s article had not yet appeared). Saperstein and others have demonstrated that, contrary to one of Funkenstein’s assumptions, typology is found also in later Jewish exegesis. Walfish gives additional examples in biblical exegesis (Isaac b. Joseph ha-Kohen, the main subject of his article, is discussed later here). In addition to the examples noted by Saperstein and Walfish, there are numerous other uses of typology in Jewish polemical writings. See also Baḥya b. Asher’s comment on redemption on Ex. 5.22 and 18.1; Biyūr, ed. Chavel 2: 44, 161; his most complex typology concerning exile and redemption is on Ex. 12.40 (ed. Chavel 2: 97–98; as usual, his citation of Ḥananēl there is to be identified either as Sa’adyah or as Samuel b. Ḥōfiy, see on this passage Lipshitz, ʻIyuniym be-biyūr, 114–17).
120 For the various interpretations of the six “ages” of the world, and the messianic implications, see my “‘Seis edades durará el mundo’…” This article was not cited by any of the writers mentioned in the previous note, probably because it was written in a language they do not understand. David Berger, who also does not read Spanish, nonetheless opines that the article “despite the title…is not concerned to any significant degree with” the talmudic text which it cites (“Torah and the Messianic Age,” in David Engel, et al., eds., Studies in Medieval Jewish Intellectual and Social History: Festschrift in Honor of Robert Chazan [Leiden, 2012], 169 n. 1); if he means that it is not a didactic analysis of that text he is correct, but the subject of that text is the entire subject of the article. Readers capable of consulting what I have written there will see how unlikely it is that Naḥmanides borrowed this so-called “typology” from Christian sources, contrary to the claim of Funkenstein. Naḥmanides’ immediate sources for the six days allegory are certainly Abraham bar Ḥayya (e.g., Megiylat ha-megaleh, 1128–29 and cf. n. 123), as well as the midrash (see also the following note and n. 124). See index here, “six ages of the world.”

121 See, for example, Sanhedrin 97a and see the commentary of Meir Abulafia of Toledo (with whom Naḥmanides was personally acquainted), Yad ramah ‘al…Sanhedrin (Jerusalem, 1999; new edition with notes), 353–54. According to that, the second millennium, the age of Torah, was from the age of Abraham at 52 years (when he “converted” his slave at Haran) and continued for 2,000 years. Abulafia endeavored to find support for this in various biblical passages. Unfortunately, the extant commentary of Naḥmanides on Sanhedrin does not include that chapter, nor does his commentary on ’A.Z. have anything on 9a, which Abulafia also cited. There are various talmudic and midrashic traditions as to the age of Abraham when these events supposedly took place.

122 None of authors cited in n. 119 discussed the difficulties of this chronology (it is particularly disappointing that Pedaya in her book made no mention of it); nor does Caputo, in spite of her detailed discussion of the six days of creation (Naḥmanides, especially 82–83). In fact, it appears that here he was directly influenced by Abulafia, who wrote (see previous note) that the messiah is not “worthy to come” (the time is not proper) until 172 years after the destruction of the second Temple, and from that time onward is propitious for his coming “were it not for our sins which delayed his coming.” According to Naḥmanides, perhaps the messiah should have come 172 years after the destruction of the Temple, but the sins of the people (which he did not wish to mention) delayed this and there began a sixth millennium.

123 Steinhart, Kūr zahav ([Jerusalem, 1936], as cited by Newman in the notes to his ed. and tr. of The Commentary…, xvii n. 32, at the end of the book) explained that a “tenth” means a tenth of a thousand years, which when added to the 172 years of the fourth millennium and all of the fifth millennium adds up to 1,290 years, which is the number in Dan. 12.11. See also the more complicated calculations in the additions to “Tōrat ha-Shēm temiymah” from the Moscow manuscript, ed. Ya’akov Yehudah Zilberlicht in Yeshūrūn 18 (2007): 46–51 and notes. Naḥmanides here was also clearly influenced by the same calculation made by Abraham b. Ḥayya, Megiylat ha-megaleh, 37, 107; Lībre revelador, 62, 174. On the various messiahs in Jewish tradition, see n. 125.

124 Naḥmanides, commentary on Gen. 2.3, ed. Chavel 1: 30–31 (Chavel’s note there, 545 col. b, end, is incorrect). He already had given a similar interpretation in “Tōrat ha-Shēm temiymah,” 169. Note the similarity to Judah b. Barzilay, Peyrūš sēfer yeṣiyrah, 237–39 (supposedly unknown until its modern discovery; unless this is coincidence, Naḥmanides clearly already knew this work, and
He again was influenced on all of this (as was Judah), including the period of redemption, by Abraham bar Ḥayya, Megilat ha-megaleh, 15–16, 18–20; see Guttmann’s introduction there, xxiv–v (Libre revelador, xxxvi–ii and cf. xix). In “Tōnat ha-adam” (Kitcvey 2: 303), Naḥmanides cites a midrash that God blessed the seventh day, which means the world to come, which begins in the seventh millennium, and sanctified that period for the Jews (the source, which Chavel could not identify, is Moses “ha-darshan,” Midrash bereshit rabatiy, text 20; see intro. 32, that his citations of this midrash are from the commentary of Rashi). Funkenstein saw this interpretation of Gen. 2.3 as part of the alleged borrowing of Christian “typology” by Naḥmanides and claimed that both Abraham b. Ḥayya and Naḥmanides took this from Augustine (“Naḥmanides' Symbolical Reading of History,” 139–41; in Hebrew in Zion [Ṣiyon] 45 [1979–80]: 54; he repeated the same ideas in his Perceptions of Jewish history, 110–14). I cannot agree with this for several reasons, not least of which is the unlikelihood that either author, with no knowledge of Latin, ever saw Augustine’s writings. More to the point, there is little similarity between Augustine and the Jewish apocalyptic-eschatological views. The one Christian notion which Naḥmanides may have utilized (known from non-Latin sources as well), not commented upon by Funkenstein, is the messianic interpretation of Dan. 7.13–14 (with respect to the sixth millennium), but Sa’adyah had already so interpreted that verse, and although Naḥmanides also did not know Arabic he knew of Sa’adyah’s comments from references in Ibn ‘Ezra and possibly elsewhere.

125 The first calculation: Biyūr ‘al ha-Tōrāh, ed. Chavel: 55–56 (all of 53 ff. is derived from Naḥmanides); the second, on Deut. 31.18; (3: 453). Chavel made no comment on this contradiction. On “messiah ben Ephraim,” see Naḥmanides’ Sēfer ha-ge’ulah in Kitcvey, ed. Chavel 1: 295; in the superior text ed. Joshua (I.M.) Aronson (Jerusalem, 1959), 71 (and cf. 61). All of “Gate Four” of that work is devoted generally to a discussion of the redemption and the messiahs. Jewish messianic ideas developed in the talmudic period and were further elaborated in early medieval midrashiym, according to which various “messiahs” are to appear before the coming of “Messiah ben David” who will restore the kingdom of Israel. On the various “messiahs” in Jewish thought, see Sa’adyah, Book of Beliefs and Opinions, 304 ff.; Dix, “Messiah ben Joseph”; Torrey, “Messiah Son of Ephraim”; Klausner, Messianic Idea in Israel, 90 ff., 209 ff.; Sadek, “Der Mythus von Messias den Sohne Josephs”; Sarachek, Doctrine of the Messiah; Berger, “Three Typological Themes.” Aside from several articles on messianic notions in Maimonides, nothing of significance has otherwise been written. Virtually worthless is the superficial book of Schwartz, Dov. ha-Rayōn ha-meshiyḥiy biḥagut ha-yehūdiy bi-mey ha-beynayim (Ramat-Gan, 1997). Sarachek remains the best study so far. None of the above studies fully utilizes all the sources and there is need for a new analysis.

126 Ed. Chavel 2: 166–67. In his notes, he briefly cites Samuel Zarza’s supercommentary on Ibn ‘Ezra, “Meqōr ha-yaiym” (in Margaliyōt tōvah, 109b); in fact, Zarza wrote there at great length about all of this (109b–110b). Interestingly, that author, who wrote in 1368 in Castile (Palencia), does not mention Naḥmanides at all. However, the supercommentary on Ibn ‘Ezra by Joseph b. Eli’ezer “Bonfils,” Šōnat pa’nēāh (pt. 2: 31), appears to have been influenced by Naḥmanides here (he cited him also elsewhere). Joshua Ibn Shū’ayb (fourteenth century), the actual author of the supercommentary (Biyūr) on Naḥmanides attributed to Meir Ibn Sahūla (or Abī Sahūla, not “Abusaulah”), also wrote at length about this, incidentally citing an important halakhic observation which he heard from his teacher Ibn Adret, and quoting what he read from an anonymous qabalist (Biyyūr,
24); that source is apparently the one discussed briefly by Idel, “Peyrūsh anōni-
yymi le-Tōrah”; he made no comment on this, however. See Ibn Adret, Sheʾēlōt u-tešḥūvāt 1: no. 9: 6,000 years of the world’s existence correspond to the six
days of creation and the seventh millennium to the Sabbath, a “tradition of some
sages as if from the prophets, and they have about this a very deep secret.” It is
important to remark that everywhere in his notes when Chavel refers cryptically
to “Absa‘ulah,” this supercommentary by Ibn Shūʾayb is to be understood.
127 Gen. 12.6, ed. Chavel 1: 77 (see also introduction to Exodus), and see ibid., 83,
Naḥmanides’ application of this principle to the allegory of the “four king-
doms” (Chapter 2, at n. 46) destined to rule over the Jews. The source is Midrash
Tanḥūma (“new” text, with commentaries, “Lēkh le-kha” 10; “old” text, ed.
Buber, 12 [1: 35b]). The formulation there, “siman masar ha-qodesh barukh hu
le-Avraham she-kol mah she-iyra lo iyra le- baniym” (“the Holy One, blessed be he,
gave a sign to Abraham that everything which [will] happen to him [will] hap-
pen to his sons”), is almost identical to that in Naḥmanides; see also his “Tōrat
ha-Shēm temiymah,” 174. The expression as it is commonly quoted, “ma’asey abot
siyman le- baniym,” (“the deeds of the fathers are a sign to the sons’), in fact is
not found in the Talmud or midrash; in the aforementioned sermon Naḥma-
Nides attributed it to Gen. ṭah, but again this is only a similar statement. See
the lengthy discussion of this theme by his student Ibn Adret, Hiydūshey...ha-
hagadōr, 132–ff. This “typology” influenced the commentary on the Torah er-
roneously attributed to Joseph b. David, Peyrūsh ʿal ha-Tōrah (see n. 172 on this),
16–18, on the Patriarchs and the future exiles, and quoting (18) essentially the
same statement from Midrash Tanḥūma (his editor, Feldman, n. 132 there, gave
an incorrect citation, nor did he note that it is from the “new” text, not men-
tioning Buber’s ed. at all); see also there, 102, on the Patriarchs and redemption.
Funkenstein also wrongly concluded that the “typology” of Naḥmanides was
limited to the Patriarchs, overlooking the aforementioned days of creation. Hal-
berthal, ‘Al derekh ha-emet, devotes to this a lengthy chapter, 6, without men-
tioning Funkenstein’s classical article (he, in fact, is cited only twice in the entire
book), offering again only long quotations from Naḥmanides but nothing of
importance about typology in his thought.
128 Hallāwa, Imrey shēfer, 112–13 (catalogued by libraries as “Yehuda ben Moshe ben
Halaveh”). Of course, several things remain unexplained in this interpretation;
for example, the Israelites certainly were not very “holy” in their behavior after
leaving Egypt. Nevertheless, his objection to the inexplicable condemnation
of Abraham by Naḥmanides is valid. It should be mentioned that Naḥmanides
added yet a third “sin,” Abraham’s treatment of Hagar in driving her and her son
Ishmael out into the desert (Gen. 16.6), because of which the Jews suffered to his
own time under the alleged descendants of Ishmael, the Muslims (of course, the
Jews in al-Andalus did not “suffer” until the Almohad invasion).
129 Ex. 3.13 (ed. Chavel 1: 292–93), and note there his disagreement with Ibn ʿEzra
and Maimonides, and also with Saʿadyah. There are qabalistic allusions in-
volved in this, in connection with the “sēfiyrōt” (see index on this term). Bahya
b. Asher Ibn Hallāwa (see below on him) repeated Naḥmanides’ explanation
here, including the expression taken from the “Guide” but without mentioning
Maimonides (Bahya, Biyūr 2: 28, and see Chavel’s note there). Bahya gave the
longest explanation of the meaning of the expression (ibid., 28–32). Isaac b.
Samuel of Acre, who came to Spain in 1305, reported a tradition of students of
Naḥmanides according to which he supposedly told them that every instance
of the Tetragrammaton in the Bible “refers to the supreme divine being, the
Cause of Causes” (Wolfson, “Beyond the Spoken Word,” 200). One wonders
what the “innovation” is in this, since obviously that is the meaning; however, Naḥmanides would hardly have referred to God as “Cause of Causes,” a totally Aristotelian concept with which he would have disagreed strongly. As we shall see later, Isaac b. Samuel reported other questionable “traditions.” See now Lobel, “Eḥyeh asher Eḥyeh and the Tetragrammaton,” which, however, does not mention Naḥmanides or Baḥya.

130 Gen. 14.18, ed. Chavel 1: 86–87 (as usual, his reference to the Zohar as the “source” may be disregarded, since that work was written later). On Lev. 18.25, Naḥmanides also referred to the “celestial Temple,” hinting at the “secret” of the references to the land in Gen. 1 and Lev. 26.42, according to which the allegorical statement can be understood that the “upper” (celestial) Temple is placed opposite the “lower” or actual Temple (Midrash Tanḥūnma, “old” text, “Va-yiqahal” 7). See also Baḥya on Gen. 15.16, ed. Chavel 1: 155; Ex. 36.7, ed. Chavel 2: 372. On the concept of the “sacred space” of the Temple and the Shekhiynah in medieval German “pietist” thought, see Wolfson, “Sacred Space and Mental Iconography”; since that article is restricted to medieval German Jewish sources no mention is made of Naḥmanides. However, there are some interesting parallels between his thought and that of such writers as Rabbi El’azar of Worms, who may indeed have influenced him; see, for example, his statement cited there, 605 n. 33, that everything is “sealed” with the divine name and God “manifests his glory as it seems appropriate to him.” On Gen. 33.20 (ed. Chavel 1: 189; this was repeated verbatim by Baḥya, Biyyūr 1: 288–89), Naḥmanides cites various midrashic statements relating to Jacob and concludes that the meaning is that “the Shekhiynah rests on the Land of Israel,” apparently contradicting his statement that it is in the upper Temple. Ibn Shū’ayb (not “Abusaulah” as erroneously, and so always, in Chavel’s note), Biyyūr, 7a, quoted his teacher (Ibn Adret) that the Shekhiynah is the “throne of glory” referred to there (the rest of the statement is cited in Chavel’s note). However, on Gen. 28.17, Naḥmanides quotes Pirqey de-Rabiy Eli’ezer that whoever prays in Jerusalem is as if he prays before the throne of glory, observing that the “gates of heaven” mentioned there refers to the upper Temple (ed. Chavel 1: 161). Elsewhere, Naḥmanides also identifies Shekhiynah with beriyt (covenant), which is the Torah (Gen. 1.1, 9.12, 17.9; Deut. 4.21, 33.1; all but the last are mentioned also by Wolfson, “By Way of Truth…,” 115 n. 39). Peculiarly, Halbertal, ‘Al derekh ha-emet, 185 n. 31 and elsewhere, thought that Shekhiynah in Naḥmanides is a separate sefiyra, identical with “ḥakhmat Shelomoh” (“the Wisdom of Solomon,” 1 Kings 5.26). The only “source” which he is able to cite is the aforementioned commentary on Ex. 3.13, end, which he somehow misunderstood. Although he cites (186) some important statements from Naḥmanides on the Shekhiynah generally, he overlooked Gen. 14.18 and others discussed further here (and see my index).

131 Gen. 46.1; ed. Chavel 1: 250 (the identification of Shekhiynah with kavōd is found already in Mekhilta on Ex. 19.20); cf. Maimonides, “Guide” I. 19 (tr. Pines, 46), 25 (tr. 55), 27 (tr. 57), 28 (tr. 60); III. 7 (tr. 430); yet in I. 64, while explaining “glory” as created light which descends to a certain place (also I. 19), he discusses one meaning of it as the essence of God (on the probable source of that discussion in Sa’adyah, see Gad Freudenthal, “Stoic Physics in the Writings of R. Saadia”). Either Naḥmanides may have overlooked Judah b. Barzilay, who said that kavōd = shekhiynah is something created and external to God (Peyrīsh sēfer yeshiyrah, 178), or else he intended him also in his criticism (if, in fact, he knew that work; see n. 124). Chavel made no comment on this statement of Naḥmanides, not mentioning, for example, the adequate reply of Ishbīl in his defense of Maimonides, Sēfer ha-zikaron (ed. Blau, 32; ed. Kahana, 66). Joshua
Ibn Shū'ayb, Biyūr, 8a–9b, also discussed this at length, defending the position of Naḥmanides. There he mentions (9b, column b) that he had seen someone who tried in the presence of his teacher (Ibn Adret) to explain Maimonides on this, but he was unable to explain one or two of the passages in question. Moses b. Joshua Narbonty (ca. 1300–d. ca. 1362) mentioned “the opinions of the qabalists” that the Shekhiyehah is not external to God; however, he accepted Maimonides’ position that the Shekhiyehah is a created thing (“Peyrūshō...le-megiylat Qiyūt,” 261, lines 86–87; 262, lines 92–97). He also referred to this, the “glory” of God is not God, contrary to the opinion of the qabalists (Biyūr le-sefēr môreh nevōkhiyeh [Vienna, 1851–52], 49a). Halbertal, ’Al derekh ha-emet, 183–85, discusses the concept of the Shekhiyehah in Naḥmanides from a different perspective (allegedly as a separate qabalistic sphere), with no mention of the controversy here discussed. On Lev. 26.16, Naḥmanides stated that the Shekhiyehah was present only in the first Temple, but in the second only the “glory” (kavōd) of God’s name was present; this, of course, reflects rabbinic tradition.

132 Ed. Chavel 1: 304 and see the notes there (the source for the statement about seeing in a glass clearly, see below on Prophecy, is certainly not the Zohar, of course). The meaning of the quoted remark is that Ibn ‘Ezra gave a correct interpretation, but only partial. “Mitnavē” can have an even more derogatory meaning than “prophesy,” it also can mean “rave” (cf. 1 Sam. 10.5; Jer. 29.26). Naḥmanides elsewhere criticized Ibn ‘Ezra in that “he could not know the truth” (qabalalah) because “he did not hear it and did not prophesy”; i.e., he had not received the esoteric tradition nor did he give a correct interpretation (Ex. 33.12; ed. Chavel 1: 519). In spite of this criticism, there is substantially no difference between what Ibn ‘Ezra said and what Naḥmanides said there. Incidentally, the word “prophesy” was employed by Joseph Ibn Kaspiy (see on him later here) in the opposite sense of explain or interpret correctly (Ṭiyrat kesef, 64; in his Mishneh kesef, see Bibliography).

133 Lev. 26.11–12, ed. Chavel 2: 184–86; Deut. 11.13, ibid., 393: God does not perform miracles forever, particularly those associated with the Land of Israel, but only for the majority of the people; as for the individual, he lives by his righteousness or dies by his transgressions. Cf. also on Num. 21.9, “all the deeds of the Torah are a miracle within a miracle” (Shabbat 96a). Here again we see an obvious distinction between Ibn ‘Ezra and Naḥmanides; for the former, there is a natural, scientific, explanation for such things, whereas Naḥmanides virtually denies the concept of “nature” (see below) and considers everything to be miraculous. In his sermon “Tōnat ha-Shēm temtiymah” (Kitvey 1: 155), he wrote that the “revealed” and “hidden” miracles demonstrate the creation, God’s knowledge of particulars and divine providence, which are the “three foundations of the Torah.” It is unfortunate that he did not write more about providence. In his (alleged) commentary on Job 36.7 (Kitvey 1: 108), it is stated that this is an important statement about providence, and that “men of Torah and faith” believe that God protects “people of the species of man” but not “people [!] of the other creations that do not speak” and this is because man recognizes God and therefore is protected by him, while other creatures do not and therefore are not protected (!). The “righteous” receive special protection so that no harm comes to them; “they are protected always from all temporal accidents [normal events], even [those] according to nature,” by a perpetual miracle which is done for them. More generally, he wrote that just as it is possible to believe in general providence (e.g., eternality of the universe “in general”), so it is possible to believe in particular providence (the survival of the individual species), and even though we see destruction of individuals and survival of the genus (biyṭūl
ha-praṭiym ve-qiyūm ha-klalīyim), this is because of original sin (ḥēṭ ha-qadmōniy) and the punishment decreed on those who die (“Tōrāt ha-adam,” in Kitvey 2: 306). This astonishing statement about original sin has been overlooked by those who have written on Naḥmanides. It would be hard if not impossible to find another Jewish writer who shared this belief; Abraham bar Ḥayya maintained that the “fall” of Adam led to a corrupt soul which then needed to be purified in subsequent generations, but this is not really the same idea (see Töyrylä, Abraham Bar Hiyya on Time, History, Exile and Redemption, 232 ff.). However, Bahya b. Asher clearly followed Naḥmanides in commenting on Lev. 12.7 about the inherent sin of women, as “primordial sin” (ḥēṭ ha-qadmōn), see his Biyyū 2: 474.


134 Gen. 46.15, ed. Chavel 1: 253. Ibn ‘Ezra’s criticism is in his commentary on Gen. 46.23; note also his criticism of religious poets (payeṭanīyim) who added to the alleged age of Yōkheved, which criticism was repeated also by Naḥmanides. For the specific piyyūt to which this refers, see Davidson, Israel. Otsar [Oṣar] ha-shiyrah ve-ha-piyūṭ (N.Y., 1924–33; photo rpt. 1970), s.v. “Ṣ,” no. 371. Yōkheved as the mother of Moses: Ex. 6.20, Num. 26.59. See Weiser’s notes to Ibn ‘Ezra there (1: 122) and especially Chavel’s notes to Naḥmanides, loc. cit., citing the supercommentaries on Ibn ‘Ezra which give valuable clarification.

135 Ex. 6.2, ed. Chavel 1: 303; Ex. 13.16 (ibid., 345–47), where he further explains that “wonders,” which are a change in the way of the world or natural order, demonstrate the existence of God and providence and the entire Torah. In one of his responsa on astrology and magic (in Ibn Adret, Teshōvōt ha-neyyūḥasōt, no. 283, not 282; rpt. in Moses b. Naḥman, Teshōvōt, no. 104 and in Kitvey 1: 378–81), he also wrote that God may nullify “for his faithful” decrees of fate dictated by the stars, and this is one of the “hidden miracles” which are the way of the world on which all the Torah is dependent (that is, all of the Torah contains evidence of these “hidden miracles”).

136 “Tōrāt ha-Shēm temiymah,” in Kitvey 1: 153–54. He added that Maimonides “admitted this” in his treatise on resurrection (that work, however, is a forgery; see Goldfeld in the Bibliography). This passage, or the first part of it at any rate, has been discussed by Langermann, “Acceptance and Devaluation,” 226–27, who noted the similarity with views of the extreme orthodox Muslim “theologians” (the Ashʿarīya), as reported in an obscure treatise by Ibn Rūḥān (“Averroes”). Of course, Naḥmanides knew nothing of that group, nor did he know Arabic, and there can be no question of any “influence” here (not even possibly through the Hebrew translation of that treatise of Ibn Rūḥān, for which no date is given, but which certainly he never saw); nor does Langermann suggest any such influence, only a similarity. David Berger discussed in detail “Miracles and Natural Order in Naḥmanides” in Twersky, ed., Rabbi [sic] Moses Naḥmanides, 107–28 (after some questionable statements in the early part of the article, the essence, 113 ff., is sound). Nehorai, “Torat ha-nes ve-ha-ṭeva’ eşel ha-Ramban” criticized
Berger and argued incorrectly that Judah ha-Lēvy was the source for Nahmanides’ theory of miracles, specifically “hidden” miracles. The author overlooked most of what is mentioned here and below (see also Berger’s brief response, ibid. 19 [1987]: 169–70). The question of miracles involving a change in nature is discussed by many of our commentators (see the index here: “miracles”). An important modern biblical scholar, discussing the various terms for “sign” or “wonder” in the Bible, remarked that none of them has exactly the supernatural meaning of “miracle” in English, since “there is no such Hebrew separation between the natural and the supernatural…nature is already supernatural” (Robinson, H. Wheeler. *Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament* [Oxford, 1956], 37). This is perhaps true of the biblical perspective, and certainly for the sages of the Talmud, but medieval familiarity with science made this less possible. As we shall see (following paragraph), even Nahmanides changed his position on this, and Joseph Ibn Kaspiy (on whom see below) specifically wrote that “signs” and “wonders” do not refer to events outside of the natural order.

137 Gen. 17.1, ed. Chavel 1: 98–99 and notes; and Deut. 34.11, ed. Chavel 2: 504. It is surprising that none of this was mentioned by Langermann, who in fact asserted (237) that Nahmanides enumerated three categories of miracles: nature, slight deviation from nature and (complete) change of nature. Nahmanides probably would not exclude also the “miracle” of the sun standing still for Joshua, but while this was a miracle, it was not in the category of “wonders” actually performed by a prophet. On his disagreement with Maimonides concerning the “wonders” performed by Moses and by Elijah (on Deut. 34.11), see the explanation of Ishbīlī cited there in Chavel’s note. Hai (Hayyē) Gaḏn, in his aforementioned reply to some German scholars concerning various magical phenomena, also discussed “signs” and “wonders” and stated that signs given to the prophets were a change in the nature of the world (in Aschkenazi, *Ta’am zeqēniym*, 55b).

138 The previously cited commentary on Lev. 26.11–12.
140 Ed. Chavel 1: 11; incidentally, it is highly unlikely that by the expression (those of) “little faith” there he meant Ibn ‘Ezra, as Chavel thought; while he often disagreed with Ibn ‘Ezra, he also praised him highly. Nahmanides used the same, and similar, expression elsewhere in his commentary (see here the following paragraph, where it refers to Aristotle). Funkenstein stated (*Perceptions of Jewish History*, 108) that Nahmanides introduced a separate entity, berēḵšiyt, corresponding with ḫaklīmah, which emanated (ḥa; as he thought Nahmanides understood the word) another being, Elōhiym; and he noted that such an idea was condemned as heretical in the Talmud (*Megillah* 9a). However, it appears that in fact this is perhaps what Nahmanides intended; see Bahya b. Asher’s commentary (ed. Chavel 1: 18): “the hidden power which is berēḵšiyt created elōhiym and they are the angels” (Ibn ‘Ezra already had said that elōhiym can mean “angels”; commentary on Ps. 82.1). Probably that is also the intent of Nahmanides’ strange statement that the letters of Gen. 1.1 can be rearranged to yield be-tōš ṭīḇārā elōhiym, “first [was] created elōhiym” (introduction, ed. Chavel 1, end; not that “God” was created, but angels). As for the Talmud there, there is no condemnation – only the suggestion that in the alleged translation of the Torah by 72 scribes for the Egyptian king a change in wording was made so as to avoid the possible understanding that berēḵšiyt and elōhiym are two separate divinities. The Qaraite Benjamin al-Nahāwundi (ninth century) believed that God had first created an angel who then emanated the world. While the qabalistic doctrine of the sefiyrōt was in its infancy when Nahmanides wrote, a possible
source may be the statement in Ḥagigah 12a that “by ten things” was the world created (in fact, ten divine “attributes”); this and similar talmudic statements (cf. Avot 5.1) are usually understood to be allegory. Unfortunately, the text of his commentary on Ḥagigah as we have it is not complete and is missing on this part; neither is there extant a commentary on that tractate from his student Ibn Adret. Another possible source is the mystical Sēfer yeṣiyrah (Chapter 1, “mishnah” 2 and 3; see the text actually utilized by the medieval commentators, 62 at the end of the book [see Bibliography]). Amazingly, not one of the modern authorities on qabalah has discussed this, or any other aspect of Naḥmanides’ theory of creation. Scholem made a brief comment, Kabbalah, 95; not entirely correct; see also Idel, “Nahmanides: Kabbalah, Halakhah, and Spiritual Leadership,” 45–46, on a different aspect (he does not mention any of the things discussed here); Pedaya, Ramban, has some scattered observations but nothing systematic. Only Halbertal, ‘Al derekh ha-emet, 251–52, has a brief reference to the “ten fingers” allegory. That the world was “established” in (not “by”) wisdom is stated already in Prov. 3.19, which Naḥmanides did not cite but which is cited by ‘Ezra of Gerona, who added a reference to Pirque de-Rabiy Eli’ezer (3) that the world was created “by” ten statements, or words (cf. Avot 5.1; Rosh ha-shanah 32a), reduced to three: wisdom, understanding and knowledge (ḥakmah, biynah, da’at). Incidentally, this is clear proof that at least in Spain the text of that homiletic work included the first chapter, in contrast to the statement of El’azar of Worms and the lack of the first three chapters in a listing in the Cairo Genizah (see Lerner, M.B. “‘Iyunim be-reshiymat sefariym aḥat min ha-geniyah,” Teudah 1 [1980]: 49). All of the sefyrōt are included in these upper three (‘Ezra, Commentaire..., tr. Vajda, 81–82; Commentary..., tr. Brody, 73). See also Joseph Qimḥi’s commentary on Prov. 3.19: “the philosophers [!] said that God created Wisdom and put in it the ability to create the heavens and earth,” an opinion with which he disagrees (Talmage, ed., Peyrūshiyim, 18; Talmage there referred to Sa’adyah Ga’on as the source, but his reference to Ibn ‘Ezra is an error). See also G. Abraham’s introduction to Qimḥi, Petiyḥah la-fesh ha-Tōrah, 10–11 (which Talmage did not cite). Joshua Ibn Shū’ayb cited a midrashic statement “All of them were created [by, in] wisdom; literally, an attribute of God” (Derashōt, ed. Cracow, 3a, col. b; ed. Metzger 1: 7; the source is not Midrash Tehilim 144 as Metzger indicated and I have not been able to find it). See also below on Bahya b. Asher. On Simon b. Ṣemaḥ Duran’s explanation of Arot 5.1 and Rosh ha-shanah 32a in terms of Ibn ‘Ezra’s previously discussed “three worlds”, see Chapter 2, n. 126.

Ed. Chavel 1: 12 (this important statement by Naḥmanides has largely been ignored by modern writers). The ultimate source for this expression, as far as I can determine, seems to be Judah b. Barzilay, Peyrūsh le-sēfer yeṣiyrah, 88 (concerning the pre-existent Torah; cf. n. 109), a form “of matter thinner than all thin, thinner than the matter of the winds.” Judah ha-Lévvy used the expression to refer to the “holy spirit” (Kūzariyy 2.4; ed. Baneth and Ben-Shammai, 45–46; tr. Hirschfeld, 87). ‘Azriēl b. Maṇaḥem of Gerona (just prior to Naḥmanides), in his commentary on Sēfer yeṣiyrah, erroneously ascribed to Naḥmanides (with the text of Sēfer yeṣiyrah, 31b), referred to a wind which is thin (daq) and in which there is only a kind of thin impression (reshiymah). ‘Ezra of Gerona also wrote that the chaos of Gen. 1.2 was a “primal emptiness” (nothingness) until “it traced a tracing finer than spirit” (Commentary, tr. Brody, 111). Matityahu b. Moses
ha-Yišhariy” (fifteenth century, Zaragoza) borrowed both from Maimonides (lo’ me-yēšh, “not from something”; clearly from “Guide” II. 13) and from Naḥmanides that not everything was created out of nothing; rather, two “foundations,” one “very thin and heavy [or abundant]” (daq ve-nikhbad) from which was made the hosts of heaven, and the other the foundation of the earth from which was formed and made everything on the earth, “and this is the opinion of the Ramban” (Peyrūsh...Arōt, 218; for Naḥmanides on this see the following note). The “philosophical” source for Naḥmanides is probably Abraham bar Hayya, Hegayōn ha-nefesh (ed. Rapoport 2; ed. Wigoder, 39–40), the necessity of the conjunction of hiyūliy (see following note on this) with form; part of this, but not the most important, is translated in Sirat, History of Jewish Philosophy, 99–100, with no analysis or discussion. The non-existence, or nothingness, from which physical matter emerged derives ultimately from Plotinus, Enneads (3.6, 18), but through the work known to the Muslims as “Theology of Aristotle.” Lipshitz devoted much of his aforementioned article to Isaac Abravanel’s critique of Naḥmanides and his incorrect claim that Abraham bar Ḥayya held the same position (in his Megilat ha-megaleh, 15). Lipshitz refers instead to the above-cited statement in Hegayōn ha-nefesh (apparently he did not have Wigoder’s ed.) and correctly concluded (536–37 n. 50) that this was the source for Naḥmanides (the “modern scholars” he mentions are of no importance, except for Tishby who indeed observed that the “Gerona qabalists” generally drew their interpretation of creation from the Hegayōn ha-nefesh). Lipshitz did not mention Judah b. Barzilay or ‘Ezra of Gerona, much less Plotinus. He is absolutely correct that Naḥmanides did not borrow his idea of two separate “substances,” one for the heavens and one for the earth, from the Hegayōn ha-nefesh; see below on this idea. On the influence of Abraham bar Hayya on Ibn ‘Ezra, see Chapter 2. 

143 In Arabic, the word is hayūlā, but hiyūliy in Hebrew. Here, definitely the influences are far more qabalistic than philosophical. Particularly of interest is the aforementioned qabalistic commentary on Song of Songs by ‘Ezra of Gerona. There he wrote (tr. Vajda, 79–80; tr. Brody, 69–70) that it was the opinion of “Plato” that it is inadmissible that the Creator produced something from nothing, but that there existed a kind of matter, similar to the clay which a potter shapes or the iron with which the smith works (Brody’s translation is inaccurate here: “this is not comparable to...”). This is not in any sense a diminution in God’s power. ‘Ezra spoke earlier about absolute “nothingness” and other concepts which clearly influenced Naḥmanides here (of this there is no hint in Vajda’s copious notes). ‘Ezra’s source is, in fact, Maimonides “Guide” II. 13; tr. Pines, 282–83; indeed, the very metaphor of the potter and ironsmith is taken verbatim from Maimonides; however, Maimonides did not attribute that to Plato, rather to the other “philosophers” who shared that view (see, e.g., Wolfson, Philosophy of the Kalam, 365–66). On the interpretation of Plato in Muslim thought, see the important article of Rosenthal, “On the Knowledge of Plato’s Philosophy in the Islamic World,” especially 401 on Timaeus, and his remarks in n. 1 there (Judah ha-Lēvy cites that work, Kūzari IV. 25; tr. 232). For allusions to this concept of pre-existent matter, see Langermann, “Cosmology and Cosmogony in Doresh Reshumoth,” 225–26; note particularly the anonymous responsum cited there criticizing this very source (Timaeus). In his sermon on Ecclesiastes, Naḥmanides also stated that God created “in one instant” the foundation of the heaven and the foundation of the earth, which is their hiyūliy (Kītevy 1: 187; bottom). Note that Moses Ibn ‘Ezra(h) already wrote, in the introductory poem to his (unpublished) philosophical-rhetorical work Maqūlat al-ḥadīqa fi ma’na al-majāz wa’l haqīqa, that “it occurred in [God’s] thought first
to create form and matter and the will, and to these were his desires/ and they are the first of all matter and the root [foundation] of all form, and there is no end to his matter [available to God] or number to his forms” (Ibn ‘Ezra(h), Shiyrey ha-hōl 1: 238, lines 21–22); a somewhat incorrect translation of this is given by Fenton, Paul. “Traces of Mōsēh ibn ‘Ezra’s ‘Arugat ha-Bōsem in the Writings of the Early Qabbalists of the Spanish School,” in I. Twerksky and J. M. Harris, eds., Studies in Medieval Jewish History and Literature (Cambridge, M.A., 1979–2000), 3: 50; the errors are significant but perhaps due to the translator of his article. Note there also, 51, an excerpt concerning the emanation of hylē from the Passive Intellect, which is incorrect; at least according to Ibn Sīnā (“Avicenna”) it emanated from the Active Intellect (see Morewedge, Metaphysics of Avicenna, note 114; text 16). Fenton there, 53–54, cites (again the translation is not entirely accurate) the comment of Naḥmanides on Genesis but does not relate it to Ibn ‘Ezra(h). The problem of the supposed “influence” of Ibn ‘Ezra(h) on early qabalists, including Naḥmanides, is that none of them knew Arabic and thus could not have read that work, even if they had known of its existence, which is doubtful.

In his sermon “Tōrat ha-Shēm temiymah” (Kitvey 1: 156–57), where he incorrectly attributed to Ibn ‘Ezra the explanation that beriyah (“creation”) comes from bara (see Chapter 2 on Ibn ‘Ezra on creation) and that in the first moment of creation God created the heavens and the earth, creating “hiyūliy for this and hīyūliy for that, which is to say that their foundation [elemental matter] is not the same,” as Maimonides said in the “Guide”; after which Ibn ‘Ezra is quoted as supposedly having said that the “hiyūliy” of the earth consisted of the four elements (fire, air, water and earth). In any case, this is not Ibn ‘Ezra’s position. In fact, it is probably from Bahya Ibn Paqudah, who said exactly this (Duties of the Heart, 120; Ḥōvōt ha-levavōt, 119). The reference to the “Guide” is apparently to II. 26 (tr. Pines, 331), where Maimonides stated that according to Pirqey de-Rabiy Eli’ezer (on which see Kafih’s note in his ed. of Maimonides, Morēh, 221) “the matter of the heavens is other than that of the earth and… they are two altogether distinct matters.” There is nothing there, nor in Ibn ‘Ezra in either of his commentaries on Genesis, about the elements, nor did Ibn ‘Ezra or Maimonides (in the original Arabic text) use the term hylē (since, as stated here several times, Naḥmanides used a different Hebrew translation of the “Guide” than the ones we have, perhaps that did have the Hebrew word hiyūliy). Naḥmanides in his aforementioned commentary on Gen. 1.1 also stated that there was created a separate “matter” (ḥōmer; hīyūliy) for the heavens and for the earth; it is this idea for which he attempted to find, incorrectly, support in Ibn ‘Ezra and Maimonides. Incidentally, Harvey, “Nissim of Gerona and William of Ockham on prime matter,” 88, claimed to find this in Aristotle, De caelo 1.1–2; it of course is not there, and his surprise that Naḥmanides maintained this position is mitigated by the fact that the source is neither Aristotle nor Maimonides but Pirqey de-Rabiy Eli’ezer, which Harvey failed to note. Harvey there quotes at length the explanation of Nisim b. Reuben of Gerona, who among other things strongly objected to Maimonides calling the element fire “darkness” (“Guide” II. 30; tr. 351), without apparently having completely read or understood what Maimonides said there. The main contention of Harvey, that Nisim was “influenced” by the Christian philosopher William of Ockham, is of course remote in the extreme (Nisim was a devout talmudic scholar who certainly did not read Latin, nor would he have been interested in a Christian philosopher). Bahya b. Asher interpreted the two uses of the object-indicator et in Gen. 1.1 as indicating the two matters, of the heavens and the earth (Biyūr, ed. Chavel 1: 15). This was also
the opinion of Simon b. Ṣemaḥ Duran, *Magenn avot*, 8b, as noted by Lipshitz, art. cit., 538; but his source for that was *Pirqey de-Rabiy Eli’ezer* and not Naḥmanides. See further on Maimonides’ views on “first matter” in “Guide” I. 28 (tr. Pines, 61; incidentally, with respect to his n. 19 there, all medieval Jewish writers in Muslim lands except Ibn ’Ezra believed that *sappir* [*sapīr*] means crystal).

145 On Gen. 1.1, ed. Chavel 1: 12. Ishbīlī, who unlike Naḥmanides actually had some knowledge of philosophy, criticized him here for presenting views not found in the philosophers (*Sefēr ha-zikarōn*, ed. Blau, 21–22; ed. Kahana, 49–50). Ishbīlī contradicts Naḥmanides not only on the basis of what he himself had read and studied in philosophy, but also from Maimonides’ treatise on logic and from Ibn Tibbon’s explanation of terms in the “Guide” (appended to his translation).

At least one of his criticisms can be answered by the fact, as mentioned, that Naḥmanides read the “Guide” in a faulty translation; see Chavel’s note, 1: 543, col. a (cf. Moses b. Naḥman, *Kitvev* 2: 348). See also Naḥmanides on Lev. 12.2 (2: 64) and the unconvincing explanation of Isaac Aboab in Chavel’s note there (see later here on Aboab). It is perhaps important to point out that while Sa’adyah Gaḏōn specifically condemned the notion of creation from pre-existent matter, Naḥmanides probably did not know that work in its Hebrew translation (it was not widely available in Spain, even though it had been translated by Judah Ibn Tibbon).

146 Gen. 1.8, ed. Chavel 1: 20 (the ultimate sources are Dan. 7.9–10, Ps. 104.2 and the apocryphal 1 Enoch 14.20; also Gen. *rabah* 3.4; *P.R.E.*, Chapter 3). In Chavel’s note there, “Another matter,” he cites Maimonides, “Guide” II. 26, but without mentioning that Maimonides there called that opinion “strange.” Virtually the entire statement is taken from the “Guide” there, as Naḥmanides understood it. As Ishbīlī noted in his *Sefēr ha-zikarōn* on this verse, there is no mention in Gen. *rabah* (12.1) of these matters. Maimonides cited Gen. *rabah* 1, but in reference to the “throne of glory” (in fact, different than the talmudic texts mentioned by Pines in his translation, 331 n. 5); see the important note of Kahana in his ed. of Ishbīlī, 51–52 n. 16* (in n. 13 there is an error: Simon b. Ṣemaḥ Duran, *Sefēr ha-tashbēṣ* 3: no. 53 [not 23], an important explanation of Maimonides; this error is repeated by Lipshitz in his aforementioned article, 431 n. 23, who discusses the subject at length). The other sources from which Naḥmanides derived his notions are unclear (on the possible if unlikely influence of Jacob b. Shēshet, see Lipshitz, 532–33), perhaps such things as *Sefēr yeṣiyrah*, the *Sefēr ha-bahiyr*, etc.; *Midrashiym*, such as *Pesiqta de-Rav Kahana*, 341–42 [21.5]; Gen. *rabah* 1.3; and elsewhere contain the explanation, given in a “whisper” (because of its esoteric secret), that Ps. 104.2 means that “the Holy One covered himself with a white robe” and the world was made bright by the radiance of his majesty; so “secret” was this that it was stated that if this had not already been said openly it would be prohibited to say it in public. Ezra of Gerona outlined the “mysteries” of creation in comparison with Ps. 104, and briefly remarked that verse 2 (“who spreads light like a garment”) corresponds to the light created from nothingness (tr. Vajda, 108; tr. Brody, 109 [whose translation of the verse is incorrect]). This and the whole comparison of the Psalm with the acts of creation were borrowed from ha-Lēvy, *Kūzariy* V. 10, a fact not mentioned either by Brody or Vajda (neither in his text commentary nor his lengthy “Note Annexe VIII” on this section). Ezra then explained further that this refers to (the sefiyrah) Ḥakhmah (Wisdom) which produced a light which was one of the ten things “emanated” on the first day of creation (*Ḥagigah* 12a; cf. n. 159). In another qabalistic text, “Ezra stated that Maimonides (“our master Moses”) erred in his criticism of the statement in *Pirqey de-Rabiy Eli’ezer*, which follows the opinion of Plato [*!] that the Creator...
produced not something from nothing but from a pre-existent matter. He refers to both Song of Songs 3.9 and Ps. 104.2, and concludes that the “light” (in the Psalm) is Wisdom (Scholem, Gershom. “Te’udah ḥadashah le-toldot reshiyt ha-qabalah,” in J. Fichman, ed., Sefer Biyalit [Bialik] [Jerusalem, 1934], 157–58; cf. Vajda, op. cit., 250–51). An anonymous metaphysical commentary on the Torah, “Dorēsh reshūmōr,” written in Spain in 1234/35, appears to have drawn on one or more of these sources in its discussion of “primordial light” and attempted to explain Pirqey de-Rabiy Eli’ezer in a manner consistent with creation ex nihilo; see Langermann, “Cosmology and Cosmogony in Doresh Reshumoth,” 212–15 (Langermann mentioned none of the other sources discussed here; see, however, 224, where he briefly mentions Ezra and Naḥmanides). Note that the discussion of “primordial darkness” by the anonymous commentator, 216, is probably influenced by Ibn ‘Ezra (Isa. 45.7); see Chapter 2, “Creation.” Judah b. Moses Hallāva, in his commentary on Genesis, also found difficulty with Pirqey de-R. Eli’ezer and gave a more sophisticated explanation than had Naḥmanides, whom he does not mention (Imrey shefer, 10; see Bibliography).

147 Gen. 2.17, ed. Chavel 1: 38; cf. Moses b. Maimon, “Guide” II. 19; tr. 302–03, and see Wolfson, “Kalam Arguments for Creation” (revised in his Philosophy of the Kalām, 373 ff.), and his “Hallevi and Maimonides on Design, Chance and Necessity,” “Tōrāt ha-Shēm temiymah,” in Kitvey 1: 142 (Chavel there thought that ba‘aley ‘iyūn is a reference to Job, which is incorrect; it refers to the Greek philosophers). “Rūmaniyah” could mean many places in medieval terminology, not necessarily Romania. Elsewhere (in his strictures on the book of commandments of Maimonides; see n. 149), Naḥmanides stated that the “heresy” of the doctrine of eternity is the belief that the universe existed primordially of itself. The Sabians are frequently discussed by Maimonides (see “Guide,” index). An important article on Muslim sources concerning them is Genequand, “Idolâtrie, astrolâtrie et sabéisme,” note in particular, 119–20; see further bibliography in n. 173, end. It is interesting that the famous Iranian scholar al-Bīrūnī (973–1050 C.E.) identified the “true Sabians,” idolaters, as the Jews of Babylonia.

148 Gen. 1.1 (ed. Chavel 1: 9); Ex. 20.2 (ed. Chavel 1: 388), the commandment “I am the Lord your God” includes the belief in creation, “for if the world were eternal nothing of its nature could be changed,” or as he explained in his aforementioned sermon, “if God wanted to shorten the wing of a fly or lengthen the foot of an ant he would not be able,” according to that belief (“Tōrāt ha-Shēm temiymah,” in Kitvey 1: 146). See also his disagreement with Maimonides on the eternity of the universe, in his sermon on Ecclesiastes, “Derashah ‘al Qōhelet,” in Kitvey 1: 188–89, and cf. “Tōrāt ha-Shēm temiymah,” 157. Pedaya, Ramban, 274 ff., has a lengthy chapter on his views of eternity with regard to “desire”; the universe and its separate components exist only so long as God desires their existence (she does not discuss the above sources, other than the sermon on Qōhelet). For various views on eternity of the universe, see the index here.

149 In his strictures on Maimonides’ book of commandments, he wrote simply that we must believe that God “brings forth from absolute nothingness [ne-‘eyn muḥlat] something [yēsh]” and also “to the something which he shall desire at any time [be-kal zeman min ha-zemaniym]” (Moses b. Maimon, Sefer ha-miṣnaḥōt, ed. Chavel, 375). This actually goes beyond the idea of continuous renewal of creation and provides for the possibility of additional creation.

150 Responsum in Ibn Adret, Tesh v t ha-mey as t, no. 284 (end), rpt. in Tesh v t ha-Ramban, 160–63 (no. 105) and in Kitvey 1: 383–84. His (alleged) commentary on Job (Kitvey 1: 117) quotes a well-known poem by Judah ha-Lévvy (Shi-yrey ha-qōdesh 1: 69–73, where the line cited is on 73, line 66). See also the
supercommentary on Naḥmanides by Ibn Shū'ayb, Biyyū 30a (¶ Ve-shavta ‘ad H’); his own comment on Genesis which he cites is ibid., 2a.

151 Gen. 2.7, ed. Chavel 1: 33 (Chavel again claimed that his “source” was the Zohar, rather than, of course, he being the probable source for the Zohar). His actual source appears to be, again, Abraham bar Ḥayya, Hgyōn ha-nefesh, ed. Rapoport, 6a and 11a; ed. Wigoder, 53, 65 and see intro. 21–22. See also Maimonides, Shemōnah peraqiym; critical ed. with Eng. tr. Eight Chapters of Maimonides on Ethics, 8–10 (text), 1–2 (tr.). The Hebrew translation of that by Samuel Ibn Tibbon was seen by Naḥmanides, who indirectly cites it on Num. 20.1, ed. Chavel 2: 274. Bahya Ibn Paqudah also objected to the opinion of “some philosophers” that the spheres and “spiritual bodies” (higher beings) are made from fire (Ḥōvōt ha-levavōt, 118; Duties of the Heart, 119). If Ignaz Goldziher was correct that “western Mediterranean” Jewish neo-Platonists believed that the soul emanated from the intellect (his ed. of Bahya Ibn Paqudah, Kitēḇ Ma’anī al-Nafs [Berlin, 1907], 43–44; cf. Langermann, “Cosmology and Cosmogony in Doresh Reshumoth,” 206), then the authors here mentioned either are not to be classified as “neo-Platonist” or they are an exception. Langermann cites Naḥmanides, Tōrat ha-adam (Kitvey 2: 287), criticizing those who do not understand the structure of the body, much less the soul, and believe that the soul originates from the galgal ha-sēḵhel (sphere of the intellect). Naḥmanides did not necessarily mean philosophers, of whom he knew little, but probably had in mind specifically Zeraḥyah ha-Lēvy (whom he frequently criticized); see his specific criticism of him on this cited by Langermann, 207.

152 Chavel in his additional note, 1: 546, observes that this (the three classes of soul) was also the opinion of Ibn Gabirol and of Ibn ‘Ezra; of course, Naḥmanides never saw Ibn Gabirol’s work (in Arabic; the Heb. translation, Meqōr hayiym, is modern). However, Abraham bar Ḥayya also maintained this (op. cit., 11a and 65); see the important discussion of this by Efros, Fiylōsāfiyah 2: 164. Those who say there is only one soul that combines three “powers” may refer to Judah ha-Lēvy (Kūzariy 5.12; tr. 259), but most certainly Hippocrates, alluded to in Moses b. Maimon, Eight Chapters, tr. 37 (he himself did not accept an actual division of three souls). Naḥmanides, naturally, would adhere to the Platonic rather than the Aristotelian position, but the decisive factor was the midrash. See here the commentary of Yafeh, Tēkhēlet Mōrdēkhay, 11, who refers to Naḥmanides on Gen. 1.23 and also the midrash Genesis rabah which may have served as a source for Naḥmanides.

153 Lev. 18.29, ed. Chavel 2: 114; Lev. 26.12 (ibid., 186); cf. Maimonides, “Guide” II. 27. His (alleged) commentary on Job 13.15 (Kitvey 1: 57) and 22.1 (ibid., 76) also refers to the “world of the souls”; i.e., the afterlife. Actually, he believed that there are no separate periods of “resurrection” and “future world,” in which only the soul exists, but that these are one and the same and are after the period of gan ‘ēden (“paradise”; see index here) which comes immediately after death. He also believed literally in resurrection and that the “world to come” is not for the immaterial soul alone but also for the resurrected body. In all of this, he disagreed, of course, with Ibn ‘Ezra and Maimonides (see M.T., Mada’: “Tēshūvah,” 8.3–4; for Ibn ‘Ezra see Chapter 2). His fullest discussion of these matters is his “Sha’ar ha-genūl” (“gate of reward”), part of his treatise Tōrat ha-adam (Kitvey 2: 297 ff.; particularly 306). Incidentally, he there quotes (308) an alleged responsum of Maimonides according to which both the Greek philosophers and the “sages of the West” (Muslim philosophers) agreed that the soul is eternal, without any material form. Needless to say, Maimonides never wrote such a thing (Chavel rightly said that no such a responsum is known). Naḥmanides certainly
is not to be suspected of forgery, but this is evidence that such forged responsa did circulate. He also quoted from the forged “treatise on resurrection” attributed to Maimonides, and understandably found discrepancies in that work. He concludes by citing (311) Ibn Gabirol’s famous “Keter malkhūt” (poem, “crown of kingship”) which showed that, like Maimonides, he also believed that the world to come is only inhabited by souls (the lines quoted may be found in his Selected Religious Poems, 102, line 324; 122, line 624; note that he also quoted the rather platitudinous line “And when You bring me from this world/ bring me in peace to life in the world to come,” ibid., 122, lines 624–25). Pedaya, Ramban, has a lengthy qabalistic discussion (314 ff.) on resurrection, without, however, dealing with any of the sources mentioned here. Haas, “Sheliylat ha-emūnah,” 4, discussed these concepts in Naḥmanides here, in connection with a larger focus on Ibn ‘Ezra, but without mention of many of the things above (nor did he cite Pedaya).

154 On Lev. 17.11; ed. Chavel 2: 97. See on this the discussion by Idel, “Naḥmanides: Kabbalah, Halakhah, and Spiritual Leadership,” 56–57 (my translation is slightly more literal than Idel’s) who claimed that his source was in fact Isaac b. Solomon “Israeliy” of North Africa, “Sha’ar ha-yesōd,” falsely attributed to Aristotle, and explained that according to Naḥmanides only the animate soul was thus emanated from the Active Intellect, “whereas the higher human faculties” were emanated from the realm of the sefīyrōt. Elsewhere, Naḥmanides criticized Jewish thinkers who maintained that the human soul emanated from the “sphere of the intellect.” Surprisingly, Idel made no mention of the commentary on Gen. 2.7, discussed above (see n. 151). Idel (57 n. 105) erroneously cited other sources for this alleged position of Naḥmanides; the first source cited, Kitvey 1: 383–84, is part of the responsum of Naḥmanides to his cousin Jonah b. Abraham Gerundiy, and the second, ibid., 392, is a piyūṭ for Yom Kippur; neither says anything at all similar to Idel’s misinterpretation. More likely, Naḥmanides was here influenced by the aforementioned (see n. 41) work of Isaac “Israeliy,” Sēfer ha-yesōdōt, translated into Hebrew by Abraham Ibn Ḥasdai ha-Lēvy of Barcelona at the request of David Qimhi, and thus available to Naḥmanides. Incidentally, concerning the essence of the commandment in this passage, where Naḥmanides disagrees with Maimonides, see Ishbibīl, Sēfer ha-zikarōn (corrected text in ed. Kahana, 88–89), that he again used a faulty translation of the “Guide” which also omitted (or Naḥmanides did) an essential part, and in fact it does not mention “demons” at all. See also Naḥmanides on Lev. 17.2 (Chavel 2: 93–94), on the differences between the souls of men and beasts and his discussion of demons (in which he clearly believed, also elsewhere). Curiously, Bahya b. Asher cited only the comments of Naḥmanides on this and ignored the above discussion of the soul. Naḥmanides says that he actually spoke with “masters of demons” (sorcerers) who explained their craft to him (“Tōnat ha-Shēm temiymah,” 146, 149).

155 Ḥidūshey ha-Ramban 1: 241, col. b.

156 See also the end of the commentary on Gen. 1.1 (Moses saw “the beginning,” Deut. 33.21) and Ibn Shū’ayb, Biyūr, 1a; and see Pedayah, Ramban, 166, who quotes this, without mentioning the source, and found it difficult; perhaps the “clear mirror,” or glass, means seeing itself and not just tiferet, etc. (she confuses tiferet Yisraēl with the qabalistic sphere Tiferet, which is another thing altogether). However, it seems likely that Ibn Shū’ayb (and so Naḥmanides) intended that all of this “seeing” (of the “back” of God, etc.) was by way of the “clear glass,” and not that it is the seeing itself (and cf. the explanation of Shēm Tōv Ibn Gaōn which she cites [again with no source], on keneset Yisraēl, see Chapter 2, at n. 37).
Halbertal, *Al derekh ha-emet*, 181, 182, has claimed that for Naḥmanides the term is equivalent to *Shekhinyah* (the “Presence” of God; see index here).

157 Ibn Shūʿayb, *Biyūr*, 5a–b, where he cites not only the commentary of Naḥmanides but also the views of Maimonides, and of his own teacher Ibn Adret (“mōriy ha-rav” in the first citation, the expression indicating that he was deceased, of course, an addition by a copyist). The third reference to his teacher, his explanation that what Naḥmanides meant when he said that pure souls “see” God in the same sense as the prophets applies only once or twice to any person, refers to Ibn Adret, *Sheḥelot u-teḥuvot* 1: no. 548 (and cf. no. 423 there). In general, Ibn Shūʿayb’s discussion of prophecy there, 4b–6a, is important, and see his *Derashōt*, all of “Raʾeh.” Clearly, Naḥmanides was strongly influenced by Judah b. Barzilay, who said very much the same thing, also citing the midrash on Leviticus (*Peyrūsh sēfer yeḥiyah*, 12; and note his discussion, 8, of the “name” of God and the connection of letters of the name to the people Israel; see n. 124 on Naḥmanides and this work).

158 Gen. 18.1; ed. Chavel 1: 106. As usual, Chavel incorrectly cites the Zohar (written later) as the “source” for the concept of *malbūsh* (cf. above, text after n. 164 on this). This is further explained by Ibn Shūʿayb, *Biyūr*, 5b, who cites *Pirqey de-Rabiy Eliʿezer*, Chapter 38 and Gen. *rabah* 24, and says that there are also different levels of angels and those who are called “men” are clothed in a thin material of light. He adds that his teacher (Ibn Adret) used to say that even though Naḥmanides had written that these angels appear only to those who are worthy, this is generally so, but once or twice they appear to every man (this statement in fact is in Ibn Adret, *Sheḥelot u-teḥuvot* 1: no. 548 and cf. no. 423). Bahya b. Asher, *Biyūr* 1: 172, quoted Naḥmanides in his explanation of why certain angels are called “men” and this is because of the “glory” created in them which is called *malbūsh*, for this is the “garment” of the three upper levels (three of the four “spiritual” elements of which all things are made, the counterpart to the four physical elements), called *adam* (“man”); Chavel there cites an explanation that these are the different types of “soul,” *nefesh*, *rūḥ* and *neshamah*). The fourth element is physical, and when the angels “clothe” themselves in this they may be seen by humans. See Wolfson, “The Secret of the Garment in Naḥmanides”; also Wolfson, “By Way of Truth,” 136–37, where, however, he somewhat incorrectly translated Naḥmanides and neglected to mention the above additional sources. Maimonides, whom he incorrectly cites, is M.T., *Ahavah*: “Yeṣādey ha-Tōrah,” 2.7, ten “levels” of angels, the last of which is “men” (*iyshiyum*), and law 9 where he explains that these are the “angels” who speak with prophets; see also “Guide” II. 42. Contrary to Wolfson, it is obvious that Naḥmanides borrowed this from Maimonides and intended the same thing, only that he meant it literally. Perhaps the distinction with regard to “created glory” which Wolfson wishes to draw, 137 n. 100, between Saʿadyah, Judah ha-Lēvy and Maimonides on the one hand and Naḥmanides on the other is correct; this requires further investigation. Shēm Tōv Ibn Gaʾn cites a qabalistic explanation of his teacher Isaac b. Tōdros; see Schwartz, *Qemiyōt*, segūlōt ve-sikḥletanūt, 53. Schwartz also ignored all of the above sources.

159 Ed. Chavel 1: 328–29. The source, not mentioned by Chavel, is *Mekhilta*, “*Shiyrta*” 2 (Mekhilta [sic], ed. and tr. Lauterbach 2: 20), which was also quoted (without naming the source) by ‘Ezra of Gerona in his aforementioned commentary on Song of Songs (tr. Vajda, 59–60 [Vajda made no comment on this}; tr. Brody, 44). It is unclear whether Naḥmanides used the *Mekhilta* (which he knew) directly here or whether he cited it from ‘Ezra’s commentary. Ibn ‘Ezra stated simply as common knowledge that every nation has a known star and *mazal*
246  Provence, Catalonia, Aragón

(zodiacal sign, or planet), and so for every city; but the Jewish people are an exception to this and have no guiding star since God has made them his "treasure" (on Deut. 4.19, ed. Weiser 3: 225; and cf. Deut. 33.17, ibid., 342; see index here "eyn mazal le-Yisraēl").

160 The Land, or more specifically Jerusalem, was traditionally considered, also by Muslims and Christians, to be the "center" of the inhabited earth; not as Chavel said in his note, nor of course was the Zohar the "source" for this or the following statement, but perhaps the opposite. Judah ha-Lēvy also wrote that the Land is the central and principal part of the "temperate zone" and it is the land of prophecy (Kūzariyy 2.95; tr. Hirschfeld, 65). Naḥmanides fervently praised the Land of Israel in several places in his commentary; e.g., ed. Chavel 1: 161–62, 189. See also his sermon for Rosh ha-Shanah, in Kīteyy 1: 240 ff., and see index here: "Israel, Land of." It is unfortunate that an international conference on the "sanctity" of Jerusalem resulted in a volume of papers, mostly by Jewish authors, which focused almost entirely on Jerusalem in Christian thought (Levine, Lee I., ed. Jerusalem. Its Sanctity and Centrality to Judaism, Christianity and Islam [N.Y., 1999]). Guy Stroumsa, "Mystical Jerusalem," for example (there, 349–70), is only on Christian ideas; Haggai Ben-Shammai, "Jerusalem in Early Medieval Jewish Bible Exegesis," 447–64, in fact is on Karaite exegesis; the section of the book devoted to "Jerusalem in the Late Middle Ages and Modern Era" has no paper on Jews at all. See, for example, the extremely important discussion by Simon b. Šemāḥ Duran (early fifteenth century, originally from Majorca but settled in Algeria) on the sanctity of Jerusalem after the destruction of the Temple (Tāšbēṣ 3, no. 201).

161 There was an ancient tradition that the Jews believed in guardian angels for every nation, see Origen, Contra Celsum 5.25 (cf. Daniēlou, J. "Les sources juives de la doctrine de anges des nations chez Origen," Recherches des science religieuse 38 [1951]: 132–37); see also Targūm Onkelos on Gen. 31.11; Talmud Sōṭah 7.11; Midrash Ex. rabah 32.1. In the "short recension" of his commentary on Ex. 33.17 (ed. Weiser 2: 341–42), Ibn 'Ezra criticized Sa'adyah Gaōn for having stated that the Israelites requested that they should have no guardian angel over them, citing on the contrary the statement about Michael (Daniel 10.21 or Joshua 5.14); yet elsewhere he wrote that Moses requested that the Israelites should not have a "minister" or angel over them (Deut. 33.17; ed. Weiser 3: 342). Concerning the dream of Jacob and the ladder (Gen. 28.12), Naḥmanides, in contrast to Ibn 'Ezra, interpreted the angels literally and said that they are sent to perform God's decrees but that God promised Jacob that he (the Jewish people) will not be subject to angels but will be a special "portion" to God (ed. Chavel 1: 157–58); incidentally, the reference to "Rabbi Eli'ezer" and the interpretation of this as the guardian angels of the nations, which Chavel could not find, are in Pīrke de Rabbi Eli'ezer, tr. Friedlander, 265 (and cf. 177), as well as in other midrashiyot. This has nothing to do with the "four exiles," or four kingdoms, as understood by Levine, "Poetics of Characterization," 705. Various midrashic sources connected Jacob's dream of the angels ascending and descending a ladder (Gen. 28.12) with the "princes" (guardian angels) of the nations (Pīsikta dī-Rab Kahāna, 353; Midrash Tehilīyot, 174a; Tanna Debe Eliyahu, 120), "Judah ha-Kohēn of Toledo" (most probably Judah b. Solomon ha-Kohēn Mosca, fl. ca. 1250) wrote that Ptolemy in his Almagest stated that according to the zodiacal signs the inhabitants of the Land of Israel should have been liars and with no knowledge of God, and thus they were merchants (citing Hosea 13.8; "Canaanite" indeed became a term for merchants in the early medieval period), "and the sage [Ibn 'Ezra] replied" that these words were true except that the Jewish people are not
under the dominion of the stars since divine providence is over them (fragment cited by Mann, J. “Glânures de la Gueniza,” R.E.J. 74 [1922]: 156, no. 8). I find no such statement in Ibn ‘Ezra, and it is highly unlikely since this contradicts his views on astral determinism and providence (see Chapter 2 and index). See also Naḥmanides’ sermon on Ecclesiastes concerning the mazālōt (astrological powers) and the “upper angels” which have dominion over the nations of the world, in contrast to the Land of Israel which is the center of the world and “treasure of God,” over which these do not have dominion (Kitvey 1: 200); cf. also his sermon on Rosh ha-Shanah (ibid., 250). Moses Ibn ‘Ezra(h), on the contrary, wrote that the difference between Jews and other peoples, like the Arabs, was that they had no need of magic or astrology, since God himself guides them (citing various passages), or through the angel Michael (Kitāb, 34/35–36/37). Abraham Ibn ‘Ezra’s very similar views were of course influential on Naḥmanides; cf. also Sklarz, “Sodotav shel R.AB”A,” 504–07.

162 Asher wrote that Gentile nations are prosperous because of the influence of the planets, citing Deut. 4.19 as proof that God ordained this, and that “since they worship the stars, they are subject to them” (from this statement, it is clear that he was not talking about contemporary Gentiles, even though he uses the present tense; rather, those of the biblical period). God ordained this influence also for the Jewish people, and only if they act in accord with his will are they not subject to those influences, but when they transgress God’s will then they are “handed over” to the influence of the stars or planets (“Sōd ha-shevū‘ah,” in Joseph Danin, ed., Qablat R’ Asher b. David [Jerusalem, 1980], 9; Asher b. David. in D. Abrams, ed., Kal Kitvav [Los Angeles, 1996], 88–89; English translation by Keiner, Ronald C. “The Status of Astrology in the Early Kabbalah[sid],” Meẖqrey Yerushalayim be-maḥshevet Yisraēl [Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought] 6 [1987]: 32* [Eng. section]). It is not improbable that he received these notions from either his grandfather or uncle, and perhaps indirectly this also influenced Naḥmanides.

163 Ex. 20.3, ed. Chavel 1: 392 (what Chavel means in his note there that Naḥmanides disagrees with Maimonides is about the law discussed in M.T., which he cites afterward). For Maimonides’ statement on angels as separate intellects, see “Guide” I. 49. On Naḥmanides’ view on astrology and his commentary on Deut. 18.9, see below: “Magic and Astrology.” One of the proofs deduced by Jacob Levinger (in Meẖqrey Yerushalayim be-maḥshevet Yisraēl [Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought] 4 [1985]: 23; in Hebrew) that a small treatise once attributed to Maimonides (Biyūr ḥēmōt qōdesh ve-hōḥ; “explanation of sacred and profane names”) is a forgery, which it actually has long been known to be, is its mention of this doctrine of separate intellects (angels) having power over the nations of the world, which is completely foreign to the actual position of Maimonides. Levinger correctly related this to qabalistic teaching (indeed, that treatise mentions qabalists, who of course did not exist, or who just were beginning to emerge, at the time Maimonides wrote), and see Levinger, 25, on the influence of Naḥmanides.

164 Yet immediately after this he wrote that Bil’am (“Bal’am” in some biblical translations) was not a prophet, the proof of which is that God “opened his eyes” to see the angel, and if he were a prophet he would not have needed this to see an angel; i.e., he would have apprehended this by himself (Num. 22.31). Tradition, of course, declared otherwise that he was a prophet, and in fact as great or greater than Moses (Sifre [Sifriy] § 357.10; Numbers rabah 14.20); the Sifriy statements were cited by the notorious polemicist Ramón Martí (so, not “Martin,” or even “Martini”; Catalonia, fourteenth century) in his Pugio fidei, and also by
Yeda’yah “Bedersiy” in his commentary (manuscript); see Louis Finkelstein’s notes in his ed. of *Sifre on Deuteronomy*, 430. Surprisingly, Nahmanides disagreed (Num. 23.5) also with the Talmud, where it is said that an angel spoke to Bil’am (*Sanhedrin* 105b); and see Epstein, *Tôrah temiymah*, notes on this passage. Naḥmanides again contradicted himself when he wrote that Bil’am “saw in a glass clearly like the first prophets,” or on a slightly lesser level since the Patriarchs saw Shaday (the form, or power, represented by that name) and he “only” saw the appearance of Shaday. (This also contradicts, of course, the statement that only Moses “saw in a glass clearly,” *Yevamot* 49b, and see Naḥmanides’ own statement on that above, “Prophecy”). He then cites the statement in *Sifriy* (but not Num. *rabah*) and attempts to explain it away (ed. Chavel 2: 297–98; note the pious objection also by Baḥya b. Asher cited in the note there; nevertheless, the midrashic statements both say the opposite). Pedaya, *Ramban*, 132–33, discussed Naḥmanides on Bil’am, with no mention of any of the above, including the statement about “seeing in a glass,” nor did she mention this in her discussion of that concept, 166–67.

165 Lev. 16.8, ed. Chavel 2: 91; cf. Chavel 1: 393 for a similar use of “necromancy,” and see below on magic and astrology. Actual necromancy, conjuring or divining by means of the dead, is forbidden in the Bible (Lev. 19.31, 20.6, 20.27; Deut. 18.11). See also Leicht, “Naḥmanides on Necromancy,” with lengthy excerpts quoted from the unreliable English translation of Chavel, and perhaps too much of an effort to relate the simple views of Naḥmanides to contemporary Christian theories.

166 See *Sifre on Deuteronomy*, 388, top. In his talmudic commentary on *B.B.* 8a, Naḥmanides discusses a complex case (on which, incidentally, see Perles, “Nachträge über R. Moses ben Nachmann [sic].” 176) and there mentions that he “heard from a Greek scholar” (*ḥavēr*, apparently in the talmudic sense, “companion-scholar” of the Phariises; here, one who knows the Talmud) the explanation of the terms discussed. There was constant commercial travel between Catalonia and Byzantium, as well as Candia (Crete) and Sicily, where Greek was spoken. In fact, *metator* is Latin and is found as a loan word in some early rabbinic texts; see Philip Alexander, introduction to his translation of 3 Enoch in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 243 (page numbers, hard to see, are on top inside margin of the page). This has been slightly misrepresented in the otherwise excellent book of Orlov, Andrei A. *The Enoch-Metatron Tradition* (Tübingen, 2005), 94, who claims that Alexander said that the Latin word survived as a *Greek* loan word in Jewish sources, which is incorrect. See also the cautionary words of Scholem, Gershom. *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition* (N.Y., 1965, 2nd ed.), 43.

167 Wolfson, “By Way of Truth,” 133 ff., discusses at length this and other statements about angels, noting that in effect the attribute of judgment is equivalent to his notion of the *Shekhiynah* (“divine presence”). Naḥmanides even made the audacious suggestion that “angel of God” should rather perhaps be understood as “the angel who is God” ![1].

168 This is in contrast to the previously mentioned opinion of Baḥya Ibn Paqudah, which Naḥmanides either forgot or deliberately contradicted; see n. 151. See also the fascinating responsum of Isaac b. Scheshet (1326–1409), *She’elot u-teshûvot*, no. 92, on magick and demons, which cites Naḥmanides here.

169 Jonah Gerundiy, *Sha’arey teshuvaḥ*, “Gate” 3.86; numerous eds. (and with Eng. tr. S. Silverstein [Jerusalem, N.Y., 1967; photo rpt. 1971], 204–05). Elsewhere (Lev. 18.25), Naḥmanides commented on the immoral sexual practices of the Canaanites for which they were dispossessed. David, Joseph E. “Nahmanides
on Law, Land, and Otherness,” in Katell Berthelot, Joseph E. David and Marc Hirshman, eds., The Gift of the Land and the Fate of the Canaanites in Jewish Thought (Oxford, 2014), 180–201, very briefly discusses Naḥmanides’ views on Canaanites but does not mention this source. The important statements of Ibn Kaspī are ignored altogether in this collection.

170 Ex. 20.3, ed. Chavel 1: 392. No doubt he was influenced by what Maimonides wrote about the origins of idolatry in the belief in powers of the sun and planets (M.T., Ahavah: “Avōdah zara” Chapter 1, and in the “Guide”); however, there is no mention there of angels, and certainly not of the “worship” of the separate intellects. See also Genequand, “Idolâtrie, astro-lâtrie et sabéisme,” 111, on Muslim sources on idolatry. Ibn Adret apparently followed his teacher in this and wrote that God appointed stars (planets) over portions of the earth and that the worship of these is not true idolatry since the worshiper knows that the power of dominion of the planet comes from God, but Jews are forbidden to worship planets or to “plan our deeds according to them in any aspect” (Ḥidushay ha-Rasba: peyrūshey ha-hagaddōt, 145; cf. Perles, R. Salomon b. Abraham b. Adereth, 53). On Ibn Adret and Ishbīlī and astral magic, see Schwartz, “From Theurgy to Magic,” 198–204 (by far the most important part of the article).

171 Deut. 18.9, ed. Chavel 2: 429. The text, Sēfer ha-Levanah, was published by A.W. Greenup (London, 1912). See also Lelli, F. “Le versioni ebraiche di un testo ermetico—il Sefer Ha-Levannah,” Henoch 12 (1990): 147–64 (especially 150 n. 10); see on the myth of the discovery of the original in Thorndike, Lynn. History of Magic and Experimental Sciences (N.Y., 1923–58) 2: 224. Astrologers generally believed that the moon “moves” into different stations every night and affects the lower world according to the “camp” (lunar mansion) in which it happens to be. Simon b. Semaḥ Duran wrote that “there is no need of these things in [with] our Torah; also this wisdom is not perfected [or complete] today in the hand of any man and all the more in our hands since the wisdom of our [talmudic] sages has been lost” but no doubt there is truth in all of this (Sēfer ha-taḏbēš 1: no. 106). Duran left Majorca in 1391 and went to North Africa, where he wrote (1405) a lengthy philosophical commentary on Job (‘Ohēv mishpaṭ, first published with the text of Job [Venice, 1589]; again in the “Rabbinical Bible” [Bible with commentaries] Qehiylat Mōsheh [Amsterdam, 1724–28]). It is thoroughly discussed by Eisen, The Book of Job in Medieval Jewish Philosophy, Chapter 7 (however, with no citation of the published editions). Since this work was not written in Spain, it does not concern us.

172 In fact, Ibn ‘Ezra (on 28.6) wrote a profound explanation of the difficulties involved in the text. There is much more than is apparent there, see the excellent discussion of this by Lipshitz, Pinqey ‘īyun, 55–63; cf. his article “Le-феyruš hā-Raab’ ‘al ha-‘uriym ve-tuniym” (which was ignored by Regev, “Siṃboliyqah,” 259–62), mentioning (261) the objection of Naḥmanides. Sela, Asṭrologiya u-farshaniyut, 290–91, comments briefly on this (citing the wrong verse, 28.8 instead of 28.6) and compares it with some of Ibn ‘Ezra’s astrological writings; none of what is said here was noted by him. Solomon b. David Ibn Ya’īsh (Guadalajara, mid-fourteenth century?) stated in his still unpublished supercommentary on Ibn ‘Ezra that it appeared to him from what he said about this that the ēfōd (upper garment of the high priest, on which was the breastplate) alludes to the ninth sphere (cited from a manuscript by Steinschneider in H.B. 19 [1879]: 93; and see the citation by Zarza, Samuel. “Majūr hayiym,” in Ibn ‘Ezra, ed., Mangaliyōr tōvah (Mantua, 1559), 78a–b). However, in Yesōd mōna, “Gate 9,” end (tr. Strickman, 135–37) Ibn ‘Ezra gives a completely astronomical explanation that the names on the breastplate correspond to the 12 constellations
and the ‘ārīyām and tūmīyām are literally “lights” and refer to the sun and moon (and see index here). The biblical commentary erroneously attributed to Joseph b. David of Zaragoza (actually by Joseph Ibn Ḥabīb, author of the commentary “Nimtāqey Yōsēf” on Isaac al-Fāṣīf; see Ta-Šina, Yiśrāel. ha-Sifrīt ha-parshāniyṭ le-Talmūd [Jerusalem, 1994], 90–91) appears to have been influenced by Ibn ‘Ezra when he stated that the ‘ārīyām ve-tūmīyām “possibly” were “deeds of heaven” or a “secret” transmitted to Moses by God (Joseph b. David, Peyruṭ ʿal ha-Tōnah, 207); so also what he wrote about the breastplate, 209, is derived from Ibn ‘Ezra (the editor made no observation on this in either place). The qabalist Abraham Abulafia also borrowed from Ibn ‘Ezra; see Idel, Moshe. The Mystical Experience in Abraham Abulafia (Albany, 1988), 106. The allegorization of the ‘ārīyām ve-tūmīyām as an astrolabe was attacked by Ibn Adret and Abba Marīy b. Moses in the debate over philosophy (in Marīy, Minḥat genaṭ, 105 [no. 49] and 106 [no. 50]; cf. Ibn Adret, Sheʾēlot u-tĕshūvōt 1: nos. 416, 417; yet surely there “those who deny God” does not refer to Ibn ‘Ezra but to later allegorists).

173 “The Torah did not prohibit that which is true but that which is false”: Ibn ‘Ezra on Lev. 19.31 (ed. Weiser 3: 67 and see his notes), which in general Naḥmanides cited approvingly (with some variation in the language) in his sermon “Tōnat ha-Shēm temiymah” (Kitvev, ed. Chavel 1: 149), but conveniently ignoring the statement that all such magic is false. See on this also Lipshitz, Pirqey ʿiyān, 69–70, 200.

174 In his responsum mentioned in Chavel’s notes (which should refer to Ibn Adret, Teshuʿvōt ha-meʿyḥaṣōt, no. 283, not 282; rpt. in Moses b. Naḥman, Teshuʿvōt, no. 104 and in Kitvev 1: 378–81, the notes are identical); incidentally, sīdybaʿīs there (Teshuʿvōt, 153 line 3 [=Kitvev, 378]) is “Chaldeans” (caledns) in Catalan, who represent astrologers generally in Jewish sources; cf. Dan. 2.5, etc.; see also the same word in Naḥmanides’ strictures in Maimonides, Sēfer ha-miṣnōt, “additional” positive commandment 8. In addition to sources in Chavel’s notes, this responsum is mentioned by Ibn Shūʿayb, Denāḥāṭ, 51b, col. b; ed. Metzger 1: 277–78. In the responsum, Naḥmanides also specifically cited Maimonides and disagreed, on the basis of the selective citing of sources to support his own position, and concluded that even magic is not forbidden (ibid., 155; Kitvev, 380; it is to this that Ibn Shūʿayb alludes, saying that Naḥmanides had a “different way” in the matter and that was due to his great piety, which perhaps protected him). Naḥmanides stated that not only astrology and magic are not prohibited, but even consulting “demons” is permissible (that is, not punishable; one still transgresses the command to be “upright” with God, Lev. 22.21, which uniquely he considered to be a positive commandment). The entire text of the responsum, from a manuscript source, was edited by Lifshitz, Y. “Teshuvat sheʾelāh le-ha-Ramban…” Tsefinot (Sefinot; not to be confused with the better known older journal Sefinot) 1 (1989): 6–16, with extensive notes on comparative sources but no analysis of the text itself. Joseph Caro cited the responsum and said that even though the law is not like Naḥmanides, nevertheless this is not divination, as prohibited in the Torah (“Beyt Yōsēf” on Jacob b. Asher, Tūr: Y.D. no. 179). Schwartz, Astroloqiyah u-maqqiyah, 136–37, merely quotes Naḥmanides’ commentary (Deut. 18), but does not remark on any of the other things mentioned here (not even the responsum). See the general remarks on the differences between Maimonides and Naḥmanides on astrology in Stern, Problems and Parables of Law, 110–12. There is a vast bibliography on the “Sabians,” far more than the author mentioned (see also n. 147). See, e.g., Khan, M.S. “A Chapter on Ancient Chaldean Sciences in an Eleventh-Century Hispano-Arabic Work,” Islamic Quarterly 16 (1972): 12–35; Corbin, Henry. Temple et contemplation (Paris, 1980);
Eng. tr., Temple and Contemplation [N.Y., 1986]), Chapter 3. Particularly important is Sunwall, Mark R. “Maimonides on the Sabians, A Case of Constructive Disapproval,” online (September, 2007): http://www.friesian.com/sunwall.htm#text-3 (an article not to be missed in spite of its obscure publication), and other articles too numerous to list.

Sanhedrin 65b. Unfortunately, we do not have his complete commentary on that tractate, nor that of his student Ibn Adret. Menaḥēm b. Solomon “ha-Meiyriy,” however, wrote that not only the “soothsayer” or astrologer who practices but also one who enquires of him transgresses (Beyt ha-beḥiyrah...Sanhedrin [Frankfurt a. M., s.a. (1930)]; photo rpt. Jerusalem, 1965; 1970), 243. A particularly interesting article on early rabbinic attitudes to magic is Alexander, Philip S. “The Talmudic Concept of Conjuring (“ḥizat ‘einayin”) and the Problem of the Definition of Magic (“kishuf”),” in Rachel Elior and Peter Schäfer, eds., Creation and Re-Creation in Jewish Thought; Festschrift in Honor of Joseph Dan (Tübingen, 2005), 7–26; although it does not include all the issues discussed here.

Shabbat 156a, according to one opinion, and Nedarim 32a; in his talmudic commentaries there is nothing on the first reference and we have no commentary from him on Nedarim. In Mo'ed Kaṭan 28a is a famous debate on the statement “life, children and sustenance [literally, food] depend on fate,” on which Naḥmanides also remarked in his commentary there. Ibn ‘Ezra (n. 179) was the source for the opinion of Ibn Adret, who wrote that fate sometimes causes misfortune and one may need to move to another place, just as he should move to atone for “sin,” but nevertheless a Jew’s fate is in his own hand, as it is said “eyn mazal le-Yisrael,” and not subject to zodiacal signs or the stars from which Jews are exempt as long as they do the will of God (Teshu'ot ha-meyūḥasōt, no. 285; also in She'elot u-teḥillōt 1: nos. 19 and 652), and see no. 287 and 1: no. 148 (not an altogether satisfactory explanation). The opinion of Ibn Adret (but curiously not Naḥmanides) is cited briefly by his student Joshua Ibn Shū’ayb, Derashōt, 81a; ed. Metzger 2: 443; he gave a qabalistic interpretation. In fact, Naḥmanides expressed a similar view in his aforementioned strictures on Maimonides (see n. 149), where he seems to have prohibited even asking astrologers for predictions, which contradicts his responsum cited there. Ibn Adret discussed the matter in fuller detail in She'elot u-teḥillōt 5: no. 48, where he noted that all biblical sources support the position “eyn mazal le-Yisrael” and the rabbinical debate related to specific later circumstances. In the end, the issue of a righteous person to whom evil happens is a “great secret” about which he heard only a very little from his teachers “and I am not able to explain.” In his commentary on aqadōt, he was even more dependent on Ibn ‘Ezra, without citing him by name (Hidūshey ha-Raṣḥba...perūshey ha-hagadōt, 125). Judah b. Moses Ḥallāva (Tortosa, fourteenth century) wrote extensively about this (Imrey shefer, 140–42; cf. 370) and noted that from Niddah 16b it appears that Rabbi Yoḥanan agreed that a person’s fortune is determined from birth, and thus Jews are subject to mazal, contrary to that sage’s opinion in Shabbat 156a (his solution, that it only refers to non-Jews, is peculiar). More significant is his objection that the statement in Mo'ed Kaṭan contradicts the Torah that these things are dependent not on fate but on punishment and reward (citing Ex. 23.26, Jer. 2.30, Deut. 11.21 and 14). He cites the explanation of his famous father that all agree with respect to giving birth that fate prevails, whether for Jews or for Gentiles, and all agree that in daily occurrences neither stars nor fate have dominion over Jews, and as Ibn ‘Ezra explained (on Ex. 33.21 [not 34.21 as the editor thought]; ed. Weiser 2: 218, see n. 182 and cf. Chapter 2, n. 123), and thus even Rabbi Yoḥanan agreed that fate may be changed or nullified by trust in God, and so the statement in
M.K. is to be understood that these things at least are not dependent on merit, but that the decree of fate may be changed. Nevertheless, it is curious that neither father nor son mentioned Naḥmanides here. See further index, “mazal” and “eyn mazal le-Yisraēl.”

177 Asher b. Shelēmyah; he specifically discussed only the aforementioned text in Moʾed Kaṭan. The “sermon” (if that is what it was) is found in some eds. of Ibn Paqudah, Ḥōvōt ha-levavōt, after “Shaʿar ha-bitḥōḥōn” (but not in standard modern eds. of the work), and was edited from manuscript by Ta-Shma, Y. “Qiyyur sefer ’Ḥōvōt ha-levavōt ’…” Alei [‘Aley] sēfer 10 (1982): 23–24 (art. 13–24), from which it was quoted without acknowledgment by Benedikt, Benjamin Z. Mirkaz ha-Tōrah be-Prōvans (Jerusalem, 1985), 246, who, not having read Ta-Shma thoroughly, mistakenly said that the author was Asher b. Meshūlam, whereas Ta-Shma in fact thought he was Meshūlam’s grandson; however, this also appears not to be correct. He was the son of Shelēmyah of Lunel, who was probably a grandson of Meshūlam (see on him Gross, G.J., 281; also the addition to Ibn Dāʾūd’s chronicle in Neubauer, M.J.C. 1: 84). Other bibliographers attributed this sermon to Asher b. Yehiēl. Avraham Yosef Havašelet, editor of the critical ed. of Judah b. Asher, Zikhōn Yehūdah (Jerusalem, 2005), reprinted the sermon, 227–28, without being aware of Ta-Shma’s edition.

178 Commentary on Passover Hagadah, in Hagadah shel Pēsaḥ: Tōrif hayim ūm peyṭrüşehy ha-rishōniym (Jerusalem, 1998), 74; quoted in Schwartz, Qemiyʿōt, segulōt ve-sikhletanūt, 61 and also in his “From Theurgy to Magic,” 204 (there, Schwartz claimed that this idea is borrowed from St. Augustine, which is not necessarily so). Biyūr, Gen. 15.8 (ed. Chavel 1: 149), Deut. 8.17–18 (3: 301–02) and Deut. 31.16 (452). The apparently contradictory opinion: Deut. 31.14 (449). He thus disagreed with Naḥmanides and followed the opinion of his own teacher Ibn Adret (Sheʾēlot u-tešhūvōt 1: no. 148 and cf. no. 19; only the first of these is cited by Chavel in his notes, 3: 301).

179 Yesōd mōra, “Gate” 7 (11); ed. Kohen, 144; tr. Strickman, 99. In his commentary on Deut. 4.19 (ed. Weiser 3: 225 and see the corresponding passages cited in the note there) he wrote that every people has a known star and mazal (zodiacal sign), and so every city, but God placed the Jewish people on a great level to be their “counselor” and they have no star. This is nevertheless contradicted by his insistence elsewhere on Saturn (Shaḥtaʿiy); Hebrew as the not altogether benevolent planet which controls the Jewish people; however, its malevolent influence may be nullified by proper observance of the Sabbath (Shabat), to which it corresponds (cf. Shabat 156a); see the insightful article of Sela, “Abraham Ibn ‘Ezra’s Appropriation of Saturn’; and note the discussion of the alleged statement of Ibn ‘Ezra on Lamentations, cited by Samuel Ibn Mōṭōt, ibid., 50–53. However, Sela’s assertion that for Ibn ‘Ezra the zodiacal sign which governs the Jews is Aquarius (cf. his commentary on Esther 3.7) needs to be clarified; Aquarius is a sign in the “planetary house” of Saturn, which actually is the controlling planet (see ibid., 25, and the text from a manuscript of Ibn ‘Ezra’s Sēfer ha-ʾōlam, in Sela, Astrōdāḥiyah u-farshanūt, 103, and see 107 on Aquarius; see also Ibn ‘Ezra, Book of Reasons, 157–58). In his commentary on Ex. 33.21 (see n. 175), he stated that as long as the Jewish people observe the Torah they are not ruled by fate, but if not then Aquarius rules them. Bahyā b. Asher cites an apocryphal “letter of Galēn,” in Arabic, part of which he translates concerning the making of images to enlist the power of Saturn for evil results and also that one may bring down the powers of the planet, which prevails over the Sabbath, by abstaining from various foods, from sexual intercourse, etc. He concludes by observing that all of this is the opposite of what is commanded by the Torah and the rabbis (Biyūr
Lipshitz, 'Iyūniyy...Bahya, 430–31, briefly discusses this and provides additional sources on Jewish beliefs concerning Saturn. Bahya’s text seems similar to citations of Pseudo-Galen by Lēvy b. Abraham b. Ḥayyim (ca. 1245–ca. 1315; Arles, Montpellier, Perpignan, Béziers; see Schwartz, Astrōlogiyah, 246–47 (Schwartz made no mention of Bahya, however; neither here nor anywhere in his book).  

180 Menaḥēm b. Solomon “ha-Meiyriy”: introduction to his commentary on the Mishnah. in S. Dikman, ed., Beyt ha-beḥiyrah...Berakhot (Jerusalem, 1960; corrected ed., 1964; rpt. 1980), 14, bottom. Jacob b. David Provençal, “Sha’ar yash-ḥū,” unpaginated [6]; commentary on Song of Songs, with Sa’adyah Gaon and Ibn Kasiy, ed. Isaac ‘Akrish [Constantinople, s.a.; ca. 1577]; very rare, there is a copy at J.T.S.

181 Megilat ha-megaleh, 115, and see Guttmann’s introduction there, xix–xx n. 2 (the Catalan tr., xxix n. 1). There is a lengthy discussion of this chapter by Sela, Astrōlogiyah, 115 ff., but with no mention either of Naḥmanides or of Bahya. Schwartz, Astrōlogiyah, devotes only two pages (24–25) to Abraham bar Ḥayya, whose astrological notions are extremely important, deserving at least a chapter; see Töyrylä, Abraham Bar Hyya on Time, History, Exile and Redemption.

182 Kitvey, ed. Chavel 1: 147. This is cited and discussed by Schwartz, op. cit., 135–36. It was also cited by Langermann, “Acceptance and Devaluation,” 230–31, who stated that it is “quite clear” to him that the real target of the attack was Maimonides and not Aristotle. However, while it is true, as I have indicated, that Naḥmanides disagreed with the position of Maimonides on astrology, he certainly would never go so far as to apply to him the expression “may his name be blotted out.” Even when disagreeing with him, Naḥmanides did so respectfully. In fact, this attack on Aristotle is consistent with other similar statements made by Naḥmanides — for example, the “head of the heretics” (Aristotle), “may his name be blotted out” (sermon on Ecclesiastes; Kitvey 1: 194 and cf. his alleged commentary on Job, ibid., 20, on the same issue; and see the index here) — and with his lack of knowledge of, yet strong opposition to, philosophy. While Maimonides certainly denied the “reality” of magic and astrology, he cannot be accused of denying “spiritual” knowledge. This opposition to Aristotle was found among other qabalists as well; for example, Isaac b. Samuel of Acre, a contemporary of Naḥmanides, even though he maintained a nearly unique position among qabalists as to the value of philosophy in general, excepted Aristotle “who denies the story of the act of creation and negates belief in creation ex nihilo” (Me’eyrat ‘eynayim [Jerusalem, 1993], 75; cited by Lipshitz, ‘Iyūniyy...Bahya, 412).

183 Ibn ‘Ezra specifically mentioned as an example of the commandment “you shall have no other gods” that one must not make “forms to bring down power of the upper [heavens]” (“short” recension on Ex. 20.2; ed. Weiser 2: 282; cf. verse 4, 20.20; “regular” recension on Ex. 20.5; and Deut. 4.16). Joseph b. Eli’ezer “Bonfils,” in his supercommentary on Ibn ‘Ezra, explained that this is the way of Indian sages who make metal images to bring down the power of the stars at specific times, “and this is a great wisdom and there are many books about it, and I know Muslims who are learned in this; I also know a little about this but not to do it, for it is truly idolatry” (Ṣōfnat pa’nēḥah 1: 245; see the important note by the editor there); see Pingree, “Indian Planetary Images,” particularly 8, on such talismans, and photographs of planetary figures (as statues of human forms) at the end of the article. David Qimḥi in his commentary on Judges 18.5 (end) also referred to “copper instruments” (the usual term for an astrolabe) used to determine the hours of the day and “judge by them according to the zodiacal signs,” and some say that “certain sages know how to make a form for certain...
hours and that form speaks" (!); he also cites Ibn 'Ezra (but not exactly as in the above statement by him). See also Ibn 'Ezra, Book of Reasons, 276. However, Ibn 'Ezra also mentions the custom of some idolaters who use animals as a medium for “bringing down” the upper powers (on Deut. 4:16; ed. Weiser 3: 225 and see notes there); see again Pingree, “Indian Planetary Images” on this practice. See also on the supercommentary on Ibn 'Ezra of Solomon Gaṭṭignō (see Chapter 3 on him) in Schwartz, “Le-darkhey ha-parshanut ha-fiylṣōḥyīṭ,” 86–87 (note the term “talisman,” and generally the remarks about “bringing down” upper powers, all of which may be related more to these earlier sources than to Ibn 'Ezra himself).

184 Kitvey, loc. cit. Clearly, Naḥmanides saw the title transliterated in some magical or astronomical treatise dependent on Arabic. So also is to be understood ʿ-l-s-m-a in the same sermon, 171 (Schwartz, 131–32, cited that passage but made no comment on the word). From the Greek, through Ar. ṭiʾlāsām, derives “talisman,” and the word is used in that sense by Judah ha-Lēvy, Kūzāriy 1.79; see also Maimonides, Mīṣnāh, commentary on Pesāḥim 4.9; cf. also Maimonides, Haqdamāt, 15. See for this, as part of the system of Ibn Sinā’s division of natural philosophy, Nasr, Introduction, 215; and see the references to other Arabic sources (but not this term), particularly in Muslim Spain, in Rodríguez Arribas, “El profeta Oseas...,” 247–48, 253. See also Lippincott and Pingree, “Ibn al-Ḥātim on the Talismans of the Lunar Mansions”; that treatise discusses the forms of the zodiacal signs which may be made from various materials to bring about desired effects. Of interest is the essay on talismans and divination by John Townley in his The Reasons for the Laws of Moses, from the ‘Moreh Nevochim’ of Maimonides (London, 1827), 112–26. Abraham bar Ḥayya referred to the ʿābā’ al-t- l- γ- ṣ-m- ā- ṭ [ṭaliṣmāt], “fathers of theurgy,” magicians; cf. Efros, Fiylṣōḥyāh 2: 118 and Schwartz, op. cit., 25 (but he again makes no reference to Naḥmanides or other sources cited here). See Maimonides’ strong condemnation of talismans and the beliefs of the Sabians, on whom see n. 173 (“Guide” I. 63; tr. 153, and more specifically III. 29; tr. 521; cf. his commentary on Mishnah ‘A.Z. 4.7). Abba Mariy, the chief opponent of Maimonidean philosophy, wrote about medical and astral talismans and added: “I heard from a certain sage that there is a special book on these matters” which divides the sphere into parts and the magic employed thereby (Minḥat genaʾōt, 21). Shēm Tōv Ibn Shaprūṭ wrote that the investigation into astrology and “wisdom of the al-ṭilas” [talisman] are the cause of many evils in faith, leading to a lack of trust in God, “and this was the way of idolatry in the [time of] the first Temple,” and that the rabbis had decreed that no one study these things until after having mastered the Talmud (Pardēs rimōniym, 20; cited also by Schwartz, “Parshanut ha-agadah shel R’ Shēm Tōv Ibn Shaprūṭ” 64, again without any comment on the word).

185 Ed. Chavel 2: 234–35; cf. also Ex. 24.11 (ed. Chavel 1: 451). See also Judah ha-Lēvy, Kūzāriy, 1.1 (the words “aṣīlah me-rūah ha-qōdešḥ” in Naḥmanides are taken directly from Ibn Tibbo’s translation of Kūzāriy there); and see Talmage, Peyrīṣhiym le-sefēr Mīṣḥey le-heyt Qinḥiṭy, 35. Although Pedaya, Ramban, devotes an entire chapter (15) to the topic of aṣiyḥul, even citing the commentary on Numbers, she sheds little light on its meaning and manages to avoid mention of the sources cited here.

186 Ex. 20.13; ed. Chavel 1: 404. This is an unusual example of his overlooking, or perhaps temporarily forgetting, a talmudic source, since the “Jerusalem” Talmud (Shekalim 6.1) already records the opinion of one of the sages that the commandments were written on two tablets, five on each. Naḥmanides, like other Spanish authorities, knew the “Jerusalem” Talmud and frequently cited it in his talmudic
commentaries and other writings, and there have recently been published separate volumes of the alleged “Peyrush” of Naḥmanides on various tractates of the Jerusalem Talmud, in fact extracted from his other writings (see my Dictionary, 640: Miscellaneous).

187 Naḥmanides on Ex. 20.7, ed. Chavel 1: 397. In fact, he did not there mention Maimonides at all, but rather directs his disagreement at Ibn ‘Ezra (see on that Chapter 2, n. 162). Bahya b. Asher (Biyur 2: 178 ff.) cited both Maimonides and Naḥmanides on this without deciding between them, and gives his own lengthy “qabalistic” interpretation (in fact, based chiefly on the Aramaic translation of Onkelos), which adds nothing. The exact enumeration of the commandments was a constant source of debate. Naḥmanides, of course, disagreed with many of Maimonides’ interpretations, and even the enumeration, of the commandments in his strictures on the “book of commandments” (Sēfer ha-miṣvōt) of Maimonides. Ḥasdai Crescas (Cresques) discussed the topic in the introduction to his polemic against philosophy, Ör Adōnay (see Bibliography), and predictably disagreed with the position of Naḥmanides on the nature of the first two commandments (see on this Urbach, S.B. “Ḥiyushey halakhah ve-agdah be-mishnat Ḥasdai Crescas,” Bar-Ilan sēfer ha-shanah 3 [1965]: 186–88). In the case of the first two commandments, said together as one, Naḥmanides maintained that the people could not distinguish (“understand”) them, but as for the remainder, apparently they did not understand the meaning or how exactly they were to be observed.

188 Gen. 46.1 (ed. Chavel 1: 246–51); the lengthiest discussion of Maimonides anywhere in his commentary. Ishbīlī, Sēfer ha-zikarōn (ed. Blau, 30–31; ed. Kahana, 62–64), already provided a correct and adequate defense of Maimonides here— not mentioned by Chavel. However, Chavel’s notes are extremely important (the Petah ha-ša‘ar which he cites there is apparently the modern commentary of that name by Hayyim Beliyaḥ on Ephraim Alnaqawa [erroneously catalogued by libraries as Al-Nakawa], Ša‘ar kevōd ha-Shēm [Tunis, 1901]; rpt. Jerusalem, 1986). Ephraim was the son of Israel (author of Menōrat ha-ma‘ar); he fled Spain in 1391 to North Africa, where he probably wrote his works, and died in 1442. Ephraim’s book, like that of Ishbīlī, is a defense of Maimonides against the criticisms of Naḥmanides in his biblical commentary. A commentary on the Torah, of no particular importance, is also attributed to Ephraim (partial ed. S. Assaf, in Baron, Salo and Marx, Alexander, eds. Jewish Studies in Memory of G.A. Kohut [N.Y., 1935], 1–8; complete, Perūsh [Peyrush] rabeynu Efrayim ‘al ha-Torah, ed. Hayyim J.I. Gad [Johannesburg, 1949]).

189 Deut. 4.9; ed. Chavel 2: 361–62. As Chavel noted there (and already before him Perles, “Über den Geist des Commentars: Notizen,” 113), he repeated this almost verbatim from his strictures on Maimonides, Sēfer ha-miṣvōt, “negative commandments” at the end, second additional commandment. The nature of a “false prophet” was dealt with extensively by Maimonides, also in the “Guide,” and by other authorities. However profound and rational the idea of not “believing” in Moses may be, it of course appears to contradict Ex. 14.31, “then they believed in God and Moses his servant.” Interestingly, Naḥmanides made no comment on that passage. Maimonides, however, quoted it (M.T., Mada’: “Yesōdey ha-Toraḥ,” 8.1), and Naḥmanides borrowed from that the statement about seeing with our own eyes and hearing with our ears. Other medieval commentators did talk about “belief” in Moses, and see Joseph Ibn Sūsan (fourteenth century), Peyrushey...Avōt, 136 ff., who disagreed strongly with Maimonides. It is nevertheless true that Moses does not hold a central place in Jewish doctrine other than as a teacher and supreme prophet. Bahya b. Asher virtually
copied from Maimonides in saying that our “belief” in Moses is not because of any signs he performed but because we heard the words of God just as he did (Biyūr 3: 364; cf. Maimonides, Igeret Teyman, 54/55).

190 While there is no esoteric interpretation, the disagreement with Maimonides is important; see Chavel’s note (2: 371) and even more importantly his note there, 527, an excellent explanation of the differences based on variant texts of the “Jerusalem” Talmud.

191 It is no good translating the passage as “the people perceived,” as do some English translations, when the Hebrew text says explicitly “saw.” Ibn ‘Ezra explained (Ex. 5.21, 20.15; ed. Weiser 2: 45, 140) that all of the sensations were combined because of the awesome events and the people were terrified (however, Samuel Zarza in his supercommentary cited an explanation from Ibn ‘Ezra, missing in our texts, according to which the verb “saw” here includes both seeing and hearing; see Ben-Menahem, ‘Inyaney Ibn ‘Ezra, 210). Neither Maimonides nor any of the medieval commentators on the “Guide” made any observation about “seeing” the voices. A famous conflict of rabbinic views is recorded in a medieval midrash: Rabbi Ishmael said that the Israelites “saw what was visible and heard what was audible,” but Rabbi ‘Aqiva said “they saw and heard what was visible. They saw a fiery word coming out of the mouth of the Almighty and it was engraved on the Tablets…” (Mekilta [sic; Mekhilta] 2: 266).

192 Ed. Chavel 2: 395 and see his notes there (“Abusaulah” cited there is, as already mentioned, Meir Ibn Sahîla, or Abî Sahîla; in fact, the commentary of Joshua Ibn Shû‘ayb wrongly attributed to Ibn Sahîla). See also Ḥagigah 12b. Chavel also misunderstood Ishbibî as saying that Ibn ‘Ezra “followed” Maimonides, when the opposite is what he meant, of course. The statement about thinking constantly of God is indebted to Maimonides, not only M.T., Ahavah: “Teshûvah,” 10.3 (cited by Chavel, n. 6) but especially “Guide” III. 51 (tr. 624); see also Ibn ‘Ezra on Hos. 4.15, cited above Chapter 2, section on “Commandments.” Naḥmanides says that the statement about being “bound in the bundle of life” even when living is “alluded to” by Judah ha-Lēvy. Lobel, “Dwelling Place for the Shekhinah,” 103–05, shows that the source is his Kūṣārî 3.65, in the translation of Ibn Tibbon. The expression “for in themselves they are a dwelling place for the Shekhiynah,” coined by Naḥmanides, was often used in later times in eulogies of great scholars. The concept of devêqût in the thought of Naḥmanides belongs properly to the realm of qabalah; see the excellent discussion in Afterman, Devêqût, Chapter 12 (also see Chapter 11 on the Gerona qabalists); in the English version, Afterman, “And They Shall Be One Flesh,” the discussion on Naḥmanides and Maimonides is in Chapter 6 and the early qabalists in Chapter 7.

193 Nina Caputo briefly alludes to this interpretation in the wider context of her discussion of Naḥmanides’ interpretation of Gen. 6.1–4, “Sons of God, Daughters of Man,” 181–83. On this subject generally, see Bamberger, Fallen Angels; an improvement over Jung, Fallen Angels in Jewish, Christian and Mohammedan Literature, although not as broad in emphasis. Ibn Shû‘ayb, Biyūr, 3b, says that “the rabbi” (sic; Naḥmanides; the error is probably that of a抄写员) did not explain his secret, but “we have received about it” an explanation which cannot be written, and he alludes mysteriously to what was “said” about Gen. 19.13 and 1 Kings 21.1 ff. Naḥmanides made no comment at all on the first verse; nor, of course, did he on Kings. Obviously, these were qabalistic interpretations transmitted by him to his students; this has escaped the notice of those (Idel, Wolfson) who have written on the oral transmission of qabalistic teaching. One of the questions which a student of Sa’adyah explained concerned the issue of whether “sons of God” here refers to angels or to important men, to which he replied that it refers to men (in Zucker, ‘Al tarțûm RS”G [Sa’adyah] le-Tôrah, 105, 112); Naḥmanides would not have known of this, of course, because it is in Arabic.
Provence, Catalonia, Aragón 257

194 Cited, from manuscript, by Newman [Moses b. Naḥman], *The Commentary…*, xxxv, at the end of the book, n. 28. He did not explain there who “Shesheth” (sic) was. Ibn Shū’ayb, *Biyūr*, 16a, mentions that “Rav Sheshet” answered a difficulty on a mystical interpretation asked by Naḥmanides; no doubt this was Sheshet b. Isaac. Again, this important statement has gone unnoticed by those who have written on the oral transmission of qabalistic teaching. Pedayah, *Ramban*, 103–04, discusses Isaac b. Samuel (“Ŷiḥaq de-min Akkò”) here. Her repeated references, there and elsewhere, to his “Ŷōsr ha-hayiyym” are annoying (it is a manuscript; there is no mention of the work in her bibliography); on her mistaken identification of Sheshet see the following note.

195 Koch, Karl, ed. *Sheshet ben Isaac Gerundi. Kommentar zu den Proverben* (Erlangen, 1893), with German tr. Koch, Introduction, 5, copying without acknowledgment from Steinschneider, *C.B.* col. 2093 the reference to an unpublished commentary by Matityahu Delakrut (sixteenth century, Poland) which states that Sheshet was the teacher of Pereṣ b. Isaac ha-Kohēn. This is very doubtful, nor was Pereṣ the author of the mystical work *Ma’arekhet ha-elōḥit*, as Steinschneider thought. Gershom Scholem (“Le-ḥequer torat ha-gilgal be-qabalah be-meha ha-Y”G,” *Tarbiz* [Tarbiyyā] 16 [1945]: 140; text 143–50) published a brief text of some qabalistic “questions” (explanations) which he attributed to one “Sheshet Des Mercadel,” described by him as a student or student-companion of Naḥmanides, further identified by him with the Sheshet who is said to have gone to Acre, without realizing that this is Sheshet b. Isaac (I do not know if he later realized his mistake; I find no corrections anywhere that I could locate). Idel simply repeated this erroneous identification in his little note on an anonymous commentary on the “secrets” of Naḥmanides, in *Da’at* 2/3 (1978/79): 125–26 (art. 121–26); on “Ibn Sahūlah” there, actually Ibn Shū’ayb, see the previous note. See also Pedayah, *Ramban*, 101, a brief reference to Sheshet, whom she also calls “Des Mercadel,” but with no reference to Scholem. She was unaware of the bibliography relating to him, including his commentary on Proverbs. The supercommentary by Sheshet: Vatican 214.9; Munich 66; Paris B.N. 798.2. Neither Chavel nor any other scholar has investigated this.

196 So also in his sermon on Rosh ha-Šanah, apparently written at Acre (Akko) in 1269 or 1270, he wrote that if the people fail to repent completely, “it is found that their closeness to God is what causes their distancing” (rejection; their special relationship with God results in special punishment when they transgress), and especially in the Land, which is the center of habitation (see n. 160) and the particular “portion” of God. There is a special sanctity and purity of the Land which does not tolerate transgressions, whereas in the Diaspora this purity is not complete because of the “angels” that have dominion over the nations and the idolatry that prevails. He concludes “and this requires a long explanation, for which this is not the place” (*Kitvey* 1: 249–50). Also in his sermon on Ecclesiastes he said that sexual transgressions are more severe in the Land because of its “purity” and sacred nature and therefore it does not “tolerate” such things, or idolatry, whereas in other lands the purity is not so perfect because of the “angels” or ministers who have dominion over them, etc. (*Kitvey* 1: 200–01). In the addition to his sermon “*Tōrat ha-Shēm temiymah*” (Moscow manuscript), he said that only the tribes of Benjamin and Judah returned from the first exile, and only the most worthy of them – adding that the final future redemption will only come as a result of complete repentance (ed. Ya’akov Yehudah Zilberlicht in *Yeshirān* 18 [2007]: 41 [art. 36–53]).

197 Ed. Chavel 2: 189–90. All of this was quoted verbatim by his disciple Bahya b. Asher (Biyūr 3: 437, 439; Chavel did not note that this was borrowed), and see my *Jews, Visigoths & Muslims*, 211–12. See also the similar statements in the additions, from the Moscow manuscript, to his “*Tōrat ha-Shēm temiymah,” see
previous note, pp. 40–42. In some respects, the last part here is similar to the earlier statement of David Qimḥi that no Gentile king could successfully rule over Jerusalem, and indeed no other people can inhabit the Land, which will “vomit them out” (commentary on Ezekiel 17.5).

198 See Idel, M., “The Land of Israel in Medieval Kabbalah,” in L. Hoffman, ed., The Land of Israel (Notre Dame, I.N., 1986), 178 and notes. Idel concludes that this was in large part a reaction against the qabalistic views of ‘Ezra of Gerona, discussed there, 177; in fact, it was a direct contradiction to ‘Ezra, which again casts doubt on the tradition that Naḥmanides learned qabalah from ‘Ezra. However, this was not merely a “qabalistic” (more correctly, simple exegetical) concept for Naḥmanides but an actual law. In his “additions” to the commandments enumerated by Maimonides, he included as positive commandment no. 4 “that we are commanded to inherit the land which God gave to our fathers...and not to leave it in the hands of others of the nations” and that this is a commandment for all time “and every individual is obligated by it, even in the time of the exile” (“strictures” in Moses b. Maimon, Sēfer ha-miṣṿōṭ, 244–46, my emphasis). This is also in direct contradiction to Maimonides, who wrote that the “conquest” of the Land is at the hands of a king of Israel or by a prophet in agreement with the majority of the people, but not through settlement by an individual or a family or even a tribe (M.T., Zera'iym: “Terumôt,” 1.2). Two recent articles in Ḥallamish and Ravitzky, Ereṣ-Yisraël be-hagūt ha-yehūdiyit, deal in general with statements of Naḥmanides concerning the Land (but neither mention the topic discussed here): Michael Nehorai (on the differences between Maimonides and Naḥmanides), 123–36; and Ḥavivah Pedaya’s excellent article on qabalistic views (see 266 ff. on Naḥmanides). Pedaya also dealt with the disagreement of Naḥmanides with Maimonides, but from a more “metaphysical” perspective, 270 ff. As mentioned previously, none of the articles deals comprehensively with medieval attitudes (nor is Ibn ‘Ezra even mentioned). On the place of the Land in the writings of Naḥmanides, see Henoch, Ramban, 141–59; and see Ravitzky, Aviezer. ‘Al da’at ha-maqôm (Jerusalem, 1991), 42 ff. and the extensive sources cited in his notes, and more briefly in his Messianism, 218–19. See also generally Newman, “Centrality of Eretz Yisrael in Naḥmanides.”

199 See also his sermon on Ecclesiastes that the essence (‘iyqar) of the commandments (maydāh) is for the Land; citing Sifre (Sifrīy) that commandments such as tefillin and mezūzah are to be observed even in the Diaspora so that they should not be unknown when the Jews are restored to the Land (Kitvey 1: 200–01; and see there 202–03 further on the merit of the Land) and on the difference between commandments in the Land and in the Diaspora; and see his commentary on Deut. 11.18, without which this cannot be understood. The division of commandments as “obligations of the body” and of the “heart” is derived, of course, from Bahya Ibn Paqudah (see Bibliography), a work known to him in its Hebrew translation by Ibn Ṭibbon.

200 Ibn Adret, Šeḥ’ēlōṭ u-teẓhūvōṭ 1: no. 94: the “masters of secrets” of the Torah (ba’aley sōḥōt; the qabalists) have reasons for all of the commandments; in general, the commandments are divided into three categories: those applying to the mouth (speech), the heart and the hands (he gives examples), and these categories represent wisdom (ḥakhmah), understanding (tevūnah) and knowledge (da’at); it should be noted that this reflects the three “chief” qabalistic spheres (seṭhīrōt).

201 On Deut. 18.15, ed. Chavel 2: 429. Ibn Adret, Šeḥ’ēlōṭ u-teẓhūvōṭ 1, no. 548. Both of these are mentioned by Harvey, Zev (Warren). “Rav Ḥasdai Crescas ‘al yiḥudah shel Ereṣ-Yisraēl,” in M. Ḥallamish and A. Ravitzky, eds., Ereṣ-Yisraēl (Jerusalem, 1991), 159, and see the same statement by Crescas there, 152 (section
3). Harvey was unable to find a rabbinic source; Chavel referred to Mekhilta (1: 4 ff.), which implies but does not exactly state this.

202 Nahmanides cites approvingly the whole of Ibn 'Ezra’s comments on Deut. 31.16 in his own commentary on Lev. 18.26 (ed. Chavel 2: 111; in n. 43 Chavel cites the wrong source). In his commentary on Gen. 26.5 (ed. Chavel 1: 149–50), while his ultimate source was the midrash cited in Chavel’s notes (149), he again used Ibn ‘Ezra’s expression that Abraham observed the commandments through the “holy spirit.” He raised the difficulty of Jacob violating the commandments (building an altar, marrying two sisters), and so ‘Amram, who married his aunt. These very examples were discussed also by Ibn ‘Ezra (see Chapter 2, at n. 82). Nahmanides gives as his own explanation that Abraham observed the commandments only in the Land, and Jacob and ‘Amram performed their actions, which were not in accord with the commandments, only outside of the Land. However, that is exactly what Ibn ‘Ezra said; in fact, giving a better explanation. The “difficulty” of the marriages of Jacob and ‘Amram was repeatedly discussed by later medieval authors; see Ravitzky, Aviezer. “Ha-ševiy lākḥ šiyuniym le-Šiyon,” in M. Hallamish and A. Ravitzky, eds., Ėres-Yisrael (Jerusalem, 1991), 9 n. 34. See particularly Ravitzky’s discussion of the “mystical” aspects of the centrality of the Land of Israel in the thought of Nahmanides, especially in his aforementioned sermon for Rosh ha-Shanah (Kitveyy 1: 250–51). Ravitzky’s article, 1–33, surveys attitudes to the observance of commandments in the Land and the Diaspora through the sixteenth century and beyond.

203 On the “difficulty” raised by Yafeh, Tekhēlet Mordekhay, 43, see Moses b. Nahman, Ḥiydūshey 1: 27–28.

204 At the end of his commentaries on the Talmud, and in Peyrūshey, ed. Chavel 2: 507–08, with errors in Chavel’s notes (and the fact that it was mentioned in the fifteenth century by Joseph Albo does not, of course, prove its authenticity; nor does the fact that it is found in some fourteenth-century manuscripts of the commentary, see Richler and Beit-Arié, Biblioteca Palatina, 113, nos. 590, 591). Cohen, “Elements of Peshat,” 36–37, believed this “letter” to be authentic and praised it as an example of a medieval exegete who used “modern” tools such as archeological evidence.

205 Ibn Susān (erroneously “Sasson, Shushan,” etc.) is the name of a well-known dynasty of rabbis and community leaders in Toledo (not to be confused with the name Ibn Sūsan). It is interesting that he knew of this family. Nevertheless, the statement is inaccurate; some Jews had this custom, but many Jewish “family names” in Muslim lands refer to a particular characteristic, as did many Muslim names. Such outstanding families as that of Maimonides had no “family name” at all. Others had appellatives which refer to their place of origin, such as al-Fāṣī (“from Fez”) or Ishbīlī (“from Seville”).

206 These are (see Bibliography for eds.): Mishnēh kesef (vol. 1: Sēfer ha-sōd, or Tiyrat kesef; vol. 2: Maṣrēf kesef); Adney kesef (vol. 1: on Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah; vol. 2: Jeremiah, Ezekiel and “Twelve Prophets”), the commentaries on Joshua, Judges, Samuel (all also in [Bible. O.T.] Miqrat gedōlōt ha-keter); Ḥaṣōṣōt kesef, on Proverbs (two recensions), in ‘Asarah keley kesef 1: 1–85, 86–132, and a fragment on (183–84; this originally appeared in the very rare Shelōshah peyrušiym [Constantinople (1577?)]) and the commentary on Ecclesiastes (185–215). Shūḥlan kesef, on Job, is also there (not to be confused with the philosophical work by him, Shūḥlan kesef, ed. Kasher [see Bibliography]; see there, 22, on the different names of the commentary on Job); vol. 2 contains the commentaries on Ruth, Lamentations, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles. The commentary on Lamentations was earlier edited by Reggio, I.S. Igeret
There are also some works no longer extant mentioned in the author's list of his own writings (Qevūṣat kesef; a faulty ed. by S. Werbluner in Benjacob, Isaac. Devamīyāt atiqyym [Leipzig, 1846], part 2: 10–14; the Munich manuscript [St., Cat. Munich, no. 265, fols. 95a–97b] was edited by Last in 'Asarah keley kesef 1: 20–24. An ed. of the Parma manuscript of the list is in Renan (Neubauer), Écrivains juifs, 188 [534]–199 [545]). There is an excellent Spanish translation, with important notes, of the commentary on Amos in Comentarios hebreos... (see Bibliography: Sources). The fragment on Song of Songs was translated (with the Heb. text) by Ginsburg, The Song of Songs, 47–49. The introduction to the second recension of Proverbs and the fragment on Song of Songs were translated by Berlin, Biblical Poetry through Medieval Jewish Eyes, 102–07. The bibliographical citations of his works on the Bible are incomplete, and at times even incorrect, both in Basil Herring (ed. and tr.), Gevīa' Kesef, a general exegetical work (not only the bibliographical references, but often citations in footnotes are incorrect); and in Kascher’s ed. of Shūlhān kesef (notably missing are references to the above translations). See also Mesch, Studies in Joseph Ibn Caspi [sic]. Nearly half of Mesch’s book is devoted to a translation of Ibn Kaspi’s Qevūṣat kesef, but the important edition in Renan (Neubauer) is not mentioned. The most significant study of his writings remains that of Renan (Neubauer), based largely on Steinschneider, “Josef Kaspi,” but with important revisions; see also Steinschneider’s longer article noted in the bibliography here, with important notes as always. It is unfortunate that no modern scholar has undertaken a complete study of Ibn Kaspiy and all of his writings (Hannah Kascher wrote her dissertation on his “philosophical exegesis”; Bar–Il University, 1979). Aslanov, Cyril. “L’aristotélisme médiévale au service du commentaire littéral: le cas de Joseph Caspi [sic],” R.E.J. 161 (2002): 123–37, deals entirely with his dictionary; the author has written other grammatical studies of Ibn Kaspiy. See also the same author’s “Yosef Caspi [sic] entre Provenza y Sefarad,” Hispania Judaica Bulletin 6 (2008): 33–42. Moshe Kahan has written concerning his dictionary; see also his “Joseph Ibn Kaspi – from Arles to Majorca,” Iberia judaica 8 (2016): 181–92, providing new suggestions (stated as fact) about his life. There are references to Ibn Kaspiy in other chapters here (see the index). 207 Ṭiyrat kesef (in Mishnēh kesef 1), 18, 19; cf. Qevūṣat kesef, ed. Last, xx; ed. Renan (Neubauer), 189. In Menorat kesef (in 'Asarah keley kesef 2), 94, he says that it is now 20 years since he went to Egypt to visit the son (sic; great-grandson) of Maimonides. On his knowledge of Arabic, see Herring, 69. Nevertheless, he often cited works of Aristotle in Hebrew rather than Arabic translations; e.g., Adney kesef 1: 95, on Isa. 7.12. He certainly could not have learned sufficient Arabic during his short stay in Egypt and must have learned it in Perpignan (where Arabic was still spoken). In fact, in his first work, Ṭiyrat kesef, 10, he refers to what he had learned some years earlier from “one who was expert in the Arabic language,” implying that he himself was not yet familiar with Arabic. A.M. Habermann claimed that Ibn Kaspiy translated Hūnayn Ibn Ishaq’s Nawādir al-falāṣifah, and edited what he believed to be an excerpt of that in Assaf, S., et al., eds. Minhah li-Yḥudah ... Zlōnīk (Jerusalem, 1950), 179–85; however, this is unlikely and no such translation is known (the famous translation of the work, of course, is by Judah al-Ḥarīrī; see n. 211). See also Aslanov, C., “How Much Arabic Did Joseph Kaspi [sic] Know?” Aleph 2 (2002): 259–69, but he did not consider the possibility of Perpignan, nor did he cite the above testimony from Ṭiyrat kesef. Contrary to his claim, it is unlikely that many, if any, Jews in Languedoc knew Arabic. On his journey to Egypt, and references to it in his other writings, see
Ben-Shalom, Ram. “Yoman ha-masa’ le-mizraḥ shel Yōseḥ Ibn Kaspiy,” Pe’amin (Pe’amim) 124 (2010): 7–51; the article focuses on customs in Egypt mentioned by Ibn Kaspiy (on which see Bacher in the following note).

208 Text in Mishneh kesef 1. Peculiarly, in his introduction to the commentary on Ecclesiastes (‘Asarah keley kesef 1: 185), he said that he wrote the Sefer ha-sōd (Ṭiyrat kesef) when he was “old” (he was only 50 when he wrote the commentary on Ecclesiastes, which was hardly “old,” contrary to modern misconceptions about age in the medieval period), and yet in his own list of his writings he says that it was the first book he wrote. The explanation is that he probably revised the book. On the book itself, see the thorough review by Bacher, “On the Biblical Exegesis of Joseph ibn Kaspi,” particularly discussing all of his references to customs in Egypt.

209 Perles, J., ed. and tr. (Germ.) Sendschreiben an Joseph Kaspi (Munich, 1879); text rpt. in Ibn Kaspi, Tam ha-kesef. The text is erroneous; there are corrections by Steinschneider in H.B. 19 [1879]: 115–18. Mesch, op. cit., 43–46, briefly discussed the rebuttal of Kalonymos, without, however, mentioning either the reprint of the text or the important corrections of Steinschneider, without which it is impossible to understand the text correctly.

210 Yet in Ṭiyrat kesef, 164, he remarked sharply that he knew that “fools” would be disappointed that he did not explain difficult biblical words in Romance (“in our language, Rūmiy”; not Latin, of course, but either Catalan or Provençal [Old Occitan]; the word is to be understood as Ar. Rūmī, “foreign, Christian”). Others can do this, he says, but he has other things with which to occupy himself.

211 Introduction to his second commentary on Proverbs, ‘Asarah keley kesef 1: 83. He was misunderstood on this by his enemies, who thought that he was comparing the Bible to Aristotle (he meant, of course, that the approach to understanding a text is the same); even his editor had to append a note defending him. See also ibid., 131, that there is no allegory or hidden meaning in the book but it is rather a book of instruction like the Ethics of Aristotle or other philosophers. The statements there about those who went to absurd lengths in allegorizing the 12 tribes relate to the controversy then raging over Maimonidean philosophy (and so also Abraham and Sarah as “form” and “matter”; ibid., 19); see, for example, Abba Marīy, Minḥat qena’ōt, 92 and also 31; however, his denial that there was any allegory of “form” and “matter” in Proverbs is a direct contradiction of Maimonides, “Guide,” introduction (tr. Pines, 13) and III. 8 (tr. 431).

212 Mūṣrey ha-fīlūsōyım is the Hebrew translation and adaptation of the ethical sayings and parables of the Christian Arabic author and translator Ḥūnayn ibn Iṣḥaq (tenth century), Nawdīr al-falāṣifāh (or Adab al-falāṣifāḥ), tr. by Judah al-Harīzī (best edition is that of Loewenthal, “Frankfurt a. M.” [actually Cracow], 1896). So also in his commentary on Job (‘Asarah keley kesef 1: 150), he wrote that the opinion of Aristotle and the opinion of the Torah are the same, by which he meant that there is no contradiction between the philosophical position as explained by Maimonides (to whom he explicitly refers) and the overall view of the teachings of the Torah. Far from believing that the Bible was like Aristotle, he wrote that all of the “complete” (or perfect) philosophers are as nothing compared to the prophets (Adney kesef 2: 53); he also claimed that all sages and
philosophers had agreed that the prophets were superior to philosophers, and that Aristotle and his “companions” are emptiness (hevel) compared to the true prophets; and “since we cannot understand a tenth of what is in the books of the philosophers, how can we comprehend even a thousandth of the words of the prophets?” (ibid., 83).

213 See on these n. 206. One of the least important of his commentaries, on Esther, has been the subject of an article by Eisen, Robert. “Joseph ibn Kaspi on the Secret Meaning of the Scroll of Esther,” R.E.J. 160 (2001): 379–408, in which he argues that Ibn Kaspiy interpreted the book allegorically and in the context of great philosophical “secrets” relating to the unfolding of Jewish history. In an only slightly less lengthy rebuttal article, Hannah Kasher explained her disagreement with Eisen’s interpretation (“On the Book of Esther as an Allegory in the Works of Joseph Ibn Kaspi. A Response to R. Eisen…,” R.E.J. 161 [2002]: 289–93). In the end, the differences revolve around whether in an earlier commentary on Job he was opposed to an allegorical interpretation of Esther, but in that later interpretation he at least in part did allegorize it.

214 Adney kesef 1: 92; the editor made no comment on this. He also includes Ibn Tibbon in the “sect” of those who believed that man’s perfection is attachment with the Active Intellect, against which he claims that there are many levels of perfection, as reflected in the rabbinic teaching that “all Israel has a portion in the world to come” (Sanhedrin 90a); see his commentary on Proverbs in ‘Asarah keley kesef 1: 12; on this unusual apparently anti-philosophical position, see the editor’s introduction there, xvi.

215 Ṭiyrat kesef, 11–13. There, 44–45, he discusses also the nature of “signs” and “wonders.” On the inability to understand those performed by Moses, see ibid., 165 (he adds, how can we understand these when we often do not understand simple stories in the Bible?). In his commentary on the Torah, he explained that ‛ot is “sign”; Lat. signale, señal in Romance; and mōfet (“wonder”) is demonstración in Romance, not “miracle” which is the meaning of pele’ (Maṣrēf le-kesef, 154). Note that in his Torah commentary he accepts as literal all the signs, wonders and miracles.

216 The first work has not survived; for the second, “Menūrat kesef,” see Renan (Neubauer), Écritains juifs, 165–68; the text is in ‘Asarah keley kesef 2: 75 ff. Other lost works of interest are “Kesef sigiyyum,” apparently on 110 questions relating to the Bible; “Neqūdōt kesef” on the nature of blessings and curses in the Bible and “Kejōrēy kesef” on the differences in exegesis between himself and his predecessors. In Mishnēḥ kesef 2: 286, he refers to his “Sēfer ha-mashal” on the Torah, another lost work. Herring, op. cit., 20 n. 116, suggests the possibility that “Neqūdōt kesef” was not, in fact, ever written. Mesch, Studies, 52 n. 75, confused this with his “exoteric commentary on the Guide,” i.e., Maskiyōt kesef ve-amudey kesef (Frankfurt a. M., 1848; ed. Werbluner, with Germ. intro. by Kirchheim; photo rpt. without the intro. in Shelōḏah qadmoney mefarkey ha-Mōreh, ed. Kafiḥ [Jerusalem, 1961]); but cf. 54–55, where Mesch has it correctly.

217 See Herring, op. cit., 20–21. At the end of his commentary on the Torah, Maṣrēf le-kesef, he has a lengthy digression on the problem of a false prophet, concluding (291) with a disagreement with what Maimonides wrote at the beginning of his commentary on the Mishnah.

218 Herring, 268 (text 43); in n. 2 there Herring gives references to the appropriate sources. ‘Abdallah b. Mūḥammad Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawśī (1052–1127) was a Spanish Muslim grammarian and philosopher (see on him especially Cruz Hernández, M. Historia de la filosofía española [Madrid, 1957] 1: 306–22). The
section from al-Baṭalajûsî was translated from the original Arabic by Altmann, “Ladder of Ascension,” 6–7. It is surprising that he there made no reference to Kaufmann, Die Spuren al-Batlajûsî’s [sic], with the Hebrew translations of Moses Ibn Tibbon and Samuel Ibn Mōṭōṭ (the corresponding section is there, 17–18, Heb. section; only in n. 31 did Altmann finally mention the book, but without noting the pages of the translation. Herring only refers to Kaufmann’s discussion, 46–48, of Ibn Kaspiy’s reference to the work. Incidentally, Herring’s interpretation of what Ibn Kaspiy said in Menōḥat ha-kesef (in ‘Asarat keley kesef 2: 91) is incorrect; there he completely accepted al-Baṭalajûsî’s interpretation (which he called “stolen” from the Torah) as a reference to the separate intellects and the “universal soul” (cosmic soul, a neo-Platonic notion found also in Muslim writers; see Walker, “Universal Soul and the Particular Soul in Isma’ili Neo-Platonism”). There is no mention of prophets as such or of “divinely appointed angels” on their mission in the lower world. On Naḥmanides on Jacob’s ladder, see n. 161. On Bahya b. Asher’s citation of al-Baṭalajûsî, see n. 218.

219 In fact, in contrast to his other works, here he disagreed entirely with Ibn ‘Ezra, on virtually every verse. This is a phenomenon which requires explanation. Note, for example, that he totally rejected his detailed explanations of the “Ten Commandments” (Maṣṭef le-kesef, 203 ff.; and cf. his astonishing remark, 279 on verse 19, that the differences in the two versions are of no consequence since both are from God). It is surprising that in his generally very good dissertation, “Early Ibn Ezra Supercommentaries” (see Bibliography) Visi made no mention of these things.

220 Geviā’ kesef, 17 (text), 174 (tr.); Adney kesef 2: 6. In one of his later books, a commentary on the Torah, he wrote that the (Greek) philosophers “wanted to imitate our holy Torah but were unable, except as an ape imitates a man’s actions” (Maṣṭef kesef, 14). An example of his relating statements in the Torah to other works, in this case Aristotle’s Metaphysics and other writings, is Geviā’ kesef, 19 (text), 179 (tr.), and so frequently in other books. In one of his first commentaries, he wrote that knowledge of nature, and so the explanation of the “act of creation” (ma’asēh herēshyit) and “act of the chariot” (ma’asēh merkabah) are “despised among our people because of their sins, and so because of our sins we have lost the books of Solomon and of the rest of our [ancient] knowledge and there have remained [only] things of wisdom attributed to Plato and Aristotle” (Adney kesef 1: 47); an absurd statement, of course. The idea of “lost wisdom,” including extra-biblical books of Solomon, is a common one in medieval Jewish thought.

221 Geviā’ kesef, 20 (text), 183–84 (tr.). Incidentally, Herring’s explanation, n. 84, concerning what is said about Nebuchadnezzar, that he “also had a right to possess” the Land, is incorrect; the statement “until he comes whose right it is” (Ezek. 21.32) clearly refers to the messiah. Later in the same work, Ibn Kaspiy asserted that the Israelites did not “deserve to destroy the Canaanites,” and for that reason they were themselves destroyed (the kingdom) by Nebuchadnezzar (text 36; tr. 243). Interestingly, Naḥmanides focused on a directly opposite accusation, that the Israelites were punished by God precisely because they did not want to seize the land from its inhabitants (Judges 2.2); “Sha’ar ha-gemūl,” in Kitvey 2: 273. The degree to which “political correctness” and “postmodernism” have corrupted current biblical scholarship is obvious in these remarks of a respected scholar:

The “Canaanite perspective” on the Exodus and Conquest was first articulated by Edward Said in an exchange with Michael Waltzer, and was forcefully brought to the attention of biblical scholars by Keith Whitelam. For most modern Westerners, the conquest of another country and slaughter of
its inhabitants, as reported in the Bible whether historically accurate or not, is an outrage, and the justification of such action by alleged divine command is viewed with grave suspicion. What is remarkable in the biblical context is that it took so long for this Canaanite perspective to find a voice.


That the anti-Semitic Said should be cited as an authority on the Hebrew Bible is the highest irony. Never mind, on the very next page Collins cites the radical professor Stanley Fish, who finds a justification for Muslim terrorists.

222 Ṭiyrat kesef, 121, 75, cited also in Herring's notes.

223 Ex. 3.22, end (“long recension,” ed. Weiser 2: 36). The attitude of Ibn Kaspiy toward Rashī needs further investigation, and see the following paragraph. Gross, “Rashiy u-masoret liymud ha-Torah,” devotes two pages (35–36) to one or two statements of Ibn Kaspiy, whom he erroneously calls “Provençal,” and concludes that he was totally opposed to Rashī.

224 Tam ha-kesef, 42. Pines, Beyn mahšvevet Yisraēl le-mahšvevet ha-‘amīyim, 287 ff., reproduced the entire text of Ibn Kaspiy’s discussion. The article relates Ibn Kaspiy’s mention of the restoration of the kingdom of Israel to the ideas of Spinoza; most of the texts from Ibn Kaspiy discussed in the previous pages of the article, 277 ff., have nothing to do with this (Pines ignored the decidedly “anti-Zionist” statements in the earlier commentaries about having “stolen” the Land). Ibn Kaspiy mentions only the conquest of Muslim territory in the kingdom of Aragón, with which he was familiar, but not Castile.

225 See Mesch, Studies, Chapter 3. See also Ibn Kaspiy, Shūlhan kesef, ed. Kasher, 170; the entire book contains important discussions of individual prophets as well as prophecy in general (the index is less complete than it might have been). Remarkably, his statements on the superiority of prophets over philosophers, and other notions, are the opposite of what both Ibn ‘Ezra and Maimonides had written, in spite of the fact that he usually followed both faithfully. He may have been influenced by Judah ha-Lēvy’s views in this, and also by Ibn Rūshd (“Averroes”), epitome of Aristotle’s Parva naturalia (Heb. tr. by Ibn Tibbon, Moses. in H. Blumberg, ed., Qisṣūs sefer ha-ḥūsh ve-ha-mūḥash [Cambridge, M.A., 1954], 58–59; see Pines, Beyn mahšvevet Yisraēl le-mahšvevet ha-‘amīyim, 281).

226 Ṭiyrat kesef, 25–26; Maskiyōt kesef, 113 (see Mesch, Studies, 100–01 and notes).

227 Ṭiyrat kesef, 23; Gevīa’ kesef, Chapter 22 (and see index here: prophecy). In the introduction (12), Herring cited Adney kesef 1: 53, 152 for similar statements; however, there is nothing about this in either place, rather 1: 50 (where he states that Hosea 1 is to be understood literally) and 1: 117 (on Isa. 20.2–3), where he states that he disagrees with the “Guide” (II. 46) and interprets literally the command to Isaiah to walk naked.

228 Curiously, E.J. and many Israeli writers spell the name “Ḥlava,” an absolutely impossible form, even if the name were Hebrew (it is, of course, Arabic). The family name Ibn Ḥallāva became Aleva, Halleva, etc. (see index to Baer, Joden 1: 1112). The debate over the first name dates to the nineteenth century and continues to the present. Steinschneider was certainly correct that the name is to be pronounced “Bahya.” It is not Arabic, nor is it a compound of B- (İbn) Yaḥya, as supposed by N. Allony in Areḥet 6 (1980): 11–12 (see there for references to Steinschneider and others). Allony erred in following the mistake of Friedberg, Bet [Beyt] ‘eqed sefarium 2: 113 (B’: 51) in ascribing the Bīyūr ‘al ha-Tōnah to “Bahya b’r Natan”; an error for Bahya b. Asher, of course (nor is Friedberg’s note there
about the first edition entirely comprehensible: defūs sefardiy Zamr"h, with no date, should be understood as an edition in Zamora [or possibly, but unlikely, Valencia], Spain, ca. 1491. Lipshitz, 'Iyūniym...Bahya, 1, did not realize that Friedberg (and not some obscure rabbi in Israel) was the source of the error of the name of Bahya's father; however, his other comments there are correct. In Spain in the fourteenth century, Bahya (a fairly common name) was transcribed in Romance letters as Baffiel (or Bafiel), which also reflects the above pronunciation. It has been suggested that Bahya is an appellative for “Judah”; see Margulies, R. “Rabênu Bahya,” Sinai 41 (1957): 185–86; again, without foundation. Chavel, introduction to his ed. of Bahya’s commentary, made no remarks at all about his name. I adhere to tradition in citing him simply as Bahya (not to be confused, however, with Ibn Paqudah). It is possible that Bahya, who was not a rabbi or known to have taught in a yeshivah (in spite of the title rabeynu bestowed upon him by later generations), earned his living as a physician; my reasoning on this is that he demonstrated considerable interest in medical matters in his commentaries (some statements, such as Ex. 23.25, ed. Chavel 2: 248, are derived from Ibn 'Ezra; see Lipshitz, 'Iyūniym...Bahya, 171).

Ibn Adret was born ca. 1233 and died in 1310. On the date of his death, see Zacut, Yūḥasiym, 223a (Chavel, introduction to Bahya’s commentary 1: 8 n. 7, went into great detail to arrive at the probable date of Ibn Adret’s death, saying that he had found no reference to this in the writings of the “nighōniym” [early scholars]; however, he overlooked Zacut). Bahya wrote not only his commentary but other works during the lifetime of his teacher, and of course with his consent (as required by rabbinical law). Chavel’s complicated discussion, 8–9, is completely unnecessary, since of course the variations in citing Ibn Adret as alive or deceased are due to later copyists and editors, as is the case with numerous other medieval texts. Bahya repeatedly cites his teacher, Ibn Adret; not only what he heard orally from him but also from his writings (these references may easily be found in the index to his Kitvey, including references to Biyūr). An important citation of him is on the verse “Can a woman forget her suckling child?” (Isa. 49.15), which Ibn Adret explained as having two meanings: that there can be no doubt that the Jewish people are (metaphorically) the sons of God (cf. Hosea 2.1), and that just as it is impossible for a mother to exchange her child for another, so it is impossible for God to exchange the Jews for another people (on Ex. 13.2; Biyūr, ed. Chavel 2: 99). See also Bahya on Lev. 16.30 (Biyūr 2: 503) that the divine name before which purification of Yom Kippur takes place is the name of 42 letters, etc., in the name of his teacher (cf. Ibn Adret, She'elōt u-tešhūvōt 1: no. 220); also on Num. 14.13–14 (ed. Chavel 3: 88), end “and so explained the great rabbi R"Sh [Solomon Ibn Adret], may he live”; cf. Ibn Adret, She'elōt u-tešhūvōt 1: no. 60; Chavel made no note on these references.

He certainly was not a dayan (judge), as Pedaya, Ramban, 102, thought (confusing him with the earlier Bahya Ibn Paqudah). Only some of his writings were re-edited in Kitvey. The editor did not bother to consult “secular” scholars, and particularly overlooked Michael, Ōr ha-ḥayyim, 268–69, who lists important unpublished works and gives citations for others. These remain unedited because scholars seem to believe that Chavel’s edition is definitive. A search should be made for extant manuscripts and these works should be edited. The date for the writing (or the completion) of the commentary is given by Bahya himself in two different places: Biyūr 1: 54 and 3: 336. It is of course unlikely that he could have written this lengthy and complex commentary in one year, so that the date refers to the completion of the work. The most important and detailed analysis of the Torah commentary is Lipshitz, 'Iyūniym...Bahya (where this is not cited in my notes, it is because he did not write on the passage under consideration). It is a
brilliant and comprehensive “supercommentary” on Bahya, but unlike his other studies it is not arranged topically but rather by chapter and verse.

231 Modern editions: Job, in Kad ha-gemah (Kitvey, 138–57; entirely based on the alleged commentary of Naḥmanides, on which see n. 102); Jonah, ibid., 213–22, based on Ḥegayōn ha-nefesh of Abraham b. Ḥiyyā (Ḥayya); Esther, ibid., 329–41. Alleged separate “commentaries” by Bahya on Job and Proverbs have been published, which in fact are merely extracts from his other writings – on Job, most recently as “Peyrūš Ṭabēnū [sic] Bahya…” (Jerusalem, 1948); on Proverbs, Jerusalem, 1950; rpt. Tel-Aviv, 1987. For a complete bibliography of all published work by him, see my Dictionary, 152–54 (there are some printing errors there). Chavel’s editions, as in the case of his editions of Naḥmanides, have become “standard.” In fact, they apparently are not as faulty as his editions of Naḥmanides; however, he uses abbreviations for various works throughout in his commentaries without explaining what they stand for (particularly disturbing is oe”sh which seems to mean “sefariym she-lifneynū,” i.e., other editions of Bahya’s works). Chavel’s introduction to the commentary on the Torah contains numerous errors.

232 As previously mentioned, Pedaya, Ramban, 88 n. 1, claimed that Bahya wrote that the commentary of Naḥmanides, written in the Land of Israel, had not reached “these lands” (Spain), when in fact he wrote that concerning the alleged biblical commentary of Maimonides; cf. his Kad ha-gemah (Kitvey, 280 and see Chavel’s note there; Bahya’s parallel statement in his Torah commentary to which he refers is in his Biyūr 3: 435). If Bahya had indeed said that the commentary of Naḥmanides had not reached Spain, how does Pedaya explain that it is cited on virtually every page of Bahya’s own commentary? Incidentally, this is not the only medieval reference to a commentary of Maimonides, of which not a fragment has ever been found and it is unlikely that he ever wrote it (see also Azulai, Ṣhe’m ha-gedoliym, s.v. “biyūr,” that such references are probably an error for the commentary of Naḥmanides [Rambam instead of Ramban]. Pedaya made the reverse error; however, Bahya wrote “R”M,” clearly intending Maimonides; see n. 83). Some examples of his copying of Naḥmanides have been mentioned here previously.

233 See index here on him. Aaron Greenbaum, introduction to his ed. of Samuel’s Peyrūš ha-Tōnah (Jerusalem, 1979), 51–52, discussed Bahya’s use of the commentary (see also his article on this in Areshet 5 [1972]: 7–33) but incorrectly said that he never cited the author by name. On Ex. 3.4 (ed. Chavel 2: 24) he does cite him by name. Greenbaum provides, 53, a table of references to (or apparent influences of) Samuel’s commentary on Bahya; again, with no mention of Ex. 3.4 (Greenbaum read, and mentioned, Chavel’s first ed. of Bahya, where he easily could have found this reference; however, Chavel made no use of Greenbaum’s table in his subsequent editions of Bahya). According to Bahya on Ex. 3.4, Samuel deduced, in the name of his teachers and their teachers, the divine “Name” of 100 letters from this passage (see index here on “God, names of”). Incidentally, according to Greenbaum several references in Bahya to the commentary of Ḥananēl (b. Ḥûshyēl) actually refer to Samuel b. Ḥûnīy. Greenbaum probably learned this from Zucker, ‘Al targūm RS”G, 321. However, at least some of the citations derive from the commentary of Sa’adyah; cf. Chavel’s note, 2: 86 (which again was not seen, nor the references cited there, by Greenbaum). Incidentally, Chavel’s note there on calculation of the new month, and Maimonides as cited, is extremely important. Lipshitz, ‘Iyûniym… Bahya, 49 ff., also added information on citations of Ḥananēl which sometimes are from the commentary of Sa’adyah (e.g., on Gen. 17.1); see also 147 ff., etc.
234 Frequently, see index of names in Bahya, Kitvei, 673 (see the index here on him). See the previous note on the confusion of Hananel with Samuel b. Hophniy. Chavel’s “edition” of Peyruškey R’ Hananel b. Hushiyel (Jerusalem, 1972) is based on earlier collections of citations in medieval sources.

235 Ex. 15.3; ed. Chavel 2: 129 (“I heard from Isaac Tôdrôs,” with the indication that he was already deceased). Certainly this is Isaac ben Tôdrôs, as Chavel said, citing Jacob Reischmann; however, he still had no idea who he was. He was one of the signatories of the ban on secular studies (Ibn Adret, She’elot u-teḥillot 1: nos. 415, 417), and also a co-signator of another (unedited) responsum of Ibn Adret, cited briefly by Neubauer, A. “Documents inédits,” R.E.J. 12 (1886): 90. All of this, including the correct form of his name, also escaped Idel, “Naḥmanides: Kabbalah, Halakah,” 83. One of Isaac’s students was Shem Tov Ibn Ga,on, an important scholar, author of “Migdal ʿoz,” a commentary on Maimonides, M.T., and (ca. 1300) of Keter shem tov, a qabalistic supercommentary on Naḥmanides (the edition published in Judah Coriat, Sifer ma’or ve-chemesh [Livorno, 1839], is corrupt). Another student was Nathan b. Judah ha-Kohen, who wrote a work on customs, cited often by Aaron b. Joseph ha-Kohen of Lunel (he was also a teacher of Shem Tov Ibn Ga’on), Orhot hayiyim (Jerusalem, 1981; photo rpt. of the first eds., 2 vols.), and see Michael, Or ha-hayiyim, 562. Isaac was the author of a commentary on the “Azharot” (liturgical poem on the commandments) of Ibn Gabirol and on the mahzor (holiday prayer book); see Steinschneider, C.B., col. 2522. According to the introduction of his alleged commentary (unpublished) on the qabalistic work “Giynat biytan,” his teacher was Ibn Adret. That, of course, is impossible and further proves the forgery of that commentary as well as the work on which it was written (see E. Gottlieb’s article in Studies in Mysticism and Religion Presented to Gershom G. Scholem [Jerusalem, 1967], Heb., section, 65; however, nowhere did the author mention that Isaac b. Tôdrôs in fact was a student of Naḥmanides).


237 Chavel, introduction to Biyur (1: 9–10), gave some incomplete and inaccurate information about these. Dan Ashkenazi (“the German,” not a last name) is cited by Bahya, Ex. 2.21 (2: 19) and 24.11 (256) (“so I heard from Rabbi Dan”). He studied with the renowned Meir b. Barukh of Rothenburg (Germany), and moved to Spain, where he was a rabbi in Zaragoza and sent questions to Ibn Adret, who replied, disagreeing with him and even sharply rebuking his ignorance (She’elot u-teḥillot 1: nos. 527, 529–30, and see especially 1, no. 548, the famous “prophet of Ávila” case). Yom Tov Ishbibili also replied to some questions from him, disagreeing with him. The series of responsa to Dan (Ibn Adret 1, nos. 1229–1233; and 3, nos. 369–372, which belong after 1, no. 1232) are perhaps by Ishbibili, not Ibn Adret (see the anonymous booklet Tsiyonei [Siyuney] maṭeḥot ve-haqahliot le-sifrey shu’ar ha-Rashba [Jerusalem, 1981], p. 2, no. 3, and p. 27; this is available in some libraries and I also have a copy). There is more to be said about him, but this is not the place. He is also cited by Jacob b. Asher, commentary on the Torah (Hannover, 1839), 58a: “I heard from Rabbi Dan Ashkenazi,” but the words “thus far the words of the rabbi, of blessed memory”
may refer to Baḥya, from whom Jacob probably copied the statement. It is virtually impossible for Jacob to have known Dan, who must have died while he was a child or before he was born. MS. Dresden LB Eb 399 (Jerusalem, Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts film F 20767) contains what is described as “novellae on the Torah” by Dan as well as Asher b. Yehiel. However, Aptowitz, “Le commentaire du Pentateuque attribué à R. Asher b. Yehiel,” 84–85, argued convincingly that it is a copy of the commentary erroneously attributed to Asher, or a slightly different version of that. The manuscript was copied in 1344, apparently in Covilhaô in Portugal (see on the manuscript Liber, “Le commentaire de Pentateuque attribué a Ascher B. Yehiel,” who argued for the authenticity of the manuscript).

238 On Gen. 1.21 (ed. Chavel 1: 42) and on Ex. 21.23 (ed. Chavel 2: 223); see also his statement about the source of the soul being the “throne of glory,” in his introduction (ed. Chavel 1: 3), also apparently from the Zohar. In fact, there are several other places where he does not cite it specifically but was influenced by it; see Gottlieb, Ephraim. “R’ Baḥya ve-ha-Zohar,” Tarbiz [Tarbiyṣ] 33 (1963): 287–313 (he curiously did not mention the above statement). The Zohar, a forgery pretending to be mystical teachings of talmudic sages, was composed primarily or entirely by Moses b. Shēm Ṭōv de León (d. 1305), in the years between 1280 and 1286, according to Gershom Scholem, and thus not long before Baḥya wrote his commentary (1291).

239 Biyūr 1: 48; Chavel wrote in his note there that he had no idea who “ba’al [author of] ha-migaleh” is, but of course the reference is to Abraham’s Megilat ha-migaleh, particularly 56 (all of the discussion of the creation there, 52–55, influenced Baḥya and perhaps also Naḥmanides; it should be noted that, at least in my copy of the work, all of the pages in Chapter 3 there are bound out of order). Guttmann in his introduction there, xxv (Llibre revelador, xxxviii), already noted that Baḥya referred to this work and cited other references, but did not cite this particular page in relation to what Baḥya quoted.

240 See Chavel’s note to 1: 45 that it is difficult to determine whether he used the translation of the “Guide” by Ibn Tibbon or al-Ḥarīẓī. However, since Baḥya, unlike Naḥmanides, knew Arabic, it is not impossible that he read the original Arabic text. On Deut. 29.28 (ed. Chavel 3: 435), he cites an interpretation he heard in the name of Maimonides – that the “secrets” of the Torah are esoteric and, as the reason for the commandments, belong only to God, whereas the exoteric are obligatory to study (which interpretation he rejects, as would be expected). As Chavel noted, this is also cited in his Kad ha-gemekah (Kitvey, 280), where he said that Maimonides wrote this in his (alleged) commentary on the Torah, but that commentary was not found in Spain (see n. 232 on this). Chavel gave an incorrect reference to Bacher, ha-Rambam parshan ha-miqra, 22, but in fact that has nothing to do with this.

241 Ex. 34.6, ed. Chavel 2: 353, that the 13 divine attributes enumerated there are emanated from the ten sefiyrōt and three “hidden” ones; and Shēm Ṭōv b. Joseph (not “Ibn Shēm Tōv,” as many erroneously write), Sēfer ha-emunōt, 28b; and see Tôdōrōs b. Joseph Abulafia (fl. 1270–ca. 1300; rabbi and qabalist in Toledo), ᪏sar ha-kavōd, on Rosh ha-shanah (f. 16b; Roman numeral 32). The “responsum” of Hai appears in Jeschurun 3 (1857): 55–57; Jellinek, Beitragē 2: 11–14; Tarbiz (Tarbiyṣ) 26 (1956): 440–58. That this is a forged responsum was already pointed out by Assaf, Teqūfah ha-geōniym, 323 n. 2; see also Scholem, Les origines de la Kabbale, 368 and cf. 329; Groner, Tzvi. “Reshiymat teshuvaḥ Rav Hai Gaon,” ’Alei séfer 13 (1986): 119. Chavel was apparently unaware of the forgery. This is, incidentally, proof that qabalistic forgery of geonic responsa, a major problem in some printed editions, began already in the medieval period.
242 On the explanation of the “Shema’” (Deut. 6.4; Biyūr 3: 274 ff.), concerning “unification” of God’s name as “service of the heart”, cf. Asher b. David. in Daniel Abrahams, ed., Kal kitvav... (Los Angeles, 1996), 62. See on this Lipshitz, ‘Iyunim...Bahya, 381 (and generally there on Bahya’s interpretation).

243 See Goldstein, “Citations of Judah ben Solomon ha-Cohen”; of interest is Judah’s use of the term gōlem for (physical) “matter,” usually paraphrased by Bahya, but on Gen. 6.6 he also used the exact term; this was derived from Abraham bar Hayya (Hyya), see n. 116. Scholars of qabalah have sought to find “mystical” or qabalistic meaning in the term generally. There is no mention of any of this in Idol, Golem.

244 The Ma’amor yeqav ha-mayim of Samuel Ibn Tibbon is referred to by Bahya on Gen. 28.12, end (ed. Chavel 1: 245). On David Qimhi (sometimes disagreeing with him), see the index of names in Bahya, Kitvey, 673. The editor of Isaac b. Joseph de Piera’s commentary (see here on him) in his introduction, 11, casti-gates Chavel for overlooking among other things references to David Qimhi, but as can be seen here this is incorrect (some of his other objections are sound).

245 Bahya, ed. Chavel 3: 100; derived from ṣūṣ, “look”; mešiṣyiq in Song of Songs 2.9; not 3 as in Chavel’s note, repeated in Qad ha-qemah (Kitvey, 248). Chavel did not note that this was the definition given, uniquely, by Joseph ha-Ézobiy in his (apparently lost) allegorical explanation of the commandments, “Séfer ha-milīyyim” (excerpt in Ibn Adret, Shc‘elōt u-teḥuṿṿōt 7: no. 538; and see he-Halūṣ 7 [1865]: 102). Bahya may have heard of this from his teacher. Neither Ibn Janāḥ nor Ibn ‘Ezra gave any explanation of the origin of the word. Bahya continues there with his own qabalistic interpretation of the significance of the commandment of attaching fringes to a garment, the tekhelet (purplish-blue central thread) of which is a reminder of the throne of glory. In the introduction to his commentary on the Torah, ed. Chavel 1: 10, he wrote that the 32 cords which make up the fringes symbolize the 32 gates of understanding (“wonders of wisdom”); and see ‘Ezra b. Solomon of Gerona, on the 613 commandments, in Moses b. Naḥman, Kitvey 2: 525–26, cited in Chavel’s note on Bahya, loc. cit. The previously mentioned Judah b. Moses Ḥallāvā (not necessarily related to Bahya) stated (Imrey shefer, 186) that the 32 cords symbolize (the letters lamed=30 and beyt=2) the beginning and end of the Torah (Genesis begins with beyt and Deuteronomy ends in lamed) to indicate that in seeing the fringes one should remember (have in mind) all the Torah and all the commandments “which are included in 32,” by which he perhaps intended the 32 gates of understanding mentioned by Bahya; the source for that concept is the mystical Sefer yeṣiyrah (cf. Judah b. Barzilay, Peyrūḏh, 140, which is taken from the commentary of Dunash Ibn Tamiyim, according to Fenton, Paul. “Abraham Ibn Ezra a-t-il composé un commentaire sur le-Sefer Yeṣīra?” R.E.J. 150 [2001]: 48; it is also found in Sefer ha-bahiyyr, see the text – actually a combination of texts – cited by Pedaya, ha-Ramban, 164; she does not mention any of the above sources). Naḥmanides, following Rosh ha-shanaḥ 21b, wrote in the introduction (3) to his commentary of fifty gates of understanding; cf. also Bahya concerning the “secret” of the Jubilee year and the Sabbatical (Lev. 25.8; ed. Chavel 2: 564). See Lipshitz, ‘Iyunim...Bahya, 289 ff., a detailed comparison of this with other qabalistic sources. “Fifty gates” is also found in the introduction to the commentary on Sefer yeṣiyrah wrongly attributed to Abraham b. David of Posquières but actually by Joseph b. Shalōm “Aḥkenaziy.” Aaron b. Jacob ha-Kohān of Lunel (writing in Majorca, ca. 1330), although generally not considered a qabalist, wrote a complex mystical interpretation of the name of God and the numeric value of the letters of a certain passage which (somehow) equals 32, “which are the 32 paths by which the world was created” (Orḥōt hayyim 1: 10b). For similar, although
numerically different, interpretations of the “German pietists,” see Dan, Joseph. “The Ashkenazi Hasidic Gates of Wisdom,” in G. Nahon, ed., Homage à George Vajda (Louvain, 1980), 183–89; see also Idel, Absorbing Perfections, 211, and on Naḥmanides and other early qabalists, 212 ff.; note especially Jacob b. Sheshet’s explanation of five sets of ten gates, each set explicating one of the books of the Torah (Sefer ha-emunah ve-ha-bitahon in Kitvey ha-Ramban 2: 435).

246 Biyyur 1: 64; cf. Kaufmann, Die Spuren al-Batlajûsi’s [sic], Heb. text 53–54, according to which Baḥya’s text should be corrected.

247 Ex. 19.17 (ed. Chavel 2: 173); as Chavel noted there, this is taken from Moses b. Maimon, Igeret Teyman (ed. Halkin and tr. Cohen, 30–32 [text], vii [tr.], and cf. 56/57 [text], xi [tr.]; Igerot, ed. Shailat 1: 128, 139). Unfortunately, Lipschitz, ‘Iyunim…Baḥya, did not comment on this. Medieval notions of plagiarism were not the same as ours, and even such a lengthy “borrowing” was not necessarily considered wrong. On the expression ma’amad har Siynay, coined by Ibn ‘Ezra, see Chapter 2, n. 17.

248 Biyyur 1: 284–86; the section quoted is from Ibn ‘Aknīn, 131 ff. (see Bibliography); Halkin, the editor, did not see this. Chavel had no idea who the “philosopher” was, and refers vaguely to his introduction (12) where he said only that Baḥya knew Arabic and translated some passages. See there on references to Sa’adyah, and see index to Baḥya, Kitvey. One of the most valuable contributions of Lipschitz, ‘Iyunim, is the discovery of additional influences of Sa’adyah in the commentary (see his index); Lipschitz, 78 n. 2, also cited Zarza, Samuel. Megôt ḥayyim (Mantua, 1559), 22b, who identified this philosopher as Joseph, the “student companion” (which he certainly was not) of Maimonides. Lipschitz himself made the mistake (79) of claiming that the real identity of the “philosopher” is “Joseph b. Judah b. Jacob Ibn ‘Aknīn” and not “Joseph b. Judah b. Shim‘on Ibn ‘Aknīn, the chief student of Maimonides.” The student of Maimonides, of course, was Joseph Ibn Shim‘on, not Ibn ‘Aknīn (certainly not “b. Shim‘on Ibn ‘Aknīn”). I had already correctly identified the “philosopher” (Ibn ‘Aknīn) mentioned by Baḥya in my Jews, Visigoths & Muslims, 283 n. 33. In addition to his translation of the passage from Ibn ‘Aknīn’s commentary, Baḥya mentions that he translated from the Arabic (translation) a text of a letter of the famous Greek physician Galen (commentary on Deut. 18.10–11; Biyyur 3: 361).

249 Ex. 12.2, end; ed. Chavel 2: 88–89. See also an explanation he cited in the name of his teacher Ibn Adret, Deut. 32.4 (ed. Chavel 3: 459).

250 Ed. Chavel 2: 183. See n. 131 on the controversy as to whether kavādā and the Shekhiynah are (created) external to God or not. Baḥya also agrees with Naḥmanides that they are one and the same (184). Moses Narbōniy, cited in that note, apparently intended this statement by Baḥya. His contemporary Moses b. Shem Tov de León also wrote that the purpose of blessings is to increase the “flow” of emanation from above and also to “impart strength” above; that is, to God (Wolfson, Elliot. “Mystical-Theurgical Dimensions of Prayer in Sefer Ha-Rimmon,” in David R. Blumenthal, ed., Approaches to Medieval Judaism 3 [Atlanta, 1988]: 45; and cf. the very similar expression by El’azar of Worms cited there, 52). That idea has its roots in traditional talmudic teaching, but Baḥya went far beyond that in his statement.

251 Deut. 10.14; ed. Chavel 3: 308. On the notion of nine spheres, see n. 61. He cites both the opinions of Naḥmanides and Maimonides with respect to the spheres, but the qabalistic interpretation is his own. Many rabbis in later generations were ardently opposed to any mystical “concentration” or intent in the recitation of the shema’ (“Hear O Israel”), or in prayers generally. 287. Ex. 28.15, ed. Chavel 2: 298–99 (he made no comment on the qabalistic significance of all this;
on the symbolism of the 12 tribes, see Naḥmanides on Deut. 33.6, ed. Chavel 2: 495). As Chavel noted, this order of engraving the initial of the names of each of the Patriarchs on the stones along with the tribes is an innovation, not found in earlier sources. Lipshitz, ‘Iyunim… Bahya, 196 ff., makes no comment on any of this but does note that the description of each stone and the connection of their names to those of the tribes are paralleled in a manuscript of gematriyot (see index here for the explanation of this term); see Trachtenberg, Jewish Magic and Superstition, 265–67. On the engraving of the names of the tribes on the stones, uniquely not on the priestly breastplate but on the diadem, in the Aramaic translation of Song of Songs (5.14), see Alexander, Philip S. The Targum of Canticles (London, Collegeville, M.N., 2003), 210–13. Interestingly, the learned scribe of a biblical codex written in Roussillon between 1366 and 1382, Elisha (Crescas) b. Abraham Benvenist (not Benveniste nor Benvenisti), includes a midrashic work apparently of his own which has among other things this discussion of the stones of the breastplate (see Kogman-Appel, “Scholarly Interests,” 164). He apparently was also the scribe–Illuminator of the famous Catalan Atlas.

252 For Naḥmanides’ own qabalistic interpretation of the Tabernacle, see “mishkan” in the index to Moses b. Naḥman, Kitvey 2: 570.

253 Ex. 13.1; Biyūr 2: 98. The commandments are, of course, discussed throughout, but see especially the important summary ibid., 201–06 (the discussion, 201, of the number ten is taken almost verbatim from Ibn ’Ezra on the same passage; not mentioned by Chavel).

254 Biyūr 2: 202; cf. also 1: 50 (on Gen. 1.31). On the ten spheres, see index here (note that this contradicts his previous mention of nine spheres). This idea of the correspondence of the commandments to the ten spheres may possibly be borrowed from the qabalist Jacob b. Shēset, “Sha’ar ha-shamayim” (there erroneously “Liqûṭey Shōn Tov”) in (spurious) Hai Ga’on, Liqûṭiyim (Warsaw, 1798), 16a.

255 Biyūr 2: 224. In his note, Chavel says that this is the opinion of Sa’adyah Ga’on as cited by Ibn ’Ezra (ed. Weiser 2: 152); but while part of it is similar, the main interpretation here, relating to the impossibility of inflicting an equal damage, is original (Hanaël, whom he mentions, is apparently a confusion for Samuel b. Höfniy, as previously noted, n. 276). See also what Judah ha-Lēvy wrote about this, Kuzariy 3.47 (tr. Hirschfeld, 175).


257 Literally, “daughter of a voice”; that is, a sound. It was understood by the sages to be a special voice emanating from heaven which announced propitious events or sometimes proclaimed God’s will; also, the voice heard at the revelation of the Ten Commandments.

258 Ex. 11.4; ed. Chavel 2: 81; see also 1: 18–20. Schwartz, Astrôlogiyah u-magiyah does not even mention Bahya, possibly because Chavel did not mention astrology in his index (Kitvey), but see “mazalōti” there.

259 In Kad ha-qemah (Kitvey, 338–41).

260 Ibn Adret, letter in Perles, R. Salomon b. Abraham b. Adereth, Hebrew section, 14 (readers not familiar with the commentary of Naḥmanides would hardly know what to make of the statement). On Deut. 12.5 (ed. Chavel 3: 323), however, Bahya gives a different interpretation of Moriah as specifically the mountain, quoting Maimonides at length. Obviously Naḥmanides intended an allegorical, or mystical, interpretation: the merit of Abraham’s submission in being willing to sacrifice Isaac extended to the entire Land of Israel (and its people).

261 Gen. 49.12 (ed. Chavel 1: 386); this was “borrowed” without acknowledgment by Judah b. Moses Ḥallāва, Imrey shefer, 440. This is in sharp contrast with the aforementioned notion of Ibn Kaspi that the Land was “stolen” and taken by
force. Incidentally, Chavel inserted here (or is it in a manuscript?) a lengthy text taken from Ḫemūnah ve-ha-bitḥōn; that is also partially cited by Judah Ḥallāva, 441 (the editor erroneously attributed it to Naḥmanides, as previously mentioned, the actual author was Jacob b. Sheshet; it is possible that this was also in the manuscript of Bahya which Judah used). Cf. also Bahya on Ex. 13.18 (2: 109), even though they had no need of weapons they used them because God expects Israel to do as much as possible according to nature and the rest is done by miraculous assistance (see also on Ex. 15.3 [2: 127]).

Ex. 25.38, ed. Chavel 2: 283. Chavel noted that he could find no source for the Land being called “darōm” (south), nor have I. However, the talmudic sages in “Babylon” sometimes referred to those in the Land of Israel as “sages [elders] of the south” (e.g., Hullin 132b; Zevaḥim 22b, 23a). There is also the general statement “Let him who wishes to attain to wisdom go to the south” (B.B. 25b), which means the Land of Israel, south of Babylon. The “seven climates” in which the world is supposedly divided is an ancient notion, common also among Muslim writers. On Deut. 8.7 (ed. Chavel 3: 297), Bahya refers to the six climates; Chavel made no observation on this contradiction (yet immediately following this, Bahya says [298] that the inhabited world is divided into seven climates; erroneously attributing this to the rabbis). See also on Deut. 11.12, ed. Chavel 3: 314; following Naḥmanides and others, the Land is not subject to astral influences but is under the direct providence of God, and as the heart is the center of the body so the Land is the center of the other climates. Elsewhere he wrote that the exile was because the people had transgressed

in the Holy Land, which is the center of the world and median of the climates, and removed themselves from the upper point called the supernal middle line [or column], situated opposite the earthly middle line, and they desecrated its sanctity and removed themselves from its dominion and remained in the dominion of the other supernal forces [or “angels”].

Therefore it was decreed that they be exiled to other parts of the world (since they no longer merited living in the central climate); Kad ha-qemah (in Kitvey), 115, top paragraph. On the Land, or specifically Jerusalem, as center of the earth, see index here. The interpretation of sinning in the Land and punishment therefore is certainly derived from Naḥmanides (see n. 227).

Deut. 11.21, ed. Chavel 3: 318. This is a slight misquoting of Naḥmanides, see at n. 197.
Chapter 5

Christian Spain, Part 2

Aragón-Catalonia fourteenth century

**Jonah b. Abraham Gerūdiyy ("of Gerona")** was born (date unknown) in Gerona but studied in Paris and Montpellier and lived in Gerona and Barcelona before moving eventually to Toledo, where he died in 1263.¹ He wrote a commentary on Proverbs, which survives in incomplete versions.² The commentary, as to be expected in view of his other writings, is entirely ethical in content and of no independent value. The "sermons and commentary on the Torah" attributed to Jonah are not by him.³

**Joseph b. Shalom Ashkenaziyy (early fourteenth century),** also known as Joseph ha-Arōkh, was a qabalist who lived possibly in Barcelona, although his family originated from Germany. Among his writings was a qabalistic commentary on Psalms, of which only some parts have survived.⁴

**Nisim b. Reuben Gerūdiyy ("of Gerona," ca. 1290–1376),** an important rabbi, wrote a commentary on Genesis, perhaps intended as part of a complete commentary on the Torah, but it exists only to Chapter 23.⁵ As would be expected from this very traditional rabi, he argued that belief in creation is the foundation of the Torah and that the “philosophers and those who follow them” (Maimonides) who maintained preexistence, or “eternity,” of the universe assert the necessary existence of the universe and that God cannot affect any change in it, thus denying the possibility of miracles.

He cites the famous statement of Nahmanides that according to this, God would not be able to “lengthen the wing of a fly or shorten the leg of an ant.”⁶ He believed that miracles are a change in natural order, which is contrary to the position of Nahmanides. In general, however, he followed Nahmanides and opposed Maimonides. However, he did not agree with Nahmanides that two separate “substances” were created, from which the heavens and the earth were formed.

**Zeraḥyah b. Isaac Gracian (Ḥēn) of Barcelona** (thirteenth century) wrote that all biblical commentators must know three things: grammar and the meaning of the words; logic, to distinguish true from false and possible from impossible; and natural sciences and general secular knowledge, which “without doubt” are alluded to even in the prophetic writings (Joseph Ibn Kaspiyy, fourteenth-century biblical commentator who also wrote a
dictionary, warned that no one can achieve “perfection,” or completeness, in understanding the Bible who has not completely mastered Hebrew grammar and logic. Zeraḥyah wrote commentaries on Proverbs and Job. Both of these were written in Rome (1288–91), and therefore are not of interest to us except as a reflection of influences that he received in Spain. His approach, unlike that of his predecessors, was almost entirely philosophical. With regard to Job, for example, he wrote that the book is completely a parable, but he also agreed with the talmudic opinion that the book in fact was written by Moses. He boasted, however, that just as no commentator prior to him had explained Proverbs philosophically, so none had endeavored thus to explain Job.

On Job, he cited Ibn ‘Ezra but usually in disagreement – also the commentary erroneously attributed to David Qimḥi, and especially the alleged commentary of Naḥmanides, with which he frequently disagreed. However, he was satisfied with the commentaries of “this generation” on Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes, in terms of the philosophical approach (surely he had in mind Ibn ‘Ezra and Ibn ‘Aknīn, and perhaps also Samuel and Moses Ibn Tibbon; not literally “this generation”). He was also strongly influenced by Maimonides (who indeed discussed Job in the “Guide”), whom he calls “the great rabbi, light of the exile” (Maimonides, of course, was not a rabbi; the term is merely honorary).

Miscellaneous commentators

Jacob b. Meshūlam, or Jacob “ha-Naziyr” (=ascete), late twelfth century, was a qabalist and author of some still unpublished biblical commentaries.

Natan b. Samuel (n-b-s"t, undoubtedly En Boshet; “en” is an abbreviation of Catalan mósén, the equivalent of “don” and Boshet his Catalan name), Provence or Catalonia, wrote (ca. 1307?) a commentary on the Pentateuch, “Zikhrōn tōv,” of which some excerpts were published.

Sēfer y"a"r or ya"er (although the correct title apparently is Patshegen, cf. Esther 4.8, “copy”) is a commentary on Onkelos (correct spelling), the Aramaic translation of the Torah, by an anonymous student of Meir b. Simon “ha-Me‘iyliy” of Narbonne (fl. ca. 1245; he was a student of Natan b. Meir of Trinquetaille, the teacher also of Naḥmanides). The commentary is valuable for understanding Onkelos, but more of interest for our purposes is the frequent citation of earlier biblical commentaries and other works, including Ibn Gabirol, Judah ha-Lēvy (a piyūṭ), Joseph Ibn Megas, Zeraḥyah b. Isaac ha-Lēvy of Gerona, Ibn Janāh, Maimonides, Ibn ‘Ezra, Joseph and David Qimḥi, Jacob Anatoliy (with whom he disagreed) and others.

Moses b. Joshua Narbōniy (ca. 1300?–d. 1362; Narbōniy refers to the origin of his family from Narbonne), an important philosopher, lived in Perpignan, Cervera, Valencia (1348) and also briefly in Toledo and Soria.
Among his works is a philosophical commentary on Lamentations, but with no indication of where or when it was written. The introduction contains the typical claim that no one previously had written a commentary such as his; in fact, he claimed that no one had written a commentary on Lamentations at all. This, of course, is false, since at least the commentaries of Ibn ‘Ezra and Ibn Kaspiy (to say nothing of Rashi) should have been known to him. In fact, at one point (247, line 38) he quotes Ibn ‘Ezra on the text. His commentary is in the typically cumbersome style of his other works, and in fact is less a commentary on the text than a rambling philosophical discourse. He makes constant references to, and often quotes from, various talmudic or midrashic sources. His other most frequent source is, of course, Maimonides, although on topics which have nothing to do with Lamentations.

Isaac b. Joseph de Piera wrote a commentary on the Torah, ca. 1300–50. The author was apparently a “companion” (of the same generation) rather than a student of Solomon Ibn Adret, whom he cites. He also cites Isaac (Ibn) Adret — who probably was the son of Solomon b. Isaac, Ibn Adret’s nephew — as well as numerous other authorities, including the Zohar.

Solomon Astruc (En Shelomoh; Astruc is not a “family name”) lived in Barcelona and was perhaps martyred in the riots of 1391 (he was known as “the holy” which often refers to a martyr). He possibly was a grandson of Ibn Adret, who had a son known as En Astruc Solomon. Solomon mentions a plague in 1359, which suits those dates. He may have been a student of Nisim b. Reuben Gerundiy. He was the father of the aforementioned ‘Ezra Gaṭṭigno (see Chapter 3) who wrote supercommentaries on Ibn ‘Ezra. Solomon Astruc wrote commentaries on the Torah, Isaiah 53, Psalms 119, 139 and Esther (perhaps on the entire Bible, but only these have survived). There is little of real interest or originality in his work, and the Hebrew style is awkward and archaic, including Aramaic words, in the style of the French and German rabbis. The author had apparently no knowledge of previous commentaries, particularly of al-Andalus or Castile.

However, there is one striking exception and his most original contribution: his commentary on Ps. 139. He explains verse 7 (“Where shall I go from your spirit and where shall I flee from your face?”) as a reference to hiding from the “accidental causes and it [sic] is the array [ma’arekhet] which is general providence [hashgaṭahah kelaliyt] and he [the psalmist] calls it ‘spirit’ and ‘face’ because it changes always.” Thus also are to be understood verses 8–10: “there also shall your hand lead me and your right hand shall hold me,” which refers to the left hand (of God) which is general providence and the right hand particular providence, by which God can guide an individual if he chooses.

This is a unique interpretation which contrary to the editor has nothing to do with the commentary of Ibn ‘Ezra, who gives a simple and “literal” interpretation of these verses, only allowing himself the “homiletical” statement that the psalmist declares that he flees “from your [God’s] hand to your
hand,” which is reminiscent of Ibn Gabirol: “For if Thou shouldst pursue my iniquity, I will flee from Thee to Thyself” (evrah mi’mkha ēleykha); that is, from God’s judgment to his mercy.20 David Qimḥi also gave only a simple explanation of the meaning of the words in these verses. He remarks (19) on the difference of Abraham’s faith, first by tradition (what he had received) and later by investigation and wisdom, which is more perfect than tradition alone (a repetition of this, “and this is also that faith from the aspect of the true tradition [qabalah ha-amitiyt] is good, faith from the aspect of investigation is more perfect,” may allude to the mystical qabalah).

Perfet Zarch (erroneously “Barfat”), a rather obscure figure who lived in Barcelona ca. 1354, wrote a brief rhymed Hebrew commentary on Job, apparently based on the commentary of Lēvy b. Gērshon.21

Solomon Alconstantin (Alconstantini), fourteenth century, Tudela and Burgos, wrote a brief philosophical commentary on Deuteronomy.22

Iṣḥaq (Isaac; maestro Izak) Elijah ha-Kohen of Seo de Urgel, a small town south of Andora, which was very important in the medieval period, apparently wrote a commentary on Isaiah.23

Isaac b. Shēshet (RiYBaSH), an important rabbi, born in Barcelona (1326) and died in Algiers (1409, not 1408), apparently wrote a commentary on the Torah, of which nothing remains.24

Shēm Ṭōv Ibn Shaprūṭ (Tudela, Tarazona; late fourteenth century), whose supercommentary on Ibn ‘Ezra has been discussed in the previous chapter, also wrote a commentary on the Torah.25

Judah b. Moses Ḥallāva (fourteenth century, Tortosa), whose father had been an important scholar there, wrote a commentary perhaps on the entire Torah (only that on Genesis survives).26 The commentary is verbose and consists primarily of explanations based on the Talmud and midrashiym. He has lengthy introductions to each parashah (division), usually having nothing to do with the content of that section (could these be sermons?). His is one of the few commentaries that can be classified as almost exclusively derash, or homiletical, with only occasional “simple” interpretation.

Although he knew, and frequently cited, both Ibn ‘Ezra and Maimonides, he seldom incorporated their insights and cannot be called a “follower” of either. He also cites Ibn Adret, but, surprisingly, Naḥmanides very seldom and David Qimḥi only once. His position on the nature of prophecy was completely different from that of any of his predecessors. He believed that a prophet is not truly such until he is “sent” to a particular people. He sought thereby also to answer the objection of Naḥmanides (Lev. 18.1) against Maimonides who said that Lot was a prophet because of the appearance of an “angel” to him; according to Ḥallāva he reached the level of prophecy but still was not a prophet because he was not sent to any people. He also offers a peculiar definition for the word nabiy (“prophet”) from niyb sefatayim (Isa. 57.19; “fruit of the lips,” speech).27
One area in which the influence of Ibn ‘Ezra, and especially Maimonides, may be clearly seen is his observation that the separate intellects (“angels”) are distinct in levels; there is no distinction in substance, which is “entirely spiritual, form without matter [ṣūrah belo’ gōlem],” taken almost verbatim from Maimonides (and see the index here: form; gōlem). However, in the realm of the (astronomical) spheres, they do have “essential changes,” such as stars that shine and those that do not, or changes in direction of movement. Nevertheless, the essence of this homily is to discuss literally the existence of angels and their various “ranks.”

While there is no sign of qabalistic influences (not even from Naḥmanides or Baḥya), he enjoyed playing with letter-numeral combinations (particularly selection of certain letters in a word or verse to yield another word or name). This is similar to gematriyōt, employed in excess by Jacob b. Asher of Toledo (see on him below, Castile).

He was apparently influenced by astrology (some of which he got from Ibn ‘Ezra); for example, he wrote that the reason for the counting (sefiyrah) of the ‘omer and the holiday of Shemiyniy ‘Aṣeret is related to the eight spheres (gagliym), and the “lower world” is conducted by the seven planets; the eighth (shemiyniy) sphere is divided into an upper part (the stars) and the lower (the moon) which has great power or influence on the earth. From one aspect, it is separated but from another it is joined with the sun from which it receives light. Therefore,

in the days of the sun [warm weather] when it was possible to make the pilgrimage festivals there was a commandment to make the ‘upper sheniyniy’ sacred to itself, and six days were attached to it as an allusion to the seven heavens beneath it.

The entire creation, and the existence of the world (6,000 “years” and one in destruction; thus seven), is dependent on this.29

Other commentators

A certain Solomon Alqabēṣ wrote a commentary on Song of Songs. He may well have been related to Rabbi Moses Alqabēṣ, a judge of appeals in Calatayud, and/or to Solomon b. Moses Alqabēṣ of Guadalajara (ca. 1476), the first known Hebrew printer in Spain.30

Another figure about whom little is known is one Abraham b. Ḥayyim (Ibn) Rimoch. Originally of Barcelona, after the attacks on Jews in 1391 he fled to Barbastro (in Aragón). Following the infamous Tortosa Disputation of 1413–14, in which he participated, he moved to North Africa. He wrote a commentary on the Psalms (unpublished) which, while hardly profound,
is of interest as reflecting the strong influence of Maimonidean philosophical concepts; yet like other pietistic writers he attacked the “falseness” of Gentile philosophers whose ideas were not consistent with the Torah.  

Matityahu (“Matathias”) b. Moses ha-Yiṣhariy of Zaragoza, also one of the participants in the Tortosa Disputation, wrote a commentary on the Torah (unpublished) and on Ps. 119. 

Profiat Duran (Isaac b. Moses ha-Lēvy), late fourteenth to early fifteenth century, lived in Perpignan and possibly Majorca. He converted to Christianity in 1391, under duress, but soon returned to Judaism. As previously mentioned (Chapter 2), he wrote a supercommentary (unpublished) on Ibn ‘Ezra. While Duran was not the author of biblical commentaries as such, he did incorporate biblical exegesis in his other writings. Interesting are his discussions of two stories in 2 Samuel, both having to do with the rebellion of Absalom (Avshalōm) against his father David. He used a realistic approach to the historical and political nature of the stories, which while not unique in medieval exegesis was unusual. Isaac Abravanel (so, not Abarbanel), the controversial courtier of fifteenth-century Castile, who wrote his commentaries and other works only after the Expulsion, cited Duran on this with approval (unlike his usual contempt for Spanish exegetes). Meir Crescas, a student of Duran, was probably the author of an unpublished commentary on Isa. 60.20–22. Another of his students, possibly, in any case a contemporary, wrote an unpublished supercommentary on Rashi. 

Moses b. Joseph (erroneous: Shēm Tōv) Gabay, a rabbi in Majorca who also fled to North Africa in 1391 but was allowed to return, wrote (1422) a supercommentary on Rashi. 

Abraham b. Isaac ha-Lēvy of Gerona and Barcelona is perhaps to be identified with the rabbi of Gerona upon whose death Profiat Duran addressed a letter of condolence to his son Joseph, and if so he died in 1393. Nothing else is known of him with certainty. His commentary on Song of Songs survives intact, along with excerpts from other commentaries. The author introduces his commentary with the usual boast that no one before him had ever written a similar commentary (false, of course). After maintaining the traditional interpretation that the book is about the love of God for the people Israel, and in spite of some insignificant “esoteric” interpretations, he in fact treats the entire work as a love story, although in his introduction attempting to relate it to the tribulations of the present exile. Toward the end he again returns to the esoteric meaning, emphasizing Israel’s redemption and the coming of the messiah. To the extent that “sources” of the commentary may be discussed at all, he relied to some degree on the commentary of Ibn ‘Ezra and even more on Rashi (this in spite of his claim to “originality”).

Sicily

Aaron b. Gērshon Abu’l Rabī (“Aburrabi”), early fifteenth century, lived in Catania, Sicily (then part of the Aragonese kingdom). He was the
son-in-law of the aforementioned Moses Gabay. He traveled to many countries, including Egypt, the Land of Israel and Syria. He was part of a delegation of Jews to Pope Martin V, who asked him about the cherubim in the Temple and why this was not a violation of the commandment not to make images (like many today, including some scholars, the pope apparently misunderstood the commandment, which prohibits not the making but the worship of images). Aaron also debated with Qaraites during his travels, and also with some Christians, which resulted in his writing a polemical work (now lost); polemical passages against Christian and Muslim ideas appear also in his commentary.

He was sometimes critical of agadic or allegorical interpretations, and although showing respect for talmudic authority he occasionally suggested an explanation which was contrary to that tradition (it has already been mentioned in Chapter 1 that the claim that he wrote that the Torah was translated from Arabic is false). In addition to his supercommentary on Rashi, he wrote several other works, apparently lost, and a commentary on the entire Torah. He was critical of some of the comments of Nahmanides, even accusing him of not understanding a talmudic source, and also of qabalists generally.

Another figure about whom little is known, Jacob b. David Provençal, who lived in Marseille and then in Naples (both subject to Spain) in the late fifteenth century, wrote an interesting commentary on Song of Songs which is entirely allegorical-philosophical. According to this, Song of Songs is divided into four sections, each corresponding to four stages in life: youth (beauty and pleasure), which is from the beginning of education until the age of 20; the stage of strength and desire, until the age of 40; the stage of wisdom, understanding and knowledge, until the age of 60; and old age when there is no longer desire, to the age of 80 (see index here, “ages of man” for another such schema).

The entire book is also allegorized as referring to the soul (particularly what he calls the “wise soul” or soul of wisdom) and the Torah (the “two breasts” of the beloved are the written and oral Torah, for example; derived from Ibn Ezra, as mentioned in Chapter 2).

Samuel b. Nisim Masnut (thirteenth century) did not, of course, live in Sicily or in Spain, as Cecil Roth erroneously claimed; his family may have originated from Sicily but he lived in Aleppo in Syria, where he wrote his extensive biblical commentary Mayan ganiym and other commentaries.

Valencia

Valencia, part of Aragón-Catalonia in the early thirteenth century, but finally a separate kingdom ruled by Catalan princes, produced several important rabbis, but it is not known for being otherwise a major center of Jewish culture. As previously noted, both Joseph Ibn Kaspiy and Moses Narḥōniy lived for a time in Valencia. There was apparently only one other biblical commentator there.
Isaac b. Joseph ha-Kohēn, ca. 1400 (possibly in Jātiva), wrote a commentary on Ruth. Nothing whatever is known about the author (he twice refers to having been in, and left, Jerusalem). What is particularly of interest is that he (if, in fact, he was from Jātiva) is the only biblical commentator from Valencia and also apparently the first qabalist known from that region (at the end of the fifteenth century, Joseph Alcastiel, also a qabalist, lived in Jātiva, but he did not write on the Bible).

His commentary is a typological interpretation, in which every name and incident in the book of Ruth is interpreted as relating to events in the past or present, and some with messianic implications. He was led to this allegorization, as Walfish points out, by his distress at the description of the brazen sexual activity of Ruth, at the advice of Naomi, with a noble man, Boaz. No previous commentary, midrash or rabbinical interpretation, remarked on this; on the contrary, the characters are all treated as praiseworthy.

The way out of the sexual dilemma is to allegorize Boaz as God, and Ruth (sometimes Naomi–Ruth combined) as Israel. The most qabalistic aspect of his commentary comes in Chapter 3, where Ruth (Israel, or the individual Jew) “rises through levels of contemplation until she reaches God’s [Boaz’s] feet,” that is, the heavenly throne, and God “descends by emanation until the last level which separates the divine from the human soul.” This is followed by a very interesting discourse on the conditions necessary for redemption from the exile.

Navarre

Under Muslim domination, Tudela, especially, had been home to important Jewish scholars, such as Abraham Ibn ‘Ezra and Judah ha-Lēvy. Tudela, Pamplona and other towns remained significant Jewish centers under the Christians, but while there were some important rabbis, as we have seen, the Jews of Navarre, like Valencia, were not known for cultural achievements in other areas. However, there were at least three contributors to biblical exegesis who deserve mention.

The first is Jacob b. Solomon (Ibn) J-ŷ-a-n-y (probably Jaeniy=of Jaén; Spanish sources spell the name Aliaen), late thirteenth or early fourteenth century, possibly in Pamplona; although the “family name” appears to indicate an origin from Valencia. He wrote a commentary on Job and also on Ecclesiastes. Apparently he also wrote a commentary on Ecclesiastes rabah and on Esther.

Shēm Ĥōv Ibn Falquera (a less likely variant, Falaquera), Tudela (?), ca. 1225–ca.1295 was a physician, who wrote also on medicine, and a prolific writer, author of some minor but interesting philosophical and other works, and particularly a commentary of some importance on the “Guide” of Maimonides.
In several places in his writings he refers to his intent to write a commentary at least on the Torah and perhaps the entire Bible; e.g., Möreh ha-môreh, his commentary on the “Guide,” 6; other references on verses in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes in other of his works, where he expressed his intent to explain these in his commentary, and in Möreh ha-môreh, 145, he says that he already had written this in his commentary on Proverbs. There are also numerous citations of his commentary in the writings of Samuel Zarza (not “Ibn” Zarza), the aforementioned author of a supercommentary on Ibn ‘Ezra, which are the main source for our knowledge of his lost commentary.50

Castille

Isaac b. Abraham Ibn Lafîf (flourished ca. 1230–70), possibly of Toledo is best known for his philosophical writings. He also wrote a commentary on Ecclesiastes and a qabalistic treatise on creation.51 The second work does not concern us here; as for the commentary on Ecclesiastes, it is platitudinous and uninteresting. There are no references to, or even awareness of, earlier commentaries (Ibn ‘Ezra is mentioned once, 16b) and there is nothing either of philosophical or qabalistic importance. A curiosity is his brief discussion (12a) of a disagreement between those who believe that the source of natural wells is rainwater and those who believe it is the seas (!). A grandson of Ibn Lafîf, whose name is unknown, wrote a philosophical commentary on the Torah.52

Isaac b. Solomon Ibn Sahûla (b. 1244, date of death unknown; Burgos and also Guadalajara) is best known for his literary work Meshal ha-qadamônîy (“Parable of the ancient one”). However, he was also a student of qabalah and wrote a commentary on Song of Songs, as well as perhaps the Psalms (only a fragment has been found) and Job (?).53 His interpretation is twofold: “esoteric” and “exoteric,” with the primary emphasis on qabalistic interpretation. However, he was well versed in talmudic sources as well as various midrashiym (including some relatively minor ones), and used the commentaries particularly of Ibn ‘Ezra and Ibn ‘Aknîn (without, however, citing them by name, except in his introduction, noted below) and of Naḥmanides (used often but cited only once). ‘Ezra of Gerona’s commentary, also used frequently, was mentioned by him anonymously as that of “one of the scholars of Torah who knows qabalah.” He praised Moses b. Solomon of Burgos in his introduction and mentioned an otherwise unknown commentary by him also on Song of Songs; yet it appears that his doctrines had little influence on Isaac’s own commentary, nor was he Isaac’s teacher (as he specifically says), although he had seen him in his youth.54

Isaac was acquainted with Moses b. Shêm Tôv de León (d. 1305), who also lived in Guadalajara, later in Ávila, the author of qabalistic works and (principal author, at least) of the Zohar. The first known citation of the Zohar appears in Isaac’s Meghal ha-gadmûniy and also several times in this
commentary (although not by name; rather cited in the name of the “sages” or the “Jerusalem” Talmud).55

Following in the footsteps of his predecessors, in his introduction he criticizes those who have written commentaries on Song of Songs, some of whom have interpreted it grammatically and according to its literary style and erotic nature, “and left the allegory closed on all sides”; that is, without explanation (Ibn ‘Ezra, although he did not entirely ignore the allegory); some who explained it (as an allegory) of the soul and the body (apparently the “philosophers” referred to on this by Ibn ‘Ezra, or possibly Moses Ibn Tibbon); those who explained it only according to the midrash and those who explained it philosophically – specifically, Ibn ‘Aknin.56

Joseph b. Abraham Ibn Chicatilla (1248–ca. 1325), not “Gikatilla” (without even “Ibn,” as in library catalogues), etc., was an important qabalist who lived in Medinaceli, Segovia and very probably Tortosa (ca. 1272–79). He was buried in Peñafiel, in Castile, according to Ibn Sā addiql. Attributed to him, perhaps erroneously, is a commentary (unpublished) on Song of Songs, and qabalistic treatises dealing with biblical topics.57

Ṭōdrōs b. Joseph Abulafia (fl. 1270–ca. 1300, Toledo), rabbi and qabalist, also wrote a commentary on the Torah (unpublished).58

Jacob b. El’azar (late thirteenth century, Toledo), famous literary author and grammarian, is the purported author of a commentary on the Torah of which only fragments remain.59

Jacob b. Asher (Toledo, d. 1336), one of the sons of the renowned scholar Asher b. Yehiel, is best known for his legal compilation Arba’ah ṫūriyōm (“Four rows,” referred to simply as the ṭū ḫ), also wrote a commentary on the Torah.60 The introductory sections on each Torah portion are devoted almost entirely to explaining what is known as gematriyōt, or deduction of meaning through the combination or numerical value of letters. Although this was known to sages of the Talmud and sometimes used to justify a metaphorical interpretation or as support for a law, the dangers involved in such fancies were clearly understood. While it was sometimes employed by Rashi and other Franco-German rabbis, in fact it was rarely if ever used by Spanish commentators (the exception being Nahmanides, occasionally, and see his justification of this at the beginning of his treatise on redemption, Sēfer ha-ge’ūlah; in Kitvey 1). Ibn ‘Ezra, in discussing the Muslim claim that the numerical value of me’ōd me’ōd (Ex. 1.7; “very much”) equals the name Muḥammad, replied that the passage refers to children of Jacob, and in addition “forbid that the prophet [Moses] should speak in gematriyōt or allusions” (short recension on Ex. 1.1; ed. Weiser 2: 239). Aside from the interpretation based on numerical values of letters and the examination even of the forms of letters, the commentary generally is of the peshaṭ (simple context) variety, sometimes citing talmudic explanations, more rarely midrashic ones, and (mostly in Genesis) allusions to the anonymous qabalistic work Tiqūney ha-Zōhar. The influence of qabalah, even to a limited extent, on this
strict talmudic-legal authority is of interest. The commentary on the Torah attributed to Asher, Jacob’s father, is spurious; although he is believed to have written such a commentary.61

**Joseph b. Joseph Ibn Naḥmiyas** (fl. ca. 1300–30), a student of Asher b. Yeḥiēl and a native of Toledo, wrote commentaries on *Avot* and at least Esther, Proverbs and Jeremiah while he was still a student in Ashṣcr’s yeshivah. He appears also to have written a commentary on the Torah and on Psalms and Ecclesiastes.62 He utilized both talmudic and midrashic interpretations, but generally offered the *pesḥat*, or simple, explanation. He was fluent in Arabic and often explained difficult words by reference to Arabic cognates. Considering that he was young (as he himself says) when he wrote these commentaries, it is astonishing the number of authorities he cites.63 There is nothing of real significance or originality in his commentaries, however. Among the authorities cited by him are some who wrote biblical commentaries, about whom nothing is otherwise known. These are a certain “Rabbi Ishma’ēl,” Abraham Ibn Gailyniy and Benjamin al-Barjilûnî (“of Barcelona,” indicating the family origin), whom he knew personally.64

**Isaac b. Solomon “Israeliy”** (Israel, or Ibn Israel) of Toledo, a contemporary of Asher b. Yeḥiēl, was the probable author of a commentary on Job (MS. Bod. 382; unpublished). Another member of the family at the same time was Israel b. Joseph “Israeliy,” brother of the famous Isaac b. Joseph. According to his brother, he was expert in Hebrew grammar and wrote commentaries on all the books of the Bible.65

**Menaḥēm b. Aaron Ibn Zeraḥ** (ca. 1310–86) of Alcalá and Toledo wrote a commentary (in manuscript) on the Torah.66 As previously mentioned, one of his students was Ḥayyim of Briviesca, who wrote a supercommentary on Ibn Ἐzra. Another of his students, Samuel Ibn Sūsan (not “Shoshan”), who was killed in the riots of 1391, wrote a supercommentary on *Rashi*.67 Another important member of that family at the same period, Joseph, wrote a commentary on Song of Songs.68 Abraham Ibn Sūsan, an important scholar in Toledo (d. 1339 or possibly 1335), is said to have written “several books on the Talmud, and on the Bible; he has no equal, there is not a ‘wisdom’ which he did not learn.”69 He may be the Abraham b. Ziza Ibn Sūsan whose commentary on *Rashi* is mentioned by Judah b. Solomon Khalaş (rabbi in Granada after 1477, and Málaga from 1481 to 1486, after which he went to North Africa).70

**Samuel b. Joseph Ibn Sasōn** (also not “Shoshan”; Carrión and Frómista, ca. 1327–49), author of the famous poetic work *Avney shoham*, also apparently was the author of a treatise or commentary on Esther.71

**Jacob d’Illescas**, fourteenth century (?), apparently lived in, or was from, Illescas, a small town near Toledo. He was the author of a not insignificant commentary on the Torah, entirely ignored by scholars.72 He chiefly cites, or relies upon, French commentators, sometimes disagreeing with *Rashi*, but he also cites Ibn Ἐzra.73
Some of his comments are interesting, such as his discussion of why the commandments about the Sabbath, “Keep” (Deut. 5.12) and “Remember” (Ex. 20.8) were said together as one (according to the Talmud; Shevu’ot 20b, see Chapter 1, text at n. 109). Nevertheless, he was apparently not thoroughly learned in the Talmud, since his mention of biblical commandments which contradict each other was already discussed in the Talmud. Also, his explanation that “Keep” is a negative commandment (to refrain from prohibited activity) and “Remember” a positive one is not in accord with previous commentators.

Miscellaneous

Judah b. Solomon ha-Kohen Mosca (so, not Matka, Ibn Matqa, Malkha, etc.), fl. ca. 1250, Toledo, was the author of an important scientific-philosophical work. A part of that was devoted to interpretation of certain biblical passages. Of particular interest is his discussion of Gen. 1.1 and his statement that the creation of the “spiritual world” (’olam ha-ruḥaniy) was not there described, but only those things found in “both worlds” (physical and spiritual) which are the sphere (singular, the heavens) and the earth; the heavens are mentioned first in the order of creation, which begins with the “spiritual world” brought into existence first by the power of God and therefore called ṛēshiyt (“first,” not “beginning”); thus he understands the opening verse apparently “at first God created,” since like Ibn ‘Ezra he recognized the difficulty of a verb (if ṛēshiyt is understood as “beginning”) being in construct with another verb (bara, “created”). He also explains the meaning of beriyah (“creating”), yeṣiyrah (“forming”) and ‘asiyah (“making”) and that “creating” is making something from nothing (yēsh me-‘ayin), without prior substance, matter (gōlem) or form (ṣūrah), “and this is the difference between us and Aristotle, who believed that a prime matter exists eternally and produces the various forms.”

An anonymous commentary, “Dorēsh reshūmōt” (“seeker of impressions,” or perhaps “secrets”), dated 1234/35 by the author, was possibly on the entire Bible. The present manuscript contains only parts of Genesis and Psalms. The author relied heavily on Ibn ‘Ezra and also Abraham bar Ḥayya. The fact that the author made use of Sa’adyah’s long Arabic commentary on Genesis indicates that he perhaps lived in a part of Spain where Arabic was still in use (Aragón, perhaps Zaragoza or Huesca; less likely would be Andalucia); alternatively, he used an otherwise unknown Hebrew translation. A philosophical commentary on Job was written by one Judah b. Sa’adyah of Toledo (possibly thirteenth century).

An anonymous commentary on the Bible, or at least several books, has been preserved in a manuscript (Ms. Hunt 268) in the Bodleian Library. It was apparently written in the thirteenth century, perhaps in Provence.
Meshūlam Ėzobiy, brother of the aforementioned well-known poet Joseph, in 1279 moved from Provence to Segovia, where he wrote a grammatical work for a boy named Daniel, son of Rabbi Isaac ha-qatan (the younger) b. Samuel. He also apparently was the author of a commentary on the Torah.  

David Ibn Bilia, ca. 1320, born in Portugal but lived also in Perpignan, wrote “Me‘or ‘eynayyim,” a commentary (unpublished) cited frequently by Samuel Ibn Zarza (see Chapter 3).

Solomon b. Ḥanōkh Alcostantini (Alconstantini) wrote “Megalēh ‘amuqot,” in Burgos (or possibly Borja) in 1353; the work is an astrological and agadic (Talmud and midrash) interpretation of parts of the Pentateuch, followed by a philosophical interpretation.

Solomon b. David Ibn Ya‘ish of Guadalajara (mid-fourteenth century), the aforementioned author of a supercommentary on Ibn ‘Ezra (see Chapter 2), also wrote a commentary on the Bible in Arabic script (not “Judeo-Arabic”).

Isaac b. Abraham N-b-r-v (Nabarro?), a student of Asher b. Yeḥiel, wrote, or perhaps copied, a Torah commentary (manuscript, written in 1343). He was apparently an important scholar in Toledo.

Moses Abzaradiel (Ibn Abī Zaradiel) of Toledo, official scribe of Alfonso XI and also Pedro I, was a scholar of some importance. He died in 1354, and his impressive tombstone is still extant. He apparently wrote commentaries on the Bible, or perhaps only on Jeremiah.

Samuel Ibn Moṭot, or Matut (fl. ca. 1370), apparently of Buitrago and lived for a time in Guadalajara, whose supercommentary on Ibn ‘Ezra and other works have been mentioned in Chapter 3, also wrote a supercommentary on Bahya b. Asher and a philosophical commentary on Exodus, both unpublished.

Moses Ibn Crispin ha-Kohēn of Córdoba, Toledo and Valencia (ca. 1376), an important scholar whose surviving works have not been published, perhaps wrote a biblical commentary, or at least on Isaiah, a portion of which has been edited.

Ḥayyim Ibn Mūsā (ca. 1390–1460) of Béjar and Salamaca is well known for his polemical treatise Magēn ve-ramaḥ, which contains some biblical references. However, he did not write a commentary on Isaiah or other biblical books, as erroneously claimed in the E.J. article on him (nor did Poznaniński, cited there, say this).

Isaac Polgar (fourteenth century), Valladolid (?), Ávila, wrote a (lost) commentary on Ecclesiastes (mentioned in his polemic, Ėzer ha-dat, ed. J. Levinger [Tel Aviv, 1984]).

Qabalistic commentaries on isolated passages, such as those of Moses b. Solomon of Burgos (whose possible commentary on Song of Songs has been mentioned), Isaac ha-Kohēn of Soria and Moses b. Shēm Tōv de León on the
vision of the chariot of Ezekiel, are not actually biblical commentary as such. The same is, of course, true of the Zohar, which while containing much esoteric interpretation was not intended primarily as biblical exegesis.  

Qabalistic (?) commentaries on Song of Songs, Esther and Ruth were written in the fifteenth century by a certain Moses b. Isaac H-a-l-γ-u-y or H-a-l-δ-y-o (possibly Halayo, or perhaps Halilla). According to a catalogue of Vatican manuscripts, the author was a converso, but certainly he wrote his commentaries before his conversion. He is not mentioned by any of the modern scholars of qabalah.

Finally, mention should be made of an anonymous commentary on the Torah, “Meshekh hakhmah,” fourteenth- or fifteenth-century Spain, in a manuscript in Munich. 

Falsely identified as “Spanish” is Isaac Arundi (fourteenth century, Provence or most likely Italy), who wrote among other things a commentary on Job (unpublished).

The final chapter – fifteenth century

The disastrous consequences of the massive voluntary conversion of thousands of Jews throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and the loss of intellectual and spiritual leadership which resulted, led to a decline in cultural creativity. Only in the last part of the fifteenth century was there some recovery at least in talmudic learning, and yeshivot were re-established, primarily in Castile. Secular learning, while it did not entirely disappear, also decreased significantly, and generally we should not expect to find brilliant or original biblical exegesis. The few commentaries that were written were platitudinous and insignificant compared to those of their predecessors.

Joseph Ibn Ḥabīb (or Ḥabība), formerly a student of Nisim b. Reuben Gerundiy and author of the famous commentary “Nimūqey Yōsēf” on Isaac al-Fāsī’s compendium of talmudic laws, has been identified as the actual author of the commentary on the Torah formerly attributed to Joseph b. David of Zaragoza. It is hardly profound, and is not what would be expected from a truly important talmudic scholar.

Isaac b. Moses (Ibn) ‘Arama (ca. 1420–d. 1494 in Naples) was one of the last rabbinical scholars in Spain. He probably was a descendant of the Aben (Ibn) ‘Arama family of Burgos and Zaragoza who in the fourteenth century were jewelers to the royal family of Aragón-Catalonia. He lived in Zamora (Castile), where he probably was born, and where he taught in a yeshivah, but was called to become rabbi and a preacher in Tarragona in Catalonia, where he stayed for a number of years and then held a similar position in the Aragonese town of Borja (there was a small but important Jewish community in that quaint mountain village). Finally, he went to Calatayud (again in Catalonia), where he headed the yeshivah. He is most famous for his monumental
'Aqeydat Yiṣḥaq (“Binding of Isaac”), which is an eclectic work combining homiletical material (based, certainly, on sermons he preached), biblical exegesis and philosophy.96

This work is not actually biblical interpretation so much as allegorical and other ideas loosely connected to statements in the Torah, with sections also on the Megiylot (“Scrolls”), originally published separately but incorporated in later editions of the complete work. The commentary on Esther in the reprinted editions, however, is not by him but by his son Meir.97 Isaac also wrote a commentary on Proverbs, “Yad Avshalôm,” dedicated to the memory of his son-in-law Avshalôm who had died shortly after his marriage.98

Isaac b. Shem Ṭov Ibn Shem Ṭov (d. ca. 1480), an important scholar who lived in various places in Castile and was head of a yeshiva in Segovia and Alcalá de Henares in the 1450s, wrote a commentary on Lamentations (unpublished).99

Isaac Aboab “II” (to distinguish him from the earlier Isaac, author of the ethical work Menôrat ha-ma’arûḵ) was born in 1433 and died in 1493 in Portugal. In Spain, he lived in Toledo, Buitrago and Guadalajara and was the head of a yeshivah in the latter two cities. He wrote a “supercommentary” on the commentary of Naḥmanides on the Torah, and also on Rashi on the Torah (apparently lost).100

The supercommentary on Naḥmanides is disappointingly platitudinous, coming from so important a scholar, ignoring all of the esoteric statements in that commentary and perhaps even more surprisingly, also the significant interpretations and even legal innovations mentioned here in the discussion of Naḥmanides. Instead, it offers a simplistic explanation of the most obvious statements in the nature of pesḥat in that commentary. One has the impression that it was intended for ordinary readers with little or no background in biblical exegesis. Of interest are only a few places where he cites something he heard from his teacher (Isaac Canpanton).

Samuel b. (Ibn) Ḥabīb de Vidas (Zaragoza, fifteenth century) wrote a commentary on Lamentations,101 which unfortunately I have been unable to see (nor is he mentioned by any who have written on medieval exegesis).

An anonymous Italian account of the Expulsion mentions also Jacob Canizal (Qaniyzal) as head of a yeshivah in “Avila de Campos,” a non-existent place; he existed, however, and wrote a supercommentary on Rashi, which has been published together with the supercommentary of Samuel Almosnino, apparently a rabbi in Jaca (northern Aragón) in the late fourteenth–early fifteenth century. One of the characteristics of Almosnino’s commentary was to defend Rashi against the criticisms of Naḥmanides.102

Saʿadyah b. Maimôn (Maymûn) Ibn Danân (fl. 1465–92/3), who originated from Fez, was the last rabbi of Muslim Granada and an important scholar and grammarian, as well as a chronicler and poet. He also wrote a short treatise on the categories of writing found in scripture; according
to this, prophecy contains seven categories: enigma (or parable), proverb, admonition, prophecy, poetry, meliyṣah (variously understood in medieval texts as “wisdom, eloquence, satire”) and story.\textsuperscript{103} To these are added three categories found in the Torah: commandments, laws and crafts (melakhōt, acts of creative labor). It is not clear why he considered these last to be “literary” categories, and “commandments” in the prophets is debatable, according to the rabbis. In addition, a brief excerpt of a commentary (apparently) on Isaiah has been preserved. Following the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, he returned to Fez, where he soon died.

**Joel Ibn Shū'ayb**\textsuperscript{104} (late fifteenth century) lived in Tudela and also Zaragoza. He may have been related to (descendant of?) Joshua, whose supercommentary on Nahmanides has been cited here, who also lived in Tudela. Joel wrote several biblical commentaries, including “\textit{Donēsh ūōn}” on the Torah and “\textit{‘Eyn mishpat}” on Job,\textsuperscript{105} and commentaries on Psalms, Lamentations (with additions by his son Samuel), but not the commentary on Song of Songs attributed to him.\textsuperscript{106}

Like Joshua, he was essentially a preacher, and his “commentaries” are actually homilies, but unlike his sermons these were surely intended to be read and not heard. The “commentaries” are verbose, lacking in originality (they are dependent upon talmudic and midrashic sources, but not on other medieval commentators) and completely without interest.

**Joseph b. Ḥayim Ya’avēṣ** (erroneous: Jaabez) lived in Portugal and then Italy following the Expulsion. He almost certainly wrote all of his works, including some biblical commentary, in those countries, and therefore he is not discussed here. The same is true of **Abraham Saba‘**, a preacher who in 1492 went to Portugal where he wrote his works (some of which are biblical commentary).

**Abraham b. Solomon ha-Lēvy Bakrāt** (Bukrāt?) of Málaga, also one of the exiles, was the author of a supercommentary on Rashi, which he wrote in Tunis.

An unknown person is **Isaac Dondon** (? D-ū-n-d-ū-n), one of the exiles in 1492 who settled eventually in the Ottoman Empire and wrote a philosophical-ethical commentary on the Torah, “Segūlat melakhiym” (in manuscript).\textsuperscript{107}

**Isaac Caro** (ca. 1440–1518), although he lived in Spain and then Portugal, went to the Ottoman Empire following the expulsion from Portugal and wrote his commentary on the Torah in Turkey; it therefore will not be discussed here.

Incidentally, one of the most interesting commentaries on Song of Songs may be that of **Joseph Ḥayūn**, rabbi of Lisbon (d. 1496), who was acquainted with earlier philosophical commentaries and even cited al-Fārābī (either second hand or in Hebrew translation). At the beginning of his commentary, he mentions that he had already written on “many” of the books of the prophets; of these only the texts on Ezekiel, Obadiah, Micah, have survived, along with his commentary on Jonah, Psalms and Esther.\textsuperscript{108}
Finally, Abraham b. Solomon, author of a commentary on Joel, has been identified, apparently erroneously, as having been from Spain. 109

While biblical exegesis, along with other learning, deteriorated in the fifteenth century, two other phenomena emerged which were of lasting significance: Jewish translations of the Bible into Spanish and the first printed Hebrew bibles. These topics, as well as an overview of Hebrew Bible manuscripts from Spain, will be dealt with in the following chapter.

Notes

1 See the article in Roth, ed., Medieval Jewish Civilization, 305–08. A eulogy of him attributed to Nahmanides was published by the editor, without indication of the source, in Hipḥakhey talmiyyey [sic] nabeynū Yōnāh ‘al maseket ‘A.Z. (Brooklyn, 1955), Introduction, 3 (unpaginated); the actual author of that commentary is Meir b. Joseph Ibn Abī Sarwī, one of Jonah’s students. A small portion, only, of the tombstone inscription is also reproduced there. The complete text of the tombstone inscription and the eulogy attributed to Nahmanides were reprinted also by Chavel, Rabīn Mosheh ben-Nahman, 58–59. On Jonah, see Shrock, A.T. Rabbi Jonah ben Abraham of Gerona (London, 1948), with many errors. More informative is Michael, Ōr ha-ḥayiyim, 477 ff.; also Ta-Shma, Y. “Rabbi Jonah Gerondi: A German Pietist in Spain”; he did not, of course, mean literally that Jonah was a “German pietist,” but that he had similar beliefs.

2 See Bibliography: Sources. It has been reprinted since, also in some separate editions of the text of Proverbs. Most of the commentary on Proverbs (from Chapter 21.14) attributed to Joseph Qimḥi is actually by Jonah; see Chapter 4, n. 24.

3 Yerushalmi, S., ed., Derash t u-feyr shey rav Yōnāh Giyrūṇdiy ‘al ha-Tōrah (Jerusalem, 1980); these are definitely not by Jonah (see Saperstein, Jewish Preaching, 124–26), although the sermons, if that is what they are (nothing actually indicates this), were influenced by his ethical ideas. The “commentary” on the Torah attributed to Jonah in Ga’d’s edition of Menaḥēm b. Solomon “ha-Meiyriy,” Pērūsh ‘al ha-Tōrah, was not actually written by Jonah but collected from his works. The same is true of the “commentary” on Job published (with text of Job) separately (N.Y., 1953).

4 Ed. Moses Ḥallamish in Da‘at 10 (1983): 57–70. Several chapters of his commentary on Genesis rabah have also been edited by Ḥallamish (Jerusalem, 1984); see generally on his works my Dictionary, 479–80.

5 Peyrūsh ha-RaN ‘al ha-Tōrah; see Bibliography. Feldman also published what he called commentaries by him on the Former Prophets, Seridim (Seriyyim) 19 (2000): 57–62, an obscure journal; in fact, these are only a few excerpts from Nīsim’s Derashōt (sermons), ed. Feldman (Jerusalem, 1974).

6 Peyrūsh, 1. Moses b. Naḥman, “Tōrat ha-Shēm temiymah,” in Kitvey, ed. Chavel 1: 146. On his explicit statements contradicting the aforementioned opinion about two separate “substances” (see above, Nahmanides on creation), see Peyrūsh, 7–8 and the correct interpretation of this by Lipshitz, “Le-tōrat ha-beriyah,” 539 (contrary to Isaac Abravanel who claimed that Nīsim agreed with Nahmanides on this).

there is no evidence), see Ravitzky, 84–85. Apparently he wrote two different versions of his commentary on Job, the second one adding philosophical interpretation on matters only briefly outlined in the first; see Eisen, Robert. “Did Zeraḥyah Ḥen Compose Two Different Versions of His Commentary on the Book of Job?” *Da’at* 48 (2002): v–xxvi (English section), with extensive excerpts in translation from two manuscripts. See now Eisen’s analysis of the commentary, Chapter 5 of his *Book of Job in Medieval Jewish Philosophy*.

8 Eisen, Robert. “Gersonides’ Commentary on the Book of Job,” *The Journal of Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 10 (2001): 244 n. 14, incorrectly said that Zeraḥyah believed that the book was entirely a fiction, and opined that “Gersonides” (Lēvy b. Gērshon) a “contemporary” of Zeraḥyah, probably, did not see his work. In fact, as stated, Zeraḥyah began his commentaries in the year that Gersonides was born. Gersonides wrote his commentary in 1325; thus, it is not impossible that Zeraḥyah saw this commentary. Fortunately, Eisen did not repeat these errors in his subsequent *Book of Job in Medieval Jewish Philosophy*, instead correctly explaining (114) that Zeraḥyah viewed the book as allegory and omitting the statement about “Gersonides.” While Eisen both in the earlier article and in his book devoted a great deal of attention to him, he did not consider, or even mention, the (alleged) commentary of Naḥmanides in relation to Gersonides; or indeed at all. As noted elsewhere, since “Gersonides” lived in Provence when it was no longer part of Spain, he is not discussed here (however, see Chapter 3 on super-commentaries of Ibn ‘Ezra: Ḥayyim of Briviesca and Shēm Ṭōv Ibn Mayōr).

9 On Job 3.8, he stated that the greatest of the commentators, Ibn ‘Ezra and David Qimḥi, said nothing of wisdom (importance) on Proverbs or Job:

not only this, but even in the way of ‘simple’ explanation [derekh ha-pesḥat] they did not explain what was necessary, not on the subject [‘inyan] and not the words [grammatical explanation], whether this was because of forgetfulness and involvement [in other things] or from lack of wisdom and understanding.

See his criticism of Naḥmanides there, 200 (on Job 1.9–10); however, the cited statement is not in our text of the alleged commentary of Naḥmanides on Job; see also 215 (on 2.6), 231 (on 16.6), 251 (on 24.18), 268 (on 25.15, 17; on both he also criticizes Ibn ‘Ezra), 275 (on 36.20: “it would have been better for him to choose silence than to explain this in words that have no meaning”). He also disagreed with some of the more extreme philosophical interpretations of Maimonides. See n. 36 on the commentary erroneously attributed to Qimḥi.

10 On Maimonides’ interpretation of Job, see Eisen, *The Book of Job*, Chapter 2, the most important chapter in the book. See also there, 131 ff., on the relationship of Zeraḥyah’s views with those of Maimonides (see also Eisen, “Joseph ibn Kaspi on the Book of Job,” *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 13 [2006]: 50–86).

11 On Genesis: see Neubauer, *Catalogue*, no. 1646.2. On Job: see Zunz, *Zur Geschichte*, 74; however, on MS. “Munich 5” cited by Zunz, see St., *Cat. Munich*, 2, with no mention of this. Our authorities on qabalah have barely mentioned Jacob, so that nothing is known of his work. Jacob is not to be confused with another qabalist, Jacob b. Saul of Lunel, also known as “the Nazirite.”

12 Gross, G.J., 328 gives an improbable explanation. “Tibbon” is also doubtful, and the identification with Natan of Montpellier is erroneous.

13 *Mivḥar ha-ma’amariym* (Livorno, 1830). An incomplete manuscript is Parma MS. 2373 (Richler and Beit–Arié, *Biblioteca Palatina*, 122, no. 632).

14 First edited from an Oxford manuscript by E.N. Adler in *Sefēr Tōrat Elōhiym* (Vilnius, 1874), and separately, 1927, from which it was reprinted in *Miqrə’ot gedēlōt*. *Sefēr peyrūshey ha-miqrā* (vol. 6 of the *Malkhūt* ed. of *Miqrə’ot* [Miqrə’ōt]
The text is a page from a book discussing historical and biblical sources. It references various works, manuscripts, and scholars, including Meir b. Simon and his writings. The text touches on the authorship of Sefer Ḥanan (The Book of Haman) and other works, discussing their origins and connections to different scholars and libraries. The text also includes references to Arabic, Spanish, and Hebrew translations, and mentions the works of Maimonides and other Jewish philosophers. It discusses the role of metaphor in interpreting biblical stories and the significance of various abbreviations and terms used in the manuscripts.

For example, it states that Sefer Ḥanan was a student of Meir, who is cited on f. 30b and apparently also on 24a. There is an important manuscript in the Parma library, Parma MS. 3509 (Richler and Beï-Arié, Biblioteca Palatina, 140); cf. also Sassoon, Ohel David, 1093, no. 1150. A. Schisha wrote a note on this work, “Sefer y”a”r ha-niqra patshegen,” Tsefunot [Ṣefenōt] no. 7 (1990): 66–70, with erroneous dating and identification of the author; cf. B. Richler’s response, ibid. no. 8 (1990): 113–114.

The text also notes the importance of the author’s knowledge of Arabic, his reference to the Arabic commentary of Sa’aida (unless this is second hand). He once cites a “Spanish translation,” that is, a Hebrew translation made in Spain (20b, 24a, 28b, 29b, 31b), the earliest reference to such a translation.

The text discusses the work of Maimonides, the role of metaphor in biblical interpretation, and the significance of various abbreviations and terms. It also mentions the importance of the edition of the Epistle and the commentary on Lamentations by Ibn Rushd. The text provides a comprehensive overview of the historical and scholarly context of the subject matter, reflecting the depth and breadth of the knowledge of the time.

Overall, the text is a rich source of information on the historical and religious scholarship of the fourteenth century, offering insights into the works of Meir b. Simon and the broader context of Jewish thought and literature.
spite of very questionable conclusions in some of the notes and the lengthy “addition” at the end. The editor conjectured (intro. 21) that the work was written ca. 1285–1315, but admits that parts were written after the death of Solomon Ibn Adret.

19 The surviving commentaries, Midreshey ha-Tōnah (see Sources, s.v. Solomo), erroneously characterized by the editor as a “supercommentary” on Rashi, which it certainly is not, although citing him often. See S. Poznański’s review in Z.f.h.B. 4 (1900): 132–35 (he was overly generous in praise of the work in that review and accepted without question the mostly erroneous “sources,” Spanish commentators, which the editor claimed in his notes). The commentary on Isa. 53, from another manuscript, was published by Neubauer and Driver, eds. and tr., Fifty-Third Chapter of Isaiah 1: 122–26 (text); 2: 129–36 (tr.). A Spanish translation of that, with notes, was published by Varo, Francisco. “En Šělomoh Astruc, y su comentario a Is. 52, 15–53, 12,” Helmantica 46 (1995): 139–41; it is not in Varo, Cantos del sirvo, a translation of Neubauer and Driver. The commentary on Ps. 119 is mentioned in Neubauer, Catalogue 1: no. 2192.12. On his commentary on Esther, see Walfish, Esther in Medieval Garb, 111–13 (on his use of the terms audiencia, royal audience, and unión, a rebellion against the king); also 188–89.

20 Midreshey ha-Tōnah, 212; the (incorrect) reference to Ibn ‘Ezra is in the notes there and on 213. Ibn Gabirol, “Keter malkhūr” 38, line 563 (ed. and tr. in Ibn Gabirol, Selected Religious Poems, 118–19; contrary to some critics, Zangwill’s translation, although in slightly archaic English, is quite good). Israel Levin wrote about Arabic parallels to this idea, which may or may not have served as sources for Ibn Gabirol. “Hagut ve-shiyrah be-yeṣiyrat R’ [sic] Shelomoh ben [sic] Gabirol,” Otsar (Ōṣar) yehudey Sefarad 8 (1965): 56–58 (article 33–58); however, he made no comment on Ps. 139.7 or Ibn ‘Ezra’s observations. Solomon Astruc’s reference (Esther 7.4) to the “ba‘al ha-azharōt” is, of course, also Ibn Gabirol, and not Judah ha-Lēvy as S. Poznański thought (in his review of the work in Z.f.h.B. 4 [1900]: 134).

21 “Ḥarūziym,” in (anonymous) Rūah hēn (Venice, 1514, this ed. only). The work is extremely rare; cf. St., C.B. 4960.33. It was published separately in Cracow, 1574. There is a brief excerpt in Schirmann, ha-Shiyrah ha-‘ivriyt 2: 545–46. It is uncertain whether he is to be identified with the Perfet Zarch who was named by Queen Maria de Luna as one of the Jewish councilors of the “upper class” in Castellón de Ampurias (province of Gerona) in 1406 (Fita, Fidel. “El Monjuí de la ciudad de Gerona y la sinagoga y concejo hebreo de Castellón de Ampurias,” B.R.A.H. 48 [1906]: 174).

22 Schwartz, Yaḥkan be-qanqan ḥadah, 269–89; this is from his “Megalēh ‘amūqūt,” part one of which was edited by Schwartz in Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Folklore 15 (1993): 62–82. The work itself, described by Schwartz as a “commentary on the Torah” (48), actually is a defense of astrology and an allegorical interpretation of talmudic agadot. The explanations in the part dealing with Deuteronomy are “philosophical” only in a simple way; in fact, traditional religious is a better description. He utilized the commentary of Ibn ‘Ezra, but also (280) Naḥmanides (not cited by Schwartz). Solomon is mentioned in Baer, Die Juden 1: 151. He is also cited by his contemporary Zarza, Samuel. “Meqōr hayiyim,” in Margaliyōt ṣōvah (Mantua, 1559), 17b, bottom and 18a, top, neither of which is mentioned by Schwartz. There is a manuscript of the work: MS. Vat. ebr. 59 (Hebrew Manuscripts in the Vatican Library, 52; the date is erroneously transcribed); there are several other manuscripts. See also Gregorio de Olmo Lete, “Salomón Alco(n)stantín(í) y su comentario Sēfer megalēh ‘amuqūt. Una presentación,” Tamid 7 (2011): 189–211, with facsimile and translation of the introduction; this journal is available online.
23 Neubauer and Driver, eds. and tr., Fifty-Third Chapter of Isaiah 1: 128–36 (text), 2: 137–46 (cf. St., C.B., p. 671, no. 12). The author was described as aged in 1359. He was the recipient of some verses by Solomon Bonafed (St. in H.B. 18 [1878]: 7).

24 Hershman, Rabbi Isaac Ben Sheshet, 5 n. 9.

25 A partial manuscript was in the “Sefardic Rabbinate” (library?) of Cairo; see the description by Gottheil, “Some Hebrew Manuscripts in Cairo,” 644, no. 54. In the colophon there, he refers to his supercommentary and states that he has further explained certain allegorical explanations in this commentary which he had not wished to discuss in the supercommentary so as not to burden readers. My efforts to locate this manuscript presently have been unsuccessful. Of course, like other writers, he sometimes discussed interpretation of particular biblical topics in his other works; such is the case with the interpretation of one verse in Job, see Garshowitz, “‘From My Flesh I Envision God’” – an important article which relates this to other interpreters as well.

26 Imrey shefer (see Bibliography). As mentioned previously, the editor erroneously wrote “Ibn Ḥallāva” on the title page (although that is found in one manuscript, there is no question that his father was known simply as Ḥallāva). U.S. libraries catalogue him as “Yehuda ben Moshe Halavah [sic]” and his father as “Halaveh.” A further error is the claim that he referred to his “relative” Baḥya b. Asher (although he cited him three times, and sometimes “borrowed” from him without mentioning his name, he never called him a relative); there may have been a remote family connection, but there is no proof of this. He frequently cited his father, which references are important for his teaching (see index of names at the end of the editor’s introduction, both “adōniy ha-rav” and “ve-katav ha-rav adōniy aviy”).

27 Imrey shefer, 151; the editor (n. 60) cited Rashi on Ex. 7.1 as the source for the peculiar etymology. Rashi may be excused for not having seen Ibn Janāḥ or, of course, later medieval commentators who gave more logical explanations, but why Ḥallāva insisted on his incorrect interpretation of prophecy and also incorrect etymology is unclear. In any case, he seems to have been unaware of grammatical works (what knowledge he had is apparently derived from the commentaries of Rashi and Ibn ʻEzra). There are other, worse, misunderstandings in his commentary, such as his completely erroneous polemical attack on Muslims (153), which of course no Spanish Jew familiar with Muslim laws and customs would have written. Living in Tortosa, he had no direct knowledge of these things.

28 His homiletical introduction to Gen. 32.5 (297); cf. Moses b. Maimon, M.T., Ahavah: “Yesodey ha-Torah” 3.12, 13 (where the expression șūrah be-lo’ gōlem is used), and other sources mentioned in the notes on Ḥallāva’s text (see also Gottlieb’s note in Moses b. Maimon, Eight Chapters, tr. 45).

29 Imrey shefer, 269–70; this is one of his lengthy “introductions,” perhaps even a sermon.

30 The commentary is extant in a fourteenth-century manuscript, Escorial G-III-13; see Llamas, “Manuscritos hebreos de la Real Biblioteca de El Escorial,” 37–38; Barco, Catálogo 1: 205–06, no. 48; Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts No. F 8839 (ignoring previous descriptions they incorrectly claim a “publication” [!] date of 1560 and attribute it to the sixteenth-century qabalist Solomon b. Moses). On Moses Alqabēş, see Hershman, Isaac Ben Sheshet Perfet, 121, 159.

of the “anti-Averroist” tendencies in the commentary. On the Tortosa Disputation, see my Conversos (index). Talmage made no mention of the J.E. article on Rimoch, nor of any of the works cited in the bibliography there (although many statements in that article, based on Graetz, are erroneous).

32 See also Midrash Tehilim, Buber’s introduction, 55 (he apparently also wrote commentaries on some other biblical books). There is a manuscript containing only the commentary on Genesis (Parma MS. 3465); Richler and Beit-Arié, Biblioteca Palatina, 128, no. 656 (another manuscript, no. 2776, is described as “Parshiyot le-Zoahr” and is on Genesis and Exodus; Richler, 478). An excerpt from another manuscript, described as a sermon or model for sermons, was published by Saperstein, Jewish Preaching, 156–66; however, Spiegel (see below) suggested, 36, that the entire commentary may be sermons and cast doubt on his authorship of MS. 2776. Buber in his aforementioned introduction (loc. cit.) also said that it should be understood as sermons rather than commentary and noted that it was written in 1402. His teacher Ḥasdai Crescas is quoted often. The lengthy manuscript was in the possession of M. Straschun in Vilnius. This and other manuscripts were briefly described by Neubauer, A. “Notes et mélanges 1.,” R.E.J. 9 (1884): 117–19 (important). The Vilnius manuscript, currently JTS MS. 10401, was copied in 1490 in the yeshivah of Isaac (b. Abraham?) Veçudo in León. A small portion of it was edited by Yaakov Mosheh Finkelstein, “Peyrush ha-Torah le-rabeynu Matityahu ha-Yishariy,” Yeshurun 17 (1996): 59–79 (art. 55–79). The actual manuscript is some 220 folios. The commentary on Ps. 119 has been published several times; there is a critical edition, Peyrash a”b (see Bibliography). See also Midrash Tehilim, 108–09. His commentary is ethical-philosophical, explaining that everything necessary for human perfection is found in this Psalm. See now the complete edition of his commentary on Avot (see Bibliography). On Matityahu, see also Gross, G.J., 255–57; Renan, Écrivains juifs, 778–79.

33 See Poliack, “Spanish Legacy in the Hebrew Bible,” 89–95 on Duran, and the studies cited in her notes and bibliography. Duran also discussed the Bible in esoteric ways and interpretations; see index here and see Fishman, “Hebrew Bible and the Senses in Late Medieval Spain.” On Abravanel, see the article in Roth, ed., Medieval Jewish Civilization. Netanyahu, B. Don Isaac Abravanel (Philadelphia, P.A., 1972), 25, 36, thought that the commentaries on Joshua, Judges, 1 and 2 Samuel and possibly Kings were written in Spain. However, Abravanel himself said that he wrote all of his works after the Expulsion (“reply” to Saul ha-Kohēn, in Abravanel, Opera minora [rpt., Westmead, 1972], 8b). In fact, he began a commentary on Deuteronomy in Portugal in the 1470s, but revised it in Naples (which revision is the printed text). Recently, the possibility that the original manuscript is still extant has been suggested (Richler, Benjamin. “Isaac Abravanel’s ‘Lost’ Commentary on Deuteronomy,” in J. Targarona Borras and A. Sāenz-Badillos, eds., Jewish Studies at the Turn of the Century (Leiden, 1999) 1: 199–204). Lawee, Eric. Isaac Abravanel’s [sic] Stance toward Tradition (Albany, 2001) is of little use concerning his biblical interpretation.

34 Schwarz, Hebräischen Handschriften, 19, no. 13.4, 5 (with question of Meir Crescas to Profiat Duran).

35 MS. L802 (“Lutski”) of New York, J.T.S. (170 leaves). It is also mentioned by Lawee, “Reception of Rashi’s Commentary,” 40 n. 35.

36 “Eved Shelômō” (Bodl. MS. Hunt. Don. 25, now Bodl. MS. 202); I have not seen the edition by Mosheh Filip (Petah Tikvah, 2006). See Baer, Die Juden 1: 720 for the correct form of his name. See S. Bernstein’s introduction to Solomon de Piera (erroneous: Dapiera), Divan (N.Y., 1942), xiv n. 29. It is cited by Gabay’s son-in-law Aaron Abūrrabi, on whom see below: “Sicily.” Nevertheless, it
may have been written when he returned yet again to North Africa; see Gross, “Rashiy u-masoret liymud ha-Torah,” 41–42, who cites a portion of his defense of Rashi (see already St. in H.B. 7 [1864]: 26 n. 1, unknown to Gross). The work is also mentioned, with incorrect manuscript number and no reference to Gross (from whom he obviously got the information) by Lawee, “Reception of Rashi’s Commentary,” 39; he also incorrectly identified the author as Moses “Ibn Gab-bai”; so again in his “Exegesis and Appropriation,” 509.

37 TaMaKh is not his “last name,” as incorrectly indicated by Feldman (see his ed. and tr. of Abraham’s Commentary on the Song of Songs). This is an abbreviation, most probably for teḥiy menūḥatō kavōd (“may his rest be in honor”), said of one deceased. Michael, Ōr ha-ḥayyim, 60, no. 149, lists him as “the physician Abraham b. Isaac Şemaḥ ha-Lēvy,” but Şemaḥ is an error for “TaMaKh” (see St., C.B., no. 4236), and already correctly stated that this is not a proper name. In spite of all this, Assis, Elie. “El comentari al Càntic dels Càntics d’Abraham ben Itskhaq ha-Leví Tamakh,” I Congrés per a l’Estudi dels Jueus en Territori de Llengua Catalana. Actes [Barcelona, 2004], 149; article 147–55). The author gave no citation for this letter. Unfortunately, this book is apparently unavailable in U.S. libraries (I have a copy). The National Jewish and Hebrew University Library in Jerusalem has only the volume of the second congress. Understandably, therefore, Assis did not see this.

38 Maʻasēh ēfōd, 189 (see Bibliography). He called him “leader of his generation and of the great ones of Gerona.” See Michael, Ōr ha-ḥayyim, loc. cit.; however, A. Berliner, corrections at the end of the book, claimed that the Abraham referred to in Duran’s eulogy is not to be confused with the author of the commentary on Song of Songs. Other scholars, including Zunz and Steinschneider, were of the same opinion (however, that the author of the commentary was from Jerusalem and not Catalonia, as Zunz thought, is unlikely). Berliner’s perceptive insight seems to be confirmed by a Yemenite manuscript of the commentary at J.T.S. which bears at the end the notation that the author wrote it in 1395 (Marx, “A New Collection of Manuscripts,” 141). Nor is he to be identified with Abraham, actually the one mentioned by Duran, in the letter published by Feldman (Kovets [Qōvēṣ] ’al-Yad 7 [1968]: 150); nor did he go to Israel for a time, as Assis conjectured (47). Our Abraham was certainly not a scholar of any renown, judging from his mundane commentary, obviously not deserving of the praise in Duran’s letter (which again casts doubt on the identity of that Abraham with our author). Joan Ferrer, see previous note, referred to the eulogy as mentioned in the catalogue of de Rossi rather than the printed edition, and did not see any of the above references. Assis, art. cit., although noting many of the above references (not, however, Berliner), nevertheless continues to believe that the two Abrahams are identical.

in Gerson Appel, ed., Samuel K. Mirsky Memorial Volume [N.Y., 1971]). None of these is of any particular significance (the fragments on Esther and Lamentations were the subject of Feldman’s dissertation, New York University, 1957; cited by Assis but not the published fragments). Assis discussed the commentary on Song of Songs in relation to other (non-Spanish) interpreters, noting aspects of peshaṭ and allegory.

Feldman attempted to suggest other sources (introduction, 43–47), but none of this is convincing. Since Naḥmanides, of course, did not write a commentary on Song of Songs, that could not have served as a “source,” as Feldman suggested, 44. The commentary once attributed to Naḥmanides is in fact by ‘Ezra of Gerona. There is no similarity between that commentary and the one by Abraham. On Duran and Ibn ‘Ezra, see the aforementioned article of Polliack (n. 33).

The supercommentary was published, together with those of Joseph Canizal (misspelled Kenizal by Lawee in various articles) and Samuel Almosnino (see below on them), in Peyrūshiym le-Rašiy (Constantinople, s.a. [1524/25?], one of the first books printed there; [rpt. Brooklyn, N.Y., 1990]). Excerpts from his still unpublished Torah commentary were edited by Perles, “Ahron Ben Gerson Aboulrabi.” On his discussion with the pope, see the text cited by Perles, 250, and in detail Lawee, Eric. “Graven Images, Astromagical Cherubs, and Mosaic Miracles: A Fifteenth-Century Curial-Rabbinic Exchange,” Speculum 81 (2006): 754–95. See also on his supercommentary Lawee, “Aharon Aboulrabi” (Lawee follows Perles in the incorrect spelling of Aaron’s name). Abu’l Rabī wrote several other works, known only from mention of them in his commentary. Perles erred in interpreting part of the text, 249, as being an indication of the date (allegedly 1420) in which the commentary was written; see Hacker, Joseph. “‘Aliyat yehudey Sefarad le-Ereṣ-Yisrael 1391–1492,” Shālēm 1 (1974): 115; thus, we do not know the date of the commentary (in an article in Zion [Ṣiyōn] 45 [1984]: 127, Hacker stated that it was written after 1447). Lawee, “Maverick,” 139, suggests the 1470s as a possible “if improbably late” date. See also the criticism of Abu’l Rabī’s explanation of the “sin” of the golden calf in one of the responsa of David Ibn Abī Zimra (fl. 1513–73), discussed by Abraham Geiger in Kerem ḥemed 8 (1854): 205 and again by Lawee.

The responsum to David (b. Judah) Messer Leone, in Eliezer Aschkenazi (erroneous: Ashkenazi), Divrey ḥakhamim (Metz, 1849), 63, attributed to Jacob, is apparently spurious; cf. St., C.B. 5603.2. That alleged responsum denounces the study of philosophy.

43 Roth, Cecil. “Jewish Intellectual Life in Medieval Sicily,” J.Q.R. 47 (1957): 325; on Masnūt, see the article by Ta-Shma in E.J.2 13: 603 (nevertheless, the same error that he lived in Sicily is in the article there on Sicily). His other works are Midrāsh Berēšiyt zuta (Jerusalem, 1962) and Midrāsh Daniel and Midrāsh Esther (Jerusalem, 1968). He was praised by Judah al-Ḥaṙīzī of Toledo, who visited him; see Taḥkemôn, “gate” 46 (tr. Asambleas de los sabios, 296, 298; and the poems, 319, 345 [only in this translation]). The poem in Asambleas, 345 (no. 113), appears to be addressed to Samuel b. Nisim “the Spaniard” = “of Spain,” but in fact the Hebrew heading may be read “I composed it in Spain for Samuel,” see the text in Edelmann, Z.H., ed., Divrey ḥefēṣ (London, 1853), ii. Edelmann there edited, 3–5, a brief treatise of al-Ḥaṙīzī in honor of Samuel.
Published under the title Peyrūš Megiyłat Rūt... Sōd ha-geʿūlah in 1551 in Salonica (not Sabbioneta, Italy as Walfish, “Typology,” 119, stated; cf. St., C.B., 1130, no. 5373 about the error of Sabbioneta, only one book was published in Sabbioneta in 1551). Walfish gave a description of the work based on a J.T.S. manuscript, with summaries of the contents. The J.T.S. manuscript, originally from Yemen, contains his commentaries on Ecclesiastes, Esther and Ruth (the first two remain to be published), and was briefly described by Marx, “New Collection of Manuscripts,” 141–42 (see also Walfish, Esther in Medieval Garb, passim). According to this, it was completed in 1389 and there are verses in praise of the author by one “Enzark Profet” (read En Zarch Profiat). One is tempted to assume an error in transcribing the name and identify him with the previously mentioned Profiat Zarch (or possibly a son; such reversals of names in father and son were fairly common). It is strange that Marx did not know who the author was or that his commentary on Ruth was published, and criticized Steinschneider for saying that he lived in Jerusalem (in fact, as we shall see, he did).

The commentary is characterized by Walfish (“Typology,” 120) as “skillfully woven fabric of typological, historical and narrative threads, the likes of which have seldom if ever been seen in medieval exegesis, either Christian or Jewish.” This is only somewhat an exaggeration, since in fact Ibn ʻEzra did the same, at least in his commentary on Song of Songs and to some degree also on Daniel. More correctly stated is his conclusion, “Typology,” 126, that this commentary is the only one “devoted almost exclusively to typological exegesis.” Ibn ʻEzra, and of course Naḥmanides, utilized typological exegesis but not exclusively.


See the index to Baer, Juden 1: 1099 for the family there. An Isaac G-γ-a-n-γ (or J-γ-a-n-γ) is mentioned in Moses b. Maimon, Qovēš 1: 40, no. 200. See also Abulafia, Gan ha-meshaliym, nos. 550–54. In medieval Hebrew, a  the short stroke mark (g’) was used to indicate the sound j (phonetically: ð; in medieval Spanish j did not yet have the hard kh sound) and that stroke often could be lost in copying, which explains the different transcriptions of the name.

Job: MS. B.N. Paris, no. 152, 4, according to Neubauer, A. “Literary Gleanings,” J.Q.R. [o.s.] 5 [1892–93]: 711. Ecclesiastes: cited by Joseph b. Joseph Ibn Naḥmias (see below on him), Peyrūškey, see introduction, xiv. The manuscript was cited by L. Dukes in Der Orient 10 (1949); 667–68; excerpts of it were published by Abramson, “Le-feyrūsh rav Yiṣḥaq ben Giyat [Ibn Ghiyāṭh] le-Qohelet,” 168–69. See now Hershman, “Peshāṭ ve-derash yardu kerukhiym.” Hershman notes, 400, that Jacob cited Naḥmanides and Jonah (b. Abraham Gerūndiy) and was in turn cited by Ibn Naḥmias, and therefore could not have lived later than the first third of the fourteenth century. It is peculiar that Jacob apparently did not cite the commentary of Ibn ʻEzra. The parable of knowledge as a ladder by which to ascend to God (see citation in Hershman, 401, end; he made no comment on this) may in this case be taken directly from Ibn Ghiyāṭh’s commentary (assuming that he read Arabic) and not from Ibn ʻEzra (see Ibn Ghiyāṭh’s commentary in Hamēš megiylot ʻim peyrūshiym ʻatiyqiyum, ed. Kafiḥ, 186).

See Hershman, art. cit., 402–04. There are significant differences, noted there, between the text of the midrash which Jacob used and the standard text; however, there were numerous additions made to this midrash, as already noted by Zunz, Derashgōy be-Yisraēl, 129, and see also 130 (this book was not mentioned by Hershman). As Hershman correctly concluded, 404, the reference to the Zohar...
is a later interpolation; however, he also stated that Jacob referred to Midrash Ecclesiastes rabah as “Midrash haziyt,” which is an unlikely error since that title always referred to Song of Songs rabah (and see Chapter 1; curiously, Avini, Rabbi Ariel, “Peyrush R’ Ya’aqov b. Shelomoh Al’iyani le-megiylat Ester,” Qovēṣ hariq gibōriym pleyṣat sōfriym 9 (2006): 228, seeks to claim our author as Provençal because he cites “Midrash haziyt” on Esther, and others who cited this as a midrash on all the “Scrolls” except Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes are from Provence; this, of course, is a statement of multiple error). As for the author being from Provence, his use of the word comarca (provinces in Spain) to explain mediynōt (Esther 1.1) shows that this is unlikely (nor is that word necessarily Catalan, as Avini thought; it is used throughout Spain). Avini convincingly argues for his authorship of the Esther commentary, which he edited (232–57) from the aforementioned Paris manuscript (since no name appears, it is understandable that this has been overlooked).

50 See Bibliography: Sources for Mōreh ha-mōreh. Most of these citations were re-published by Jospe in his Torah and Sophia, 459–84. Four new citations from another unpublished work of Zarza were edited by Jospe in the appendix to Jospe and Schwartz, “Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera’s Lost Bible Commentary”; the other citations appear to be from another lost work by Ibn Falaquera, “Sēfer ha-derash” (perhaps an esoteric commentary on midrashic or agadic statements). Salvatierra Ossorio, “La Torah y su interpretación,” is a translation and brief analysis of a section dealing with theological aspects of the Torah in that work.

51 The philosophical works are Rav pe’aliym (Lvov [Lemberg], 1885; photo rpt. Jerusalem, 1970); also Sha’ar ha-shamayim (erroneously attributed to Ibn ‘Ezra), see details on this in my Dictionary, 359–60. Other minor works of his are also listed there (there are printer’s errors there on publication dates of some works). The commentary on Ecclesiastes, Peyrush megilat Qōhelet, s.L.s.a. (Constantinople, 1585?), and the work on creation, Šūrat ha-‘olam (see my Dictionary, 359, no. 5 for information), were both photographically reproduced as Kitvey R’ Yishq Ibn Laṭiyf (Jerusalem, 1970).

52 Parma MS. 2211, ff. 105r–136v (Richler and Beit-Arié, Biblioteca Palanina, 137 no. 685.11). The commentary frequently cites the “Guide” of Maimonides. His family name is Arabic, and is thus not “Sahulah,” etc. In the introduction to his commentary he refers to himself as “ben Aviy Sahūla,” which is to be understood as equivalent to the Arabic Abū, “father of”; i.e., he is a son of the family of Sahūla. The commentary on Song of Songs was edited from a unique manuscript by A. Green (see Bibliography: Sources, Ibn Sahūla). It was already discussed, with some excerpts, by Salfeld, Das Hohelied Salomo’s, 106–08, and the introduction edited by H. Brody in Kovets (Qovēṣ) ‘al-yad 5 (1893): 30–32 (the volume number of the journal is incorrectly printed as 9). It is this commentary that was mentioned by Neubauer, erroneously attributed to Solomon “Abi Sahulah,” citing the commentary of Ibn ‘Aknīn (“Joseph ben Aqnin,” 349); see excerpt from the introduction in Neubauer, Catalogue 1: no. 343. Commentaries on two psalms are in a J.T.S. manuscript; one was published by Scholem, G., “Peraqiyam me-toldot sifrut ha-qabalah,” K’S 6 (1929): 117. Green remarked (393 n. 4) that Brody (intro. 15) erred in attributing a commentary on Job to Ibn Sahūla. However, as noted in Chapter 4, n. 71, Hershler, introduction to the Qiryat sēfer of Menahēm b. Solomon “ha-Meiyriy,” mentioned this commentary, although he gave no source; the matter requires further investigation.

54 See Green, 400–01; even though it is difficult to concur with some of his hypotheses, at least they are a corrective to Scholem’s opinion that he constantly cited what he “heard” from Moses.
55 See Green’s introduction, 400–01; also there, 401–03, on the possible relationship between Ibn Sahula’s commentary and a responsum on the nature of Song of Songs attributed to Isaac Ibn La’if. As mentioned, Bahya b. Asher also cited the Zohar, as “Midrash shel Rabiy Shim’on b. Yohay.” Bahya’s commentary was completed in 1291, some time after Isaac wrote.

56 Text, ed. Green, 405, lines 12–21. Very interesting is the fact that he cites, and harshly criticizes, Ibn ʻAknīn’s previously discussed commentary, which proves that Ibn Sahula was fluent in Arabic. The question is, where did he acquire this proficiency? Certainly not in Burgos or Guadalajara, where Arabic was not known. It would have required considerable study of the language to be able to read Ibn ʻAknīn’s commentary. In his introduction, he refers to “wandering” from place to place and from one “country” (or land) to another, and the possibility should be considered that he was in Zaragoza (or another Aragonese community where Arabic was still in use) before going to Burgos. Incidentally, Green there, note to line 15, claimed that “the majority” of commentaries on Song of Songs dealt with the relationship between the soul and the body, which of course is hardly the case. The only specific reference to that is in the aforementioned remarks of Ibn ʻEzra, and as indicated I do not know to whom he referred.

57 Ibn Ṣaddiq, Qiyṣṭar zēkher sādiqy, 97 (15). Manuscripts of the commentary: J.T.S. (see Scholem, Kabbalah, 40), Leiden (Steinschneider, M., Catalogus codicum Hebraeorum [Leiden, 1858], 89) and Paris B.N. (liib. 790); and see St., C.B., 1461. Of these, only the Paris manuscript is mentioned by Barry Walfish in his bibliography of medieval commentaries on Song of Songs, 533. The authenticity of the commentary has been questioned by Gottlieb, Meḥariyim ba-sifruth ha-qabalah, 129 (reprint from his “Biyuriyim ba-kitvey R’ Yosef G’iqṭiyylah [sic],” Tarbiz [Tarbiyā] 39 [1970]: 78–80). As previously mentioned, the “Ma’amār ʻal peniyimiyūt ha-Tōrah,” a qabalistic interpretation of Gen. 1 (ed. G. Scholem in K”S 6 [1930]: 410–11; rpt. in Moses b. Naḥman, Kitvey, ed. Chavel 2: 467–69), has been attributed to Ibn Chicatilla by Gottlieb; see Chapter 4, n. 98 (end).

58 See Michael, Or ha-ḥayim, 429. He also apparently wrote a commentary on Proverbs, mentioned by Joseph Ibn Naḥmiyas (see here on him), the only known (partial) manuscript of which was in the Jewish studies library in Warsaw, destroyed by the Nazis; see Richler, Benjamin. “The Lost Manuscripts of the Library for Jewish Studies in Warsaw,” Studia Rosenthaliana 38–39 (2005–06): 376, Cod. 77, 1 and 382 n. 159.


60 First published in Constantinople, 1514, and after that also in many editions of the Bible with commentaries, but only the introductory parts of each section. Reinitz, Jacob, ed. Ba’al ha-tūriym ʻal ha-Tōrah (Jerusalem, 1971; 1993 edition, 2 vols.) is also an abridged version. The complete commentary has been published only four times: Zolkiew, 1806; Hannover, 1839; Warsaw, 1880/81 and Jerusalem, 1961 (rpt. 1964). The Hannover ed. is available online (select each book and it will open as a pdf document): http://www.daat.ac.il/daat/vl/tohen.asp?id=164. This commentary is based, as the author himself stated, almost entirely on that of Naḥmanides, but without qabalistic and philosophical explanations. References to other commentaries there are also derived from Naḥmanides. An English translation, Tir [sic] on the Tōrah, by Munk (Jerusalem, 2005; N.Y., 2005), 4 vols., is of no scholarly value. There is an earlier one by Gold and Touger (Brooklyn, 1999–2004), 5 vols.
61 First published as Da’at zeqēniyım (Livorno, 1783), then in Hadar zeqēniyım (Livorno, 1840, both with the commentary of the authors of the Tosafôt on the Torah, and subsequently; and also in some editions of the Pentateuch, Migra’ôt gedōliyım, with commentaries). See on this Michael, Or ha-ḥayyım, 263–64; Aptowitzer, V., “Commentaire du Pentateuque attribué à R. Ascher,” R.E.J. 51 (1905): 59–86 (see Chapter 4, n. 270). Some statements on various passages, excerpted from his other writings or citations by other writers, were published as a “commentary” in Gad, ‘Asarah me’orôt ha-gedōliyım, 23–29. Isaac b. Jacob de Lattes (fl. ca. 1370) wrote that Asher “explained the written and oral Torah” (Sha’arey Ṣiyōn, ed. Havlin, 180). Either he confused Asher with his son Jacob, or more likely he meant that in his talmudic commentaries he explained the “entire” Torah.

62 See Bibliography for his commentaries. Neubauer, Adolf. “Literary Gleanings,” J.Q.R. (o.s.) 5 (1893): 710, believed that he wrote commentaries on the entire Bible, but there is no evidence for this. However, he noted that his commentary on the entire Torah, not just Genesis, is cited by Solomon b. Jacob Almali (or Almale; not “Almoli,” b. Spain ca. 1486–90; he lived in Portugal and then in Ottoman Turkey, where he wrote his works). Zunz also stated that he wrote a commentary on the Torah (Zur Geschichte und Literatur, 429; nos. 1–6 in Zunz are all the same person). Ibn Naḥmias himself cited his commentary on Genesis (in his commentary on Avot 5.1; rpt. in his Peyrūḵey), and also his commentary on Ecclesiastes (ibid., on 1.1,5) and on Psalms (in his commentary on Prov. 18.22). Excerpts of the apparent text of the commentary on the Torah were published by Gad, ed., Hamishāh me’orôt ha-gedōliyım, 84–94 (also with excerpts from the commentary on Proverbs and the commentary on Avot. 95–97); however, as usual, the editor gave no source for the text. In a catalogue of manuscripts and some printed books from Constantinople, sent to E. Carmoly in 1841, there in fact appears a 68 page (folio?) manuscript of a commentary on the Torah attributed to Ibn Naḥmias (Revue orientale 2 [1842]: 113, no. 7). According to Yehudah Fris-Ḥorev, editor of Isaac Aboab, Menōnat ha-ma’or (Musad ha-Rav Kook edition; I cite Jerusalem, 1961), 54, some fifteenth-century Spanish scholars referred to commentaries on Proverbs, such as that of Ibn Naḥmias, as “Midrash Mīshley”; if so, those works should be examined for possible recovery of lost sections of this commentary.

63 Sa’adyah Gaon, Hai (Hayyē) Gaon, Samuel Ibn Naḥrīllah, Rashi, Solomon b. Meir (“Rashbam”), Abraham bar Ḥayya (or Ḥīyya), Ibn ‘Ezra, Maimonides, Jonah Gerundiy, Naḥmanides, Joseph and David Qimḥi, and numerous other scholars and rabbis who did not write biblical commentaries. Note the citation of Jonathan Ibn Janāḥ on Jer. (Sēfer ha-riqmah, in the rpt. ed., pt. 2: 55); and also on Prov. 6.3, from a manuscript mentioned by Neubauer, loc. cit.; not in the edited texts of Ibn Janāḥ. The numerous citations of other scholars do not, of course, mean that they wrote biblical commentaries; rather, he cites either what he heard personally from them or in other cases what he apparently found written in their names in other sources. His frequent citations of Sa’adyah are of importance, meaning that he had the gaon’s Arabic commentaries as well as his translations of Esther and Proverbs, at least; on his citations of Sa’adyah in the commentary on Esther, see Schlossberg, Eli’ezer. “Iyuniym be-feyrushēy R’ Yosēf Ibn Naḥmias.” Megadim (Megadiyım) 8 (1989): 84–96; this journal is very scarce in the U.S.A.

64 Ibn Galīniy is cited in his commentary on Proverbs (Ibn Naḥmias, Peyrūḵey, 72). “Rabbī Ishma’ēl” and Benjamin al-Barjiḥūnī are cited in his commentary on Jeremiah, ibid., 42 (Ishma’ēl), 33 (Benjamin). An Abū’l-Ḥasan Binyāmin
The chronological part (Pt. 4, Chapter 18) of Isaac b. Joseph’s astronomical treatise, Sēfer yesōd ōlam (Berlin, 1777; photo rpt. Jerusalem, 1970), 86b; (Berlin, 1846–48, ed. Goldberg and Rosenkranz), Pt. 4, 35b; and the important text of that chapter, containing missing material, in Zacut, Abraham. Sēfer ha-yūḥasiyn (Cracow, 1581 ed. only, 163b). Israel is cited by Joseph Ibn Naḥmias (who knew him personally) in his commentaries on Jeremiah and Proverbs. Note also his mention of a commentary on the divine “name” of 72 letters by Israel (Neubauer, A., “Literary Gleanings,” J.Q.R. [o.s.] 5 [1893]: 712). He, probably, and not Isaac, is quoted by Samuel Zarza in his supercommentary on Ibn “Ezra (“Megōr ẖayim”) in Margalialiōt tōvah, 45b), although since the discussion is on numbers it could possibly be Isaac. The commentary on Job is noted in Neubauer, Catalogue, who conjectured that the author was the grandfather of Isaac b. Solomon, author of the commentary on Avot; however, that is disproved by the fact that he cites Joseph (correctly Yosiyy) Ibn Crispin ha-Kohēn, who was a rabbi in Toledo who served as a member of a beyt diyn (rabbinical court) with Asher b. Yehiēl; see Enelow, in his introduction to Israel b. Joseph Alnaqawa (erroneously catalogued by libraries as Al-Nakawa), Menōrat ha-ma‘ar (N.Y., 1929–32; photo rpt. Jerusalem, 1972) 4 (pt. 3), Eng. intro. 29. For Ibn Crisp, see Asher b. Yehiēl, She’ēlōt 55.10b (ed. Yudlov, 241).

Renan (Neubauer), Écrivains juifs, 364. This certainly should be published. Mordechai A. Friedman published the text and translation of a fragment from a section of an alleged commentary by Ibn Zeraḥ, M., “Menahēm ben Aaron Ibn Zemah’s [sic] Anti-Polygyny Torah Commentary from the Geniza,” in Marc Zvi Brettler and Michael Fishbane, eds., Minḥah le-Naḥum: Biblical and Other Studies Presented to Nahum M. Sarna (Sheffield, 1993), 103–16 (text 113–16). This excerpt is apparently taken from Ibn Zeraḥ’s legal compendium Šēdah la-derekh (there is no question as to the identity of the author, mistakenly in the article, as Friedman gave correct biographical information on him and indeed has now corrected the title in the online post of the article: https://www.academia.edu/17639083/Menahem_ben_Aaron_Ibn_Zemahs_Zerahs_Anti-polygyny_Torah_Commentary_from_the_Geniza_1993).

A manuscript of this commentary is in the J.T.S. library (MS Lutzki 1058) and should be edited. (Joseph is erroneously catalogued by libraries as “Ibn Shoshan” or even “Yosef Ben-Shoshan.”) He was the author of a commentary on Avot (see Bibliography).
302 Aragón-Catalonia fourteenth century

70 See Neubauer, A. “La famille Khaḷaṣ,” in R.E.J. 5 (1882): 48, 49. Khaḷaṣ (hardly “Klatz,” as in Lawee, “Reception of Rashi’s Commentary,” 42, who gives no details) mentioned him in his own supercommentary on Rashi on the Torah, Mesiyyah ilmiym (Jerusalem, 1986; and according to a new manuscript, Petah-Tikveh, 2001), which he wrote in North Africa. For some unknown reason, libraries catalogue the author’s name as “Judah b. Abraham” (Khaḷaṣ), even though the title page has (correctly) Judah b. Solomon. On Khaḷaṣ see also Havlin, “Le-toldot mishpahat Alkhalaṣ [sic]”; Gross, “R. Yehudah Khalal in Tlemcen” and on his supercommentary Gross, “Rashiy u-masoret liymud ha-Torah,” 47–49. Nevertheless, the Ibn Sūsan dynasty lasted for centuries, and this Abraham b. Zīza may have been another person. Incidentally, Abraham Ibn Sūsan is one of those not mentioned by Gross, “Rashiy” (nor by Lawee, who appears to have borrowed most of his information from Gross). Much of Lawee’s article deals with polemic, Christian and Jewish, and not even in Spain; names are constantly misspelled. Only on 49 does he finally get to the announced theme of his article, the explanation of the statement that Adam had intercourse with every animal. A subsequent article by him, “From Sepharad [sic] to Ashkenaz: A Case Study in the Rashi Supercommentary Tradition,” AJS Review 30 (2006): 393–425, is a virtual rehash of the first; he revisited the same content in “The Reception of Rashi’s Commentary on the Torah in Spain: The Case of Adam’s Mating with the Animals,” J.Q.R. 97 (2007): 33–66, with all the same errors, including a reference to Abraham “Bokhrat” (Abraham b. Solomon ha-Lēvy Bakrāt or Bukarāt, who in fact wrote his supercommentary in Tunisia). There remains to be done a thorough and accurate study of the reception of Rashi, both his biblical and more importantly his talmudic commentary, in Spain (see some important details in my Conversos, index Rashiy). It is disappointing that in the latest massive tome on Rashi, Sed-Rajna, Gabrielle, ed. Rashi, 1040-1990. Hommage a Ephraïm E. Urbach (Paris, 1993) there is not a single article which discusses the reception of Rashi in Spain. It has been demonstrated that the text of his talmudic commentary as we have it differs greatly from manuscript and other citations in the Spanish tradition prior to printing (see, for example, Jeremiah Malahi [?], “Nusaḥ peyruṣ Rashiy le-talmud ha-bavliy be-sifrey Sefarad ha-rishoniyym,” Shanātōn ha-mishpāṭ ha-ʻivriy 18–19 [1992–94]: 251–64; “Mova’ot mi-peyruśey Rashiy le-masekhet Berakhot be-sifrey ha-rishoniyym,” Ṣhdānān 6 [2000]: 67–84; etc.). Similarly, citations in Spanish biblical commentaries should be closely examined, particularly where there are manuscript sources.

71 Steinschneider, Cat. Munich, 112, no. 239.10. Avney ha-shōḥam, ed. Chamiel (Jerusalem, 1954; rpt. 1962). The editor was unaware of the manuscript of the commentary, and Steinschneider was apparently unaware that he was the author of Avney ha-shōḥam.

72 He was not, of course, from France or Germany, as Zunz apparently thought (cf. St., C.B. 5543); however, in Zur Geschichte und Literatur, 102, Zunz did not say this. Renan (Neubauer), Rabbins français, 443, thought that he was from France. Jacob’s commentary, Imrey nō’am, was published several times: Constantinople, 1539; Cremona, 1565; Cracow, 1598; in (Bible. Pentateuch) Qōhelet Mōsheh (Amsterdam, 1724–28) and, separately, Jerusalem, 1970. I cite the last edition. The only other scholar to mention him at all was A. Marmorstein, “Die Superkommentare zu Raschis Pentateuchkommentar,” Z.f.h.B. 11 (1907): 188, no. 2; however, his commentary can hardly be described as a “supercommentary” on Rashi.

73 On Gen. 49.4 (ed. cited, 37, where the editor noted that the explanation cited in the name of Ibn ‘Ezra, “these are two words,” is not found in his commentary; however, this is not correct, since in the “regular” recension there he indeed says...
“as if he had said ‘adal me-‘alay,’” and apparently it is to this that Jacob referred. He also quotes Ibn ‘Ezra on Ex. 13.12, 22.17; Lev. 16.8 (ed. cited, 46, 61, 107). Jacob was also overlooked by Gross, “Rashi u-masoret liymu‘ud ha-Torah,” and by Lawee, “Reception of Rashi’s Commentary.”

74 Ye’emot 4a, and see the explanation of Epstein, Tōnah temiymah 4: 156 n. 118.

75 See Bibliography: Sources, Judah b. Solomon. The translation of the text promised by Goldstein never appeared (following others, he incorrectly transcribed the author’s name as “ibn Matkah”). See also Goldstein, “Citations of Judah ben Solomon” (again, without translation of the texts).

76 Text, “Commentary,” ed. Goldstein, 206, lines 1–20; 209, lines 115–20, also 210. See index here on “golem.”

77 Langermann, “Cosmology and Cosmogony in Doresh Reshumoth.” The Dorēsh reshūmōt is cited by Bahya b. Asher in his lengthy discussion of the Ten Commandments (Biyyūr 2: 305), and also by Jacob b. Asher, Ṭūr, “Ôrah hayyim” no. 118.

78 More so than Langermann perhaps realized; for instance, his emphasis on Jerusalem as “point of contact between the celestial and terrestrial realms” (208), and especially the “three worlds” (309; see Roth, “Two Notes on Ibn ‘Ezra”); see further on Jerusalem in the thought of the anonymous commentator, 219 ff. Good as the article is, there are other topics that could have benefitted from further consideration of sources, such as the discussion of light (309 ff.), where Ibn Gabirol, particularly, as well as Judah ha-Lévy and perhaps even Isaac Ibn Laţīf as sources should be investigated (to be sure, Ibn Gabirol is mentioned casually in the article). See also Langermann, T., “A Citation from Saadia’s Long Commentary to Genesis, in Hebrew Translation,” Aleph 4 (2004): 293–297; text of the citation in this work.


80 See Japhet, “The Lovers’ ‘Way’” (chiefly on literary aspects); and in more detail Alfonso, “Comentario anónimo,” with text (45–55) of several chapters; see also her “Glosas romances (le’azim) en hebreo en dos comentarios medievales…,” with translation of the commentaries on Proverbs and Song of Songs. Alfonso has edited the text on Proverbs, “In Between Cultures.” The fact that the commentary explains terms by their Arabic meaning, as well as cites the commentary of Ibn Bil‘am (49, Chapter 2) argues against either Catalonia or Provence; yet there are frequent Provençal glosses in the commentary. Barco, “Estudio lingüístico de glosas romances,” suggests Toledo as the place of writing, since there are alleged Toledan dialectic glosses. This does not explain the Provençal glosses, however.


82 MS. Vat. ebr. 59; Hebrew Manuscripts in the Vatican Library, 52 (the date is erroneously transcribed); there are several other manuscripts. Excerpts of it have been published; see my Dictionary, 117, no. 40a (an error in printing should be corrected: Yashan be-qanqan ḥadash). See also Olmo Lete, “Salomón Alco(n) stantin(l) y su comentario Sēfer megelēh ‘anuqot,” with facsimile and translation of the introduction.

MS. Dresden Landesbibliothek Eb 399; see Róth, Hebräische Handschriften, 32. According to the tombstone inscription of Isaac (Almanzi and Luzzatto, Avney zikarōn, 40–41, no. 38), he was a great rabbi who engaged constantly in study of the Torah, “who judged in righteousness the poor and showed no favoritism to the great” (important, or wealthy, people). He died in 1365. The commentary cites things he “heard” from the aforementioned Dan Ashkenaziyy (see Chapter 4, n. 270), but given the date it is impossible that he actually heard these; instead, he copied from another source (perhaps Baḥya). Victor Aptowitzer was of the opinion that the manuscript is a copy of the commentary erroneously attributed to Asher b. Yeḥiel (“Le commentaire du Pentateuque attribuée à R. Asher b. Yeḥiel,” R.E.J. 51 [1902]: 84–85). One of the reasons that the commentary cannot possibly be by Asher is that it cites the Zohar (f. 44b; Liber, 74), a later forgery. Liber, M. “Le commentaire du pentateuque attribué à R. Asher b. Yeḥiel,” R.E.J. 54 (1906): 64–101 was certain that the author, not merely the copyist, of the commentary was Isaac and that it was written in Spain.

See Baer, Die Juden 2: 142–44 for a list of official documents with his signature. He was still the official scribe for Pedro I in 1351–52, and signed a document of that king granting various privileges to Murcia (León Tello, Judíos de Toledo 2: 132, no. 487). He is also mentioned in the responsa of Judah b. Asher of Toledo (no. 77). See the description of the tombstone, with facsimile reproduction and transcription and translation of the inscriptions, by Zelson, Louis G. “The Tombstone of Moses Ibn Zardil” (as he conjectured the reading to be), J.Q.R. 19 (1928–29): 145–50. For all of his obvious learning, the author was unaware of the reference in Judah b. Asher. His suggestion that he was the same as the person named in a manuscript copied in Toledo in 1307 (with the name of the patron later replaced by a certain Moses b. Joseph) is mere conjecture. The tombstone today is prominently displayed in the so-called “Sefardic museum” of Toledo, the synagogue formerly known as the “El Transito” church. The tombstone and its inscription have often been photographically reproduced.

He is cited by Joseph Ibn Naḥmias in his commentary on Jeremiah (photo rpt. Ibn Naḥmias, Peyrūshey, 16), which is certainly the commentary wrongly attributed to Joseph Qimḥi in a manuscript in Karlsruhe mentioned by L. Dukes in Otsar (ōṣar) nelmad 2 (1857): 75–76 (Dukes there said that obviously this is not the commentary of Joseph Qimḥi).

See Neubauer, Catalogue, nos. 286, 1647.1. Unfortunately, these have not been examined by modern scholars. On his apparent residency in Buitrago, see Baer, Die Juden 2: 282, bottom.

Neubauer and Driver, Fifty-Third Chapter of Isaiah 1: 95–108 (text); 2: 99–114 (tr.).
See “The Book of Zohar and Exegetical Spirituality” in Fishbane, *Exegetical Imagination*, which analyzes in detail a few examples but in fact sheds little light on the overall exegetical approach; the same is true of the article of Segal, E. “The Exegetical Craft of the ‘Zohar,’” *AJS Review* 17 (1992): 31–49, which rhapsodizes about the creativity of the approach, based on three (!) examples; and even more Idel, Moshe. “The Zohar as Exegesis,” in Steven T. Katz, ed., *Mysticism and Sacred Scripture* (Oxford, 2000), 87–100, which while giving a few examples of some of the outrageous statements sheds no light on actual exegesis in the Zohar (Fishbane’s above-cited chapter is reprinted in this collection, 101–17). Idel’s brief remarks on the Zohar (462–64) in his superficial discussion of “kabbalistic” exegesis in Saxo, *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament 1/2*: 456–66, add little. See instead the careful study by Bacher, “L’Exégese biblique dans le Zohar” (not mentioned by any of the aforementioned authors). Wolfson, “Left Contained in the Right: A Study of Zoharic Hermeneutics,” is an important article dealing with the conflict of evil and good as interpreted in the Zohar but it really has little to do with exegesis; he also did not mention Bacher. Kalman, Jason. “With Friends Like These: Turning Points in the Jewish Exegesis of the Biblical Book of Job” (dissertation, Montreal, McGill University, 2005), 170–221, analyzes in detail references to Job in the Zohar. Unfortunately, the thesis is less satisfactory in dealing (in a few short remarks) with some, only, of the medieval commentators on Job.

A Halilla family was found in Oña (a lovely town N.E. of Burgos), and another in Briviesca — including a Mosse (Moses), in the early fifteenth century (Baer, *Die Juden* 2: 256). Manuscripts (sixteenth century) of the commentary on Song of Songs are found in the Vatican (Vatican – Biblioteca Apostolica ebr. 69, 70, 71); in Milan (Ambrosiana O 78 Sup.); in Paris B.N. héb. 269 and in the Escorial: Lacave Riaño, José Luis. “Manuscritos hebreos de la Biblioteca de Escorial no catalogados,” *Sefarad* 37 (1977): 295. See Steinischneider, *Cat. Munich*, 47, no. 71 (not mentioned by Lacave), who says that the title of the work is not “Tapūḥy zahav” (“apples of gold”), as others have said, and describes it as a “philosophical-allegorical” commentary, and also quotes the introduction. On Song of Songs and Ruth: Montefiore Library no. 39 (Hirschfeld, *Catalogue*, 8). On Ruth, together with Esther, also in Wien–Oesterreichische Nationalbibliothek Cod hebr. 178 (Schwartz, *Die hebräischen Handschriften*, no. 34). See also Walfish, *Esther in Medieval Garb*, 114, 215–16, 288.

Steinschneider, *Cat. Munich*, 131, no. 267.

See Eisen (who incorrectly identified him as Spanish), *Book of Job in Medieval Jewish Philosophy*, 108 ff. See the brief anonymous note on Arundi in E.J.* 2, where the guess that he originated from Ronda, near Málaga, is unlikely.

Conference papers of uneven quality have been published under the title *The Hebrew Bible in Fifteenth-Century Spain* (see Bibliography). Only one of the papers deals, ostensibly, with fifteenth-century exegesis, Kozodoy, “Messianic Interpretation of the Song of Songs in Late-Medieval Iberia,” 117–47; although the majority of the paper deals with midrashic and talmudic sources, the early Muslim period (including poetry) and medieval Europe before finally devoting a few pages to only two or three of the fifteenth-century writers, about whom nothing new is said. One other paper concerns Abravanel, who of course did not write in Spain and therefore is of no relevance. Other papers, however interesting, are on tangential matters of art, *conversos* and liturgy. Kozodoy is not alone in confusing sermons with biblical exegesis. So Saperstein, Marc. “The Method of Doubts: Problematizing the Bible in Late Medieval Jewish Exegesis,” in J. D. McAuliffe, et al., *With Reverence for the Word*, 133–56, which, with the exception of “Abarbanel” (sic), deals entirely with sermons instead of commentary as such.
94 See Bibliography: Sources, Joseph b. David, Peyrūṭh. On the identity of the author, see Yeisrael Ta-Shma, ha-Sifrūṭ ha-parshaniyṭ le-Talmūd, 90–91.

95 See Baer, Die Juden 2: 340. Thus, I maintain the spelling ‘Arama, although in Hebrew it is spelled with a final –ה (Israeli writers always omit this anyway). The family name, as we know also from a signature of his brother, was actually Ibn ‘Aramah.

96 Salonica, 1522, and published frequently thereafter. The most important edition is Pressburg, 1849 (5 vols.; photo rpt. Jerusalem, 1960), with extensive commentary by Chaim Josef Pollak. There is a condensed English translation, Aqaydat [sic] Yitzḥaq [sic], tr. E. Munk (Jerusalem, 1986.; photo rpt. Jerusalem, N.Y., 2001). A fifteenth-century manuscript (Escorial G-IV-14) contains what purports to be a commentary on the Torah by ‘Arama, which probably is simply excerpted from his work; the same is probably true of the commentary on Ecclesiastes there (cf. Llamas, “Manuscriptos hebreos de la Real Biblioteca de El Escorial” 1: 41–43); of course he actually did compose a commentary on Ecclesiastes (see my Dictionary, 137–38 for editions), but apparently not as in this manuscript. There are other manuscripts that claim to be his commentaries on various biblical books, which probably are also excerpts of his main work (see Nitai Shinan, “Spanish Manuscripts of Works by Fifteenth Century Spanish Authors,” Hispania Judaica Bulletin 9 (2013): 3360–61) “Spanish” there means Jewish, and “Spanish writing” means Sephardic script; there are many more manuscripts by such authors than described in the article, which considers only ‘Arama and Albo. Nevertheless, the Escorial manuscript, unknown to all who have written about him, should be examined carefully. There are only a few significant studies of the author and his work: Heller-Wilensky, R’ Yiḥaṭ ’Ar-amah u-miṣḥnatō, her dissertation done under the direction of Harry A. Wolfson, and thus an attempt to relate ‘Arama’s ideas to those of Philo (according to Wolfson, the “source” for virtually all medieval Jewish philosophy; see also the article cited in the following note); Pearl, Medieval Jewish Mind, a popularized presentation; and Septimus, “Yitzḥaq Arama and Aristotle’s Ethics.” See also Kellner, “Gersonides and His Cultured Despisers, Arama and Abravanel.” Baer (History 2: 253) explained ‘Arama’s frequent references to Aristotle’s Ethics as being part of “common practice” to compare laws of the Torah with “natural law” and to prefer the latter to the traditional commandments (!): “[the] Ethics, they asserted, was sufficient.” As Septimus (article cited, 1* n. 2) observed with considerable understatement, this charge is not “well documented.” Indeed, it is completely false, including the claim about natural law. The only biblical commentator who to some extent emphasized Aristotle’s Ethics (more, Aristotelian logic) was the aforementioned (Chapter 4) Ibn Kaspiy. Septimus, 5*–6*, rightly criticizes those (Heller-Wilensky, S. Regev) who thought to find qabalistic influences in ‘Arana, but inexplicably claimed that he “was a passionate and powerful [?] critic of Aristotelian rationalism” (1*; but see 7* n. 23). In fact, ‘Arama was strongly influenced by philosophy, albeit at second hand. On his rejection (perhaps too strong) of rationalism, see Diamond, “Isaac Arama’s Nightmare: Closing the Philosophical Exegetical Chapter Maimonides Opened.”

97 Heller-Wilensky, “Isaac Arama on the Creation and Structure of the World,” 131. Isaac’s commentary on Esther was published only once (Constantinople, 1518; apparently the only copy is at the Paris Bibliothèque Mazarine); that commentary (unless this is also by his son) was reprinted with text of Esther (Zolkiev, 1765). The commentaries reprinted in Bible. O.T. Hebrew. Esther (Jerusalem, 1990, 1996, 2004) are, in fact, by his son (written in Salonica or Naples); see further (and on manuscripts) Walfish, Esther in Medieval Garb, 226, and excerpts,
68–74. Additions to the commentary on Ruth, ed. M.B. Lerner, were published in Sêfer zikaron le-Shemu‘el Kalman Mirsky (Samuel K. Mirsky memorial volume [N.Y., 1971]), 103–23.

98 Constantinople (?), 1565 (?); Leipzig, 1858–59, with notes (photo rpt., Jerusalem, 1967). The name Avshalom (in the Bible, the son of David, of course) is otherwise unknown to me as a Jewish name in Spain.

99 He was also the author of important sermons, “‘Eyn ha-qôrê,” the complete text of which remains unedited. MS. Parma 2211 contains (ff. 48r–59r) his commentary on Lamentations; see Richler and Beit-Arié, Biblioteca Palatina, 137, no. 685. The manuscript was completed in Medina del Campo (Spain) in 1440. On his other works, see my Dictionary, 388–90. He is not to be confused with (alleged) Joseph b. Shem Tov “Yeshu‘ah” who was the apparent author of a collection of excerpts of biblical commentaries and sermons, including a commentary on the entire Torah and one nearly complete on Song of Songs, found in Vat. MS. ebr. 65 (Richler, Hebrew Manuscripts in the Vatican Library, 45–46) and MS. ebr. 445 (ibid., 391–92). In fact, this is the pseudonym of Joseph b. Shem Tov Vecinho (Vizinho), who converted in 1497 and lived in Portugal as Diego Mendes; he was a student of Abraham Zacut before his conversion (see my Dictionary, 734, no. 414).

100 On Naḥmanides, first published with the “Rabbinical” Bible, s.l. [Constantinople], 1525; photo rpt. of Aboab’s commentary only, Brooklyn, N.Y., [1992?]; and in some later editions of the Pentateuch with commentaries, the most recent being Lvov (Lemberg), 1858. This commentary has sometimes been characterized, obviously by those who have not actually read it, as dealing with the “polemical” statements in Naḥmanides, which it does not. His supercommentary on Rashi is cited in Aboab, Nehar Piyshôn (Zolkiew, 1806), 2a. Interestingly, a manuscript of the commentary of Naḥmanides was copied at the yeshivah of Aboab by Joshua ha-Kohen and two other scribes in 1467 (Richler and Beit-Arié, Biblioteca Palatina, 114, no. 596, Parma MS. 2372); it is tempting to think that this manuscript was used by Aboab for his supercommentary. On the Aboab family, see the articles in Roth, ed., Medieval Jewish Civilization.

101 Peyrūsh megíyat Eyykāh (Salonica, 1595; Jerusalem, 1903 [?]). Apparently neither edition is available in U.S. libraries.

102 Marx, Alexander. Studies in Jewish History and Booklore (N.Y., 1944), 85 (text), 89 (tr.). This is a confusion, apparently, of Ávila and Medina del Campo; no yeshivah is known to have existed in the former city, whereas Joseph ‘Uziel taught in the latter. Where or when the author lived (even if in Spain) is uncertain. On Samuel Almosnino, see Conforte, Qôrê ha-dôrôt, f. 34a (bottom). A probable ancestor, Mahir Almosnino, was a rabbi and scribe of Jaca (northern Aragón) in 1339; see Riera i Sans, Els pobles públics i les sinagogues segles XIII-XV, 309–10, no. 104. According to Marx, Studies in Jewish History, 89, Samuel went directly from Spain to Turkey in 1492. His Peshaftîyim on the Prophets was published with the commentary of David Ibn Hin, Liqûtîy shôţhaniyim (Venice, 1602), and again in the famous Amsterdam Bible of 1724–27. The commentaries of Jacob Canizal, together with those of Samuel Almosnino, Abu‘l-Rabî and others, were published as Peyrūshîyim le-Rashiy (Constantinople, 1525; photo rpt. [Brooklyn?], 1990); cf. Steinschneider, C.B., nos. 5515.1 and 7001.1 (if St. was correct, as he usually was, that a manuscript dated 1446 exists, or did exist, of this collection, then one or more of those authors wrote in Spain). Canizal’s commentary has also been reprinted with that of Moses Albeda: Peyrūsh le-feyrūsh Rashiy (Petah Tikva, 1998). A “defective” manuscript of the commentary is found at Cambridge; see Reif, Hebrew manuscripts at Cambridge University Library, 107, where it is said to be a more complete copy than the published version.
Only the polemical section on Isaiah 53, ed. and tr. Neubauer and Driver, Fifty-Third Chapter of Isaiah 1: 202–16 (Eng. tr.); 2: 183–93 (text). Scholars have ignored this, as they have generally ignored all the commentaries in that collection. It should be mentioned that there are several errors in the English and Hebrew introductions of that collection, as well as some omissions. I call attention especially to “David de Rocca Martino” (Eng. intro. 1: xii; Heb. intro: 2: xiii); in fact, David de Roquemartine of France and Provence, who lived long before Abravanel. See Renan (Neubauer), Écritains juifs, 314 ff.

So, not “Shueib” nor “Shuaib”; the name means “help, aid” in Arabic and in fact is the name of a prophet in the Qur’ān, in spite of which it is constantly erroneously transcribed by modern authors. Joel is mentioned by none of the medieval chroniclers, but see the seventeenth-century chronicler Conforte, Qorē ha-dōrōt, 28a.

Nothing remains of these other than citations in other writers. His commentary on the Torah, apparently, is cited by Moses Almosnino (1516–1579), an important rabbi in Salonica and author of several works, Me‘amēš kōḏeh, 50b, 57a (specifically stated as from his commentary), 129b, 188b, 194a.

Psalms: Nōṭh tidōṭ (Salonica, 1568–69; photo rpt. Brooklyn, 1993). Lamentations: Qōl bōkhyim (Salonica, 1521) and other eds. (see my Dictionary, 392). Song of Songs: in Bible, Shiyr ha-shiyyrīm (Sabbioneta, 1558, 1559; Prague, 1611), with the commentary of Abraham b. Isaac ha-Lēvy. This is actually excerpted from the sermons of Joshua; see S. Abramson’s introduction to Joshua Ibn Shū‘ayb, Derashōt, 41–43. On the other works mentioned, see Bibliography.

Parma MS. 3120 (Richler and Beit-Arié, Biblioteca Palatina, 129, no. 660; who note manuscripts in other libraries). This surely deserves study, if not publication. Jane Gerber claims that an Isaac Dondon was one of the prominent and “ambitious” members of the Jewish community of Fez (Jewish Society in Fez 1450–1700 [Leiden, 1980], 99; she gives no source or even a date). However, the article “Istanbul” in E.J. states simply that he was among those who settled in the city between 1492 and 1520 — again, with no source.

Because he wrote in Portugal, and elsewhere, he is not discussed here in detail. The commentary on Song of Songs should be edited. The introduction only is discussed briefly by Rosenberg, “Parshanut ha-fiylosofiyt le-Shiyr ha-shiyyrīm,” 146–47, with no biographical information, nor was he aware that the commentary was already analyzed by Salfeld, Hoheliṭ Salomo’s, 118–21, with references to earlier authorities (and see there, 163–64, excerpt from the introduction); in general, Rosenberg seems not to have known of that book. Hayūn mentions the commentaries of Sa‘adyah, Rashī, Lēvy b. Gērshon (“Gersonides”), Ibn ‘Ezra and ‘Ezra (of Gerona). Excerpts of his commentary on the Prophets are in Eli’ezēr b. Menahēm Markbreit, ed. Liyyūṭey Man (Amsterdam, 1764); on Eze- kiel, ed. Zipor (Jerusalem, 2006), 2 vols.; on Jonah, ed. Zipor in Qovets [Qōvēš] ’al-Yad (n.s.)18 (28) (2005): 289–313; commentary on Obadiah, ed. Zipor, in Shenatōn le-hēger ha-miga va-ha-mīzraḥ ha-qadīm 17 (2007): 309–27; on Micah, ed. Zipor in Sinai 139 (2007): 3–29; on Psalms (Salonica, 1522; with comm. of David Qimhi, photo rpt. Brooklyn, 1999; on Psalms, ed. from manuscript, Jerusalem, 2016) on Esther (Lakewood, N.J., 2000). His commentary on Esther is adequately dealt with by Walfish, Esther in Medieval Garb; note that the text had not yet been published when he wrote that book.

So by Judah Ratzaby, although with some doubt. The matter seems to have been decided, that he was from Yemen, by Schlossberg. E. “Peyrūšaḥ shel R’ Avraham ben Shōlōmō le-sēfer Yoēl,” in Aharon Ben-David and Isaac Sluā, eds., Mēqārīyim bi-īshon [hardly “ba-lashon,” as catalogued by libraries] ha-’ivriyy u-he-mada’ey ha-yehadiṭ (Jerusalem, 1981), 209–30.
As noted in Chapter 1, the “Hebrew Bible” is divided into three sections, Torah (the Pentateuch), Neviyim (the Prophets) and Ketüviym (Writings, including the Scrolls and historical books), hence the acronym TaNaKh. There are strict rules as to how the Torah scroll, particularly, should be written; it should only be written on the scraped hide of an animal permitted for food, and there are guidelines as to which kind of ink and pen are to be used and how the letters are to be written.1 The same stringent rules apply to the writing of the scroll of Esther, for use in the synagogue, and mezūzōt and tefillin. Traditionally, and sometimes also in medieval Spain, the other parts of the Bible were also written on scrolls, particularly for use in reading in the synagogue, but the rules were relaxed with regard to the preparation of these (which indeed do not now need to be written on scrolls at all). Although every Jewish adult male is obligated to write a Torah scroll, in fact, this duty is usually delegated to a trained scribe,2 and rarely could individual Jews actually afford to have such a scroll written for their own personal use.

In addition to the special preparation of hides, there are laws about the preparation of ink to be used. Moses b. Maimon (“Maimonides”) wrote that the ink must be strong enough to adhere fairly permanently to the scroll, and it must not contain qalqantum (Gr. kalkanthum; vitriol, called blue vitriol ink), which is not the same as qomus, the ink made from the rust of iron (such kind of ink was used for writing some ordinary manuscripts).3 Abraham b. Natan of Lunel (ca. 1155–1215), who lived in Toledo, wrote that everywhere the ink used for writing Torah scrolls, etc. was made from vitriol, or an ink of locusts (the vernacular word he uses, which I was unable to find in any language, and is probably derived from Lat. atramentum, which is the same as vitriol). He also mentioned about the custom of the Jews of France who purchased ink from Christians who made it from large thorns boiled in wine and vinegar and then placed it in a parchment skin to dry. He explained at length how the parchment for Torah scrolls was prepared in Toledo.4

At some point in the early medieval period, the Jews adopted the Muslim and Christian custom of binding books into codex form (these never replaced
biblical scrolls in the synagogue, of course; see below on that prohibition). Codices were made of cut and folded leaves, first of papyrus and later either of parchment or paper, and were always lined when used (by Jewish scribes) for writing biblical texts, and sewn together and bound in boards or covers of animal hides or of metal. Sheriyra Gaôn (tenth century) described in detail the making of parchment.5

Paper was introduced to the Muslims from China by way of Samarqand in the eighth century and was being produced in Muslim Spain at least by the eleventh century. Paper made in Spain was generally highly regarded, particularly from the workshops of Jtiva (in Valencia), which was not conquered by the Christians until 1252, and thus it was not until 1256 that paper became used in northern Christian Spain.6 Yet paper was still relatively unusual among the Jews in Aragón-Catalonia in the thirteenth century, when Solomon Ibn Adret (ca. 1233–1310) described a codex written on paper and had to explain that each folio consisted of a leaf (yad, which means “portion”), and described one folio of a book, “that is two leaves.”7

Paper was often as expensive as parchment, if not more so, and this explains the prevalence of parchment for the writing of codices, even those owned by people of ordinary means. By the end of the thirteenth century, however, paper became cheaper as it was produced in mass quantities. The earliest dated Jewish codex on paper from Spain is a copy of Ibn Janâh’s grammatical works (Judeo-Arabic) from Valencia, 1119.8 In some cases, we find people who owned both paper and parchment codices of the Bible. An example of a relatively late (second half of the thirteenth century) Spanish codex on parchment is the (non-Jewish) “Holkham Bible.”9

A special “sanctity” (qēḏūṣah) attaches to a Torah scroll, which includes strict rules as to how it is to be kept and handled and other matters (see also below, “Responsa and Other Rabbinic Sources”). One is not allowed to sleep in a room which contains a Torah scroll unless it is completely covered, and there are other rules. Codices (and later printed copies), whether of the Pentateuch or the entire Bible, do not have this sanctity, but nevertheless are to be treated respectfully. Maimonides wrote that it is not permissible to open a bound codex of the Bible so that the Prophets or Writings open on top of the Pentateuch (which would lie underneath).10 The laws and customs regarding the treatment of biblical codices would make an interesting study.

Since it is an obligation to read from the Torah on the Sabbath and holidays, and twice during the week, every place of worship (not necessarily a synagogue, this could include yeshivot and even private houses where prayers were held by a small group) theoretically had to have at least three Torah scrolls.11 In practice, given the high cost of such scrolls, we know that many had only one and some none at all, whereas important synagogues had numerous scrolls. Solomon Ibn Adret of Barcelona (ca. 1233–1310) ruled that funds donated for charity might be used for purchasing Torah scrolls for the synagogue, and so even the money specified for building a synagogue. Others
ruled that a Torah scroll might not be sold even to use the money for repairing (or enlarging) a synagogue. The completion of the writing of a new Torah scroll concluded with a community celebration. The scroll reading was publicly conducted at the synagogue, sometimes accompanied by the playing of musical instruments.

In Muslim lands, and also in parts of Spain in the Christian period, Torah scrolls were kept in special wooden cases, sometimes overlaid with gold or silver, which were placed in the ark (a large decorated cabinet usually against the eastern wall) and when taken out for reading, stood upright on the reading desk. Torah scrolls were decorated with “crowns,” usually of silver, either atop the aforementioned case or on the top of the scrolls themselves. They often were further adorned with a decorated cloth covering and a binding cloth which was tied around the scroll. If the scroll was kept in a case, such binding was not necessary. Not all Torah scrolls in Spain were kept in such cases; in many synagogues, particularly in Christian Spain, the scrolls were covered in mantles and placed separately in the large ark, exactly as in “Ashkenazic” synagogues. Almost all such scrolls also were adorned with silver “crowns,” or with riymōniym, finials on top of the rollers on which the Torah is wound.

The aforementioned Abraham b. Natan of Lunel, who lived in Toledo, mentioned the practice in Spain that one called to the reading of the Torah recites the blessing while holding it “in his hands and on his breast;” that is, apparently, he picks up the scroll in its container.

In addition to the law that each adult male must write (or have written for him) a copy of the Torah, there was the requirement of the study. The Sēfer ha-ḥiynūkh (thirteenth century, Barcelona; educational work on the commandments) also asserts that the writing of an individual Torah scroll is a biblical commandment, and adds that for this one does not need to go to his neighbor in order to learn from his scroll and that this commandment applies even if he has inherited a scroll, “in order to increase the number of books among us” and so that books can be lent to those who do not have them.

Eventually, the law was in fact reinterpreted to require the study of the Bible instead of writing a Torah scroll. Asher b. Yeḥiel (ca. 1250–1327) wrote that the individual obligation to write a Torah scroll no longer applied since these were written for community use and kept in the synagogue; instead, there is an obligation (biblical, according to him) for every adult male to make for his own use and study copies of the Bible and the Talmud. This is in direct contradiction to Maimonides, who said that the obligation to write a Torah scroll is a biblical commandment.

As noted in Chapter1, many medieval Jews confined themselves to the reading of the weekly Torah portion with the commentary of Rashi. However, this was not the case in Spain, where the study of the Bible meant the entire Bible. As we know from various sources, many “ordinary” Jews had codices of the whole Bible, and some had more than one copy. The aforementioned high cost of writing a Torah scroll did not normally apply
Bible texts in Spain
to codices, and individuals could afford to buy these from scribes or even write one themselves. An interesting example of an individual who copied for himself such a manuscript was one Samuel b. Abraham [b.] Natan who went to Cervera (in Catalonia) in 1299 to have a fracture of his leg healed and while there he spent his time copying a Bible, which took him nearly a year to complete. There are still extant in libraries such biblical codices which the owner has noted that he wrote for himself.

However, not only men were owners of biblical codices, but there were also records of women owners. For instance, in Cervera in the fifteenth century, a certain woman who had moved there from Gerona left a Pentateuch in her will; as did Bella, who left 11 books, mostly biblical. A Jew in Zaragoza in 1429 inherited from his mother “half a Bible and some Torah [manuscripts] and two other books, which are one of the prophets and the other the Talmud.” In Laredo, a woman became ill and instructed her husband to purchase with her money a Torah scroll and “crown” and donate these to the synagogue of Huesca (presumably her home town).

Wills often reveal the ownership of biblical manuscripts or codices. The testament of an important Jew of Besalú (1370) includes a copy of the earlier prophets; the “law of Moses” Pentateuch), some paper and parchment commentaries (unfortunately not specified) on the Bible, “a book called Quetumim” (Ketūviym? probably the biblical “Writings”), Psalms, another Pentateuch and “Meguilla” (the book of Esther). Jews also left money for the purchase of Torah scrolls for synagogues.

Nevertheless, many of the extant biblical codices are illuminated, some lavishly, and these were obviously expensive and highly treasured heirlooms (which perhaps explains their survival). Profiat Duran (Isaac b. Moses ha-Lēvy, late fourteenth to early fifteenth century, Perpignan and perhaps Majorca) sarcastically criticized those who owned such books for their own glory, thinking that “storing them in their treasure-chests is the same as preserving them in their minds,” although he reluctantly admitted that they thereby leave a treasure to their children who may benefit from them.

Manuscripts in medieval Spain

The importance of manuscripts was not just for the obligation of study, however. Errors can creep into manuscripts, even with the most careful of scribes. It was therefore necessary to collate texts from reliable manuscripts. Text “criticism,” i.e., comparing and collating manuscripts, began, according to tradition, with three Torah scrolls kept in the court of the Temple; in each of which different readings were found for three words, and the decision was to keep in each case the reading as it was found in two of the scrolls against that found in only one.

Scholars in medieval Spain were especially careful to consult as many manuscripts as possible and went to great lengths to obtain ancient copies. As previously mentioned (Chapter 1), Menahēm Ibn Sarūq referred to the
biblical codices, found in “all the cities of Spain,” which had been carefully examined by scholars, and compared those to the codices in Tiberias. The famous grammarian Jonah Ibn Janāḥ wrote that he relied upon corrected manuscripts of the Bible, “and there has come into my hands a [manuscript] of the Bible from Jerusalem and another Babylonian” (see Chapter 1, n. 92). The Jerusalem manuscript (“Codex Yerushalmiy”) was later cited in masoretic notes when it differed from the “Codex Hilēliy” (see below).

Ibn ‘Ezra was particularly careful to compare various manuscripts, including those examined by the “masoretes” (or more correctly masorites) of Tiberias (see Chapter 1, n. 68). Elijah Levita, the famous Italian grammarian and exegete (b. 1468), wrote: “Sēfer Ispaniyah [Spain] is the general name for the Spanish [Hebrew] codices, for they are more correct than all other examples.”25 Indeed, Spanish manuscripts were renowned outside of Spain, even in France in the early medieval period; for example, Samuel b. Meir (d. ca. 1160), grandson of Rashi, wrote that he found a correct reading “in all the [biblical] books of Spain” (on Deut. 18.11). Meir ha-Kohēn (a student of the famous thirteenth-century rabbi Meir b. Barūkh of Rothenburg), wrote that he had examined biblical manuscripts of Ispaniyah (Spain).26 It is not clear whether these statements are to be understood literally, in which case these scholars actually went to Spain to examine the manuscripts.

Many individual rabbis and scholars either wrote or had written for them codices of the Bible. The most interesting example was Samuel Ibn Naghrīllah (see Chapter 1 on him), who was secretary to the prime minister of Granada before becoming prime minister himself. Early in his career, around 1020, he wrote a Bible codex and finished it in 1028. According to the heading on one of his poems, he had been asked by a certain person (it is not known whether he was a scribe or a rabbi) to make this copy for him. In the poem, Samuel stressed that he had been very exacting in his copying. Apparently, the poet Ṭōdrōs b. Judah Abulafia purchased this same Torah scroll in Seville toward the end of the thirteenth century.27

Joseph b. Solomon Ibn Sūsan (so, not “Shoshan,” etc.) was an important official and scholar in Toledo in the early thirteenth century. Abraham b. Natan of Lunel, who lived in Toledo and was Joseph’s son-in-law, wrote that carefully corrected versions of the Megiylṯōt (“Scrolls: Esther, Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations and Ecclesiastes) were written for Joseph.28 The famous rabbi Nisim b. Reuben Gerundiy (=of Gerona), who lived in Barcelona, apparently wrote a Torah scroll for himself.29 Menahēm b. Solomon “ha-Meiriy” (Montpellier [possibly] and Perpignan, 1249–1306) wrote a Torah scroll which was still in use in the synagogue of Perpignan in the fifteenth century.30

Biblical manuscripts of particular importance, such as those carefully collated from presumably correct ancient masoretic texts (written in accord with the rules set down by the previously-mentioned “masoretes”), were of great value. Also, codices which were richly illuminated and extremely expensive were carefully preserved and handed down from generation to generation;
some were sold and passed through the hands of several owners and thus for-
tunately have been preserved. In addition to the “important” manuscripts
described below, there are a number of much less important ones in various
collections. In many cases, there is insufficient detail to determine even the
date, much less place of composition, or the names of scribes and the like.

**Important medieval Bibles**

The earliest extant Hebrew biblical manuscripts (codices) in the world date
from the ninth and tenth centuries. Possibly one such manuscript, a Pen-
tateuch codex, has survived from Spain (British Museum, now The British
Library, MS. Or. 4445). It is a beautifully written manuscript, punctuated
and with texts of the masorah (with some unique readings). There are many
later medieval manuscripts of great importance and some of lesser impor-
tance. In the nineteenth century, the famous scholar Harkavy found a Pen-
tateuch manuscript in Cairo, which he identified possibly as “Babylonian”
(Iraqi) but with additions at the end from a Spanish manuscript written in
Gerona in 1188 by Meshulam b. Tōdrōs for [David] b. [Solomon]; the names
were erased as was often the case when a manuscript was acquired by a new
owner.

While many biblical manuscripts, scrolls and codices were written in me-
dieval Spain, only a few actually are found in Spain today. There are appar-
tently only three medieval Torah scrolls (not codices) extant in Spain, one in
the museum at Tarragona, one that belonged to the Jewish community of
Vitoria (Navarre) and a Torah scroll at Madrid; in addition, there are some
fragments in Spain. There are also three Spanish scrolls at Parma, Italy and
(possibly) some at the British Library. The earliest known extant Span-
ish Torah scroll (described as “late thirteenth century,” more probably four-
teenth century) is described in a Sotheby’s auction catalog; hopefully, it will
have been purchased by a major library and not a private collector.

As may be seen in the Appendix, the majority of extant biblical manu-
scripts were produced in Portugal (not only Lisbon), followed by Toledo.
What is surprising is that these came from several small communities. The
combination of the Expulsion, when most manuscripts were taken with their
owners to other lands and have since been lost, and the zeal of the Inquisi-
tion in confiscating and usually destroying Hebrew books or manuscripts
owned by conversos, makes it remarkable that any survived at all. Those that
did usually were from Italy, where the original owners often sold valuable
manuscripts in order to have money for living.

A Bible codex (incomplete, “Writings” followed [!] by the “Former Proph-
ets”) written in Toledo in 1197/98 is the earliest extant manuscript. The
earliest extant manuscript from Burgos is dated 1207. Another manuscript
written in Toledo (1232) is the earliest decorated codex from Spain. A
complete codex was copied in Toledo in 1272 by Ḥayyim b. Isaac Israel (or
Israeliy), probably the renowned scholar of that name. A manuscript of the
entire Bible written in Toledo in 1277 was the basis for Yedidyah Solomon Norziyy’s important work Minhat shay. A very fine complete Bible codex (Toledo, 1280) served for the edition of the Complutensian Polyglot (n. 235 below) and the new “Madrid Polyglot.” The Biblioteca Nacional at Madrid also has a codex of the Pentateuch, hafṣatōr and Scrolls (Megillot) written in Toledo in 1289. There are also records of several miscellaneous manuscripts copied in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

Of interest, even though it was not written in Spain, is the Hebrew Bible supposedly given by Alphonse de Poitiers, the brother of Louis IX of France (that king was a notorious hater of Jews, as was his brother) to Alfonso X, which he then donated to the cathedral of Seville, according to the report of the eighteenth-century Valencian Hebraist F. Prez Bayer.

Long ago, Assaf called attention to a responsum by Moses Ḥalawā (a student of Ibn Adret and an important scholar) in which there is mention of three Bible manuscripts which were in Barcelona, the oldest of which were known as “Keter Tōrah” and “Sēfer Siynay.” The third was called “Tamiyd” and was kept in the main synagogue in Barcelona, but had been declared unfit by Nisim Gerūndiy (ca. 1290–1376) until a portion of it was corrected. Important rabbinical scholars were often experts in such rules, as was the case with Isaac b. Shēshet (1326–1409; not 1408 as sometimes mistakenly written) who supervised the correction of Torah scrolls by the scribe Bonastruch Lobell.

The most famous biblical codex in medieval Spain was the “Codex Hilēliy” (“Sēfer Hilēliy”), a complete Bible manuscript known at least in the late twelfth to early thirteenth centuries, when it was cited by Jacob b. El’azar of Toledo, a grammarian and literary author. He in turn was the source for several references to the manuscript by David Qimhi. The manuscript was kept in Toledo, and is mentioned also by Menahēm b. Solomon “ha-Meiry” (1249–1306) and again by Joseph Ibn Nahmiyas of Toledo (fl. ca. 1300–after 1330), a student of Asher b. Yeḥiel in his commentary on Proverbs. Shēm Tov Ibn Gaōn’s famous Soria (1312) codex (see below) has several important masoretic notes based also on the Hilēliy.

It is curious that there seem to be no other references to it until the late fifteenth century and after, although it is cited in the masoretic notes of several manuscripts, including Escorial MS. G–II–8, a complete Bible which once was in the hands of the grammarian and Bible scholar Alfonso de Zamora, son of a converso. Abraham Zacut, the famous Spanish chronicler and astronomer (d. ca. 1515) relates that in 1196 there was an attack in León (which is well-documented; this was not an attack on Jews, although they fought in the battle) and that

then [the Jews] took out of there the [Bible] written some 600 years before that by Rabbi Moses b. Hillel [Hilēl], which was called after his name ‘Hilēliy’; [it] was very exact and from it all the [other bibles] were corrected.
He adds that he had seen the section of the early and later Prophets from this codex, which had been brought after the Expulsion to Portugal and was then sold in Bougie (Boujai) in Algeria. Zacut also mentioned that David Qimḥi had stated that the codex was in Toledo. Of course, it is impossible that it could actually have been written as early as Zacut claimed, but this is probably an exaggerated tradition as to its authority.

Unmentioned by Zacut is the Torah (Pentateuch) printed in Guadalajara in 1476 (see below, on printed Bible editions) which states in the colophon that it was “corrected according to the Hilēliy.” A complete Bible, printed in Spain (probably), ca. 1480, has the text of the Pentateuch corrected from the “Hilēliy.” Joseph Athias in Amsterdam based his renowned edition of the Hebrew Bible (1659–61; 4 vols.) on the “Hilēliy” and another codex dated 1299, no doubt the famous “Cervera Bible” (see n. 82 below).

Zacut’s account was apparently the source for the absurdly confused statement of the seventeenth-century writer Joseph Sambariy, who repeated the story but stated that it was in “1199 at the time of Moses de León” (author of the Zohar, who lived in the thirteenth century!), and that the codex was named after the talmudic sage Hillel (Hilēl). Finally, he adds that Menahēm de Lonzano (b. 1550) “hoṣiṭā” (“published it;” actually, he only cited it) in his Ŷr Tōrah and said that the codex was brought to Egypt and placed in the Magḥribiyy (“Western”) synagogue; but Sambariy said that in fact this was not that codex but another old one in which the scribe indeed alludes to having corrected it according to the “Hilēliy.” The codex which Jacob Sapir (Sapiyr) reported having seen in Cairo in the nineteenth century was a different one altogether, perhaps indeed a forgery, as some have suggested.

A codex written in Toledo in 1241 by the scribe Israel b. Isaac Ibn Israel (or perhaps “Israeliy,” a member of that renowned Toledo family) was corrected according to the “Hilēliy” and was apparently intended as a model for the writing of Torah manuscripts. A facsimile edition of it has been published. An important complete biblical codex written in Toledo in 1300 (not 1246) mentions that the “Hilēliy” lacks two verses in Joshua (21.36, 37). The aforementioned Bible codex from Toledo (1280) cites variants from the “Hilēliy.” Other biblical codices have masoretic corrections according to the “Hilēliy,” and it is apparently correct that this represents the most important Spanish masoretic tradition.

The most famous biblical codex after the “Hilēliy” was known as the “Sēfer ‘Ezra” (“Torah of ‘Ezra”) in Burgos. Apparently, the earliest reference to it is a text cited by Menahēm b. Solomon “ha-Meiyriy,” according to which a scholar from Germany came to Toledo to write a Torah codex carefully collated with that of Meir Abulafia (on whom see below). After it was completed, it was also examined according to the “Sēfer ‘Ezra” and re-examined by five scholars in Toledo, one of whom was Juda (so, the Spanish form, not Hebrew Yehūdah) Ibn Ṣabāl “the careful scribe.” Yet another rabbi had a copy made from which to correct Torah scrolls in “western lands,” apparently
France, and requested this to be done with the help of scholars in Burgos. This was completed in 1306.63

Solomon b. Solomon ḥazan (not necessarily a cantor, in medieval Spain ḥazan often meant a teacher or a reader of the Torah in a synagogue) wrote in 1410 that he had inherited from his father a Torah codex written in 1350, which was copied from either, or perhaps both, the “Ḥilēliy” or the “Sēfer ‘Ezra.” His copy was written on paper, and because of its age had deteriorated and the ink had faded in several places, and in addition, he had lent it to various people over time and they had incorrectly inserted punctuation and other changes. Therefore, he copied it correctly onto the parchment so that it would last.64

In 1366, when Enrique II entered Burgos, he imposed a huge tax on the Jews there, who had supported his half-brother Pedro in the civil war. They had to sell all the silver ornaments of the Torah scrolls “except for [those of] Sēfer ‘Ezra,” which were not sold.65 In 1391, the Jews there were asked to swear on their Tora de Yzra (Ezra) not to sell arms, etc.66 Perhaps the earliest reference to this text is by Isaac Polgar (Valladolid? Ávila; early fourteenth century), who wrote that the Torah scroll “which is renowned among us,” written by ‘Ezra ha-Kohen, contained certain words written differently than in other carefully corrected scrolls.67 It is referred to again in the fifteenth century by the renowned scribe Abraham b. Ḫasan ha-Lēvy, one of the Spanish exiles who settled in Salonica, who simply stated that the scroll “called of ‘Ezra the scribe” was in Burgos, perhaps as early as the time of Meir Abulafia (ca. 1165–1244).68

However, Elijah Capsali of Candia (sixteenth century; a not altogether reliable chronicler) reported a visit by one of the Jewish exiles from Portugal, a qabalist, who, as part of an embassy from Fez, claimed to have spoken to the Portuguese king (Manuel I) in 1508 and that he had been given permission by him to see the codex of the (entire) Bible, “written in the days of ‘Ezra the scribe,” in which supposedly gold letters on every occurrence of the word “sorrow” (ṣarah) was a “prophecy” that the messiah was to come in 1630.69 If there is any truth at all to the story, it is obvious that a medieval scribe ‘Ezra has been confused with the biblical ‘Ezra (also called “the scribe”). Unfortunately, a key word is missing in the text which would have given us the name of the codex. It is also cited once by Menaḥēm de Lonzano in his aforementioned Ōr Tōrah, who wrote that he found a certain word in the Sēfer ‘Ezra (which means that a copy of the text, probably, had reached him).70

Another important manuscript was completed in Burgos in 1260, the so-called “Damascus Keter,” which because of its splendid “carpet page” illumination (pages with floriated decorations in the style of Muslim carpets) has received some study.71

The “First Cambridge Castilian [Heb.] Bible,” written in the mid-thirteenth century Castile or later, has an interesting colophon by the scribe Solomon b. Ishmael, with a table of the Christian chapter divisions (ff. 245a–246a)
and Spanish names of biblical books. In addition, that scribe carefully read a copy of the Latin Bible, apparently with St. Jerome’s prefaces, and noted additions in it which are not in the Hebrew text.

Joseph Ibn Marwās, or possibly Marwn (certainly not Merwas), in Toledo, ca. 1300–34, copied at least three biblical manuscripts. An important complete Bible written in 1306 either in northern Spain or Provence is Copenhagen MS. heb. 2 (see n. 34 above).

The Ibn Gaōn “Soria Bible” (1312) is another one which has received some attention. At the end of the nineteenth century, it was reported that a family in Tripoli owned the manuscript, which has an unusual order of the arrangement of the books (however, it should be noted that some other Spanish manuscripts also have different arrangements). Variants from the aforementioned “Codex Hilēliy” are included. This manuscript was written and signed by Shēm Ţōv Ibn Gaōn, whose brother was Joshua, scribe and illuminator (perhaps) of at least seven biblical manuscripts, including the “First Ibn Gaon” (Tudela) Bible of 1300 [not 1301] (Paris, B.N. MS. hbr. 20); the “Dublin Ibn Gaon” (Dublin, Trinity College Library MS 16) codex of Prophets and Hagiographa (also done at Tudela in 1300); the “Oxford Ibn Gaon” Bible (see below); the “Second Kennicott Bible” (Soria, ca. 1306); an undated Bible (Paris, B.N. hbr. 21); a Pentateuch (Parma MS. 2938); and this (Soria Bible) very richly illuminated manuscript.

The “Oxford Ibn Gaon” Bible, written and illuminated by Joshua in Soria, ca. 1300, was sold in 1482 by Abraham b. Isaac ha-Lēvy of “Almuksam” to Todros b. David Ibn Sūsan (not “Shoshan”), apparently a branch of the well-known Toledo family, of “Sali” (Las Salinas, near Medina del Campo?). He in turn sold it in 1492 to Abraham (b.) Benveniste (Bienveniste) of Soria.

Narkiss, who has frequently described the Soria Bible and the other manuscripts, was apparently unaware of who Shēm Ţōv was (he casually dismissed him as a mere scribe). He was later an important scholar, author of the commentary “Migdal ’ōz” on the Mishnēh Tōrah of Maimonides, and other works. Innovations by him include additions to the “masorah parva,” with references to various manuscripts otherwise unknown and to the opinions of scholars up to Naḥmanides. In his introduction, he stated that he had copied it for himself and that he had examined various manuscripts and also that he corrected the masorah. In addition to this, he elsewhere mentions a scroll (“sēfer Tōrah”) which he wrote, presumably for himself (see n. 74 above).

There is a complete (?) Bible manuscript, ca. 1400, (MS. L2) at the Jewish Theological Seminary (N.Y.) which is said to have served as a model for scribes; this and other partial biblical manuscripts there deserve study by experts. The “Serugiel Bible,” a complete Bible written in 1304 in Soria by several scribes, and which also contains the commentary of Rashi, has its name from the scribe of the books of Daniel and Ezra, Samuel b. Jacob Serugiel (the only scribe whose name is found in that Bible). This important manuscript
was seen by Leon da Modena, the famous Italian rabbi, in 1628, who wrote an inscription (Italian) attesting to its accuracy.

The “Farḥi i Bible,” so called because it belonged to a member of the illustrious and fascinating family of that name in Damascus in the nineteenth century, was actually written in Roussillon (then part of Aragón-Catalonia) by the scribe Elisha (Crescas or Cresques) b. Abrahám Benvenist (Benvenist, not Benveniste or Benvenisti, was the form of that name in Catalonia) sometime between 1366 and 1382.81

The “Cambridge Castilian Pentateuch and Hagiographa” (early fourteenth century) is of no particular importance (Narkiss, 35), nor is the “Oxford Castilian Bible” of the early part of the century (ibid, 39).

Other biblical manuscripts are of importance chiefly for their illuminations, including the “Perpignan Bible” (1299), the “Cervera Bible” (1299), the “Parma Bible” (probably Toledo, mid-fourteenth century),82 and a Bible written in Castellón de Ampurias (Castelló d’Empries, N.E. of Gerona) by ‘Ezra b. Jacob Ibn Adret in 1396 (the scribe was not necessarily related to the famous rabbi);83 and a number of codices done in Portugal.84 Important for its illuminations is the “Duke of Sussex Bible” done in Lisbon, later in the fourteenth century (British Lib. Add MS 15283).85 There are also some miscellaneous biblical manuscripts from Spain in the Parma (Sicily) library.86 Of particular interest is a manuscript of the “Writings’ (Hagiographa) on parchment from Valencia (1290). The scribe, Ḥayyim b. Samuel Ibn Yaḥyūn from Tudela wrote it for a certain Nathan b. Jacob.87 A Pentateuch from Barcelona, written in 1278, contains illuminated masoretic notes.88

There are few extant manuscripts written in Aragón-Catalonia in the thirteenth century. A manuscript of the Pentateuch written in Huesca (Aragón) in 1275 is important for its masoretic notes and the customs for the reading of haftarōt there.89 This is, as far as I know, the earliest biblical manuscript which has survived from Aragón.

In the fourteenth century, important biblical manuscripts began to emerge in Aragón–Catalonia. The famous Russian Jewish scholar A. Harkavy, on a trip to Egypt and Palestine in 1886, saw in a Qaraite synagogue in Jerusalem “a very old Bible” called Miqdashyah written (in Catalonia) in 1322.90 The above-mentioned “Farḥi Bible,” which Harkavy also saw in Damascus, was also called Miqdashyah, which appears to have been a generic term (“small sanctuary” or “sanctuary of God”91) for important Bible codices written in Catalonia, just as Keter (“crown”) was for those produced in Castile (the aforementioned “Keter Tōrah” scroll in Barcelona was thus probably originally from Castile). In 1327 Salamo Saporta (or Çaporta) of Cervera had inherited from his father (not uncle) in Santa Coloma de Queralt a Miqdashyah (in the Catalan source: Magdāśia) bound in red covers and worth 12 livres, a substantial sum.92 In Majorca in 1335 the scribe Bonnin Maymo, also called Asher, contracted to write codices of Maimonides (Mishnēh Tōrah and the
Bible texts in Spain

In Malta, subject to Aragón-Catalonia from 1479, an inventory of goods of one family in 1484 included a book called Madixi. In 1473 in Cervera, an ill relative of Cresques Adret, a physician and secretary of the Jewish community, owned a valuable Bible called “Magdesía” (Magdàsia), which he ordered Cresques not to sell unless in the most dire circumstances. A broker had already offered a lucrative sum of 60 livres for the book. It seems obvious that this is the same manuscript as the 1383 codex, below. Ginsburg mentioned the Miqdashyah as one of the codices which he had utilized; remarkably, known also from the colophon of another manuscript.

A unique codex from Falset (which was the home of Isaac [en Itzac; Iac] Bonafos b.Shealtiēl, son-in-law of the famous Isaac b. Shēhet, until 1417 when he moved to Cervera) was copied by Aaron b. Hayyim ha-Kohen for one Mordecai b. Abraham de Osimo (a town in Italy) in 1347. The following year in Castellón de Ampurias Solomon b. Abraham ha-Kohen wrote a complete biblical codex.

An illuminated Bible codex was copied in Cervera in 1383 for “n’[En] Aṣtruq b. R’ Yisḥaq b. R’ Shelomoh b. [Ibn] Adret,” a grandson of the famous rabbi (Solomon Ibn Adret). The scribe was Vidal (b.) Saul Satorre, or Çatorre, who also copied another manuscript in Zaragoza in 1404 (the colophon identifies the scribe as Hayyim b. Saul Migdoliy, equivalent to torre and Ḥayyim being the Hebrew equivalent of Vidal).

A codex from the second half of the century (British Library Add. MS 15250; so-called “Duke of Essex Catalan Bible” is of interest for illumination of Temple instruments (f. 3v–4r).

A manuscript written in Zaragoza in 1341 by ‘Ezra b. Moses b. El’azar is of interest because the books of the “Latter Prophets” are arranged according to the talmudic order (B.B. 14b) rather than the traditional arrangement, and because the initial letter of each biblical book (except Lamentations) and the number of each Psalm are in gold letters. It also contains in the margins the Sēfer ha-shōrashiyym, a dictionary by David Qimḥi.

Another fourteenth-century illuminated manuscript which apparently has gone unnoticed by scholars is of the “Former Prophets,” now in Moscow. There is also a Torah manuscript with “Former Prophets” and masoretic notes, in which the aforementioned Codex “Hilēliy” is cited.

More important were manuscripts from the fifteenth century. One of these, written in Zaragoza in 1404, is also significant for its illuminations. Another important manuscript, for its “strict adherence to the masora” and particularly its full Tiberian vocalization, is a fourteenth- or fifteenth-century Pentateuch and Hagiographa at Cambridge University.

A number of manuscripts which have unfortunately come to be designated as “Catalan bibles” (leading to possible confusion with bibles translated in Catalan; whereas these are, of course, Hebrew) were produced in the late fourteenth century. None of these (including that of 1357 now at Paris,
Bible texts in Spain

B.N.105 are of particular textual importance. For the sake of accuracy, it should be noted that the “King’s Bible” (Solsona, 1384) was written by Jacob b. Joseph of Ripoll for Isaac b. Judah of Tolosa (Spain) and not “Toulouse” (France) as Narkiss thought. The chapter and verse divisions (see Chapter 1 above, n. 93, 94 on this; also n. 72 above), which the scribe acknowledges are from the Christians (“Edom”), are written in red (adom) in the margins.

The “First Kennicott Bible”107 is famous because of its numerous illuminations by Joseph Ibn (b.) Hayyim. It was written at La Coruña (now A Coruña, Galicia) in 1476 by Moses Ibn Zabara for the “admirable youth” Isaac b. Solomon de Braga. The scribe included also Sefər mikhlōl, the grammatical treatise of David Qimhi. Ibn Zabara was the author of a work on the writing of Torah scrolls, Malekhet ha-sōfēr, discussed later, and also the scribe of another Bible (1477).108

A partial manuscript (Pentateuch, haftarōt and “scrolls”) was written in Seville in 1471 by Judah b. Samuel Alberq (? Albaraq) for one Abraham b. Jacob.109

A manuscript written in Córdoba in 1479 by the scribe “Isaac Sason for Jacob Alkalai and corrected by Abraham ben Solomon Ibn Atar” in Badajoz, 1483, is of interest. This scribe may remotely be the Isaac “ben Ishai [Ishay]” Sasōn who copied a complete bible, begun in Ocaña (near Toledo) in 1491 and completed it after the Expulsion in 1494 in Évora, Portugal.110

Of some interest because of its ownership is the “Abravanel Pentateuch,” written by Moses b. Jacob ha-Sefardiyy Ibn Khālīfah in 1480.111 The manuscript contains also the haftarōt and the Megiylot (Scrolls), as well as the pseudepigraphic Megiylat Antiyōkhūs (Antiochus).112 It was owned eventually by Samuel Abravanel, son of the famous Isaac, who was born in Lisbon in 1473 and was later rabbi of Naples, 1496–1541.

Another manuscript ultimately owned by Isaac Abravanel (whose signature appears “several times” on folio 1a) is of the Prophets, written in the thirteenth or fourteenth century (Cambridge MS. 21). The first section, the “Former Prophets,” is of interest because it was given by Moses Şeviy Hirsh hazan “passing here on my way to the Land of Israel” as a gift to the “wise young man Isaac,” son of the “expert physician” Samuel ha-Lēvy Ashkenaziyy (obviously both the giver and recipient were German, as the names indicate, although the latter was probably born in Spain; no place is mentioned). The manuscript was apparently originally a complete Bible, since the dedication says “this Torah,” implying that it contained at least the Pentateuch and Former Prophets. There are five marginal references to the Codex “Hilēliyy.” MS. 22, Latter Prophets, may also have belonged to Abravanel. Note that Isaiah in this codex contains Christian chapter and verse divisions.113

In Toledo in 1480 the scribe Isaac b. David Qimhi i copied a Bible for don Barūkh, son of “the illustrious Rabbi Yosēf Albo” (the famous Joseph Albo, author of the Sefər ha-‘iqarıym, or “book of principles of the faith,” who died...
Bible texts in Spain in Soria in 1444). Another codex which shares some similarities and may therefore have been written in Spain is the “Imola Bible,” so called because it is now found in the library in Imola, Italy.

A poignant treasure is a manuscript (complete Bible) written in 1492 in Toledo only months before the Expulsion. The scribe was Abraham [b. Moses] Ibn Khālifa (cf. above; his father?) and he wrote it for Rabbi Jacob Aboab, son of Samuel. Masoretic notes and other additions were made in Constantinople in 1497 (manuscripts MS. L6 and L6a at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York). A companion to this is the richly illuminated Bible codex, bound in 16 small volumes, written by the same scribe in Toledo in 1487 for Solomon b. Jacob Ibn Gato, which also contains important references to the Codex “Hilēliy.” An important manuscript written after the Expulsion is the “Aberdeen Codex,” in 1493/94 by Isaac b. David Valansiy (not “Balsani”), whose name indicates that he was from Valencia.

Aside from these, there are other extant fifteenth-century Spanish biblical manuscripts. These include the so-called “Vernon Bible” (Seville, 1454), now in the Bodleian Library, and the “Seville Bible” (Seville, 1468). There are two manuscripts in Vienna: a complete Bible written at Valladolid in 1479 by Yishmaēl b. Samuel Amilio, and a Pentateuch undated but described by its cataloger as fifteenth-century, as well as a fourteenth-century manuscript of the “Writings.”

The Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid has some biblical manuscripts, including one which has Spanish and Latin vocabularies. The Cathedral of Toledo also has some Hebrew biblical manuscripts of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Of interest also is a Pentateuch written in Uclés (east of Toledo) in 1442 by Jacob b. Moses Alaḥdab for the “youth” Yōm Ṭōv b. David Ibn Faraj. Interesting for the place where it was written, Berlanga de Duero (Castile), is a Pentateuch and “Scrolls” (1455). Another Pentateuch was copied in Calatayud in 1474, and apparently a complete Bible in Tauste (Aragón) in the same year. Snaith’s previously-mentioned edition of the Bible utilized B.M. (now The British Library) MS. Or. 2626–28, written in Lisbon (1482) by Samuel b. Samuel Ibn Mūṣā.

Not particularly important (other than for the “carpet page” illuminations of the second) are the two complete bibles (fourteenth century) from Spain currently in the Vatican library. A few other Vatican manuscripts also come from Spain. One which is curious has the Pentateuch in the center of the page with other biblical books written in the surrounding margins. The manuscript was copied in 1446 in an unnamed place by Joseph b. Moses Abu’l-Khīr.

Some fragments of biblical manuscripts have been discovered in Gerona, the earliest dating perhaps from the thirteenth century. Recently, several fragments of Hebrew biblical codices which were used as binding material for other books have been found in the cathedral archive of Tarazona in Aragón.
A Bible manuscript (fourteenth or fifteenth century) in Munich is of interest because it contains also a work on the enumeration of the commandments by the aforementioned Abraham b. Ḥasan ha-Lēvy, a student of the famous rabbi Isaac de León and a well-known scribe (mentioned later). It also contains a carefully written list of the variations between the corrected manuscripts and the Codex Hilēliy. Also of interest is a complete Bible written by the scribe Isaac Franco in 1462 in the tiny town of San Felices (not “Felicis”) de los Gallegos, about 100 km. N.E. of Salamanca, for a patron whose name unfortunately was removed by a later owner of the manuscript.

From Sicily (then under Spanish dominion), there are extant Pentateuch manuscripts from Messina (1425) and Sciacca (1439).

Mention should be made of manuscripts (belonging to the thirteenth or fourteenth century) of the Aramaic translation of the Torah attributed to Onkelos (see Chapter 1 on that).

A very peculiar manuscript (belonging to the fourteenth or fifteenth century) is of the Bible in which the entire text of Ibn Tibbon’s Hebrew translation of Maimonides’ “Guide of the Perplexed” appears in very small letters at the top and bottom of each page (the first part of the manuscript, Torah and “Former Prophets,” is at Cambridge University while the second part is at Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati).

Undoubtedly several important Torah scrolls or Bible manuscripts have been lost, as were numerous other Jewish books, through the common medieval catastrophes of fire, theft, piracy (there are several records of books lost when they were stolen from ships) and particularly as a result of the mob attacks on Jewish communities throughout Spain in the summer of 1391 when homes and synagogues were looted. Among the manuscripts which were “fraudulently” (as later government investigators asserted) confiscated from the community of Majorca were a Torah scroll and a manuscript (codex) of the “major” prophets. This no doubt occurred in other communities as well. While the Inquisition generally had no authority over Jews, many Hebrew books owned by conversos (Jews converted to Christianity) were seized, including bibles (see below, “Jewish Bible Translations,” on this).

Finally, it should be mentioned that there are possibly biblical fragments from Spain in the numerous collections of Cairo Genizah materials in libraries around the world. I have examined the major catalogs but not all of the various handlists and other published material. Undoubtedly there are as yet undiscussed manuscripts in U.S. libraries since there are no catalogs of any of the thousands of Hebrew manuscripts in these collections.

**Responsa and other rabbinic sources**

Rabbinical sources provide us with some interesting information about biblical scrolls and manuscripts. Abraham b. Natan ha-Yarḥiy (=of Lunel), ca. 1155–1215, went to Toledo, where he composed his important book on
customs, *ha-Manhiyg*. He also wrote a few responsa, one of which was addressed to the rabbis of Aragón in which he soundly rebuked them for declaring unfit Torah scrolls written in Toledo where the parchment had been cured in dog feces (mixed with liquid colored with saffron). He stated that such scrolls were perfectly fit even for use in the Temple, and that such had always been the custom also in France and Germany. He wrote these responsa “for” (on behalf of) the aforementioned Joseph b. Solomon Ibn Sūsan, who was the owner of the Torah scroll and had suffered “great loss” because of the condemnation of the Aragonese rabbis (in other words, he charged for copies to be made from his scroll and this opinion was depriving him of that income).138

He also mentions that he had issued a prohibition when he was in Burgos against writing names of God in gold letters in scrolls or other books since gold might easily deteriorate or scrape off.139 Ṣemaḥ b. Solomon Duran (North Africa, fifteenth to early sixteenth century), in a responsum concerning improper forms of letters in a Torah scroll, referred to “great later scholars” who had written about the names of God in gold letters and that they should be rewritten in ink. This probably refers to Isaac b. Shēshet, who nevertheless did not say they should be rewritten, but rather that even though it is prohibited to correct the names, if they were rewritten in ink the scroll would be permitted in spite of the violation.140

Abraham also noted that ḥūmeshy (scroll copies of the Torah) prepared for teaching children, even though they are not fit to be read in place of Torah scrolls in public services, must be written on “good hides” in order that they should last.141

Maimonides ruled that it is certainly permissible to recite the blessing over a scroll which is unfit (invalidated because of some defect in the writing) since the blessing is on *reading* and not on the scroll; a distinction which he says many eastern (“Babylonian”) scholars had not understood. He observed also that the Jews of the “West” (Spain) in the days of Isaac al-Fāṣī and Joseph Ibn Megas (famous rabbi in Lucena, d. 1141) and others had read from scrolls of parchment which had not been prepared specially for Torah scrolls, and that they recited the blessing on those scrolls. Nonetheless, every congregation should have a proper scroll to read from, but if not they may use even one that is unfit, and thus ruled “Rabbi Ḥanōkh ha-Seferi” (Ḥanōkh b. Moses; Córdoba, tenth century).142

Solomon Ibn Adret (Barcelona, ca. 1233–1310) disagreed and wrote that if a scroll read in the synagogue is found to be unfit and another is taken out, the person called to the reading must again recite the blessing over the second scroll “for it is an obligation to read from a proper scroll and the blessing he made on the first one was in vain.”143

In another decision, he stated that if the Torah is read during public services and it is unfit for any reason, one should not recite the blessing but that
this only applies if he has not said the blessing for the Torah in the morning prayers; if he has, then reading from an unfit Torah is no worse than reading from a Bible codex or laws (from the Talmud) or the Mishnah, for which he is required to recite a blessing (no longer the practice). Presumably, he adds, this is what Maimonides intended, since he had ruled that a Torah scroll which is unfit does not have the sanctity of a Torah at all and is like a Bible codex or scroll from which children are taught.\textsuperscript{144} This appears to contradict what he wrote elsewhere, in reply to a question from a community where they had no Torah scroll and read only from a codex and recited the blessing over it, that only a proper Torah scroll may be used and that even one mistake makes it unfit, or if the hides were not prepared specifically for a Torah.\textsuperscript{145}

Elsewhere he wrote that the obligation to stand, out of respect, in the presence of a Torah scroll, includes also ḥūmashiym, but only those which are like a Torah scroll in all ways except that they are not read from publicly and this is only out of respect for the public (since they are not actually Torah scrolls). He added that “our ḥūmashiym” which are not scrolls (but codices) still require standing in their presence out of respect.\textsuperscript{146} Not only is this a strict interpretation, it appears to contradict the position of Maimonides that such codices do not have the sanctity of a Torah scroll at all.

Simon b. Ṣemah Duran (1361–1444), who fled Spain due to the persecutions of 1391 and became a rabbi in Algeria, was asked about the custom of (Spanish) scholars “recently arrived” there that if an error was found in a Torah scroll another was taken out and the reading continued, to which he replied that it is wrong even in accord with the aforementioned responsum of Maimonides, since the first reading from an unfit scroll was to no avail; rather, they should begin the entire reading again from the second scroll. He adds that so he had seen when he was in Majorca and in Catalonia and Aragón the custom of important rabbis and his own teacher. A note by a copyist of the manuscript adds that he had found in another book that in the yeshivah of Isaac de León (Castile, late fifteenth century) when a Torah scroll was found to contain an error and there was no other scroll to read from, he had permitted reading from it but without reciting a blessing.\textsuperscript{147} In another responsum (3: 207), he discussed a Torah scroll in which several lines were torn, which he ruled was permissible for reading. Isaac b. Shēshet, another Spanish sage who had fled to North Africa, disagreed, but when he learned of Simon’s reasons he also agreed to permit it.

**Errors and corrections of biblical manuscripts**

Maimonides devoted an entire section of his code of Jewish law to the proper writing of Torah scrolls and possible errors in them (\textit{M.T., Ahavah: “Tefillin, mezūzōt ve-sēfer Tōrah,” 7–10}).
Nevertheless, this was not sufficiently detailed to serve as a guide for scribes in the writing or correction of Torah scrolls (as Maimonides noted, many of the customs involved were not found in the Talmud but handed down from scribe to scribe). There are other legal sources from Spain and other lands which deal with the laws of Torah scrolls, in addition to the aforementioned (n. 1) minor talmudic tractate Sofrin.148

Meir Abulafia of Toledo (ca. 1165–1244),149 an outspoken critic of the philosophical views of Maimonides, was an expert on the laws of preparation and writing of Torah scrolls and prepared a detailed treatise on the masorah.150 In a reply to scholars in Burgos, he mentioned that all of the copies of the section of the Mishneh Tora on “open” and “closed” passages in the Torah texts which he had seen had errors in them due to the copyists. He corrected these errors and also wrote to Samuel Ibn Tibbon in Marseille, the translator of Maimonides’ “Guide,” to send him a text of these laws from his own copy of the M.T. which had been collated with the original text of Maimonides.151

One of the students of Asher b. Yeḥiel later wrote: “in my hands is an exemplary correction of the pentateuchal text, from which Rabbi Meir [Abulafia] copied [or corrected] several Torah scrolls,” and one of these corrections was to remove the vowel-consonant vav from tōṭafōt (Ex. 13.16).152

The aforementioned important scribe Abraham b. Ḥasan ha-Lēvy, one of the exiles (1492) who settled in Salonica, wrote that the treatise of Abulafia became already in his own lifetime the standard by which all Torah scrolls in Germany, France “and all the western lands and distant isles” were corrected and that communities in all those lands sent messengers to Toledo to obtain copies of his book.153

Menahēm b. Solomon “ha-Meiyriy” wrote that he happened upon a “very reliable book” (sēfer meduyaq harbēḥi) according to“Rabbi Meir of Toledo” (Abulafia), which he had sent to all the yeshivot “and in the land of the West” (Spain, possibly also France) and to the rabbis of Germany, and “what he found worthy of relying upon he wrote [thus] in his Torah and what he found debated among the great [scholars; e.g., Maimonides] he decided between them according to his own opinion.”154 Abulafia wrote a Torah codex (not “Torah scroll,” which by law cannot have such marginal corrections), carefully prepared according to his own rules, from which other copies were made.155 Menahēm also wrote a more detailed book on the preparation and correction of Torah scrolls, Qiryat sēfer (see Bibliography).156

Solomon b. Simon Duran also wrote a brief treatise on scribal corrections of Torah scrolls.157 The renowned fifteenth-century Castilian rabbi Isaac de León supervised the inspection of all the Torah scrolls and discovered that there were errors in the writing of certain words which were not in accord with Abulafia’s book, and therefore he ruled that all of these scrolls were invalid until corrected. He also did the same with regard to tefillin written according to the opinion of Asher b. Yeḥiel, contrary to that of Maimonides.158
Of interest is a complete biblical codex (fourteenth century, apparently Spain) intended to serve as a model for copying Torah scrolls, in which there are exactly 42 lines and each column on each page begins with the letter vav. This kind of scroll later came to be known as vavey ha-‘amūdiyim, but the practice was severely condemned by authorities and certainly must have been rare in Spain.159

As mentioned previously, Nisim b. Reuben Gerundiy declared one of the oldest Torah scrolls in Barcelona unfit until it was corrected according to masoretic rules. However, Ibn Adret wrote that bibles not written in accord with the masorah are not to be declared unfit because of that, and additions and deletions are not to be made because of masoretic books or midrashiym. In any case, he noted, there are disagreements in the masōrah, Eastern or Western traditions, the school of ben Ashēr or ben Naftali, etc. Nevertheless, manuscripts should be corrected in accord with indications in the Talmud of correct biblical readings, and in general, manuscripts should be examined and corrected in accord with the majority reading.160

Even one letter written incorrectly could cause a scroll to be unfit until corrected. Nahmanides gave a qabalistic reason for this and the “secrets” found in the various forms of letters, the “crowns” (tagiyn, decorative strokes) on the tops of certain letters, etc., but he also gave a legal interpretation.161 Bahya b. Ashēr Ibn Ḥallāwa, whose Torah commentary is discussed in the previous chapter, also gave a qabalistic interpretation even to the seven tenu’ot (vowel signs), “by which the Torah is built and established, and they are the ‘seven voices’” with which the Torah was given (Ps. 29; cf. Berakhot 29a). The difference in a vowel point can change the meaning of a word, and “all of this is of the wisdom of our godly Torah and holy language.” The vowel points stand for (allude to) the existence of everything, which is the Temple (celestial Temple in its cosmological relation to the earthly Temple). Even the “point” (dagēsh) in certain letters has a significance according to whether it is above, below or in the middle of a letter, “therefore, one who adds or takes away a point destroys the entire world.”

In another context, he noted that even one letter of a word in the Bible can be interpreted in many ways depending on the vowel pointing assigned to it. For this reason, there are no vowel points in a Torah scroll, for thus many interpretations may be given, whereas a pointed word can only be interpreted in one way.162

Ibn Adret simply wrote that the forms of letters must be adhered to correctly, the mem and samekh completely closed and the lines of the alef and shiyyn must be completely joined to the body of the letter, and so the “foot” of the qūf must not be joined to the body of the letter.163

He also questioned the statement of Maimonides (M.T., Ahavah: “Tefillin, mezūzōyot ve-sēfer Tōrah,” 8.3) that certain errors in writing a Torah scroll have no possible correction and the entire sheet on which the error occurs must be
replaced. Ibn Adret brought proofs from the Talmud that such a scroll should be “hidden,” but stated that this means only until it can be repaired.\(^{164}\) He was asked whether it is permitted to recite the blessing on a Torah scroll in which the letters are written with vowel points and replied that it is not; first, because the scroll must be as (presumably) it was given at Sinai, and secondly because many sages interpret (dorshiyin) the written scriptures and the masorah and if it is vocalized there is not masorah (tradition, as to how certain words are to be read or pronounced).\(^{165}\)

Nisim Gerundiy replied to a question about a scroll in which letters or words had been omitted and were added at the bottom of a page, with dots to indicate where they were missing, and whether such a scroll is unfit, to which he first replied that according to earlier opinions (not cited by name) it is permissible; but finally, in accord with the “Jerusalem” Talmud, it is not permitted. However, if the congregation was accustomed to read from it because of the first opinion, the custom should be followed. Nevertheless, he adds, “I remember when I was a child that my father bought a scroll that was written in this manner, which is still with me, and he did not permit it.”\(^{166}\)

Asher b. Solomon, nephew of Judah b. Asher b. Yeḥiēl (the “Rosh”), wrote to his uncle that he had been called to the reading of the Torah in the synagogue and after reciting the blessing he noticed that there a few places in the scroll where the “foot” of the qūf was joined to the line of words below and so he said that the scroll was not fit and he would not recite the blessing. Another man there arose and said the blessing and told others to do so. An argument resulted in which various legal opinions were quoted, including that of his grandfather the “Rosh” prohibiting it. Judah b. Ashēr agreed.\(^{167}\)

Most authorities agreed that if the two “parts” or strokes of the letter q are joined together, instead of two distinct strokes, it is unfit. However, Menahēm “ha-Meiry” disagreed with “some of the geōniym” (here, sages, doubtless Naḥmanides; he probably did not see Ibn Adret’s responsa on this) because this does not take the form of the letter unrecognizable or confusable with another letter.\(^{169}\) Simon b. Ṣemaḥ Duran wrote that in Majorca, where there were more than 60 old and new Torah scrolls, many of them had the top and bottom of the letter q joined together; “furthermore, I heard that Rabbi Nisim Gerundiy... wrote for himself a Torah scroll” in which the letter was thus written.\(^{170}\) Asher b. Yeḥiēl ruled that two letters incorrectly joined together invalidate a scroll, but that this may be corrected by scraping the joining part, even in one of the names of God (since it was written according to the law but an error was made in joining the letters).\(^{171}\) Lēvy
Ibn Ḥabib (ca. 1480–1545) wrote that when he was in Zamora he and some rabbis there saw the responsum of Asher b. Yeḥi iël (3.16) dealing with incorrectly written letters in a Torah scroll and they decided according to his opinion.172

Simon Duran, when he was in North Africa, also dealt at length with the problem of a Torah scroll that had been corrected with respect to “open” and “closed” paragraphs. The question indicated that the Algerian community had several Torah scrolls which had been written by the Majorcan scribe En Vidal, who had also been the prayer leader in Majorca and was known as a careful and expert scribe.173

**Printed Hebrew editions of the Bible in medieval Spain**

The first printed Hebrew book, apparently, was not the Bible but the commentary of Naḥmanides, possibly in Rome (ca. 1469–72); 2 vols.174 The first Hebrew biblical text was an edition of Psalms (Bologna?) in 1477, with the commentary of David Qimḥi i (heavily censored because of the polemical statements in it).175 Little attention has been given to the published Hebrew bibles in medieval Spain, the texts of which were certainly carefully collated with important manuscripts and therefore worth the study. The first Hebrew Pentateuch, with the commentary of Rashi, was published at Reggio di Calabria, Sicily (then part of Aragón) in 1475. Another commentary of Rashi was printed in Guadalajara in 1476, as well as a complete Pentateuch (as noted above, based on the “Hilçliy” codex). It included also the “Scrolls” and the hafṭarot, as well as the commentary of Rashi. Apparently, only one copy survives, in Florence.176 Given this, a curiosity is a beautifully written manuscript (Bodl. OX Can Or 101) of the hafṭarot from Guadalajara in 1487, long after these printed editions.

It is known that a Bible was printed at the Hebrew press established by the converso Juan de Lucena at Montalban-Toledo around 1476 (only fragments of the production of that press have survived).177 An apparently complete Bible was published somewhere in Spain around 1480; fragments only remain (at Jewish Theological Seminary in New York; see n. 55 above). Sometime before 1491, another (Jewish) Hebrew press was established at Zamora, and from the colophon of the commentary of Rashi which was published, it is known that the press also printed a Pentateuch. At Híjar (in Aragón) another Hebrew press produced, among other works, an edition of the “Former Prophets” (1487) and two Pentateuch editions, one with “Scrolls” and hafṭarot (1488–89), and the other with the Aramaic translation of Onkelos and the commentary of Rashi (1490).178 A complete Pentateuch was published at Lérida (Lleida, in Catalonia) in 1492–98.179 There are also extant several other Bible fragments from the fifteenth century at J.T.S.
Portugal also saw the establishment of several Hebrew presses. The first printed book of any kind produced in Portugal was a Hebrew Pentateuch in Faro, ca. 1486, the press established by Samuel Chacon, a Spanish Jew from an important family; the printer was one Samuel Porteirah, or Porteiro (possibly Italian). A second edition was published with the commentary of Rashi and Aramaic translation of Onkelos (1487). The renowned press of Eli’ezer Toledano at Lisbon printed six works, including the commentary of Nahmanides on the Torah, and a Pentateuch with Rashi and Onkelos (1491), a splendid edition. This was followed in 1492 with editions of Isaiah and Jeremiah with the commentary of Qimhi, and a copy of the “Later Prophets” with Qimhi’s commentary in the same year. The last Hebrew press in Portugal was at Leiria, where a Pentateuch was published, possibly in 1492 or 1495. Proverbs with the commentary of Menahem “ha-Meiyriy” and Levy b. Gershon was published there (1492), and with the commentary of David Ibn Yahya at Lisbon (ca. 1492). Editions of Proverbs and of the “Former Prophets,” both with the commentaries of David Qimhi and Levy b. Gershon were also published at Leiria in 1494.

It is interesting to see that many of these early printed bibles were immediately accessible to Spanish exiles in the Ottoman Empire, as stated by the aforementioned scribe Abraham b. Ḥasan ha-Lēvy: “all of the excellent printings brought from Lisbon, printed and corrected by the wondrous and pious scholar of the generation Rabbi Eli’ezer [Toledano] of blessed memory, or those that came from Italy and Venice and from Constantinople…”

**Bible translations**

The first extant Spanish translation from Hebrew was of the Psalms, by a Christian, the famous “Hermann the German” (Hermannus Alemannus) in Toledo sometime prior to 1256. Incidentally, the Fazienda de ultra mar, frequently referred to in writings about Spanish Bible translations, is neither a Bible nor does it contain translations; rather, paraphrases of some biblical stories. It was written by a certain Almerich, archdeacon of Antioch, for Raimundo, the well-known archbishop of Toledo, probably before 1153. There were, of course, numerous medieval vernacular translations of the Bible. Here we are concerned with Jewish Romance translations.

**Condemnations of Spanish translations**

Following an enactment by Jaime I, the ecclesiastical council of Tarragona (1234) prohibited Christians from owning either the “Old” or “New” Testament in Romance translation. While there was as yet no general prohibition on the translation of the Bible (by Christians), the ecumenical Church council of Trent in 1546 debated the issue. Archbishop Bartolomé Carranza de Miranda of Toledo, delegate to the council, argued that the Catholic
Monarchs (Fernando and Isabel) had allowed such translations “at the time when they consented to have Muslims and Jews living among the Christians.” However, after the Expulsion, some conversos allegedly taught their children “Jewish ceremonies” by means of such translations, particularly that printed in Ferrara (highly unlikely, of course).191

Be that as it may, it is interesting that nearly all of the Escorial Bible manuscripts discussed below, translated by Jews mostly for Christian patrons, contain the notation “Prohibida” (prohibited) on the first page.192 They were nevertheless preserved because they ultimately had come into the possession of the Catholic Monarchs.

The Inquisition, which generally did not affect Jews at all, was concerned with eradicating supposed “heresy” both among “old” Christians and conversos (converts to Christianity).193 Repeatedly in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries orders were issued for the burning of all Hebrew books owned by conversos (or their descendants) and also of bibles translated into Spanish.194 In Salamanca in 1492, more than 20 such Bibles were burned (specifically because of being translated from Hebrew and containing “errors” and “heresies” against the Christian faith). In the same year in Barcelona translated bibles were seized and burned.195 In 1496, the chief inquisitors sent letters throughout Spain stating that it had come to their attention that many people have in their possession Hebrew books dealing with the Jewish law and with medicine and surgery and other sciences and arts. The complaint further mentioned even prayer books written in Spanish. Anyone of whatever class was therefore ordered, on pain of excommunication, to turn over all such books and writings to the Inquisition.

In Valencia in 1478, the Catalan version of the Bible printed there (nearly 600 copies) was burned, ironically since it was attributed to (an earlier translation) Bonifci Ferrer, brother of St. Vincent Ferrer, the notorious preacher who devoted his life to converting Jews. The earlier translation, sponsored by Ferrer, was done in the Cartuja de Porta-Coeli (monastery) ca. 1396-1402 and was revised to agree with the Vulgate by the converso Daniel Vives and the inquisitor Jaume Borell. In spite of all the care to make it conform to early versions of the Vulgate and to ensure that it was a “Catholic Bible,” both Vives and the Bible were condemned by the Inquisition.196 In 1497, some inquisitors complained to their counterparts in Valencia that “many persons” have books written in Hebrew dealing with Jewish law, medicine and other sciences, as well as bibles (brivias) in Romance; therefore, all such books were to be turned over to the inquisitors and publicly burned; there were other instances of this kind.197

In another document written in 1498 by the Inquisitor General of the diocese of Burgos (in Castile), and Valencia and various cities in Catalonia, which document was therefore written in a curious mix of Castilian and Catalan, it is stated that descendants of conversos have in their possession books having to do with Moses and the things of the “old Law,” as well
as translations, particularly of the Psalms, which were contrary to the interpretations of the Church. Therefore, all were ordered to turn over such books to be burned, including specifically the prayer books, “talmuds of the Jews,” or any other works which might contain the aforementioned Psalms.¹⁹⁸

**Jewish Spanish translations**

Spanish Jews played a pioneering role in the translation of the Bible into the vernacular. Jewish translations were of two kinds: those done for Christian readers and those for Jewish readers. In spite of the loss of numerous manuscripts and books, including translations, due to the Inquisition (both before and after the Expulsion), some 14 manuscripts of translations done by Jews have survived.

Apparently, the earliest reference to a Spanish (Jewish) biblical translation is in an anonymous commentary on Onkelos (so, not Onqelos) by a student of Meir b. Simon “ha- Меï‘liy” of Narbonne (fl. ca. 1245).¹⁹⁹ Thus, we know that such Jewish written translations existed, at least from the mid-thirteenth century. Thanks to the work of many scholars, we have both detailed studies and several editions of the medieval Jewish Spanish biblical translations.²⁰⁰

It has been suggested that Alfonso X of Castile (1252–84), under whose patronage Jewish scientists translated numerous Arabic astronomical and other works, ordered Jews to translate the Bible into Spanish, and that translation supposedly served as the basis for the Bible printed at Ferrara in 1553 (that much is certainly false).²⁰¹

The *General estoria*, an important historical compendium composed anonymously in the reign of Alfonso (attributed to the king himself) states that the Muslims “have their Bible [!] translated from the Hebrew [!] like ours” and have their commentaries on it “which adduce proofs from the sayings of Moses in the Bible.” Elsewhere, the five books of Moses are called “Torat, which in our language of Castile is to say ‘law’.”²⁰²

It is nevertheless possible that a Jewish translation of the Bible was done under the auspices of Alfonso. It has long been noted that there are strong similarities between the biblical quotations found in the *General estoria* and the Jewish translation of the Bible in Escorial MS. I-i-8, which probably is not old enough to have served as a source, but a presumed earlier translation may have been the source for both works. The G.E. specifically mentions the Hebrew text of the Bible in several places.²⁰³

Generally, Jewish law did not permit the reading of the Torah in the synagogues in translation (this nevertheless was done, in Greek, in many synagogues in the Hellenistic period; see Chapter 1). A spurious work attributed to Jonah b. Abraham *Gerundiya* allowed this, which appears to have been permitted in some French communities.²⁰⁴ However, Aaron b. Jacob ha-Kōhēn
of Lunel wrote in his legal compendium (1330) that many communities in Provence read the Torah portion of the seventh day of Passover and also the first day of SheminiyʿAṣeret in the vernacular (Provençal or Catalan) so that women and unlearned (who did not understand Hebrew) would hear. The book of Esther (called simply “Megillah [Megiylah],” scroll), read on the festival of Purim, was sometimes read in the vernacular, also primarily for women who did not understand Hebrew. This was allowed by Jewish law, but in such cases, the text itself had to be written in the vernacular; in other words, it could not be an oral translation from a Hebrew text. Of course, the book of Esther is included in biblical manuscripts as well as in the complete Bible translations. There is also a separate fifteenth-century manuscript of a Jewish translation in Castilian.

The Escorial MS. I-i-3, although it dates from the fifteenth century, is supposed to represent (reflect) the “mother text” of all Jewish Spanish versions. It is richly illuminated with no less than 65 miniatures. It is a complete Bible (only this and I-i-4 are complete), with some unusual order of the books and unusual Spanish titles for some, and includes also the first and second books of Maccabees translated from Latin versions (this was part of the Christian canon, but in Spain these had a particular significance in relation to Christian “martyrdom” mythology).

Llamas, who has studied this manuscript carefully, although not noting that the order of books differs from the standard Jewish arrangement (as we have seen, that was not always followed in Hebrew manuscripts either), correctly observed that the division of chapters of the Torah corresponds with the Hebrew parashiyōt (“sections”) and not with the Christian division. This means that the manuscript most probably was written for Jewish readers.

Another proof of the intended Jewish audience is the use of transliterated Hebrew “Adonay” (“Lord”) or “Adonay Dios,” instead of “Señor,” for the name of God (most of the other Jewish translations for Christians use “Senior” or “Senyor,” “Senyor Dios” for God). So also the spelling of proper names, which follows the Hebrew and not the Christian spelling (e.g., Aharon, Elazar), and the list of place names in Lev. 33 (136 of the edition), all of which are in contrast to these forms found in Christian texts.

Nevertheless, the Llamas assumed that the illustrator was Christian because the Jews supposedly only permitted the illustration of the Passover Haggadah and the scroll of Esther, but of course, that is not true (a scroll, literally, of Esther also could not be illustrated, but only a codex copy was available). However, he was probably correct in noting the Christian stereotyping of Jews in the illustration of stoning the Sabbath-breaker (the illuminations are reproduced in Lazar’s edition). On the basis of this, and the inclusion of Maccabees in the text, the Llamas concluded that the manuscript is a copy of an earlier Jewish translation and that the copy was made for Christian readers. This conclusion is at best doubtful. Clearly, the illuminations are the work of a
Christian, but it was not unusual for Jewish patrons to have Christian (as well as Jewish) artists to illuminate their Hebrew biblical and other manuscripts.

Escorial MS. I-ii-19 (fifteenth-century) was also written by and for Jews. It is also a complete Bible, but some of the books have been lost, including probably the books of Maccabees. It is otherwise quite similar to the previous manuscript. Escorial MSS. I-i-5, 6, 8 are also Jewish translations. Numerous other manuscripts remain unstudied and unedited. Recently, a Bodleian manuscript dated 1406 containing Joshua, Ruth, Samuel and Kings, MS Canon. Ital. 177, has been identified as a translation from the Hebrew and perhaps for a Jewish reader (although the order of the books follows the Vulgate, making this at least questionable).

According to Llamas, Escorial MSS. I-i-4 and I-i-7 were written by Jews for Christian readers. This seems to be confirmed by his analysis of the important text of Gen. 49.10, the translation of which in fact is problematic. I-ii-19 translates literally “until he comes to Shiloh (sylo);” I-i-3, following some Jewish interpreters, has “until the messiah comes,” whereas both versions made for Christians refer to the coming of the “anointed” (ungido), or “the one who will aid the Gentiles.” In addition, I-i-4, as well as I-i-8, contains the apocryphal book of Tobias and other apocryphal books. To this must be added the mistranslation of “virgin” (virgen), instead of a young girl, in Isa. 7.14 in I-i-3, I-i-4 and I-i-5, which proves that they were also made for Christians.

MS. R.A.H. (Real Academia de la Historia) 87 (fifteenth century) was clearly written for a Christian patron, as can be seen from the inclusion of the Latin Vulgate in addition to the Spanish translation (actually a composite based on two different texts). It may originally have been intended to include the entire Bible, but all that remains is a volume of the prophets and Maccabees. Lazar has concluded that the manuscript, or its possible lost source, was utilized by Moses Arragel for his own famous translation (the so-called “Duke of Alba” Bible, on which see below).

The “Biblia de Ajuda” (Lisbon. Biblioteca de Ajuda. MS. 52-XIII-1), a Castilian manuscript of the fifteenth century, has been characterized as “Jewish” (casually, by Lazar, and in more detail by Avenoza). In fact, it generally is a direct translation (Christian) from the Vulgate, but at some point, one or more Jewish owners (?) may have made some corrections to the text. Eventually, at the end of the century, the manuscript was acquired by a Portuguese physician and surgeon, a converso. Another important fifteenth-century manuscript, Biblioteca pública de vora MS. CXXIV, was completed in 1429 by Manuel Rodriguez of Seville for the jurist Pero [Pedro] Alfonso de Toledo. It contains Psalms, Job, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Daniel, Esther, Ezra and Lamentations; apparently translated from the Hebrew (not necessarily by the scribe).

An interesting manuscript which deserves further attention is of the Psalms, in Hebrew, from the fourteenth century, with interlinear Latin translation
Bible texts in Spain

This manuscript clearly was done either by a *converso* or “old Christian.” Similar to this, perhaps, is a manuscript of the Psalms in Hebrew, with facing Spanish, Greek and Latin translations. This manuscript, allegedly from the twelfth century but in fact clearly no earlier than the fifteenth, is now at the University of Leiden.

In 1422 in Toledo, *don* Luis de Guzmán, master of the (military) Order of Calatrava, wrote to Rabbi Moses Arragel of Maqueda (a town near Toledo) and asked him to begin work on a Spanish translation of the Bible with glosses, or commentary. Not without reluctance, the rabbi agreed (in a lengthy reply of no less than 12 chapters), and with the aid of three Christian scholars (at least one of whom urged the rabbi to convert) ultimately completed (ca. 1430) what is presently known as the “Duke of Alba Bible,” certainly the most famous Spanish translation. Nothing whatever is known about Moses Arragel. His son Isaac was the scribe of a Hebrew Bible manuscript written in Toledo in 1456, at which time his father had already died, and apparently also of a book of Psalms written in Naples in 1468. Yuçaf Arragel, undoubtedly one of his relatives, was a rabbi in Toledo in 1452. There was also one Salamon Arraxel (Arragel) in Guadalajara in 1492.

Arragel’s glosses on difficult or particularly important verses follow Jewish sources, rarely also incorporating Christian explanations. While he apparently followed to a large extent the Latin “Vulgate” (see index here), he objected that there was a significant difference between that and the Hebrew text (the prologue of Chapter 9, f. 9r), and in several instances, he adhered to the Hebrew text. In his letter of reply to Luis de Guzmán, he remarked on the difference between the articles of faith of the Jews and the Christians and observed that his translation would be “very different” from that of St. Jerome. In his introduction, he already criticized Jerome’s translation and, interestingly, noted that in Madrid and in Cuéllar “are found two bibles in Latin much more in conformity with the Hebrew than that [translation] which today is in [used in] the church.” He also did not hesitate to defend both the eternal nature of the Torah law and the importance of the principles of faith enumerated by Maimonides. Indeed, there are a number of surprising polemical statements scattered in his commentary, but this is not the place to discuss these.

The entire finished work was examined by a commission of Franciscan theologians in Toledo and “corrected” by them (which nevertheless did not save it from being seized by the Inquisition in the seventeenth century). It is interesting that the order of the biblical books follows the traditional Jewish order, and that it was apparently the Franciscan advisor Arias de Ençinas who agreed to this.

Furthermore, Arias informed the rabbi that he was to leave a space in the manuscript where illuminations were to be added, and with sensitivity to
his religious scruples (about not portraying God, or giving divine attributes to human figures) Arias would instruct the artists what to portray. Certain Jewish influences may nevertheless be detected in some of the illuminations, possibly reflecting the rabbi’s own instructions or suggestions. The illuminations of the manuscript are magnificent, certainly among the most important examples of medieval art.234

Some conversos and descendants of conversos played a significant role in the translation of biblical texts, including Juan and Francisco de Vergara; the former was arrested by the Inquisition. Alfonso de Zamora (ca. 1474–1544), son of a converso (Juan), became one of the most prolific writers in the following years. He was an expert in Hebrew grammar and was one of the redactors of the famous Complutensian Polyglot Bible which was produced at Alcalá de Henares (Complutum in Latin) in six volumes (1514–17).235 His editions of the Targum (Aramaic translation) of Psalms, Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes have also been published.236 Other conversos who participated in the preparation of the text of the Complutensian Polyglot were Alfonso de Alcalá and Pablo Coronel and Juan and Francisco de Vergara.237

There are extant some Portuguese translations of the Bible by Christians, but these were not done from the Hebrew text, which is surprising because of the numerous printed editions of the Hebrew Bible in Portugal. However, the “Biblia historical de Acobaça,” a kind of compendium of biblical history to the Maccabees, is extant in at least one manuscript version which appears to have been the work of a converso. An adaptation of the first book of Maccabees from a Spanish translation of the Vulgate text was made by a Portuguese Jew in 1444.238

**Jewish Catalan translations**

There also are a number of manuscripts of medieval Jewish biblical translations in Catalan. One of these has been identified as a translation directly from the Hebrew, allegedly for converso readers; although this has been denied by another scholar. Two other manuscripts in Paris also were allegedly translated by conversos.239 There are records of several non-Jewish Catalan translations.240

MS. K. 24.25 of the Cambridge Genizah collection, apparently fourteenth to fifteenth century, possibly of Catalan origin (although it may have been written by an immigrant in Egypt), while not a Bible translation does contain “Judeo-Spanish” (Ladino; Spanish in Hebrew letters) glosses, possibly the work of a student.241 Inquisition testimony from 1486 concerning some conversos of Teruel includes the accusation that one of them had a Catalan translation of the Bible which contained only the text of the “Old Testament.”242 A fifteenth-century manuscript of the Psalms in Catalan translation, done in Naples, is directly from Hebrew.243
Table 6.1 Hebrew Bible Manuscripts and Editions by City or Locale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locale</th>
<th>Current Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Coruña</td>
<td>OX Kennicott 1</td>
<td>1476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Almeida, Portugal</td>
<td>(see n. 84 above)</td>
<td>ca. 1484 (?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arles</td>
<td>MS 21-22 of the Comunità</td>
<td>1202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Israelitica di Roma</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barcelona</td>
<td>MS 19 of the Comunità</td>
<td>1325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Israelitica di Roma</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berlanga de Duero</td>
<td>OX Can Or 77.</td>
<td>1465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burgos</td>
<td>Paris, B. N. MS. hébr. 82</td>
<td>1207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jewish Nat. Lib. (Jerusalem),</td>
<td>1260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MS. Heb. 4° 790</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calatayud</td>
<td>Parma MS. 2948</td>
<td>1474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castellón de Ampurias</td>
<td>MS. Harley 5774–75</td>
<td>1396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bibioteca Malatestiana di</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cesena — Pluteo Sinistro</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>XXIX, 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cervera</td>
<td>Biblioteca Nacional (Lisbon):</td>
<td>1279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MS. Iluminado 72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Film F 8862 of Institute</td>
<td>1383</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>for Microfilmed Hebrew</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Manuscripts, Jerusalem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Córdoba</td>
<td>J.T.S. MS. L5</td>
<td>1479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flaset</td>
<td>Berlin, Staatsbibliothek</td>
<td>1347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MS. Or fol. 585</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faro, Port.</td>
<td>Printed Pentateuch</td>
<td>ca. 1486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gudalajara</td>
<td>Printed Pentateuch</td>
<td>1476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(haftarat) Bodl. OX Can Or 101</td>
<td>1487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hijar</td>
<td>Printed “Former Prophets”</td>
<td>1487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Printed Pentateuch, “Scrolls”</td>
<td>1488–89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Onkelos, Rashi”</td>
<td>1490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huesca</td>
<td>MS. Vat. Rossiana 601</td>
<td>1275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leiria, Port.</td>
<td>Printed Pentateuch</td>
<td>1492 or 1495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Proverbs, “Former Prophets,”</td>
<td>1494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 eds.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lérida (Lleida)</td>
<td>Printed Pentateuch</td>
<td>1492–99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lisbon</td>
<td>Lisboa, B.N. 72</td>
<td>ca. 1300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parma 2674</td>
<td>1469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parma 677</td>
<td>1473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Parma MS. 1712</td>
<td>1476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(or Seville)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oxford Opp Add 4°26</td>
<td>1480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lisbon. Biblioteca de Ajuda. MS.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>52-XIII-I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>British Library MS. Or. 2626–28</td>
<td>1482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oxford Balliol College No. 382</td>
<td>1491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paris B.N. MS. Hb. 15</td>
<td>1496</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Continued)
### Hebrew Bible Manuscripts and Editions by City or Locale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locale</th>
<th>Current Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Printed commentary of Naḥmanides</td>
<td>1491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>On the Torah, Pentateuch with Rashi and Onkelos</td>
<td>1492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Isaiah and Jeremiah with commentary of Qimḥi, and “Later Prophets” with Qimḥi’s commentary in the same year</td>
<td>1491 completed in Évora, Portugal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[Majorca?]</td>
<td>Jewish Nat. Lib. (Jerusalem), MS 4º 780 I–2</td>
<td>1322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Messina, Sicily</td>
<td>1425</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montalban-Toledo</td>
<td>Printed Bible, mahzor</td>
<td>ca. 1476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moura, Portugal</td>
<td>Oxford Bodl. MS. Can. Or. 42</td>
<td>1471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naples</td>
<td>Psalms, MS. Vat. Urb. ebr. 7</td>
<td>1468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ocaña</td>
<td>JTS J.T.S. MS ML 5 J.T.S. J.T.S. MS. ML5</td>
<td>1491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1494 in Évora, Portugal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perpignan</td>
<td>Paris B.N. hébr. 7</td>
<td>1299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reggio di Calabria, Sicily</td>
<td>Printed Pentateuch</td>
<td>1475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roussillon</td>
<td>(Private ownership)</td>
<td>Between 1366 and 1382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Felices de los Gallegos</td>
<td>Copenhagen Royal Library, MS. Heb. 3.4</td>
<td>1462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sciacca, Sicily</td>
<td>Former Sassoon MS 499, now in Bodleian Library</td>
<td>1454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seville</td>
<td>Former Sassoon MS. 487, now at the Scriptorium, the Center for Christian Antiquities in Orlando, Florida</td>
<td>1468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot; (Probably)</td>
<td>Modena (Italy), Biblioteca Estense Or. Ms. 18.1</td>
<td>1470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Toledo, Archivo y Biblioteca Capitulares, MS Z-1-19</td>
<td>1471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Hispanic Society (N.Y.) MS. HC 371/169</td>
<td>1472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Parma MS. 2809</td>
<td>1473</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solsona</td>
<td>British Library, King’s Ms. 1</td>
<td>1384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soria</td>
<td>OX Arch Seld A 47</td>
<td>1304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Bodl. MS Kennicott 2</td>
<td>ca. 1306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Carl Alexander Floersheim Trust for Art and Judaica (Bermuda)</td>
<td>1312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>MS. Vat. ebr. 11 and 12</td>
<td>1312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tarazona</td>
<td>Universidad Complutense de Madrid, MS. 2</td>
<td>1482</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tauste</td>
<td>MS F 1832–33, Trinity College Library, Cambridge</td>
<td>1474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toledo</td>
<td>Paris, B. N. MS. hébr. 105</td>
<td>1197/98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Hebrew Bible Manuscripts and Editions by City or Locale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Locale</th>
<th>Current Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Paris, B. N. MS. héb. 25</td>
<td>1232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>J.T.S. L85</td>
<td>1241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Paris, B. N. MS. hébr. 26</td>
<td>1272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Parma 2668</td>
<td>1277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>BH MSS 1 Biblioteca de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid</td>
<td>1280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Madrid, B. N. MSS/5469</td>
<td>1289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>British Library, MS. Or 2201</td>
<td>1300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>University of Toronto, MS Friedberg 5-001</td>
<td>1307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>former Sassoon MS. 1208</td>
<td>1334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Genoa, Biblioteca Universitaria, MS. D.IX.31</td>
<td>1480</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>(MS Parma 2018) possibly Toledo</td>
<td>1484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Madrid, Biblioteca del Palacio Real, MS. II/3231–46</td>
<td>1487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>(Probably) Sassoon, <em>Ohel David</em>, 608 (unsold)</td>
<td>1487</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tudela</td>
<td>J.T.S. MS. L6 and L6a</td>
<td>1492</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paris, B. N. MS. hébr. 20 (also 21)</td>
<td>1300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Dublin, Trinity College Library MS 16</td>
<td>1300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uclés</td>
<td>Parma MS 2825</td>
<td>1442</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valencia</td>
<td></td>
<td>1290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valladolid</td>
<td>Parma MS. 3233</td>
<td>1479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ibid., 7, nos. 3 and 4</td>
<td>Fifteenth century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zaragoza</td>
<td>National Jewish Library MS. Heb. 1401</td>
<td>1341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>Paris, B. N. MS. hébr. 31</td>
<td>1404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hamburg- Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, MS. Levy 7</td>
<td>Thirteenth century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Russian State Library, MS. Günzburg 568</td>
<td>Fourteenth century</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MS. Vat. ebr. 596 (for other Vat. MSS see notes 127–28)</td>
<td>1446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MS. Parma 1996–97</td>
<td>1468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Escorial library MS. G-I-5</td>
<td>1476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trinity College, Dublin MS 13 (Ms 2.5)</td>
<td>1478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Paris, B. N. hébr. 21</td>
<td>1446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Cambridge, MS. Add. 652</td>
<td>1446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Escorial library MS. G-I-12</td>
<td>1446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Russian State Library, MS. Günzburg 1510-11</td>
<td>1446</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Notes

1 Maimonides enumerated 20 things which make a Torah scroll unfit (M.T., Aha-
vah: “Tefillin, Mezûzah, Sêfer Tôrah,” 10.1; see there 6.1 on the preparation of
hides). An entire (minor) talmudic treatise, Soferim (so correctly, not Soferim),
is devoted to the proper preparation of scrolls as well as tefillin and mezûzôt,
and there are related laws in other tractates. On the requirement that only the
scraped side of the hides be used, see Moses b. Maimon, Teshûvoth, ed. Blau 1:
267–68, no. 139; 2: 296–98, no. 153. There are differences of opinion in legal
sources as to whether the hides for a Torah scroll must be prepared specifically
with that intent in mind, and whether this can be done by a Gentile, or whether
ordinary hides acquired from Gentiles may be used. See, for example, the deci-
sion of Samuel Ibn Naghrîlah (see Chapter 1 on him) cited by Abraham b. Isaac
of Narbonne (ca. 1110–79), Sêfer ha-eshkôl, part 2: 39, in which he explains in
detail the current method of soaking and preparing the hides. See also the highly
technical discussion in Günzey Schechter 2: 527–35 (see Bibliography: Sources).
See also Maimonides, Teshûvoth, ed. Blau 2: 304 (no. 158). On the preparation of
manuscripts in general, including biblical scrolls and codices, see briefly Beit-
Arié, M. “How Hebrew Manuscripts are Made,” in Leonard Singer Gold, ed.,
A Sign and a Witness (N.Y., Oxford, 1988), 35–46 and in far more detail Haran,
“Bible Scrolls in Eastern and Western Jewish Communities” (without, however,
taking note of any of the above). The article has nothing to do with “Bible
scrolls,” only the material from which they are made; see also the same author’s
“Technological heritage in the preparation of skins.”

2 The scribe (sôfer) is a skilled and carefully trained professional who knows the
complicated and technical laws relating to the preparation of scrolls and ink, the
formation of letters and the many rules regarding the writing of a biblical scroll.
Most communities had at least one such professional scribe, either paid by the
community or by individuals who hired his services. In practice, not all scribes
were so knowledgeable or careful, and we find numerous errors in several man-
uscripts (not only codices but even some Torah scrolls). Illustrations of scribes
at work may be seen in Ameisenowa, “Eine spanisch-jüdischer Bilderbibel,”
reproduced in Schirmann, Shiyrah 2: facing 592, and see also facing 593. The
E.J.2 article “scribe” contains many errors; e.g., that only a feather quill may be
used, or that a scroll cannot be written except by a scribe (Maimonides, Meir
Abulafia, Nisim b. Reuben and many others, wrote scrolls for their own use and
also as models for community scribes). Leila, Scribes, Scripts and Book deals with
the entire history of “The Hebrew Book” in a few pages, 101 ff., managing to
make several errors along the way. Beit-Arié, “Transmission of Texts by Scribes
and Copyists” has very little on Spain. Generally, the writing was done with
a reed pen in Spain, whereas quill (feather) pens were used in most of Chris-
tian Europe. An important responsum by Solomon Ibn Adret (Barcelona, ca.
1233–1310) discusses the case of a scribe hired by an individual to write a Torah
scroll for him, and they agreed as to the price for writing it but not for correct-
ing it. The scribe then claimed a separate fee for the review and correction of
the scroll. Ibn Adret ruled that even though it is expected that a “fit” (properly
written) scroll would be made, mistakes are frequent “and there is no scribe so
careful in his writing that he does not err at all,” and the purchaser is not strict
about this unless serious and unusual errors are made. As for correcting the
scroll, this depends on the custom; if in that place the custom is that the scribe
does such correction, then he must do it, but otherwise not (Ibn Adret, Shî’elôth
u-tešhûvôt…mi-ketav-yad, no. 338). In many, if not most, of our extant medieval
bIBLICAL MANUSCRIPTS, THE SCRIBE IS CAREFUL TO ANNOUNCE THAT HE HAS IN FACT MADE an exact copy, correcting it according to superior manuscripts. A copyist of Ibn ‘Ezra’s commentary on Exodus, Vidal b. Solomon Ibn Quatorze, complained that part of the text from which he copied was not found in “exact copies” and was a different text and he wrote what was found in the majority of manuscripts (Oxford, MS. Poc. 393; Neubauer, Catalog, 38, no. 214).

3 The ink is prepared by mixing oils with other substances, such as pitch, resin and gum ammoniac and then burned and the soot collected and further mixed and formed into solid slices which were then cut and dissolved in an infusion of galls (gall nuts); cf. M.T., Ahavah: “Tefillin,” 1.4. This was the ink which he himself used in writing his own copy of a Torah scroll; however, he finally decided that vitriol may be used, even though it is not as enduring (Moses b. Maimon, Qovēṣ tegūrōt, no. 53; the original Arabic text was partially edited by Margoliouth, G. “Responses of Maimonides in the Original Arabic,” J.Q.R. [o.s.] 11 [1899]: 549–50; see the corrected text edited and explained by Simonsen, D. “Arabic Responses of Maimonides,” J.Q.R. 12 [1922]: 136–38 (TAMA [sic] referred to there is the editor of the Pēr ha-dōr collection of Maimonides’ responsa). That text was reprinted, with Hebrew translation, in Moses b. Maimon, Teshūvōt, ed. Blau 1: 257–64, no. 136; none of the editors made any observation on the terms qalqantum or qomus). He was asked specifically whether the ink to be used is that called in Arabic ḥibr (“tinted,” gall-nut ink) or midād (diluted, with liquid; soot ink; the definitions in the notes are incorrect), to which he replied that it is not ḥibr. For a brief description of the preparation of ink of various kinds in the medieval Muslim world, see Levey, “Mediaeval Arabic Bookmaking,” 7 (what he characterized as the “more refined” Indian and Chinese method is closest to what Maimonides describes); see the translation of the Arabic text itself, the part dealing with ink, 15–21. Chapter 11 of that treatise, 39–41, deals with the making of paper (see below on the use of paper). See also Bos, “Hayyim Vital’s Kabbalah Maasit we- Alkhimiyah (Practical Kabbalah and Alchemy),” 100. In a technical article, Remazeilles, et al. describe the impact of gum arabic on gall-nut corrosion of simple paper, with the result that such corrosion is shown to be retarded (“Influence of Gum Arabic on Iron Gall Ink Corrosion”; and see a similar article, Čsefalvayóvá, et al., “Influence of Iron Gall Ink on Paper Ageing. Perhaps through much experimentation, similar conclusions were arrived at in the medieval world.

4 Sēfer ha-manhiyy 2: 727–28; correct qanqantum on 727 to qalqantum (cf. previous note). He did not see Maimonides’ responsum since he did not read Arabic. See also Moses b. Naḥman (Naḥmanides), Hidūshey ha-Ramban 1: 349, on Gittin 19a, who discusses vitriol of Spain “dug from the mountains,” and distinguishes between atramentum and this vitriol.

5 Translated in Wischnitzer, History of Jewish Crafts, 61; Sheriyra is not mentioned by Beit-Arié, “How Hebrew Manuscripts are Made” (n. 1 above), or even in his more technical writings. An interesting article on parchment in medieval Spain is Rodriguez Díaz, “Industria del libro manuscrito en Castilla,” and see the general works listed there, 327 n. 49. On the use of papyrus, for biblical scrolls only, see Haran, “Book-Scrolls at the Beginning of the Second Temple Period,” which contains detailed information on the preparation of hides from the earliest times. For older literature on the more general use of papyrus, see the references in Baer, Juden 1: 1049 n. 1. On codices, see Resnick, “Codex in Early Jewish and Christian Communities.” Levy, Fixing God’s Torah, 10, suggests that there may already be a reference to writing the Bible in codex form in the Talmud (Megilla 27a); the problem there discussed, of later books thus resting
on top of the Torah, is similar to the ruling of Maimonides (see at n. 10 below). In fact, the ḥūmash (the five books of the Pentateuch) mentioned there already clearly refers to a bound codex, although elsewhere it refers to a scroll containing only the Pentateuch but which was used for the study.

6 On the production of paper, particularly in Spain, see Burns, “Paper Comes to the West [sic], 800–1400.” See also the comprehensive book of Bloom, Paper Before Print, especially Chapter 2 (peculiarly, there are no notes in the book). For a survey of earlier studies and theories, see Steinschneider, Haṣaʻōt, 71–74, although ignoring Jewish sources mentioned here. Not mentioned by Burns is the interesting discussion by the tenth-century Muslim writer known as al-Naḍīm, Fihrist 1: 39–40; note also his statement that the “Hebrew [Jewish] way of sharpening pens is with an extreme angle” (38). Paper was in use commonly in Egypt at least in the ninth century, as we see from the documents of the Cairo Genizah. On the high regard for the quality of paper from Spain in the Muslim period, see Goitein, Mediterranean Society 1: 81, 410 n. 1 and generally 111–12. See also Glick, Islamic and Christian Spain, index, s.v. “paper,” There is an interesting brief discussion (English) on the making of paper, particularly in Spain, by Mordechai Glazer in Paléographie hébraïque, 51–53. Parchment, as well as paper (sometimes both mixed together), was still being used by Jewish Jews in the fifteenth century.

7 Sheʻelōt u-teshūvōt 1, no. 548 (Tehūvōt ha-Rashb”a ha-shayyekhōt le-miqqa midnash ve-dēʾōt, ed. Dimitrovsky [Jerusalem, 1990] 1, no. 34), first paragraph.

8 In the St. Petersburg (formerly Leningrad) library; see Beit-Arié, “Osey Kitvey Yad ha-‘ivriyim be-Leningrad…” 44 (the article is chiefly a historical summary of well-known information about the collection and with only vague generalities about the actual manuscripts). There is a catalog of the biblical manuscripts, Harkavy and Strack, Catalog. There is no indication of the presence of an apparent record of this manuscript according to The Codicological Data-Base of the Hebrew Palaeography Project (sfardata.nli.org.il).

9 Now in the Schoyen Collection (Oslo and London), MS. 5070 (see “online”: http://www.nb.no/baser/schoyen/4/4.1/411.html#5070). Illuminated bibles, of course, and Passover hagadot were usually written on parchment for preservation.

10 M.T., Ahawah: “Sefer Tōrah,” 10.5. The alignment of Hebrew books is from right to left so that if such a codex is opened to the Prophets or the Writings, the Pentateuch (the first section of the Bible) would necessarily lie to the right, under them. In practice, it is doubtful that very many worried about this; in modern times with printed Bibles it is ignored altogether. This law is mentioned also by Bahya b. Ashēr Ibn Hallāwa (d. 1340), Biyur 2: 438 (on Lev. 8.8, end), who said that this is specifically written (by the rabbis), and Isaac b. Moses ha-Lēvy (Profiat Duran; Perpignan, late fourteenth to early fifteenth century), Maʻasēh ēfod, 11 (bottom). The general talmudic source is Talmud Megillah 27a, but as pointed out by Lipshitz, ‘Iyyuniym…Baḥya, 231, the standard text there does not mention that the books of the Prophets should not be placed on top of the Writings; however, in the text of that passage as used in Spain this order is found (see Shēm Tōv Ibn Gaʿōn, “Migdal ‘ōs,” on M.T., Hafla‘ah: “Shevūʻōt,” 12.4).

11 Not only large communities but even smaller ones such as Gerona had more than one scroll in the synagogue. In the inventories of books owned by Jews there in the early fifteenth century, we find mention of four scrolls of the Torah and one of the haf hanot (prophetic readings for synagogue use) and a scroll, or codex, of prayers, all of which were kept by two community officials for use in the synagogue; Millās Vallicrosa and Batlle, “Inventaris de llibres de jueus gironins,” 41 [319], no. 314. See the numerous references to scrolls (rotle, rotulus,
Céfer [Séfer] Tora, thora) in the index, 634, of Riera i Sans, *Poders publics i les sinagogues segles XIII-XIV*.

12 *Tehillim* ha-mey’hasōt, no. 276. See the reply of Isaac b. *Shēshet* (She’elot, no. 285) to Judah b. Asher b. Solomon, great-grandson of Asher b. Yehiēl. Both of these sources prohibit the selling of a Torah scroll for the needs of a synagogue. Isaac permitted it only in the case of a scroll in which a mistake was found or it was lacking a letter, in which case it no longer has the sanctity of a Torah scroll. However, even a perfect scroll may be sold for the needs of students or to provide for the marriage of orphans. Nevertheless, when faced with extreme debts, the community of Besalū was granted permission by Queen Violante in 1417 to sell all of their Torah scrolls except one (Riera i Sans, *Poders públics*, 544, no. 362).

13 In one case, in Zaragoza in 1488, a *converso* (apparently) was hired by the community to play an instrument for such a ceremony (Motis Dolader, *Expulsión de los judíos del reino de Aragón* 2: 81).

14 A good general article on the “crowns” of Torah scrolls is Yaniv, “ha-Keter le-Sefēr Torah bi-Sfarad,” including some illustrations. Contrary to the title, the article does not deal only with Spain but rather “Sefardic” congregations in other lands and later periods (many writers confuse “Spain” with “Sefardim”). See also more generally her “From Spain to the Balkans: Textile Torah Scroll Accessories” (her reference, 417 n. 30, to Torah crowns in Abraham b. Natan, Sēfer ha-manhiyig, “no. 56” makes no sense as there are no such numbers in the work; I am not sure to what she refers to since I find no mention anywhere there of such crowns). Another general article, again not on Spain, is Feller, “‘Purim of Saragossa’ and its implications on… dressing the Torah scroll” (the so-called “Purim of Saragossa [Zaragoza]” is a legendary account; see Revue des écoles de l’Alliance Israélite [1901–02]: 148–52; some have tried to identify Syracuse in Sicily as the locale, but neither is there corroborating evidence for that).

15 See also at n. 21 below. For examples of actual silver “crowns” in medieval Spanish synagogues, see Motis Dolader, *Expulsión*, 82–96, and his “Estudio de los objetos liturgicos” (see also his *Expulsión de los judíos de Zaragoza*, 148 ff. and 206. There were several synagogues in Zaragoza, and it is not clear from the documents from which synagogues the Torah crowns and other accessories were taken. See also the color photograph of rimonim (fourteenth century) in the shape of castles in the cathedral of Majorca in Cataluña judía, 8 (there are also Catalan and English eds. of this book) and in black and white in Pons, *Judios de Mallorca*, following 200, plates III–V. We have no study similar to that of Motis for Castile, but note the record of “silver [adornments] which the Torahs have, worth more than 30,000 mrs.,” a considerable sum of money, which after the expulsion of the Jews remained in the synagogue of Béjar, a town near Salamanca (Carrete Parrondo, ed., *Fontes iudaeorum*, 49, top; note the similar reference to vestments and silver Torah ornaments remaining from the synagogue of Hervás, 53, no. VI). We do not know whether these silver adornments were the work of Jewish craftsmen or not; however, in Barcelona in 1379 the administrator of one of the synagogues contracted with a Christian silversmith to make the crown for one of the scrolls, as well as some lanterns for the synagogue (Madurell y Marimón, “Plateros judíos barcelonenses,” 298). In the small community of Uncastillo in Aragón in 1427 the Jews accused the Christian baile of having stolen the crowns of the Torah, which were to be ransomed for 200 gold florins (in fact, as the ensuing trial showed, he was not guilty); see Marin Padilla, “Notas sobre el robo de las coronas de las Toras de Uncastillo.”

16 Sēfer ha-manhyig 1: 155, line 65. The reference to “in his hands” refers of course to holding this case since it is forbidden to touch a Torah scroll with one’s hands.
The so-called “Sefardic” Jews (of North Africa, Egypt, Iraq and other countries; not all of whom by any means are descended from Spanish Jews) still keep Torah scrolls in such cases, as do Yemenite Jews.

17 Ed. Chavel (Jerusalem, 1977; there are several editions), 732 (“commandment” 613); the author was, probably, Aaron ha-Lēvy.

18 Asher, introduction to his “Halakhōt qetanōt,” at end of Makkot in standard editions of the Talmud; he also dealt briefly with other laws concerning Torah preparation and writing as part of that commentary. S. Kook, in K’S 18 (1942): 105–06, argued that this (the entire “Halakhōt qetanōt”) is part of the “Halakhōt qetanōt,” of al-Fāsī, with additions by Asher; nevertheless, this section is clearly by Asher. It is this which is quoted by his son Jacob, Ṭūr Yorēh dē’ah, 270, “Hillehōt sēfer Tōrah” (Joseph Caro there in his commentary suggests that Asher did not intend entirely to set aside the individual obligation to write a Torah scroll). Maimonides, M.T., Ahavah: “Tefillin, mezūzāh ve-sēfer Tōrah,” 7.1. The same commandment applies to the writing of tefillin and mezūzōt, generally fulfilled by purchasing these from scribes (presumably in medieval Spain and other countries individuals paid a scribe to do this, who then acts as an “agent” on behalf of the client who thus fulfills the commandment by means of agency; in modern times, these are most often simply bought from a supplier of religious goods, although some are careful to buy from a scribe since there are difficulties involved in the legal act of agency in purchasing mass-produced; see Jacob b. Asher, Ṭūr Yorēh dē’ah, loc. cit., on the prohibition of purchasing a Torah scroll in the market).

19 Our sources are numerous inventories or accounts of books owned by Jews in Spain. In several cases, codices of individual biblical books were owned rather than, or even together with, complete bibles. See also the description of medieval biblical manuscripts in Zotenberg, Catalog (Paris); note there especially MS. 82, written for Ṭōdōrōs b. Meir ha-Lēvy of Burgos, the father of Meir Abulafia, in 1207. On a richly illuminated biblical manuscript which belonged to the famous converso Alvar García de Santa María, see my Conversos, 147 (it was said to be worth 10,000 mrs., an enormous sum).

Colophon of the manuscript cited by Riegler, “Divreyy sofriym be-qolofoniym shel kitvey-yad,” 144 (the date should be 1299, not 1259); cf. also Freimann, “Kopisten hebraischer Handschriften,” 111, no. 130 (he gave the date as 1300). This is none other than the famous illuminated “Cervera Bible” discussed below, n. 82. It is curious that there were no physicians in the town (unspecified) where he lived.

21 Llobet i Portella, “Documents de jueus de Cervera,” 49–51, and 54 on Bella, who originated from Perpignan. In addition, one of the books was the commentary of Rashi on Genesis and Exodus. Zaragoza: M. Serrano y Sanz, “Notas acera de los judíos aragoneses en los siglos XIV y XV,” Revista de archivos, bibliotecas y museos, ép. 3, t. 37 (1917): 339. We should not assume, of course, that women owned these books for their own study (although there were some women scholars); most likely, they were inherited from their husbands or fathers. Laredo: Ibn Adret, She’ēlōt 4, no. 243. At a later period, Isaac b. Shēḥet was asked about a synagogue in Segorbe (Valencia) that had to borrow money from Muslims in order to redeem a silver crown that had been given in pledge for another loan (She’ēlōt, no. 282).


23 Ma’tāseqē ēfōd, 21; cited also by Stern, “Hebrew Bible in Europe in the Middle Ages,” 36.

24 See Sofrim 6: 4; J. Ta’anit 4.2, 68a; Sifre (Sifriyy), section 356. This is also mentioned briefly by Menaḥēm b. “ha-Meiryy” Qiryat sēfer, 14. See, with caution,

25 Massoreth ha-massoreth, 260. Later Italian Jewish biblical authorities such as Menahēm de Lonzano (b. 1550) and Yedidyah Solomon Norzi (1560–1616), both mentioned later here, also relied upon the superior Spanish manuscripts.

26 “Hagahōt Maymūniyyōt” on Moses b. Maimon, M.T., Ahavah: “Tefillin, mezūzōt ve-sēfer Tōrah,” 8, on “Berēšiyyot,” no. 4. Incredibly, David Stern, who copied some of the above information from secondary sources, mistakenly wrote that Meir of of Rothenburg (not Rothenberg) himself wrote the “glosses;” this is, of course, impossible (Stern, “Hebrew Bible in Europe in the Middle Ages,” 249 n. 24). The article is much better on “Ashkenazic” (Franco-German) traditions than Sefardi.

27 Ibn Naghrīlallah, Ben Tehiliym, 212, no. 69; Abulafia, Gan ha-meshaliym ve-ha-ḥiydot 2, no. 691.

28 Abraham b. Natan, Sēfer ha-manhiyyōt, f. 251. See further on this below, “Responsa.”

29 Simon b. Šemaḥ Duran (1361–1444) mentioned the Torah scroll which Nisim had written for himself (Sēfer ha-tashbēṣ [so, correctly, is the title] 1: no. 51 [19d]). Some years ago there was the discovery of a Torah scroll supposedly written by Nisim with an inscription by his son; see the text in Hershman, Isaac Ben Sheshet Perfet, 193–94; copied without acknowledgment by Feldman, Peyrūḡ ha-Ran ‘al ha-Tōrah, 9. The Hebrew inscription is abbreviated and cryptic, and the various attempts to explain it have been unsuccessful. After many years during which the whereabouts of the scroll was unknown, it was finally rediscovered in the Hebrew University library (Jerusalem). It was re-examined by Havlin, “Sēfer-Torah she-katav le-‘aṣmo rabēnu Nisiym me-Giyrundiy [sic],” complete with facsimiles (the length of the article is due to a detailed discussion of the proper form of certain letters in Torah scrolls and other extraneous matters; the colophon itself is reproduced there, 7–8). Havlin did not discuss the difficulties in the inscription; incidentally, the work of Assaf to which he refers, 6 n. 5, is correctly Meqūrōt u-mehqāriym be-tōldōt Yisraēl (see Bibliography here). The fame of the alleged scroll has spread around the world, but unfortunately far less known is the important new article by Havlin revealing that it is a later forgery (“‘Oḏ be-‘inyan sēfer ha-Tōrah ha-meyūḥas le-R”N,” again, the length of the article is due to extraneous legal discussions). Havlin had the scroll examined by the outstanding Israeli professor of physics, Israel Felner of Hebrew University, and careful scientific examination revealed without a doubt that the scroll is not earlier than 1470 nor later than 1680. Another discovery, of a manuscript (or fragment) written by the son of Nisim proves that the colophon on the Torah scroll is not by him (art. cit., 32–33. Incidentally, in the first article of Havlin there is a discussion of the form of various letters, but since the commentary on Shabbat attributed to Nisim was actually written by his students, the difficulty raised by Havlin there disappears (see Ta-Shma, Israel. Sifrey ha-rishōniym [Jerusalem, 1967], 29 n. 17). This applies to the remainder of Havlin’s discussion there of the opinion of Nisim on other letters, all of which are also by his students and not him.

30 As reported in 1410 by Solomon b. Solomon ḥazan (see below on him), text in Jescherum 9 (1878): 3; rpt. in Kobak, Ginzez nistarōt 4: 75. Another Pentateuch was written in Perpignan in 1299: Paris, B.N. hébr. 7; see n. 82 below.

31 As we shall see, not only such valuable manuscripts but even more “ordinary” ones, some copied by individuals for their own use, have also survived. The
collection of the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts in Jerusalem, now with an “online” catalog: http://jnul.huji.ac.il/imhm/ (although very difficult to use) is somewhat helpful; although caution must be used since they consider everything not European to be “Sefardic.” Thus, many manuscripts so described are in fact North African, Yemenite or even Italian; nor do they distinguish Spain from “Sefardic,” which correctly refers to works written outside of Spain by former Spanish Jews or their descendants. This problem prevails also in earlier manuscript catalogs, such as that of Cambridge University (Schiller-Szinessy in the Bibliography: Catalogs), where many manuscripts are vaguely described as “Sephardic” script. One of these, an “unknown” (!) commentary on Proverbs by Immanuel b. Solomon, is, of course, by the famous Immanuel of Rome and thus can hardly be a “Sephardic” manuscript of the fourteenth or fifteenth century (ibid., 37–38, no. 26 and see no. 27). Beit-Arié, “Colophoned Hebrew Manuscripts Produced in Spain,” 162–63, after wrongly claiming that the term Sefarad was “identified by early translators with Iberia” (my emphasis), asserts that Hebrew codicology uses the term to refer to a type of “book production and script.” He cites his own work as the authority for this. If so, it is a practice which should be changed since it is as vague as would be the description “Latin” to refer to any European script. (On the term “Sefarad” and its history see my “A Note on the Meaning of Sefarad.”)

32 See, for example, Reif, ed., Hebrew Manuscripts at Cambridge University Library, 54 ff., a number of bibles or fragmentary bibles again described vaguely as “Sefardi” (at least not “Sephardic”) script and little other useful information. Several partial biblical manuscripts or fragments exist in various Spanish libraries and archives. An interesting example of an unusual codex is the “liturgical” Bible (so called because it was written solely for use by a reader in the synagogue, as seen in the inclusion of the haftarah, or portions of the Prophets read in the service), without date or colophon (possibly thirteenth century), preserved in the Biblioteca Nacional, MSS 5469 (see Valle Rodríguez, Catálogo descriptivo, 81–83; Barco del Barco, Catálogo 2: 115–16, no. 72). This obviously is earlier than the 1318 Bible (Oxford, Bodleian Ms. Kennicott 4 Cat. 2326), described by Stern as the earliest Spanish liturgical Bible, “Hebrew Bible in Europe,” 299.

33 This chapter does not discuss all of the manuscripts, but only the most significant. There is still no complete catalog of all the medieval biblical manuscripts from Spain, even those in Spanish libraries, much less of those in all of the libraries in the world. Important individual inventories, or descriptions of at least some manuscripts, are mentioned here in the notes. A fairly complete listing of early manuscripts is in Beit-Arié, et al., Codices hebraicis litteris (I have not checked to see that all of the extant Spanish Hebrew manuscripts are in fact included). More complete is Silvestri, Bibbie ebraiche, easily accessible.

34 Much has been written on Hebrew Bible manuscripts in general; of interest is the detailed discussion of early studies in Steinschneider, Haṣaṭṭ, 61–63; many of the works mentioned there are still of value and have been generally ignored in recent scholarship. The article “Manuscripts, Hebrew” in E.J. is virtually worthless; the list of library catalogs there also does not even mention Spain. For criticism of this article from another perspective, see Benjamin Richter’s comments: http://seforim.blogspot.com/2007/08/benjamin-richler-manuscripts-at-jewish.html: Wednesday, 08 August 2007. See generally the article “Bible – manuscripts and printed editions,” in Roth, ed., Medieval Jewish Civilization. There I neglected to mention the manuscript supposedly written by the famous masorete Moses b. Aaron in 897 (or 896), in the Qaraite synagogue.
of Cairo (described in detail by Gottheil, “Some Hebrew Manuscripts in Cairo,” 639–41). However, already Neubauer, “Introduction of the Square Characters in Biblical Mss.,” had discussed this codex, 25–26, and concluded that it was of the eleventh or early twelfth century (he said that Harkavy agreed with this). A limited facsimile edition was published (Jerusalem, 1971; 2 vols). Of major importance is the famous “Aleppo Codex” (Keter Aram Ṣōva) of the entire Bible, written in Aleppo, Syria in 929. Although known for years, it was impossible for scholars to have access to this manuscript until after 1948, at which time most of it had been destroyed in anti-Jewish rioting in Aleppo (the surviving text has been published). This was the manuscript utilized by Maimonides in the preparation of his careful copy of the Pentateuch. Much has been written about this Bible; the most recent being Tawil and Schneider, Crown of Aleppo: The Mystery of the Oldest [sic] Hebrew Bible codex (Philadelphia, 2010). In fact, the earliest extant complete Bible manuscript is the famous Leningrad (present St. Petersburg) Codex, written in 1009, probably in Cairo; it served as the basis of important modern editions of the Bible, including the new J.P.S. ed. and tr. (Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures [1999]). Facsimile eds. are: Pentateuch, Prophets and Hagiographa (Canada, 1971) 3 vols.; The Leningrad Codex (Leiden, 1997; rpt. 1998), with important introductions. There is a Spanish tr. of the Torah only, La Toráh, tr. Ricardo Cerni (Zaragoza, [1998]). A complete Hebrew Bible in Copenhagen was said to bear the date 746, but this is, of course, an error (MS. Heb. 2; described in Codices orientales bibliothecae regiae haviensis, 9–10). In fact, the date is 1301 and it was written in “northern Spain or Provence” (Ulf Haxen in Kings and Citizens [see title in Bibliography], pt. 2: 2–3, no. 5; Haxen has an erroneous listing in the bibliography, 31, for the authors of Codices orientales). This is the manuscript discussed but incompletely identified by Metzger, “Masora ornementale,” 100. There is a manuscript of the “Latter Prophets” in St. Petersburg which allegedly is dated 747 C.E., but since no one outside of Russia has seen the manuscript or even a photograph of it, nothing can be said about this with certainty; it is unlikely, of course (see the brief discussion by Starkova in Paléographie hébraïque, 38–39; however, in Gintsburg, Catalog [sic], 28, no. 19, it is dated 847). There is also a codex of the “Latter Prophets,” dating from 916, in the Russian National Library. All of the above was overlooked by Stern, “First Jewish Books,” which is chiefly a kind of lay introduction to the masōnah (incidentally, the book by David Lyons, the title of which is incorrectly transcribed by Stern, 192 n. 78, actually ha-Masōnah ha-megarefet, is not a “cumulative edition” but is based on the Cairo codex of the Prophets). On the “masoretes” see also Chapter 1 above, n. 68. There is still a need for a complete and accurate catalog of all Hebrew biblical manuscripts extant today; Dez Macho, Manuscritos, is general and outdated. For the important St. Petersburg (formerly Leningrad) collections, for example, Katsh, Ginze Russiyah, is absolutely worthless, containing poor facsimiles of fragments of biblical, talmudic and midrashic manuscripts with no descriptions. The first part is somewhat better, but of no real value for this subject. Not to be overlooked is the important microfilm collection at Hill Monastic Manuscript Library at St. John’s University in Collegeville, Minnesota (see Bibliography). For example, they have (or had, the collection now apparently has been drastically reduced) the entire Cambridge (Cairo) Genizah on microfilm, and numerous other collections. Two of the earliest complete Torah scrolls (as opposed to codices) are described in Davis, M. C. Hebrew Bible Manuscripts in the Cambridge Genizah Collections (Cambridge, 1980) 2: 1–9 and in detail by Sirat, Colette, et al. “Rouleaux de la Tora anterieurs l’an mille,” Academie des inscriptions
It is described by Ginsburg, *Introduction*, 469–74, with a full-page reproduction facing 469 (he dated it 820–50; the number is Or. 4445, not 4455). The entire manuscript is now online: http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Or.4445. The dating, and indeed the provenance, of the manuscript, is questionable; see the description in Margoliouth, *Catalog*, 36–39 (who made no suggestion that it is Spanish but dated it as “probably” in mid-ninth century; others have dated it in the tenth century). See also Dotan, A. “Reflections Towards a Critical Edition of Pentateuch Codex Or. 4445,” in Emilia Fernández Tejero and María Teresa Ortega Monasterio, eds., *Estudios masóreticos: X Congreso del IOMS: en memoria de Harry M. Orlinsky* (Madrid, 1993), 39–51 (in spite of that no such edition was ever done). A fragment of another apparently tenth-century Pentateuch manuscript (St. Petersburg, MS. Firkowicz B 188) has been described by Penkower, “Sariyd ketav-yad.”

See, e.g., Ginsburg, *Introduction*, 477, who identified (now British Lib.) MS. Harley 1528 (fourteenth century complete biblical codex) as “Sephardic”; that is, from Spain; see Narkiss, *Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts in the British Isles* (hereafter HIMBRI) 1, no. 20; 2, figs. 324–27. More important is Harley 5720, dated by Ginsburg (485; description continues to 494) as “ca. 1100–20” and from Spain. It is a codex of the Prophets, lacking some.

Ḥadashiym gam yeshaniym, 106. This manuscript is mentioned, and the colophon reproduced, also by Gottheil, “Some Hebrew Manuscripts,” 619–20, with no realization that Harkavy had already published it (originally, in his notes to Graetz’s history). If authentic, this is the earliest known reference to names of Jews in Gerona.

Most of those in Spain referred to in the Allony-Kupfer *List of Photocopies, 83–86, are in fact modern scrolls, not medieval. Tarragona: Soberanas, A. “El rollo de Sefer Torah del museo bibliico de Tarragona,” *Sefarad* 21 (1961): 67–68, with plates. The Vitoria scroll: *Catálogo de la exposición bibliográfica sefardi mundial* (Madrid, 1959), no. 71. The miniature scroll in the *Museu Marés* of Barcelona, ibid., no. 72, does not properly belong to the group since it is a modern printed scroll of no value; see Calders, T. and Fuentes, Ma. J. “Peces hbraiques del Museu Mars,” *Anuario de filología* 4 (1978): 184–88. There are also some fragmentary remains; see Cantera Burgos, “Nueva serie de manuscritos hebreos de Madrid” (second article), 26. On the fifteenth century (?) Torah scroll, incomplete, in Madrid, see Valle Rodriguez, *Catálogo*, no. 22. The Parma (Spanish) scrolls are all fourteenth to fifteenth century; see Richler and Beit-Arié, *Biblioteca Palatina*, 10, nos. 29–32. Of interest also are two fragments (complete folios) of a Torah scroll probably of the fifteenth century which were used as binding material for Christian communal records of the second half of the century in Calahorra. In modern times, they were removed and attached to a roller (similar to that used in modern Torah scrolls); see Cantera Montenegro, “Séfer Torah del archivo catedralico de Calahorra,” with facsimiles (I am grateful to Prof. Cantera for providing me with a copy of this article). Similar to this is the fragment used as a binding in the archives of Olite (Navarre), possibly fourteenth or fifteenth century (Juventino Caminero y Ricardo Ciévide. “La Torá de los judíos de Olite,” *Archivo de filología aragonesa* 28–29 (1981): 83–94. However, the fact that the fragment is six columns (not five, as the authors wrote) in width, as well as certain incorrect procedures in spacing, precludes the possibility that this could be from a Torah scroll intended for synagogue use. It might have been for teaching...
purposes. I could find no further information on this interesting fragment. Most of the Hebrew biblical manuscripts at the monastery of Montserrat (Catalonia) are modern; the few exceptions are not of Spanish origin. British Library: see Margoliouth, Catalog 1: 1–3, 15 nos. 1, 2, 3, 5, 30, all described as “Sefardi hand” (at least not “Sephardic” as is the modern practice) of the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries; but not necessarily from Spain. A catalog statement from the auction of a fifteenth-century Torah scroll attributed to Moses Ibn Zabara (see index on him) at Sotheby’s 03 December 2008 http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2008/western-oriental-manuscripts-l0824-1/lot.22.html asserts that only nine medieval Torah scrolls written in Spain survive; one sold at Sotheby’s 4 December, lot 38; the one which they mention as being sold at Christie’s was erroneously identified (see n. 39 end below); Margoliouth catalog as cited above (they mention, twice, only three of those listed) and apparently only one of the above-mentioned Parma scrolls. Very important is a complete Torah scroll (ca. 1470) sold at auction also at Sotheby’s 20 December 2017: http://www.sothebys.com/fr/auctions/ecatalogue/2017/important-judaica-n09687/lot.168.html, with color photograph.

39 Sotheby’s Important Judaica (New York, 24 November 2009), N08606 (catalog available: http://catalogue.sothebys.com/events/N08606), Lot 142; described as a Torah scroll “from the Kabbalistic [sic] circle” of Shem Tob b. Abraham Ibn Gādn (see index here on him), “Northern Spain: Late 13th Century.” The reference to a “Kabbalistic circle” refers to what is described as “anomalous, curved and spiral letters,” supposedly a qabalistic feature, “throughout the entirety of the Pentateuchal text.” As explained in the detailed notes following the basic description, the scroll follows the tradition of the Sefer tagiyn (or tagiy) in this respect (see index here on that book), perhaps with “crowns” added to the letters by a later hand. That book was appended by Ibn Gādn to his Soria 1312 Bible (after the Pentateuch and before the Prophets), and only that codex and this Torah scroll follow the method outlined in that book. He also added the verses of Sa’adyah Ga’dn on the number of letters, with a commentary (see on these Stein, S. “Saadyas Pijjut [sic] on the Alphabet,” in Erwin I. J. Rosenthal, ed., Saadya Studies [Manchester, 1943], 206–26). The anonymous author of the detailed notes in the Sotheby catalog remarks that there is a possibility that the scroll is the Torah scroll which Ibn Gādn said that he wrote for himself (see n. 74 below on that). The same catalog entry notes the existence of “A scroll [of Spanish provenance] from the late twelfth or early thirteenth century: http://www.sothebys.com/app/live/lot/LotDetail.jsp?lot_id=159416149; lot 38.” The catalog description there contains a certain amount of nonsense, but it is apparently true that this Torah scroll is an accurate copy of the famous Aleppo Codex. It also agrees in many places with the “Codex Hilēliy” (discussed here, see index). The catalog erroneously identifies a fragment of a Torah scroll sold by Christie’s (10 December 1999, Lot 171) as “Spanish,” and fourteenth century; in fact, it is from a very early scroll identified as “Oriental, perhaps Iraq or Syria (possibly Babylon), 10th or 11th century”: (http://www.christies.com/LotFinder/lot_details.aspx?from=salessummary &intObjectID=1640166&xsid=54fcb68-5f1e-4744-8ee5-1d30cfda520d). All of these were seen in July of 2011. Recently, it has been claimed that the oldest known complete Torah scroll has been discovered at the University of Bolonia, supposedly dating between 1150 and 1225; the article does not indicate if the scroll is from Spain: https://elpais.com/cultura/2013/05/28/actualidad/1369770124_378624.html.

40 Paris, B. N. MS. hébr. 105; see Sirat and Beit-Arié, Otsar kitve-yad 2: 5; Sed-Rajna, “Moyens auxiliaires,” 55, inexplicably dated it 1195 (the article, 65–68
and plates, mentions names of scribes of dated manuscripts from Toledo and Burgos, cf. next note; the name “Ibn Merwas” is of course erroneous and should be Marwās, or possibly Marwān; cf. below at n. 73).

41 Paris, B. N. MS. hébr. 82; see on this and other manuscripts Sed-Rajna, “Toledo or Burgos,” 7.


43 Paris, B. N. MS. hébr. 26 (Zotenberg, Catalog, 3; Sirat and Beit-Arié, op. cit., 1, no. 8). A second manuscript was copied by him in Toledo in 1277 (Parma. Biblioteca Palatina MS. 2668); see Sed-Rajna, “Toledo or Burgos,” 6–7 and Richler and Beit Arié, Biblioteca palatina, 3, no. 1. Ḥayyim Israel (b. Israel or “Israeliy”) lived in Toledo and Zamora ca. 1272. He was a philosopher and translator of medical works and the uncle of Israel b. Isaac Ibn “Israeliy” mentioned later here. Parma MS. 3183 was also copied by a certain Ḥayyim; could he be the same scribe? (Richler and Beit–Arié, Biblioteca palatina, 5, no. 8).

44 Written in 1626; first printed in the Mantua, 1742 Bible. On his dependence on Spanish manuscripts generally, see Fernández Tejero, Texto hebreo bíblico de Sefarad en el Minhāt Šay. There is an ed. and tr. of Minhāt Šay [shay] on the “Former Prophets” by M. J. de Ascárrega–Servert (1987). The Toledo manuscript (formerly MS. de Rossi 782, now Parma 2668) was written by the aforementioned Ḥayyim Israel (“Israeliy”) for Isaac b. Samuel ha-Lēvy and his sons Samuel, Joseph and Meir in 1277 (Richler and Beit–Arié, Biblioteca palatina, 3). See the thorough discussion and bibliography in Silvestri, Bibbie ebraiche, 43–47. The illuminations are extensively discussed by Kogman-Appel, Jewish Book Art. Samuel (the father of Isaac) was, of course, Samuel Abulafia, brother of Meir (on whom see later here). We know nothing further of Isaac or his sons.

45 No. 1, currently BH MSS 1 (formerly 118–Z–42) of the Biblioteca de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid. It was used as the basis for the text of the famous Complutensian Polyglot (see below at n. 236 on that). See also n. 53 below. The manuscript was written by a scribe, who modestly refrained from giving his name, for the “young men” Isaac and Abraham b. Maimon (Ibn Melekh?), both of whom are described as physicians (see Ginsburg, Introduction, 771–72). The original catalog description of the manuscript by José Villa-Amil y Castro in Revista de la Universidad de Madrid 2a ép. 6 (1875): 716–17, wrongly asserted that the owners were sons of Maimonides! According to that description, a note on the first leaf states that “Rabbi” Joseph Erasmo (!) Moses, a converso who allegedly taught at Salamanca, testified to the unique value of this codex (the statement to which this refers cannot be read in the online copy; see below); this statement was made in 1756. See also Llamas, “Manuscritos hebreos de la Universidad Complutense de Madrid.” It was also mentioned by Neubauer, “Notes,” 424–25. See the detailed analysis of this manuscript (M–I) and edition of parts of the text in Fernández Tejero, Tradición textual española de la biblia hebrea. Editions of the masorah of this manuscript are slowly being published as separate volumes. See also remarks concerning the masorah of the manuscript in Ortega-Monasterio, “Los códices modelo,” 361–63, and “Some ‘hillûfîm’ Ben Asher/Ben Naftali.” See also Gómez Arranda and Ortega-Monasterio, “Critical Editions;” Ortega-Monasterio and Fernández Tejero, “Distintas manos en la masora parva;” and Azcraga, “Diferencias textuales en las masoras” and “Orthographic Irregularities in the Manuscript M1.” Another of the manuscripts utilized for the Complutensian Polyglot, cdice no. 2 (M–2, currently BH MSS 2), has received a thorough masoretic study by Ortega-Monasterio, Estudio masorético; see also her “Los cdices modelo,” 363–65. The complete
manuscript is now online: http://alfama.sim.ucm.es/dioscorides/consulta_libro.asp?ref=B1929718X&idioma=0 Fernández Tejero has done pioneering work on the investigation of corrections to Spanish Hebrew biblical codices, in relation to Norman Snaith’s theory that the ben Asher Masoretic tradition (see above, Chapter 1, n. 68) is to be found in these texts (see also Weiser, introduction to Ibn 'Ezra 1: 60). See further Fernández Tejero’s important article “Primera y segunda manos en manuscritos hebreos bíblicos de Sefarad,” where she concluded on the basis of careful collation of several additional manuscripts that the theory is generally incorrect. There are a few other Hebrew biblical manuscripts in the collection of the Universidad Complutense, described (although sometimes erroneously) in the aforementioned listing of Villa-Amil y Castro and now more correctly by Domingo, *Manuscritos hebreos*. Interesting is the manuscript listed by Villa-Amil as 9, “paraphrase” of Isaiah by Ḥayyim bar Samuel of Tudela, but as MS. 16 by Torres Santo Domingo: Ḥayyim b. Samuel Meir of Tudela, Shōr ha-ḥayyim. If so, this is much less exciting, since that work has already been published (Jerusalem, 1966), although the name “Meir” is otherwise unknown (his grandfather’s name was David). There are also some late manuscripts of commentaries by Ibn ‘Ezra and David Qimḥi as well as some grammatical works.

46 MSS/5469. Valle Rodríguez, *Catálogo*, no. 14; see also Reinardt and Gonzálvez, *Catálogo*, 400–01; Barco del Barco, *Catálogo* 2: no. 72. Date according to Valle.

47 A thirteenth-century manuscript of Joshua and Judges is in Hamburg (Hamburg- Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, MS. Levy 7; Röth, *Hebräische Handschriften*, no. 5). Elkan Nathan Adler, in the report of his nineteenth-century travels, ( *Jews in Many Lands* [Philadelphia, 1905], 154) relates seeing in Magnesia (Greece, near Thessalonika) “two massive volumes of a Masoretic Pentateuch” written in Barcelona in 1289 by “the son of Reuben the son of [Ṭ] odros” for Zeraḥyah b. Shealtiel b. Zeraḥyah. He mentions also a volume of the Prophets and “Writings” in a different hand. Apparently unknown to researchers and bibliographers is a thirteenth-century Torah codex with haftarāt and micrographic and other decoration in Cologny, Switzerland (Fondation Martin Bodmer, Cod. Colmer 21, online: http://www.e-codices.unifr.ch/en/list/one/tmb/cb-0021 (although the description says “al-Andalus” there is nothing to indicate that origin; the script is standard Sefardic). The Bodmer collection is famous, of course, for its “New Testament” papyri. Also of interest is the 1266 codex, known as “The Haverford Hebrew Bible,” at Haverford College in Haverford, Pennsylvania. According to the information provided, it was written in Spain by one Solomon b. Moses (no scribe of that name is recorded by Freimann, “Kopisten”) for Joshua b. Zeraḥyah b. Shealtiel. The same collection also contains (no. 10) a fragment of 2 Kings written in Elvas, Portugal in 1467 (see the catalog description of the manuscripts: http://www.haverford.edu/library/special/aids/rare_books_and_manuscripts/harris.pdf); see also Rachel Beckwirth, “Haverford College’s Thirteenth-Century Hebrew Bible”. The Elvas manuscript is also decorated with numerous drawings and stylistic architectural elements. A manuscript of a Pentateuch was written by Solomon b. Reuben b. Judah for the merchant Isaac b. Abraham b. Samuel Ibn Ardit (a well-known family name) of Majorca and was completed in Barcelona in 1325; also a Pentateuch with haftarāt and “Scrolls” written by Joseph b. Samuel Basiliomaly, completed in 1203 in Arles (the abbreviation s” of course does not mean “shelihah šiybur” [leader of the prayer] as Gottheil thought but rather a blessing for one living); Gottheil, “Bible Mss. in the Roman Synagogues,” 178–79. The Barcelona, 1325 manuscript is currently MS 19 of the Comunità Israelitica di Roma (Gottheil, “Bible Mss. in the Roman Synagogues,” 179–80;
Metzger, “Masora ornamentale,” 98; see also I. Sonne, *Scelta di manoscritti e stampe della biblioteca della Università israelitica* [Rome 1935]; only at J.T.S.). The Arles manuscript is MS 21–22 of the same library. A manuscript containing the “Latter Prophets,” Scrolls (*Megillot*) and Chronicles is found in Hebrew Union College and has been described in detail by Blank, “A Hebrew MS. in the Hebrew Union College Library,” dated as the thirteenth century, Spanish (it is apparently part of a manuscript in St. Petersburg which contains the other prophets and “Writings” and may have been a complete Bible). It is of interest as being closely related to the “ben Naftali” masoretic tradition and with numerous variant readings. The masoretic notes also frequently refer (see 252–55) to one Moses al-Ruiṭiy (or simply “al-Ruiṭiy”), who Blank conjectured was an otherwise unknown Spanish rabbi or grammarian who lived in the vicinity of Lucena. This is possible, but more likely is the town of Rota, now Reuda de Jalón, near Zaragoza, which was described by Muslim writers as one of the “Jewish cities” (see Roth, *Jews, Visigoths & Muslims*, 143); Jews continued to live there later in the medieval period. Michael Wilensky contributed a short note (German) to the same journal (without mentioning Blank), in which he cited the erroneous theories of earlier scholars in trying to identify Moses but did not give his own conclusion (“I’ Moše Al - Roṭiṣ [sic]” in *H.U.C.A.* 11 [1936]: 647–49). The Spanish Jewish grammarian Judah Ḥayyūj is also named in these masoretic notes.

48 See Cantera Burgos, “Nueva serie de manuscritos hebreos en Madrid” (second article), 39–40. The manuscript, apparently still in the archives of the cathedral, also contains part of the rabbinical chronicle *Sēder ‘olam*. This is the manuscript which Neubauer reported that he saw, and note the interesting details he gives from the chronicle (“Notes,” 433; Cantera did not know of this). The second manuscript described there, which later went to the Museo Lázaro Galdiano (Madrid), is a fifteenth-century copy of the commentary of Rashi, described in detail by Cantera (obviously that could not have been part of the Bible codex of Alfonso X). Another Bible owned by Alfonso, which he gave to his son Sancho and later it was also given to the cathedral of Seville, is the so-called “Biblia de Pedro de Pamplona,” of which currently only two volumes of the Christian Bible survive (Claret García Martínez and Rodríguez Díaz, “Un codice de la biblioteca de Alfonso X en la catedral de Sevilla;” the authors made no mention of the more important manuscript of the Bible referred to here.

49 Assaf, *Meqōrōt u-mehqariym*, 182–85. Incidentally, the *En Astruc Solomon to whom Moses refers as his teacher (185) was the son of Ibn Adret; Assaf’s uncertainty as to who he was is all the more surprising given the specific mention of him on 182. See Ḥallawā, *She’elot u-teḥuvōt*, no. 144; the editor made no mention of Assaf’s publication, and in his introduction (15) erred in stating that Moses’s teacher was Ibn Adret’s son Judah. Moses Ḥallawā declared the Torah scroll in question fit for reading, and also mentioned that in his youth his teacher Astruc Solomon had also seen that scroll and did not declare it unfit. In spite of Nisim’s ruling, in the early fifteenth century in North Africa, the example of leniency in connection with errors in one of the scrolls in Barcelona was still cited in a question to Simon b. Ṣemaḥ Duran, *Sēfer taḥbēṣ* 2, no. 125, and see no. 127 concerning scrolls written by the renowned scribe *En Vidal of Majorca* (see on this n. 174 below). A thirteenth-century scroll (British Library Arundel Or 16) contains two additional verses in Joshua (see n. 60 below) with the marginal note that these are not found in “*Sēfer Siynaiy*” or in “*Sēfer Rabbēnu Gērshom*” (not otherwise known) or other scrolls. This scroll is in Ashkenazic script and obviously written in France or Germany; it is remarkable that it makes reference to the Barcelona codex.
50 She‘lōt u-teshuvōt, no. 7. He is perhaps the same as Astruc Llobel Gracian in Baer, *Juden* 1: 452, and see the index there. The question, from a rabbi in Bougie, North Africa, concerned about a Torah scroll which had errors in it. In his reply, he stated that in Barcelona the scribes had been accustomed to correct the arrangement of passages if they had made an error in them and that this was in accord with the opinion of Ibn Adret, “who was a great sage.”

51 *Commentary of David Kimhi on Isaiah*, xxvii–iii; *Sēfer ha-shōrashiyim*, s.v. “d-r-s” and “s-ū-m;” *Mikhōl* (his grammatical treatise), 71a, 115a (ed. and tr. William Chomsky, 20, 116). It is astonishing that Darom’s “critical” edition of Qimhi’s commentary on Psalms (see Bibliography) repeats the erroneous reading in Ps. 109.10 (“Sēfer hilālym” instead of “Hilēly”) which Finkelstein already corrected in Qimhi’s *Commentary on Isaiah* (on that Psalm, Qimhi cites a correction in the masoretic text of the “Hilēly,” adding that so had “the nagiyd” [Samuel Ibn Naghrillah] written). See Jacob b. El’azar, *Kitāb al-kāmil*, 5, 27, 28, 33, 68 (since Qimhi did not know Arabic, he must have seen this work, which he cited frequently in his grammatical treatises, in a Hebrew translation). Elijah Levita (the famous fifteenth-century Italian grammarian) mentioned Qimhi’s reference to the codex but added that he himself did not know what it is (*Massoreth ha-massoreth*, 260; Ginsburg added the incorrect information that it was written in the seventh century at Hilla, a town near the ruins of ancient Babel; this notion he took, without attribution, from an earlier writer, see on that and other theories Pick, “Lost Hebrew Manuscripts,” 123.

52 Peyrūsh ‘al Mishley, 72 (on 8.16).


54 Yūḥasiyn, 220b. N. Sarna, in the (Eng.) introduction to the facsimile edition mentioned below (n. 59) stated that it was written as early as the tenth century by Moses b. Hillel or his son, the scribe of another biblical manuscript of the same period (not in Spain, however). The unacknowledged source for this information is Neubaier, “Introduction of the Square Characters in Biblical Mss.,” 23–24, a St. Petersburg manuscript copied by Moses b. Hillel in 994 and citing a sixteenth-century Egyptian manuscript of Zacut which reads “Moses b. Hillel b. Moses.” David Stern claimed (“Hebrew Bible in Europe,” 250) that it was said to have been written around 600 (which it was not) but more probably was written around 1000 in León (for which there is no evidence), and that it was “carried away” by the Almohades (sic) when they “attacked the Jewish communities of Castile and Aragon.” He knows of no scholarly work on the codex, nor editions of it.

55 Copy, from the original in Florence, at Jewish National Lib. (No. 002094178). This is probably the same Bible of which only fragments (on Lev. and Num.) are at the (N.Y.) Jewish Theological Seminary (J.T.S.); cf. *Reel Guide to Hebrew Incunabula reels 1–20* (Ann Arbor, M.I., 1973), Heb. 12. The unique complete copy, at Florence, was described by Cassuto, U., *Incunaboli ebraici a Firenze* (Florence, 1912), no. 43; see the brief remarks in the review by A. Marx in *J.Q.R.* (ns) 11.
According to García Blanco, *Análisis*, 128 (and see note, 129) the Bologna, 1482 Pentateuch also was done in accord with the “Hilēliy.”

56 David Franco Mendes (1713–92), *Memorias do estabelecimento e progresso dos judeus portugueses e spanhöes nesta famosa cidade de Amsterdam*, ed. Fuks and Fuks-Mansfeld (Amsterdam, 1975), 63 (lines 19–24). Note that the author remarks on the richly illuminated text of the *masorah* in the 1299 codex, which precisely fits the “Cervera Bible.”

57 Chronicle in Neubauer, *Mediaeval Jewish Chronicles* 1: 126. For Lonzano, see Ortega-Monasterio, *Texto hebreo bíblico de Sefarad en el Or Torah*. Indeed, Lonzano himself said that he did not have the actual codex but only a copy of some passages from it, and see on this Sapir, *Even sapiyr* 2: 199.

58 *Even sapiyr* 1: 12a; Sapir there specifically said that this codex, which contained the translation (following each verse?), was in Ashkenazic script and that the name of the alleged scribe was Mordecai Halāliy (or perhaps Hilēliy). Sapir was skeptical about the date assigned to it. This manuscript was also described, with texts of the colophons, by Gottheil, “Some Hebrew Manuscripts in Cairo,” 625–27, with no mention of Sapir (although elsewhere in the article he cited that work). Marx, Alexander. “Notes,” *J.Q.R.* 18 (1906): 568, remarked that the frontispiece (describing that as a copy of the “Hilēliy”) and the date are forgeries. Sapir also acquired another important biblical codex from Yemen, which contained a copy of the *masorah*, or at least portions of it, from the “Hilēliy” (published by him, *Even sapiyr* 2: 199–214). Toledano, *Ökter genaziym*, 205, discusses a manuscript from Toledo known as “Sēfer Hilēliy” or more probably “Halāliy,” after the name of its scribe Mordecai *H-l-ā-l-y-h*; but this is apparently also a different codex.

59 See Bibliography: Bible. Pentateuch. *Hebrew Hileli Codex*. The poor quality of the printing makes it difficult to read (the original manuscript, J.T.S. Lutzki 44a [now MS L85], available on microfilm at several libraries). The manuscript is now online: http://garfield.jtsa.edu:1801/view/action/nmets.do?DOC_CHOICE=267103.xml&dvs=147283082_8607~825&locale=en_US&search_terms=&adjacency=&VIEWER_URL=/view/action/nmets.do? &DELIVERY_RULE_ID=4&divType=&usePid1=true&usePid2=true The original codex consists of three volumes; it was written for Abraham b. Solomon “Abudraham” (Ibn Abū Dirhmā), perhaps related to the famous David, author of an important work on the liturgy. See also Pérez Castro, “Una copia del Codex Hilleli.” The same scribe, apparently, copied a manuscript of the “Latter Prophets” in 1222 (Bodleain MS. Kennicott 7; Neubauer, *Catalog*, no. 2331), as well as a four-volume manuscript of the Bible (only part of which survives) which ultimately went to Safed and was certified by the famous rabbi Moses Cordovero (1522–70); see Sed Rajna, “Toledo or Burgos,” 8; see also notes 109 and 156 below on other manuscripts copied by him. Probably his son was the “Isaac b. Israel ha-sofēr” (scribe) mentioned in Toledo in 1282, and it is clearly this Isaac whose tombstone dated 1297 was preserved (see González Palencia, *Mozárabes*, no. 1.147; León Tello, *Judíos de Toledo* 2: no. 212, 286). Isaac Abravanel, commentary on Amos 3.12, also referred to the famous Bible copied by Israel (no doubt the copy of the Hilēliy codex); critical ed. in *Comentarios hebreos medievales al libro de Amos*, and in *Don Isaac Abrabanel [sic] y su commentario al libro de Amos*. Another Pentateuch manuscript based on the Codex Hilēliy and similar to the J.T.S. manuscript mentioned above is in the hands of the Swiss collector René Braginsky, where it is Manuscript 119; see the printed exhibition catalog of that collection, Cohen, et al., eds., *A Journey through Jewish Worlds* or the online...
version: http://braginskycollection.com/start.php#/single/books/119/3 (it is possible to view several pages of the manuscript there, but if there is a colophon it is not exhibited nor does the description mention any).

60 British Museum, now The British Library, MS. Or 2201; Margoliouth, Catalog 1: 21–23. See Ginsburg, Introduction, 669. This is an important manuscript, described in detail there, 667–74, containing readings from the “Babylonian” tradition not attested elsewhere, and with exceptionally detailed masoretic notes; now online: http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Or_2201&index=0. Margoliouth gave the wrong date (it is actually a forgery in the manuscript); see Narkiss, HIMBRI 1: 20–22. See on the added verses, and also on the 1280 Manuscript (below), Hendel, Ronald. Steps to a New Edition of the Hebrew Bible (Atlanta, 2016), 9–10. This is similar to the less detailed fragment acquired by E. N. Adler and which he dated 1492 (“Eleventh Century Introduction to the Hebrew Bible,” 676 n. 4); the authenticity of the fragment of the “introduction,” actually laws concerning Torah scrolls, which he edited in that article and attributed to Judah b. Barzilay of Barcelona, has been disputed (see n. 149 below). Michèlè Dukan, Bible hébraîque, although curiously limited to the period indicated (not even to the end of the thirteenth century), managed to ignore this famous manuscript, as well as many other Spanish manuscripts. Also ignored are all the many important studies by Spanish scholars cited in this chapter. See the review by M. T. Ortega-Monasterio in Sefarad 67 (2007): 484–86 (if anything, the review was too kind).

61 Cited by Pérez Castro, “Una copia del Codex Hilleli,” 16–17); and see n. 51 above. The article analyzes the manuscript in comparison with the famous Leningrad codex and concludes that the Spanish codex (at least the Pentateuch which was corrected in accordance with it) relied both on the ben Asher and ben Naftali masoretic traditions, but much more on the latter.

62 For example, the “Earl of Leicester’s Codex” of the Pentateuch and “Writings,” of Spanish origin, described by Ginsburg, Introduction, 728–34, and see the index there, 1009: “Codices.” Important also is MS. Parma 1996–97 (De Rossi 413), 2 vols., a complete Bible copied according to the “Hilēliy” in Spain in 1468 by Benjamin b. David Gabay (De Rossi, Manuscripti codices hebraici 2: 33, no. 413); see the description and detailed comparison of this with other manuscripts by Milletto, “Un manoscritto ‘hillelita’ della Biblioteca Palatina di Parma,” 278–91. Fernández Tejero, Texto hebreo bíblico de Sefarad en el Minhat Šay, compared the facsimile with citations of the original Codex Hilēliy in that later book and found (206) that there was a 74% correlation (of course, as mentioned, the J.T.S. manuscript contains only the Pentateuch). Ortega-Monasterio, Texto hebreo bíblico de Sefarad en el Or Torah, studied a number of Spanish biblical codices and found a 90% correlation with the “Hilēliy” tradition as recorded by Lonzano in that book.

63 Menahēm b. Solomon, Qiryat sēfer, 48–49. The other scholars named are Meir ha-Kohēn Gēershoniyy, Moses b. Adam ha-darḥan (“preacher”) of Tudela and Meir Ablulu (?) “the great grammarian” and Joseph ha-ḥazan (“cantor” or reader) Al-kansuliy(?). I have found no other mention of any of these; the name Abencubal (indeed, Judā) is known in Toledo in the fifteenth century, but of course, cannot be the scribe mentioned here. There is a possibility, however remote, that Joseph ha-ḥazan is the same mentioned as a member of the Jewish court of Toledo in 1233 and 1248 (González Palencia, Mozárabes de Tōleōd 1 [volumen preliminar], nos. 1.141, 1.142, etc.).

64 Text in Jeschurun 9 (1878): 1–6 (Hebrew section); rpt. in Kobak, Ginze y nistarōt 4: 73–78. Although he obviously spent time in Castile, and may even have been
from there (probably), he states (3) that he was then living on the Ebro river, which refers to Zaragoza. Note that he complains that others had made copies of the aforementioned codices but sold them at very high prices. He was the author, or collector, of a number of letters, including some written to him, in Zaragoza (published by Beinart, H. “Igron ‘irryi mi-Sefarad min ha-meeh ha-15,” Sefunot 5 [1961]: 77–134). In addition, he wrote a lengthy eulogy on the death of Benvenist Ibn Labi of Zaragoza (d. 1412), published in the aforementioned Ginzev nistarôt 4: 78–82 and cf. the journal he-Halûš 11 [1880]: 97.

65 Samuel Zarza (see Chapter 3 above on him), cited in Ibn Verga, Judah. in M. Wiener, ed., Shvev Yehudah (Hannover, 1924), 131; also in Baer, Juden 2: 200–01.

66 Burgos: Francisco Cantera Burgos, Alvar García de Santa María y su familia de conversos (Madrid, 1952), 23; Baer, op cit., 239.


68 Letter in Taitachek, Pîsev, 106.

69 Shmulevitz, Aryeh, et al., ed. Sêder Elijahû zîṭa (Tel-Aviv, 1983) 1: 238. On other examples of gold lettering discussed here, see index “gold letters in Bible manuscripts.” The Portuguese king had ordered all the books which Jews had brought with them from Spain to be collected and burned; however, obviously, not all were destroyed.

70 Cited by Meir Benayahu in Sefunot 11 (1971–77): 199 n. 34. Lonzano also mentioned that the word in question was not in the books of Meir Abulafia (on whom see below) or Menâqähm “ha-Meiriy;” Benayahu suggested that this may refer to the responsum of Abulafia to Burgos (see in the text here before n. 151), but of course it is not that; rather, his famous work on corrections of Torah scrolls. There was also a tradition that the scroll of the Torah written by the biblical ‘Ezra was still in existence in Syria; Abraham Zacut quoted at length a letter from Isaac Ibn Alfarâ of Mâlaga to Simon b. Šêmaḥ Duran and his son (read benô instead of beniy) Solomon describing his travels, in which he claimed to have seen this scroll (Yûhasiyûn, 228a; cf. Otsar fôsar masa’ot, ed. Eisenstein [N.Y., 1926], 81–83). According to Gottheil, “Some Hebrew Manuscripts in Cairo,” 614 n. 1, a Bible codex then in Bologna bears the inscription that it was written by “Ezra the scribe,” but in fact it dates from the twelfth or thirteenth century. Perhaps this is the manuscript seen by Lonzano. A legend reported in a seventeenth-century chronicle (Sambari, in Neubauer, Medieval Jewish Chronicles 1: 118–19) claims that the scroll of the biblical ‘Ezra was found in Fuṣṭîf in Egypt, and that Maimonides had supposedly heard of this scroll, then in France, and had gone there to compare it with his own Torah scroll written by ben Asher, and thus supposedly brought it to Egypt. There is obviously no truth to such legends. Lonzano, in fact, said that he examined this scroll in Egypt and that it consisted merely of three faulty scrolls bound together. See also D. S. Loewinger’s introduction to Aptowitzer, Schriftwort, xxxv, and in more detail, the article by him and E. Kupfer cited there.

71 Not to be confused with the Damascus Pentateuch (ca. 1000 C.E.). See Narkiss, HIMBRI 1: 50 and Plate 5. The term “Keter” (crown) is one of those used in Spain to refer to important biblical manuscripts (see also index here). This codex was written by Menâqähm b. Abraham Ibn Malekh or Maliq (not Malek) for Rabbi Isaac b. Abraham Ḥadad; neither of whom is otherwise known (see Baer, Juden 2: 563 on the “Emmeleque, Maleque, Malch, Ibn M-l-kh” families of Burgos). In the fifteenth century, the manuscript was purchased by Abraham
b. Ma’azia ha-Kohên from Ṣedaqah b. Abraham. Most probably they lived in Egypt. I. Joel (in K’S 38 [1962]: 122–32) first reported on the purchase of this famous manuscript by the Hebrew University in Jerusalem (MS. Heb. 790), and that he had consulted Baer on the possible origin of the names; Baer misled him into believing that the scribe and rabbi were of Toledo. Joel remarked on certain definitely Spanish characteristics of the manuscript and its writing. A digitalized version of the manuscript is online: http://jnul.huji.ac.il/dl/mss/heb790/index.html. There are other examples of “carpet page” illuminations, such as the “Parma Bible” (see below at n. 82) and especially the “First Kennicott Bible” with its numerous examples (Narkiss, 154–56, figs. 456–62), and the micrography carpet page of the “Lisbon Bible” and other examples (ibid., 141, fig. 179v; 170, fig. 520; 171, fig. 526; 174, fig. 541); also Copenhagen Royal Library MS. Heb. 7, a Pentateuch, ca. 1460 (Ulf Haxen in Kings and Citizens pt. 2: 8–9, no. 7, with illustration).

72 Narkiss, HIMBRI 1: 18–19. The manuscript is described in some detail, including the colophon, in Schiller-Szinessy, Catalog, 16–19, no. 13. According to this, it is a particularly accurate text with valuable masoretic notes not found in printed editions. The introduction to the table of Christian chapters and verses indicates that these were for the purpose of refuting Christians in their polemics against the Jews “because of questions they ask us every day about our faith and our holy Torah,” citing a particular chapter of a book, “and we do not know what that chapter is, and so to answer them quickly” the table of names of books and chapters was added. Another example which includes such a table (without the explanatory note) is the Imola Bible (see n. 115). See also Dunkelgrün, Theodor. “When Solomon met Solomon: A Medieval Hebrew Bible in Victorian Cambridge,” Journal of the Bible and its Reception 3 (2016): 205–53, particularly 213–15 (most of the article is an interesting discussion of nineteenth-century Hebrew catalogers). On the divisions of chapters and verses, see Chapter 1, n. 110, also index here “verses, division of.”

73 Narkiss, op. cit., 20–22. Abūl-Wālīd Marwān was the Arabic name of Jonah Ibn Janāḥ; there was also an important scholar in Provence in the twelfth century named Moses b. Joseph b. Marwān ha-Lēvy, and others. The three known manuscripts copied by Joseph are two complete bibles (1300 and 1308; British Library MS. Or. 2201 [see n. 60 above]; University of Toronto, MS Friedberg 5–001 [formerly in the Sassoon collection, MS. 508]; this is the manuscript called erroneously “Bible Merwas” by Metzger, “Masona ornementale,” 101) and of the “Latter Prophets” (1334; Sassoon MS. 1208; Sassoon, Ohel David 1, Addenda, 51); see Sed-Rajna, “Toledo or Burgos?” 7 and “Hebrew Manuscripts from Toledo and Tudela,” 303 (essentially the same article); Narkiss, op. cit. 1: 21. The manuscript of the “Latter Prophets” was acquired by Jacob Sapir in the nineteenth century (Even sapiyr 2: 185, no. 3). It was written in Toledo in 1331 for Judah b. Asher, son and successor of the renowned Asher b. Yeḥiēl of Toledo.

74 The manuscript was used by Norman Snaith for his edition of the Bible (Torah. Neviyim. Ketuviyim; see “Sources” here), which nonetheless relied primarily on the Lisbon, 1482 manuscript, to the extent that any manuscript was actually used (see n. 127 below). The Soria Bible is fully described in Sassoon, Ohel David 1: 2–5. In addition to this, Ibn Gaŏn wrote a Torah scroll, apparently for himself; see his “Miγdal ʻoz,” on Maimonides, M.T., Ahavah: “Tefillin, mezūzōt ve-sefer Torah,” Chapter 9, beginning “Ve-aniy ʻōmēr (in all printed eds. with commentaries).

75 S. Buber wrote that in 1879 he received a letter from a rabbi in Tripoli saying that they had this manuscript, written in 1314 (‘a”d), but this is apparently a
misreading of ‘a”b (1312); letter in Harkavy, Me’asēf nedāhiym, 193–94. According to Harkavy, this Bible was also called “Keter Šēm Ṭôv,” the same as the title of one of Ibn Shēm Ṭôv’s books. Eliezer Aschkenazi wrote from Tunis in 1868 that an acquaintance of his had written to him that the manuscript was in a “certain city” (probably Tripoli, as above) but that the owner did not wish to sell it. This unnamed acquaintance copied the entire introduction by Ibn Gaōn, which Aschkenazi published in ha-Levanôn (Lebanon) 5 (no. 18) (1868): 280 (this journal is extremely rare but mostly available at the Jewish National Library). The manuscript was finally acquired by David Sassoon and was part of that collection sold in 1984, to the Carl Alexander Floersheim Trust for Art and Judaica (Bermuda).

76 See D. Cazés in R.E.J. 20 (1890): 80–83. Not only is the arrangement of books unusual, so also the division of chapters in Samuel and Kings and some other books. Job, Proverbs and Psalms are written as poems, with separate hemistichs. This is in keeping with a tradition that these books (the Hebrew acronym E”MeT, “truth,” from the initials of each title) are the “only” poetry in the Bible; this was mentioned also by Moses Ibn ‘Ezra(h) in his work on poetics. Other examples of variations in the order of books will be mentioned later; see on this in general Ginsburg, Introduction, 1–8. The so-called “Farḥî” codex (see index here) also has a different order of books, but this matter is not as simple as Kogman-Appel, “Scholarly Interests,” 156, indicates; see index here “biblical books, order of.”

77 Oxford, Bodl. MS Kennicott 2. Narkiss, HIMBRI 1: 22–23. He stated that Joshua was more a decorator of the masōrah text than an actual illuminator (an artist who lavishly illustrated the biblical text); however, this is obviously not so, since Joshua himself stated (24) that he also drew the Temple plan for what is now known as the “Second Kennicott Bible,” an extremely elaborate drawing. The “Dublin Ibn Gaon” Bible also has an unusual order of books; see Narkiss, 30 and 107. See in greater detail Narkiss, “Manuscrits hébreux enluminés conservés dans les bibliothèques de France,” 258–68. The manuscript was sold in 1399 in Bologna by Menahēm b. Moses, who possibly fled Spain after the attacks in 1391. On the various signatures of Joshua in these manuscripts, see Metzger, “Josué ben Abraham ibn Gaon,” 11–12, notes 13–14, and briefly “Masora ornementale,” 103 n. 98. Metzger is of the opinion that only the Paris and Dublin manuscripts were the work of Joshua, in addition to the “Cervera Bible” (see n. 82 below) which is the main subject of her article; this position is not tenable in light of the above statement that he illuminated at least the “Second Kennicott Bible.” On Paris, B.N. MS. hébr. 20 and 21, see Zotenberg, Catalog, 3. Manuscripts 22–24 there are also from Spain. On the important Torah scroll, which may be the work of Ibn Gaōn, see notes 39 and 74 above, also with additional information on the “Soria Bible.” There is some debate about the date of the “Second Kennicott Bible,” usually said to have been written in 1306, but Kogman-Appel, Jewish Book Art, 101–02, argues that it was much earlier (see also there, 113 and Barco, “Joshua ibn Gaon’s Hebrew Bibles,” 273–74). Another Pentateuch apparently written in Tudela at about the same time (1300) was auctioned at Sotheby: http://www.sothebys.com/en/auctions/ecatalogue/2017/important-judaica-n09687/lot.169.html. According to the description, the “present volume begins on the flesh side. An identical placement of the flesh side occurs in the so-called First Ibn Gaon Bible. That Bible shares with our manuscript a number of exceptionally rare variants in the vocalization of the text. This combination of codicological and masoretic parallels helps reinforce the suggested localization and dating of the present
manuscript to Tudela, ca. 1300.” Is it possible that this is, in fact, an unsigned codex written by Ibn Gaôn?

78 Undoubtedly Amusco, a town near Palencia; on Jews there in 1492, see Baer, *Die Juden* 2: 425.

79 Hopelessly misread by Narkiss, *HIMBRI* 1: 33, as “Ban Banesht.” He is undoubtedly the “Abraham Bienveniste” mentioned as owning some houses near the castle of Soria in 1487, and the “Rabi Jaco Gaon” from whom he bought a house is certainly a relative of our scribe (Baer, ibid., 423). Other less likely possibilities for “Sali” could be Salinas de Aona or Salinillas; see Baer 2: 585 on these towns. The manuscript is briefly and inadequately described by Neubauer, *Catalog* 1: nos. 68, 69 (OX. Opp. Add. 4to, 75 and 76).

80 Neubauer, *Catalog* 1: no. 1 (OX Arch Seld A 47). Narkiss, ibid., 37–38. A scribe Abraham b. Joseph Serugiel (Soria, 1312) is mentioned as a copyist of a Bible in Soria in 1312, of which only the Prophets and “Writings” survive (MS. Vat. ebr. 11 and 12; which he bequeathed to the synagogue upon his death in1331/32); the scribe’s name was misread by Richler, *Hebrew Manuscripts in the Vatican Library*, 7 as “Sarakasniel” and 8 “Sarkasniel.” Richler also identified the owner of the manuscript as Isaac b. Joshua Caló (*sic*) but the Hebrew colophon, if copied correctly (the name of the scribe was not), has d-q-a-l-u, which could perhaps be de Calo or some other name. The scribe Abraham Serugiel is mentioned by Freimann, “Kopisten hebraischer Handschriften,” 106; Samuel is not mentioned.

81 See Sassoon, *Ohel David* 1: 11 ff.; Harkavy, *Hadashiyim gam yeḥananim*, 102–03, reported that he saw this manuscript in Damascus; and see Loewinger, D. S. prolegomenon to Aptowitzer, *Schriftwort*, xxv ff. Neither Harkavy nor Loewinger knew the actual origin of the manuscript. It is in private hands and unavailable for further examination, but there is a microfilm at the Institute for Microfilmed Manuscripts (Jerusalem). Jaume Riera i Sans, in *Latlas català de Cresques Abraham* (Barcelona, 1975), 15, claimed that the scribe is to be identified as the famous Cresques Abraham, illustrator (allegedly) of the famous Catalan Atlas (see my *Dictionary*, 184–85). Kogman-Appel says that there are reasons to accept this claim on the basis of “art-historical considerations” (“Scholarly Interests,” 149). She demonstrates the extensive knowledge and interest in scientific and other matters which Elisha had, and so he was far more than a “mere” scribe or illuminator. His interests also included a knowledge of many early Jewish chronological works and legal texts. Much of this interest found expression in the material which he included in his manuscript; also extensive masoretic material not normally found in such codices (see details in Kogman-Appel, “Scholarly Interests,” 156 ff.; note that he cited variants from the Severus Torah scroll, probably derived from David Qimḥi, see Chapter 4 above, n. 38); on important little-known *midrashiym* used, see 160 ff. Note that in one of these, which perhaps he himself wrote, he incorporated a summary of the five methods of interpretation from Ibn ‘Ezra’s introduction to his commentary (see Chapter 1 above), as well as some statements from Bahya b. Asher and Jacob b. Asher (see Chapter 4 above). Also important is what has wrongly been described as a Catalan translation of David Qimḥi’s dictionary, *Sēfer ha-shōrashiyim* in the margins. In fact, it is the scribe’s own version of a biblical dictionary, based on that work but incorporating his own ideas and translations of words in Occitan (old Provençal), corresponding in several words with glosses in the Catalan atlas (ibid., 159–60). Roussillon, where the codex was written (perhaps Perpignan?), was of course part of Provence. An unfortunate slip of the pen (computer) is the claim that Elisha “developed the tradition of the typical Sephardi *sic* Temple diagram” (ibid., 169); he did nothing of the sort, of course, this was already a
long-standing practice and was particularly championed by Joshua Ibn Gaon. Finally, we hear (171) tragically of the sale of two biblical codices, at least one of which was illuminated, by his widow after her and their children’s conversion in 1391.

82 Perpignan Bible (Paris B.N. hébr. 7); mentioned briefly by Metzger, “Masora ornamentale,” 100; cf. Zotenberg, Catalog 1–2; see Kogman-Appel, Jewish Book Art, 131–40, 157–65 and Gutmann, Joseph. Hebrew Manuscript Painting (N.Y., 1978), 50–51, 52–53, plates 6–7; Cervera Bible (Biblioteca Nacional, Lisbon 72), ibid., 59 (it served as a model for the “First Kennicott Bible,” discussed later); see also Ginsburg, Introduction, 494, and numerous works on illuminated manuscripts. A digitalized version is available online: http://purl.pt/23405/3/#/14 (with patience). Parma Bible (Parma, Biblioteca Palatina MS, Parm. 2810), ibid., 56–57; the brief description in Richler and Beit-Arié, Biblioteca palantina, 4, no. 5; Manoscritti ebraici della Palatina di Parma, 10–11 (see there also, 12, a less important Spanish Bible, thirteenth–fourteenth century). The “Cervera Bible” was written for himself by the aforementioned Samuel b. Abraham [b.] Natan (see at n. 20 above), and was later richly illuminated (in La Corua, now A Corua) and in the eighteenth century was acquired by Antnio Ribeiro dos Santos, the remarkable librarian of Lisbon, where it is now MS. Iluminado 72 of the Biblioteca Nacional (Lisbon); see Metzger, “Josué ben Abraham ibn Gaon et la masora du MS. Iluminado 72,” with facsimiles; and see: http://www.metmuseum.org/about-the-museum/now-at-the-met/features/2012/lisbon-hebrew-bible. The text of the masōrah was copied and illuminated by Ibn Gaon in Tudela for a certain Rabbi Sason of Cervera; he completed only the first part and another scribe finished it. It should be remarked that the text itself must have been considered important; otherwise, why would anyone go to the great expense of illuminating it? As noted above (text before n. 56), it also was probably a model for the famous Athias Bible printed in Amsterdam. Various theories concerning the Cervera of the “Cervera Bible,” other than the obvious location in Catalonia, have been suggested. Kogman-Appel, Jewish Book Art, 125–26, advances ingenious arguments for a Castilian location, no less than the tiny town of Cervera del Ro Alhama in La Rioja. Aside from the fact that no Jews are known to have lived there, her argument about the use of the castle representing Castile in the illuminations has been disproven by Barco, “Joshua ibn Gaon’s Hebrew Bibles,” 277 n. 29. Vernica Vives, “La biblia de Cervera: un modelo olvidado,” II Congrs per a l’estudi dels jueus en territori de llengua catalana. Actes (Barcelona, 2005), 201–11; online: <http://institutmonjuic.googlepages.com/elccongres> (click on Actes II Congrs at bottom of page) has nothing of importance, ignoring most of what is discussed here.

83 London, British Library MS. Harley 5774–75; Margoliouth, Catalog, 88; Narkiss, HIMBRI 1: 115–17. MS. Harley 5773 may also have been written by the same scribe; see online: http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Harley_MS_5773&index=64 (Margoliouth, Catalog 1: 50–51 does not, however, mention the name of the scribe.)

84 The earliest (?) codex is ca. 1300 (Lisboa, B.N. 72; this is the manuscript reported by Neubauer, “Notes,” 434, apparently there were then no other biblical manuscripts there). There is also a biblical codex from Portugal with the commentary of Rashi in the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid. It belonged to Judá (so) b. Isaac of Lisbon, who sold it to Rabbi Samuel Nunes in 1442 (Valle Rodríguez, Catálogo, 66, no. 10; there is no mention of either person in Pimenta Ferro Tavares, Os judeus em Portugal). A manuscript of the Prophets (part of a larger work) was copied by a certain Manoah b.Meir Sḥṭ-y-y-l-γ in Almeida, Portugal (the
date is corrupt; apparently 1484, according to Freimann, “Kopisten hebraischer Handschriften,” 110, no. 93, who cites Gottheil. The manuscript was in the former Sicilian and Catalan synagogue of Rome (Gottheil, “Bible Mss. in the Roman Synagogues,” 177–78). A Pentateuch with haftārōt and “Scrolls” was copied in the beautiful town of Moura in 1471 (Oxford Bodl. MS. Can. Or. 42); another was allegedly written (according to a modern note) in 1496 in Lisbon for Rabbi Abraham b. Elijah Romano [Romo] (Paris B.N. MS. Hb. 15; Gottheil, “Bible Mss.,” 179). Since our focus in this book is on Spain, we shall not detail all the Portuguese manuscripts or their history; see Pimenta Ferro Tavares 1: 371–75 (incidentally correcting Metzger’s assumption that the scribe Samuel de Medina [Parma MS. 2674 and 677] was Castilian, although the “family name” indicates a probable origin from Castile), and the bibliography cited in her notes; see also Sed–Rajna, Gabrielle. Manuscrits hébreux de Lisbonne (Paris, 1970). See Richler and Beit-Arié, Biblioteca palatina, 34, nos. 145, 146 (Parma MS. 2674 and 677). The so-called “Lisbon Bible” is discussed below at n. 127. The “Abravanel” Pentateuch (n. 111 below) contains a notation from a purchaser (1584) that he acquired it and another written by Samuel de Medina in Lisbon in 1491. That certainly is the one currently in Oxford Balliol College No. 382 (Silvestri, Bibbie ebraiche, 153, 166–68; she did not make the connection and dated it erroneously 1490, but see the colophon).

85 Narkiss, HIMBRI 2: 33, figs. 310–11; Tahan, Ilana. Hebrew Manuscripts: The Power of Script and Image (London, 2007), 52–53. Another pentateuchal codex, late fourteenth to early fifteenth century, once owned by the Duke of Sussex is MS Add 15306 (Margoliouth, Catalog 1, no. 82); it is less significant but has a micrographic decoration. Another manuscript of the complete Bible, also known as the “Duke of Sussex Bible” (MS Add 15252) dates from the second half of the fourteenth century. It lacks the illumination of the other manuscripts.

86 Richler and Beit-Arié, Biblioteca palatina, 5, no. 9 (MS. 3215); 6, no. 11 (MS. 1994–95); no. 12 (MS. 2517); no. 13 (MS. 2667); no. 14 (MS. 2667); 7, no. 16 (MS. 3073; doubtful); no. 17 (MS. 3214); etc. Most of these are described simply as fourteenth or fifteenth century “Sephardic script,” which in the absence of other identification does not prove they were in fact written in Spain.

87 Parma MS. 3233 (Richler and Beit-Arié, Biblioteca palatina, 61, no. 283). The manuscript was sold in 1470 by Samuel b. Solomon Miyli (Melli).

88 Metzger, “Masora ornementale,” 96; yet see n. 86 above, where this manuscript (Parma MS 3214) is described simply as fourteenth to fifteenth century.

89 MS. Vat. Rossiana 601; (Richler, Hebrew Manuscripts in the Vatican Library, 595), copied by Joseph b. Jacob Ibn Janāḥ in Huesca in 1275; microfilm at Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts (Jerusalem), no. F 8574. This manuscript, which includes also some masoretic treatises, may be worth further study. A fragment of another scroll, incorrectly identified as a Torah scroll but actually of the Prophets [fourteenth century], is found in the Archivo Histórico Provincial of Huesca; it contains part of Judges 19 and 1 Samuel 2–3 (color photo in Aragón Sefarad [Zaragoza, 2004] 2: 295); and also a fragment of Judges from Jaca, fourteenth century, ibid., 297 and also in vol. 1: 433, wrongly identified as a Torah scroll. Note also several manuscript biblical fragments, fourteenth to fifteenth centuries, from Tarazona (vol. 2: 290–91).

90 Ḥadashiyim gam yeshaniym, 101. This is the manuscript described in detail by Gottheil, “Some Hebrew Manuscripts in Cairo,” 649–52 (there was a copy of it in Cairo; Gottheil provided the complete texts of the colophons of both manuscripts). Gottheil, aided by David Yellin in deciphering the colophon of the Jerusalem codex, made several errors: the date 1422 instead of 1322 and the
incorrect reading of the name of the patron for whom it was written, not “don” D-s-p-o [u]-n-i-n but “Enduran” (en Duran), as Harkavy correctly read it (Gottheil admitted that he could not explain the a [e] instead of o in what he thought was “don”). From this form (en is the Catalan equivalent of don), it is obvious that the codex was written in Catalonia (indeed, as we shall see, all bibles called miqdashya were from Catalonia). The family name of the patron, d-s-p-o-n–ṣ, maybe de Safont (see Silvestri, Bibbie ebraiche, 80; she did not transcribe the en at the beginning of Duran, however). The name of the scribe is Moses b. Menaḥēm d-al-Bo [u]-r-n-s (de Albornoz). See also Y. Ben-Zvi in K’S 32 (1956–67): 366–74. The manuscript is now at the National Library of Israel (MS 4º 780: 1–2).

91 Profiat Duran wrote that the Bible is divided into three parts (Torah, Prophets, “Writings”) to symbolize the three parts of the Temple, and thus “he does well who calls this book Miqdash Yah” (Ma’asēh ēfōd, 11–12; and see 13 on why the full Tetragrammaton is not used instead of the abbreviated Yah). On the connection of the idea of the Bible and the Temple and Ibn ‘Ezra, see above, Chapter 2, n. 120. See generally Wieder, “Sanctuary as a Metaphor for Scripture.” The masoretic Aaron b. Moses b. Asher did not specifically make this allegorical connection between the Bible and Temple, although he alluded to it in an obscure manner (Diqdūqey ha-te’amiym, ed. Baer and Strack [Leipzig, 1879], 2).

92 Durán y Sanpére, Discursos, 51–52; and see the inventory of books left by Isaac Saporta in 1326, published by Soberanas i Lleo, “La biblioteca de Salamó Samuel Atzarell” (my gratitude to the courteous and efficient staff of the public library of Tarragona for making this available to me while I was there). On Isach Saporta and his family, see Secall i Güell, Jueries medievals tarragonines, 292–95; especially the genealogical chart, 293.

93 Hillgarth and Narkiss, “A List of Hebrew Books……” Unusually, it was specified that all these books were to be written on lambskin parchment, and they were to be illuminated and the Bible to have initial letters in gold and all were to be bound. The price paid was 30 livres for the first two and 10 for the Bible.

94 Wettinger, Godfrey. The Jews of Malta in the Late Middle Ages (Malta, 1985), 62; text 230.

95 Durán y Sanpére, Discursos, 51–52. Baer, Die Juden 1: 862 erroneously assumed that he is the same as the famous physician who performed eye surgery on Juan II of Aragón–Catalonia, and also the same as the astrologer who predicted that king’s siege of the Catalans in 1471 (the name in Baer’s document is spelled Cresques Abnár or Abinbar; who is the physician referred to; obviously not the same as Cresques Adret). Further information has since come to light. The Bible had been in the hands of Astruc Adret, a relative of Cresques, who had sold it to another physician in Cervera without the consent of the family. Cresques severely chastised his relative for this; see Llobet i Portella, “Documents de jueus de Cervera,” 52–53. Another physician of Cervera, Salamó Cavaller, in 1472 paid the enormous sum of 45 livres for a three-volume Bible codex, called Magdasia (ibid., 52–53; already mentioned by Durán y Sanpre, Discursos, 51–52, not cited by Llobet). For other sources referring to the acquisition of Bible codices called Magdasia, see there, 52 n. 8. In an inventory of books owned by Jews in Gerona (early fifteenth century), Vidal Lobel and his son Struch (Astrug) owned complete manuscript of the Torah (“macdacia,” or Magdasia), another Pentateuch codex, two copies of the Aramaic translation, the commentary of Rashi, the complete prophets, the Psalms, the “scrolls” (Megiylot), Proverbs, Job, the apocryphal Esdras (one wonders if this were the Latin or perhaps a Romance translation), the commentaries of David Qimhi on the prophets (separate codices) and on Joshua, Judges and Samuel, Psalms, the commentary of Jonah b. Abraham
Gerūndiy on Proverbs, the commentary of Ibn ‘Ezra on Genesis and Exodus, as well as numerous other books (Millàs Vallicrosa and Batlle, “Inventaris de llibres de jueues gironins,” 36–38; reprint, 314–16). Iancu-Agou, “Livres inventories a gerone [sic],” is a detailed summary of Millàs Vallicrosa and Batlle, with some additional sources relating to other communities, primarily Provence in the fifteenth century. Isaac Sa-Porta (Saporta) of Santa Coloma de Queralt in 1326 left a number of books to his nephew, including a Magdasía (appendix to Soberanas i Lleo, “La biblioteca de Salomn Samuel Atzarella”). Of the over 600 individual books listed in the Gerona inventories, for the most part, owned by “ordinary” Jews (not scholars), nearly all are biblical (either complete or separate books, such as the Pentateuch, Prophets or Psalms).

96 Introduction, 748. That manuscript is said to have belonged to the “Talmud To-rah” society in Barcelona and to have been copied from a Bible from Jerusalem, “and it is called Miqdashiyah;” see n. 126 below, the Tauste Bible, on this.

97 Berlin, Staatsbibliothek MS Or fol. 585 (Steinschneider, Berlin 1, No. 32. In the colophon the scribe indicated “castle of Falset.”

98 Pluteo Sinistro XXIX, 1 – Biblioteca Malatestiana di Cesena; see Tamani, “Fondo ebraico della Biblioteca Malatestiana.”

99 The Cervera codex was later in the collection of David Sassoon (MS. 16; in Sotheby Park-Bernet; Film F 8862 of Institute for Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts, Jerusalem [incorrectly titled “Keter ha-Rashba”!!]). See Blasco Martinez and Romano, “Vidal (Ben) Saúl Satorre: copista hebreo,” 3–4. The authors noted that the “Judah ben Dinah” for whom the 1404 codex was copied should probably be “Abendino” (see there, 10). See Zotenberg, Catalog, 4: Paris, B.N. MS. heb. 31. Freimann, “Kopisten hebraischer Handschriften,” 107 (no. 16) listed Satorre as “Chajjim b. Saul” known as “Vital Sartori” (sic). Astruc converted during the persecution of 1391, taking the name Luis de Junyent (see Llobet Portella, Josep M. “Los conversos según la documentación local de Cervera (1338–1501),” Revista de la facultad de geografía e historia 4 [1989]: 337).

100 Margoliouth, Catalog 1, no. 53; Narkiss, HIMBRI 1, no. 19; 2, figs. 310–23. The codex has no indication of date or place of composition.

101 National Jewish Library (Jerusalem), MS. Heb. 1401. This has received careful study by Yalon, “Tōrah neviyiym ketūviym ketav-yad Yerūšalayim,” with attention to the valuable indications of early masoretic material and divergencies in the manuscript, but with nothing about possible textual variants. The entire manuscript is online: http://jnul.huji.ac.il/dll/mss/heb1401/index_eng.html. This manuscript, like some others, has Jeremiah before Ezekiel and then Isaiah. Judah b. Moses Ḥallāva (Tortosa, fourteenth century; his father had been a famous rabbi there) expressed his amazement that contemporary scribes do not follow the order of biblical books as in B.B. 14b, particularly in not placing Jeremiah after Isaiah, which is only found in the Miqdashiyah codices (see above on these), and not in all of them; “and perhaps the Christian tradition caused this since in the order of the prophets they begin with Isaiah since it [consists of] pleasant and sweet rhetoric [!]” (Imrey shefer, 393); in other words, because the Christian bibles also have Isaiah first, some Jewish scribes may have placed Jeremiah first to avoid the appearance of favoring the prophet whom Christians believe “foretold” the coming of Jesus. Printed Hebrew bibles all have Isaiah prior to Jeremiah. Another fourteenth-century biblical codex from Spain in which some beginning and ending letters of books are written in gold is Vat. ebr.7 (Richler, et al., eds., Hebrew Manuscripts in the Vatican, 4). There is also a manuscript (fourteenth or fifteenth century) of the “Latter Prophets” which contains Qimḥi’s dictionary in the Escorial library (MS. G–I–12); this, however,
follows the traditional order of books (Barco del Barco, Catálogo 1: 147–48). Various other extant manuscripts also contain the dictionary, including the “Farḥī Bible,” discussed here.

102 Russian State Library, MS. Günzburg 568 (“Former Prophets”), MS. Günzburg 1510–11; microfilms at the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts (Jerusalem).

103 Paris, B.N. MS. hébr. 31. The scribe was the important Vidal Saul Satorre (Çatorre), who wrote the Cervera codex previously discussed (n. 100) before moving to Zaragoza.

104 MS. Add. 652; Schiller-Szinessy, Catalog 1: 24–25.

105 See Sirat and Beit-Arié, Otsar kitve-yad ʻivriyim 1, no. 44. On other Catalan manuscripts, see Narkiss, HIMBRI 1: 105, 107, 109, 113, 115, 118, 120.

106 Narkiss, HIMBRI 1: 110 (now British Library, King’s Ms. 1); Kogman-Appel, Jewish Book Art, 155 copied the error. Ginsburg, Introduction, 512 ff. has it correctly (Richler and Beit-Arié, Biblioteca palatina, 64, no. 304, made the identical error with regard to a manuscript written in Provence in 1328). The name “Jacob de Ripoll” is found as a member of the Jewish council of Barcelona in 1367 (Baer, Die Juden 1: 408), but he is probably another person. See the interesting history of the “King's Bible” manuscript provided by Kennicott, reproduced by Ginsburg, 517. According to this, the Bible found its way first to Jerusalem and from there to Aleppo (Syria), where it was sold in the seventeenth century. Jacob b. Joseph is mentioned by Freimann, “Kopisten hebraischer Handschriften,” 108, no. 36, as the scribe of another manuscript in Solsona, 1388. Some of these Catalan manuscripts, including the “King’s Bible,” are important for their illuminations.

107 OX Kennicott 1. “Bible. O.T. Hebrew. 1806” (Vienna, 1806), 4 vols.; also (Bible. O.T. Hebrew. Kennicott Bible). The Kennicott Bible. Roth, Cecil. The Kennicott Bible (Oxford, 1957), is a booklet (10 pages) of reproductions of illuminations, which unfortunately gives little idea of their richness. There is now an outrageously priced private facsimile available, with an introduction by Bezalel Narkiss and Aliza Cohen-Mushlin: http://www.facsimile-editions.com/en/kb/ An extensive bibliography of books and articles dealing with this Bible is in Silvestri, Bibbie ebraiche, 140. See also Ma. Ortega-Monasterio, Teresa. “Some Hebrew Bibles in the Bodleian Library: The Kennicott Collection,” J.S.S. 62 (2017): 93–110 (on the “Second Kennicott Bible,” see n. 77 above). The “Kennicott Bible” is one of the rare examples of what is called “box binding,” with extension pieces on three sides of the bottom cover and the top cover folding into it like a box. Avrin, Leila. “The Sephardi Box Binding,” Scripta Hierosolymitana 29 (1989): 27–43, discussed four examples then known: this Bible; Jerusalem, Schocken Institute of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, MS. 24350, an undated Pentateuch; Jewish Theological Seminary, Micr. 8241, an undated Hippocrates, Medical Aphorisms; and Cincinnati, Hebrew Union College, Klau Library MS. 2, a Pentateuch written in Lisbon in 1475. One or two other examples, not from Spain, have since been discovered.

108 Toledano, Ōṣar genaziyum, 211, mentions that he saw a Bible manuscript which had been corrected in accord with the Bible written in 1472 by Ibn Zabara, who had written “dozens” of such manuscripts, three of which were at one time still in Morocco; yet Toledano did not mention the “Kennicott” Bible. MS Zürich, Jeselsohn 5 (Pentateuch) and MS. Sassoon 1209 (Prophets and Writings) are a Bible copied by Ibn Zabara in 1477 in “Almuksam” (probably Amusco, see n. 78 above; Penkower, see below, invents a non-existent “el-Muqasam”) for David Barzilay (microfilm at the Institute for Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts, Film
Ibn Zabara wrote that he collated his text with several important manuscripts, relying particularly on that of the scribe “Rabbi Israel,” who of course is the aforementioned Israel b. Isaac Ibn Israel (or “Israeliy”), scribe of the Toledo copy of the Codex Hilēliy. Penkower states that MS London, British Library, Or. 2286 was also the work of Ibn Zabara. A later marginal note in the Toledo copy of the Codex Hilēliy mentions that the owner has a Torah scroll (or codex) written by Moses (Ibn) Zabara which was kept in the synagogue of the Talmud Torah in Toledo (Silvestri, *Bibbie ebraiche*, 27). Ibn Zabara was the subject of various legends reported by the eighteenth-century rabbi and bibliographer Hayyim Joseph Azulai; see Benayahu, Meir, ed. *Sēfer Hiyd’a* (Jerusalem, 1959), 97 and Richler, B. “The Scribe Moses ben Jacob Ibn Zabara of Spain: A Moroccan Saint?” *Jewish Art* 140–147 (1992): 18. Penkower, Jordan S., et al. *Masorah and Text Criticism in the Early Modern Mediterranean: Moshe Ibn Zabara and Menahem De Lonzano* (Jerusalem, 2014) (briefly discuss the 1477 codex, which they suggest may actually have been written in 1476, but the main focus of the book is on the renowned Menahēm de Lonzano (sixteenth-century Italy (who carefully examined and glossed Ibn Zabara’s text, concluding that his text of the Pentateuch was superior to that of the famed Aleppo Codex, but the text of the prophets was not as accurate. All those who have written on Jewish manuscript illumination of course discuss this codex; see especially Contessa, “The Decoration Program and Artistic Context of MS Zurich, Jeselsohn 5” in Penkower.)


110 Jewish Theological Seminary (N.Y.) MS. L5. Silvestri, *Bibbie ebraiche*, 145, transcription of the colophon. The complete bible is also online via JTS, see: http://garfield.jtsa.edu:8881/R/-?func=dbin-jump-full&object_id=141799&silo_library=GEN01 (see Image 679 at the end for the colophon).

111 Neubauer, *Catalog 1*: no. 30 (Bodl. Opp Add. 4º26); see Narkiss, *HIMBRI* 1: 171 (he transcribed the name of the scribe erroneously, this has misled other scholars who have written it as “Khalef,” cf. fig. 521 there, where it may be read correctly). The text of the masōrah was written by a different scribe, Samuel b. Joshua b. Joseph Frontino(?). There has been debate as to the location of this manuscript; most recently Silvestri, *Bibbie ebraiche*, 226, argues for Seville, citing Schmelzer, “Hebrew Manuscripts and Printed Books,” that Jacob b. Joshua Frontino was the scribe of two manuscripts in Seville in 1471 and 1474. Peculiarly, he made no mention of our scribe, who very likely was the brother of this Jacob. It is likely that Abraham, the scribe in Toledo (see below), was the son of this Moses; on Moses, see Freimann, “Kopisten hebräischer Handschriften,” 110 (no. 104) on other Bible manuscripts copied by him (and on his son Abraham ibid., 106, no. 6), as a copyist of a manuscript in Seville in 1472 and of others in 1473 and 1480, but no mention of the “Abravanel Pentateuch.” The 1473 complete Bible manuscript is Parma MS. 2809, with space left for the name of the ultimate purchaser (in other words, the scribe wrote it and later found a buyer for it); see Richler and Beit-Arié, *Biblioteca Palatina*, 9, no. 23 (incorrectly “ibn Khalef,” nor did he mention the “Abravanel Pentateuch”). The 1472 manuscript done in Seville is now Hispanic Society (N.Y.) MS. HC 371/169 (Goshen-Gottstein, “Biblical Manuscripts in the United States,” 32, erred in stating that the only Hebrew biblical manuscript at the Hispanic Society library is the beautifully illuminated B 241; of which there is now a facsimile ed., N.Y., 1993). Although Metzger, “Massora ornamentale,” 108, briefly discusses some of these manuscripts, she gives incomplete information about them. She also makes
erroneous statements about the form of his name. There is another manuscript, in the Coimbra (Portugal) university library, which is sometimes wrongly referred to as the “Abravanel Bible,” apparently because it has some marginal notes and “belongings” (?) related to the Abravanel family (Carlos Fiolhais, director of the library, “Conserving Ancient Knowledge for the Modern World”: https://estudogeral.sib.uc.pt/bitstream/10316/12359/1/CONSERVING%20ANCIENT%20KNOWLEDGE%20FOR%20THE%20MODERN%20WORLD.pdf). An important analysis of the decoration of this manuscript is Afonso, Luís Urbano, et al. “La biblia de Coimbra y la ‘escuela andaluza’ de iluminación hebraica,” Archivo español de arte 88 (2015): 53–68.

112 This work, extant in Aramaic and Hebrew versions, relates the events of the Maccabees (there is a brief note on it by Zeev Safrai in Safrai, et al., eds., Literature of the Sages. Second Part, 238–40, with outdated bibliography and no mention of its inclusion in Spanish Hebrew bibles). A critical ed. of the Aramaic version was published by M. Z. Kadari in Bar-Ilan 1 (1963): 78–102; the standard Heb. text is in Jellinek, Beyt ha-midrash 1: 142–46; 6: 4–8). It is found also in other biblical codices (e.g., notes 128 and 132 below and in the aforementioned “First Ibn Gaon” (Tudela) Bible of 1300; also Paris, B.N. MSS. 46, 47; Zotenberg, Catalog, 5–6). The scribe of the aforementioned “First Cambridge Castilian [Heb.] Bible,” in his table of Christian names of the books, stated that “they have also another book, called Maccabees, which is Megiylat Antiyokhūs,” which of course is incorrect, confusing that later work with the apocryphal Book of Maccabees. The text also appears in the Universidad Complutense de Madrid MS. 2 (formerly 111-Z-21; erroneously reversed in the article), copied by Yom Ṭov b. Isaac Amarillo in Tarazona (1482); it later belonged to the famous Hebraist Alfonso de Zamora (Cantera Burgos, “Manuscritos hebreo-bíblicos,” 1257, no. 10; it was mentioned by Neubauer, “Notes,” 424, no. 2). The first printed edition was in Guadalajara, 1482 (extremely rare); thus the claim by H. Filipowski, in his ed. of Ibn Gabirol’s Mivḥar ha-peniyniym, and his ed. of Megiylat Antiyōḵūṣ (London, 1851), that it is the first edition is erroneous. There is an edition from some manuscripts and translation by M. Gaster in Transactions of the IX International Congress of Orientalists (London, 1893), 17–32. See also (Sources): Diez Merino, “Manuscrito hispano inédito de la Megillat Antiochus.” A recent Spanish edition of the late fourteenth century (probably) manuscript is in Avenoza, Biblia de Ajuda, 144–55, and see the important introduction, 131 ff. The Filipowski ed. (above) to which she refers as being reprinted in 1863 should have been explained; the text was reprinted in Slucki, Ḥakhmat Yisrael (Warsaw, 1863; photo rpt. Jerusalem, 1977). The text of the version in the “Ajuda” Bible (so-called because it is found in the library of Ajuda in Portugal) is eclectic, based also on the early Megiylat Ta’aniyti (more than a calendar of fast days, it is an Aramaic chronicle with glosses in Hebrew) and on the medieval Hebrew version of Josephus, Sefer Yosiyfōn. It is either the work of a Jew or a converso. See Caas Rello, “La versin de los Macabeos de la Biblia de Ajuda y el Rollo de Antioco,” an important study in general on the Maccabee material in Jewish tradition (he determined that the main source of the Ajuda manuscript is the Megiylat Antiyōḵūṣ, but did not consider the other material, nor did he mention all of the above manuscripts and references). Amazing ignorance still is to be found in the assertions of some modern writers, such as the statement that “Megillat Antiochus…was regularly used as the festival scroll for Purim” (Staalduine-Sulman in A Jewish Targum in a Christian World, ed. Houtman, et al. [Leiden, Boston, 2014], 29).

113 Schiller-Szinessy, Catalog, 32–34, nos. 21, 22. The autograph manuscript of Abravanel’s own commentary on Isaiah and the “Former Prophets,” written
in Corfu and completed in Monopoli (Italy) in 1499 is in the Escorial library (MS. G-I-11); the text of the commentary on Amos was edited from this manuscript by Ruiz González, Gregorio. Don Isaac Abrabanel [sic] y su comentario al libro del Amós (Madrid, 1984).


115 See the brief description, with bibliographical references, in Contessa, 62–63. These and a third Bible manuscript, written for “Moses b. Samuel al-Ṭōṭōs” (sic., of Tortosa) in 1484 (MS Parma 2018), possibly in Toledo, is briefly mentioned by Mauro Perani (“Manuscripts Brought to Italy by the Jews Exiled in 1492,” 301).

116 The 1487 Toledo Bible, now in Madrid, Biblioteca del Palacio Real, MS. II/3231–46; Barco, Catálogo 1: 116–23; Ortega-Monasterio, “The Hebrew Bible of the Royal Palace in Madrid;” see also Metzger, “Masora ornamentale,” 108. A photograph of one page is in the exhibition catalog Vida judía en Sefarad, 258, no. 26; a richly illuminated folio reproduced in La Cataluña judía, 188. Neubauer, “Notes,” 426–27, who notes the importance of the massoretic notes. On the scribe, see n. 111 above. The Gato or Ibn Gato family was important in Toledo.

117 (Edinburgh, University of Aberdeen, University Library MS 23). See Roth, Cecil. The Aberdeen Codex of the Hebrew Bible (Edinburgh, 1958); a booklet with descriptions and illustrations. It was probably written in Naples, under the patronage of Joseph Albalia, one of the exiles.

118 For instance, a manuscript of the Torah formerly in the Sassoon collection, written in 1487 for don Abraham b. Joseph Ibn Crispin (Sassoon, Ohel David, 608; Park-Bernet, Important Hebrew and Samaritan Manuscripts, no. 916; unsold). Of some interest is a series of manuscripts at J.T.S. (Lutzki 1–2, 4–10; microfilms in some other libraries), written in Spain about 1480 and which contains the entire Bible. Important for its beautiful illuminations is the Copenhagen Royal Library MS. Heb. 5 (Haxen, in Kings and Citizens, pt. 2: 20). British Library MS. Harley 5498, a four-volume complete codex, is either fourteenth or fifteenth century, described as “Sefardic script” (Margoliouth, Catalog 1: 30–31).

119 Formerly Sassoon MS. 487, now at the Scriptorium, the Center for Christian Antiquities in Orlando, Florida; Film F 9272 at the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts (Jerusalem). There are two separate colophons, the earliest of which refers to the completion of the masorah on the Hagiographa, dated eighth day of Nissan in the year 5228 (31 March 1468), according to which it was written for “the dear and honorable son of the aged honorable don Moses Santadoli. God grant him male children dealing with [studying] the Torah…” The second colophon gives the name of the scribe of the codex: Moses bar Joseph of T-r-u-t-i-e-l (Torrutiel, near Cuenca, where the fifteenth-century chronicler Abraham b. Solomon lived and that it was written “for the lovely [pleasant] youth R. Abraham bar Jacob Samia in the city of Seville on the new moon of Sivan of the year 5228 of Creation…” (22 May 1468). Either the original owner did not, in the end, acquire the manuscript and it was later completed for the other patron, or possibly the text of the masōrah on the Hagiographa was added to the other codex. Metzger, “Masora ornementale,” 108, cites from a catalog of another manuscript copied by Moses at Seville in 1472. “There is another example of the scribe’s work, a non-illuminated complete Bible now in Modena (Italy), Biblioteca Estense (Or. Ms. 18.1) with its colophon dated 1470” (Baker, “United
States: Hebrew Manuscripts and Incunabula,” lecture at the 66th IFLA Council and General Conference [International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions], Jerusalem, 2000 (online: http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla66/papers/082-141e.htm). I was unable to see Jona, S. and Gruenwald, M., eds. Catalog der ebräischen Handschriften der kgl. Bibliothek in Modena (Belovar, 1883); most of the library was looted by the Nazis. I do not find this manuscript mentioned in the list “Fonti ebraiche nei fondi della Biblioteca Estense Universitaria”: http://www.cedoc.mo.it/estense/info/expo/beu-mo-2006_cultura-ebraica.pdf. There is there also a manuscript of the Psalms (Alfa.S.10.8 (1); ibid., 5) written by Joseph b. Jacob Ḡaškenaziyy in Naples in 1487. He was also the scribe of a manuscript of the “Writings” (Ketūviyyim) with commentaries in the same year (Alfa.&.5.27; loc. it.). Incidentally, an error there lists: Alfa.H.7.17 as “Isaac, Rabbi (o Abbas), De religione seu De ordinatione animae (in castigliano) Aput Sanctum Cucufatum Vallis Aretanae [i.e.: Zaragoza, Juan Hurus], 1489,” although correctly identifying both the title and the translator, Bernardo Boil (see article in The Catholic Encyclopedia on the confusion of two people of this name). In fact, this is not the work of the Spanish Jewish author but rather of St. Isaac of Nineveh (d. ca. 700), also known as Isaac the Syrian and Isaac Cyrus, and is a rare example of this work (unfortunately, the above web site is no longer available and a search of online catalogs of Italian manuscripts yielded no results). See also Janeras, Sebastià. “La difusion d’ Isaac de Ninive dans la péninsule ibérique,” in Juan Pedro Monferrer Sala, ed., Eastern Crossroads: Essays on Medieval Christian Legacy (Piscataway, N.J., 2007), 261 ff. (also apparently confusing the two different Boils; according to the author, only one copy of the work is known, at the Madrid B.N., to which the copy at Modena may now be added).

120 Schwarz, Hebräischen Handschriften…Wien, 5, no. 1; 7, nos. 3, 4. Microfilms of these (and the entire collection) are at the Hill Monastic Library (see n. 34, end, above) and at the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts in Jerusalem (F 17792). Silvestri, Bibbie ebraiche, 143-44. cites Schwarz but mentions only the first manuscript (no. 3).

121 Valle Rodríguez, Catálogo, nos. 8, 9 (Pentateuch, incomplete, with the vocabularies), 12, 19, 20–22; Cantera Burgos, “Nueva serie de manuscritos hebreos en Madrid,” 220–28 (with photographs). MSS/5456 contains a fragment of Genesis in Hebrew with interlinear Castilian translation (ca. 1351–1401; possibly Salamanca). It is surprising to read the opinion of one author (Ortega-Monasterio, “Manuscritos bíblicos hebreos en bibliotecas españolas,” 218) that there are no less than 30 [Hebrew] biblical manuscripts at the Biblioteca Nacional, as nothing like that number has been cataloged (Cantera Burgos, “Manuscritos hebreo-bíblicos,” 1258–60, lists only six). Another interesting manuscript is of the complete Bible, including dates of sale (1427, 1446 and 1456), the last owner being Jacob b. Elijah Ṣarfāṭiyy, who may be identical with Jacob Ṣarfāṭiyy of Plasencia (Baer, Juden 2: 324); Valle Rodríguez, ibid., 59–61; this is apparently the one mentioned vaguely by Ortega, 220. See also a photograph of one page of an illuminated (opening words and marginal decoration) complete Bible in the exhibition catalog La vida judía en Sefarad, 258, no. 27.

122 Reinardt and Gonzálves, Catálogo, 56–58 (MS. 1–13, nearly complete; MS. 1–14, Pentateuch with “Scrolls” and haf ṣarot), 102 (MS. 2–13, complete except for Pentateuch).

123 Parma MS. 2825 (Richler and Beit-Arié, Biblioteca Palatina, 33–34; Beit-Arié there, 279, erroneously describes an important mahzôr [holiday prayer book] manuscript, written in Uclés in 1481, as from “Aragon!”) The biblical manuscript contains also the hafṭarôn and the “Scrolls,” with the exact dates for the
completion of each; thus, the *haftarōt* was completed 15 days after the Torah and the Scrolls a week later (note the remarkable speed, notwithstanding the additional material added). The manuscript also contains a calendar beginning with the year 1441/42 and the “chronology” of each book (more details on this would be of interest), as well as the peculiar addition of special titles for each of the books of the Torah (*Sēfer ha-yashar* for Genesis, *Sēfer ha-bariyt* for Exodus, etc.). There are some entries in Ladino (Spanish written in Hebrew characters) indicating that the manuscript, along with “other items” was given to a synagogue in the tiny town of Pastrana (east of Madrid) by Yōm Tōv Ibn Farāj in the years 1468–71. The family name of the scribe reminds us of Isaac b. Solomon Ibn Alahdab, fl. ca. 1350–1429 (?). He was an astronomer and poet, a student of Judah b. Asher, the great-grandson of Asher b. Yehiel; ultimately, he went to Sicily. The notice of a synagogue in Pastrana is of great importance; nothing is known about the Jewish community there (see, however, Baer, *Die Juden* 2: 428, a quarrel between two Jews there in 1489). After the Expulsion, the synagogue was converted into a church; see Ruiz Povedano, J. M. “Las ‘conversiones’ de sinagogas,” *M.E.AH.* 39 (1980): 151.

124 OX Can Or 77. Narkiss, *HIMBRI* 1: 177. The scribe was “Eli” (possibly ‘Alī; Aly) b. Joseph *Miyjiy*. The manuscript was sold in the same year to one Menahēm b. Yōm Tōv Ḥōvah. Berlanga de Duero is a small town, still very medieval. The little that is known of its Jewish community is found in two articles by Solla, Ricardo Muñoz. “El pasado judío de Berlanga de Duero,” in Universidad Pública de Navarra, ed., *Convivencia de culturas y sociedades mediterráneas. V Encuentros Judaicos de Tudela* (Pamplona, 2004), 75–90 and “La comunidad judia de Berlanga de Duero,” in Y. Moreno Koch and R. Inzquierdo Beniito, eds., *Del pasado judio en los reinos medievales* (Cuenca, 2005), 205–30; neither article mentions this manuscript or the individuals associated with it.

125 Calatayud: Parma MS. 2948 (Richler and Beit-Arié, *Biblioteca Palatina*, 35), of no special interest. Tauste (N.W. of Tarazona): MS F 1832–33, Trinity College Library, Cambridge. Narkiss, 179; the scribe was Joseph b. Jacob b. [Ibn?] Senior (Seneor), called “de Baillo” (Villo?) (A Jacob Abensenyor is recorded in Tauste in 1452; possibly the scribe’s father). Narkiss could not identify the name of the town. In its present state, the manuscript consists only of the Pentateuch and the prophets. In the important colophon of this manuscript, hitherto ignored, the scribe-owner states that he was very careful in copying and punctuating the text and the *masōrah* using various manuscripts, among which was one “of the associations [cofradía] Talmud Torah which was written in Barcelona, the crowning city [ha-ma’atiyrah, usually said of Jerusalem], which was copied from the Bible written in Jerusalem… which is called Miqdashiyah;” the colophon is reproduced in Silvestri, *Bibbie ebraiche*, 100–01. The Barcelona manuscript to which this refers is obviously the one used centuries later by Ginsburg in his famous Introduction, see n. 97 above.

126 Facsimile ed., *Tanakh Lisbon* (see Bibliography). Ibn Mūsā’s codex contains the entire Bible and was written for a certain person by the name Joseph b. Judah al-Ḥakhīm (which may indicate he was a doctor or judge; Ar. al-ḥakhīm, Sp. alfaquí or alfaquim); see Ginsburg, *Introduction*, 707–14, and Narkiss, *HIMBRI* 1: 141–44; see on the *masōrah* Ortega-Monasterio, “Los códices modelo,” 365–72. The illumination of the Bible, begun in Lisbon, was never completed until it was later acquired in Italy and finished by Christian artists. Samuel also wrote a manuscript of Psalms in 1476 (Parma MS. 1712; Richler and Beit-Arié, *Biblioteca Palatina*, 79, no. 390; Beit-Arié mentioned “several other” manuscripts by Samuel, but cited only Hebrew Union College HUC 2, in 1475, and Or. 2626–28,
without noting either Snaith’s ed. or the facsimile rpt.). In fact, Snaith’s edition, while claiming to utilize these various manuscripts, is virtually a reprint of the earlier Hebrew Bible ed. M. H. Letteris (London, 1866 and numerous reprints), with serious errors; see the review by M. Cohen and D. Freedman in *H.U.C.A.* 45 (1974): 97–132.

127 Vat. ebr. 8 and ebr. 475; Richler, *Hebrew Manuscripts in the Vatican Library*, 5, 410–11.

128 Vat. ebr. 21 (Richler, 14); Vat. ebr. 26 (16–17), a thirteenth-century manuscript of “Writings” and “Scrolls,” which includes the Scroll of Antiochus (see index here for other examples of this); Vat. ebr. 29 (Richler, 18–19); Vat. ebr. 447 (Richler, 392); Vat. ebr. 463 (Richler, 403); Vat. ebr. 596 (Richler, 492) and Urb. ebr. 4 (Richler, 601).

129 MS. Vat. ebr. 596; Richler, 492. It consists of the Torah, *haftarōt*, “Scrolls,” and the books of Psalms, Proverbs, Job and Daniel; the first three of these are the traditional books known as *E’MeT* (see n. 76 above) but the inclusion of Daniel is unusual.

130 On the Gerona fragments, see Cortès, “Fragments de manuscrits hebreus i arameus” and “A propòsit de dos manuscrits fragmentaris hebreus apareguts de nou;” and Lozano Galan and Jiménez Jiménez, “Fragmentos,” with texts. The Tarazona fragments are briefly described, and with the texts but not facsimiles, in a booklet, *Documentos hebreos de la catedral de Tarazona* by Elizabeth Giralt-López and Josep Ribera Florit; available only online at http://www1 dpz.es/dipu/areas/presidencia/sefarad/NUEVO/ESP/novedades/novedades.htm (possibly for a limited period of time). This publication, and indeed the fragments themselves, has apparently been ignored in recent scholarship on the so-called “European genizah” (this refers to the recent discovery of manuscripts, and chiefly fragments of manuscripts, in various places in Italy and some in Spain and elsewhere; few are of significance and such discoveries are not correctly characterized as “genizah” since they were not hidden away by the Jewish communities but rather in most cases later used as bindings for other documents by Christian owners). The fragments, used as binding material for archival documents, of the so-called “Gerona genizah” have not turned out to be as significant as the hype surrounding their discovery indicated. In fact, the existence of pages of Jewish loan records or fragments of Hebrew books in such bindings was known already to Millás Vallicrosa years earlier (“Restos de antiguos libros hebraicos,” *Insitut d’estudis gironins. Annals* 6 [1951]: 323–24; see also his “Restos de una antigua biblia hebraica manuscrita en Gerona,” *Sefarad* 13 [1953]: 356–58); according to him, Jewish bookbinders of Gerona, who had a virtual monopoly, placed these fragments of outworn books in such bindings to preserve them; a less charitable explanation might be that they were fragments of works left behind after the Expulsion and used by Christian bookbinders. A brief note by Chaim E. Cohen, “’Al piysūq pesūqiym ve-shaʿar praṭey yiḥyūd be-sēfer Tōrah be-Giyronah,” *Leshōnēnu* 69 (2007): 399–405 in fact deals with a late Ashkenazic Torah and is thus of no interest for us.

authore Vox Dei appellata (Cambridge, 1597). The Munich manuscript gives the name of the city where Abraham lived (or was born) as “A-r-n-y-d-o,” which of course is Arnedo in the Rioja region, near Calahorra. The work is also found in Paris, B.N. MS. 29, a fifteenth-century Pentateuch with illuminated masorah (Zotenberg, Catalog, 4; curiously not mentioned by Metzger, “Masora ornamentale.” The Munich manuscript has many illuminated pages, apparently the work of the scribe.

132 MS. Heb. 3.4 in Copenhagen Royal Library, described in detail (Latin) in Codices Orientales Bibliothecae Regiae Havniensis, 6–9, with the Hebrew colophon. The codex contains also the “Scroll of Antiochus,” on which see n. 112 above. There is no record of the community in Baer.


134 Written in Alcalá de Henares: Escorial G-III-3; see Sefarad 3 (1953): 46. Another manuscript is described by Diez Merino, “A Spanish Targum Onqelos [sic] Manuscript.” Neither of these is noted by Sperber, Alexander, ed., The Bible in Aramaic (Leiden, 1959). The Hijar, 1490 manuscript (see index here, Onkelos (2)) is there noted.

135 Schiller-Szinessy, Catalog, 19–20, no. 14; not in Reif, ed., Hebrew Manuscripts at Cambridge University Library (since there are no catalogs of manuscripts for Hebrew Union College, it is impossible to locate the appropriate number; however, Silvestri, Bibbie ebraiche, 245, indicates it is MS 702).


137 Goshen-Gottstein’s misnamed “Hebrew Manuscripts in the United States” were concerned only with manuscripts prior to the thirteenth century which indicate important “variants” for the biblical text. For instance, he mentioned (32 n. 24) Union Theological College (N.Y.) Thompson Case CB 20 B 58 13, a fourteenth to fifteenth century manuscript of Joshua-Esther, which “does not seem worthy of any special attention.” He also casually mentioned the previously cited (N.Y.) J.T.S. MS. 5 (actually MS. L 5), as a “beautiful Spanish manuscript written in May 1479 by the scribe Sasson [Sasōn],” also referred to as “Sasson MS.” (ibid., 45 n. 7); see at n. 111 above. These are the only manuscripts cited in the article that are of interest for our purposes (he ignored other important manuscripts at J.T.S.). In the years since then, little effort has been made to catalog Hebrew manuscripts in any of the other libraries in the United States (an exception is the Hill Monastic Manuscript Library; see Bibliography).

138 Sēfer ha-manhiyy 2: 723 ff.; see also 616–17 where he explains that dog feces no longer have any bad smell, which would be prohibited for a Torah scroll (thus we see that the feces were already thoroughly dried before mixing with the liquid).

139 Ibid., 734. As we have seen, several biblical codices have certain words or letters in gold, but usually not names referring to God. It is curious that Abraham had to issue such a prohibition since it already exists in the Talmud: Sofrim 1.9, a certain “Alexander” is said to have written the names of God in a Torah scroll in gold, or overlaid with gold, and the sages prohibited it; see on this Graetz, H. “Alexander and His Gold-Lettered Scroll,” J.Q.R. (o.s.) 2 (1889): 102–04. Graetz sought to identify Alexander with the brother of Philo.

140 Yakhiyn ve-bō’az, new ed. (Jerusalem, 1992) 1: 93, no. 24; the editor was not able to identify the source. Isaac b. Shēshet, Shē,t ālōt u-tešhūvōt, no. 7.

141 Sēfer ha-manhiyy 2: 734. “Ḥūnash” can also refer to a Pentateuch codex, but children were often taught from scrolls (see also the following note, end).
372 Bible texts in Spain

142 Teshuvot, ed. Blau, 2, no. 294; this responsum is also found in Ibn Adret, Teshuvot ha-meyḥasot la-Ramban, no. 239; where it is rightly attributed to Maimonides (added by an editor or copyist, of course). Maimonides used the term “Sefardiyy” for Ḥanōkh to identify him as “Spanish” for his correspondent in another land. At the end of the text there the words are added “and so ruled the sages of Narbonne” (Blau did not mention this). The decision of the sages of Narbonne is in Moses b. Maimon, Qōvēs I, 4, no. 16. See also Aaron b. Joseph ha-Kōhen of Lunel, Orḥot ha-yiyyom 1: 23, where both responsa are quoted (all these are in the Bibliography here), and Menahēm b. Solomon. “ha-Meiyyriy,” Qiryat sēfer, 56–57; and see ed. from Ms. by S. Gottesman in Yeshūrūn 21 (2009): 41–42. Ironically, a fourteenth-century rabbi in Tortosa, Moses Ḥallawā, an important scholar, ruled (Sheʾēlōt u-teshuvōt, no. 145) that one must not recite the blessing upon a scroll not written in accord with Maimonides; yet he was asked specifically (no. 147) about what Maimonides had said in his responsum, to which he replied that Ibn Adret (who had been his teacher) had said that we do not rely on responsa of Maimonides which he did not sign (this is important if it could be verified, although it is unlikely since only the original recipient would have a signed responsum; for Ibn Adret’s real reason in rejecting the responsum see the following note); elsewhere he disagreed with Maimonides and noted that Ibn Adret had permitted it (ibid., no. 149 and see n. 2 there for Ibn Adret’s responsum). Curiously, Maimonides elsewhere ruled that a Torah written on parchment (not specifically for a Torah scroll) is invalid, and it is like a hūmash (see previous note) which is not fit to be read in public services (Teshuvōt, ed. Blau, 2, no. 162, 266). This would seem to contradict the practice in al-Andalus which he mentioned with approval. The opinion of Ibn Megas that the conditions that make a scroll unfit apply only to a scroll that is read in public, even if it belongs to an individual, but with a Torah of an individual which is called a hūmash it is not necessary to be so strict (cited in Ashkenazi, Shīyṭah meqūbēṣet on Ketuvot 19b [various editions]).

143 Sheʾēlōt u-teshuvōt 1, no. 227; repeated in no. 230. Both the responsum of Maimonides and that of Ibn Adret are quoted in full (without, of course, mention of sources) by David b. Joseph “Abudraham” (correctly Ibn Abī Dirhām; Seville, fourteenth century), Abūdraham, the section on blessings on the Torah (I use the Warsaw, 1878 ed., f. 37a–b). Ibn Adret’s colleague Asher b. Yehiēl in Toledo issued the exact same ruling (Sheʾēlōt u-teshuvōt, 3.8. Joseph Caro (so; not “Karo” or “Qaro,” 1488–1575) cited Maimonides and wrote that Ibn Adret disagreed and said that Ibn Adret must have written this “in his youth” (we know of no responsum he wrote in his youth) but wrote later in his code that such a scroll is unfit. Caro added that if so there is a difficulty in that Maimonides had cited the custom of great scholars (in Spain), and they must therefore have erred (“Beyt Yōsēf” on Tür, Yōreḥ dēʾah, no. 279.2; reprinted in Ibn Adret, Teshuvōt ha-Raʾḥiba hē-hadashōt, f. 211, bottom; no number). Ibn Adret’s responsum is ibid., 104–05, no. 118 (2); there he wrote that he had never known of a case where the blessing had been recited on a scroll that was unfit, even in the villages where sometimes there was an unfit scroll from which they read, but without reciting a blessing (part of this was also cited by Caro, op. cit., no. 283). This is somewhat surprising since of course, Maimonides in his responsum agrees that the scroll is unfit; the question is only whether a blessing may still be recited on it; neither Ibn Adret nor Caro appear to have understood Maimonides’ reasoning here. Shēm Tōv Ibn Gaʾon (early fourteenth century) cited the opinion of the French rabbis (and so, of course, Maimonides) that even one missing letter invalidates a Torah scroll (cf. B.B. 15a), and adds that so was the custom in all “Sefarad”
(Castile) and Catalonia that if an error was found another scroll was brought and the blessing recited again (“Miqdal ‘oz” on M.T., Ahavah: “Tefillin, mezūzōt ve-sēfer Tōrāh,” 1.2.). The source for Ibn Ga’n’s statement is Meir Abulafia, who said that the custom in all of Spain is that if an error is found the scroll is returned (to the ark, chest in which Torah scrolls are kept) and a new one brought out and the blessing recited again (cited in so-called Yad Ramah ve-qadmōniym on Gittin, ed. Shoshanah [Jerusalem, 2001] 2: 87–88). Earlier, Ibn Ga’n was asked about a Torah scroll in which were found three or four mistakes, to which he replied that it is not permitted to read from it until the mistakes are corrected and that thus had Ibn Adret (his teacher) taught (in Ibn Adret, She’ē lot u-teshūvōt 7, no. 287).

144 Ibn Adret, Teshūvōt ha-Rashba ha-ḥudashot, 102–04, no. 118 (1); re-edited in Ibn Adret, in A. Zolznik, ed., She’ēlot u-teshuvot...mi-ketav-yad (Jerusalem, 2005), no. 12 (and cf. no. 13 where he disagreed completely with Maimonides). He said that he had not seen the responsum of Maimonides, which is strange since it had already been translated (from the original Arabic); perhaps for some reason, this had not yet come into his hands.

145 She’ēlot u-teshuvot 1, no. 487; cf. Teshuvot ha-meyuḥasot, no. 199, where in the question this is said to be the actual practice in several “villages.” In another responsum, apparently to Rabbi Solomon of Toledo, he explained that the hūmashiym about which the Talmud debated whether they may be read in the synagogue and a blessing recited in place of a Torah scroll was written on scrolls according to the same laws as a Torah scroll, but “our hūmashiym” written as codices may not be read in place of a Torah scroll (ibid., no. 805; cf. Teshuvot ha-meyuḥasot, no. 187). As above, the word hūmash also was applied to scrolls written for teaching children, which Ibn Adret does not discuss but which he also would have found unfit for reading in the synagogue. He elsewhere explained that the reason why it is customary to read the hafṭarot (prophetic readings) from a codex is because the scrolls of the Prophets are not to be found at all, and also that according to the law the hafṭarot alone, separate from the complete Prophets, are not to be written in a scroll (She’ē lot u-teshuvot 7, no. 150; “R’ Yishāq” cited there is, of course, al-Fāṣī).

146 She’ē lot u-teshūvōt 1, no. 144.

147 Duran, Sēfer ha-tashbeḥēṣ 3, no. 30. It is questionable whether the editor’s note should be relied upon for this alleged practice of Isaac de León, an important scholar who certainly knew of the ruling of Maimonides.

148 However, the authenticity of a fragment attributed to Judah b. Barzilay (Barcelona, born ca. 1070) on the laws of Torah scrolls (Adler, ed., “Eleventh Century Introduction to the Hebrew Bible”) has been challenged by D. Kaufmann and S. Halberstamm (see the latter’s notes in J.Q.R. [o.s.] 10 [1897]: 166–67, and by Ginzberg, Ginsey Schechter 2: 528. Also, if this were authentic, surely Yerūḥam b. Meshūlām (ca. 1290–1350), a student of Asher b. Yeḥiel, who cited Judah’s Sēfer ha-‘iṭiyym on laws of Torah scrolls in his own legal compilation Toldot Adam ve-hava (Venice, 1553), 18b, would have cited at least part of this text.


150 Masoret seyag le-Tōrāh (see Bibliography). The title, of course, is taken from Avot 3.14, “tradition is a fence around the Torah.” See part of the introduction of this work translated in Breuer, Mordecai. Keter Aram Sōvah ve-ha-nūsah ha-meqūbal
and generally xxi–iv and Hebrew, 88–94; also in Levy, Fixing God’s Torah, 18. In fact, the work is only a dictionary of the correct (in his opinion) punctuation of certain words in the Torah, with brief explanations but no references either to other authorities or to the various manuscripts consulted. He claims to have examined both ancient and recent manuscripts and to have followed the majority reading of the former (setting aside recent ones as corrupt or inferior).


152 She’ēlōt u-teshūvōt 3.6. The student also mentioned that the Torah scroll in question had been written in a manner which was not according to ancient scrolls that had been copied in earlier times (whether the question comes from Spain or Germany is uncertain).

153 Letter in Taitachek, Pisqey, 104 (citing also Menahēm’s book mentioned below), and see 106–07. Yet he also said that Abulafia’s book was very hard to obtain (n. 159 below). A question apparently from Germany to Asher b. Yeḥiel relating to the possibility of correcting numerous errors in a Torah scroll mentions having an excellent book on correction of Torah scrolls and that “Rabbi Meir Sofēr” (scribe; Abulafia?) copied from it several Torah scrolls. It is probable that this refers to Abulafia’s book (Asher b. Yeḥiel, She’ēlōt u-teshūvōt, 3.6). Incidentally, the aforementioned Moses Ḥallawā of Tortosa was asked about the ruling of Asher, according to which errors could be corrected, to which he replied that he doubted that Asher ever wrote this and that it contradicts the opinion of Maimonides (Ḥallawā, She’ēlōt u-teshūvōt, no. 146); clearly, he did not have Asher’s responsa.

154 Qiryat sēfer, 45. Septimus, B., Hispano-Jewish Culture (Cambridge, M.A., 1982), 37, misinterpreted Menahēm to mean that Abulafia sent to all these lands “requesting” reliable Torah manuscripts and built upon this an elaborate theory of paying for those manuscripts, and other groundless notions. In fact, what was said is that Abulafia sent copies of his own work to those lands. A codex (Escorial G-I-5) of the Hagiographa with commentaries of Ibn ‘Ezra and Gersonides, and David Qimhi and Menahēm b. Solomon “ha-Meiyriy” on Psalms, written in 1476, contains a copy (at the end of the book of Nehemiah) of Abulafia’s masoretic work, the colophon of which is dated 1465 and states that it was copied from the autograph manuscript of Abulafia, written in 1226 (not 1227); see Llamas, “Un manuscrito desconocido,” 68–69, 75 (the article deals with non-Spanish manuscripts in relation to the Complutensian translation; see at n. 236 below on that) and “Los manuscritos hebreos de la Real Biblioteca de El Escorial,” 16; Barco del Barco, Catálogo 1: 149–51, no. 16.

155 Two Torah scrolls written in accord with Abulafia’s corrections were kept at Burgos (Israel Ta-Shma, “The ‘Open’ Book in Medieval Hebrew Literature: The Problem of Authorized Editions,” Bulletin of the John Rylands Library 75 [1993]:18; see also Goshen-Gottstein, “Keter Aram Šōva ve-hilḵōt sēfer Tōrah la-Rambam.” The colophon of a Toledo Pentateuch codex copied by Elisha b. Samuel of Toledo in 1256 (Parma MS. 2025) states specifically that it was collated with Abulafia’s work Masoret seyag le-Tōrah (see brief description in Richler and Beit-Arié, Biblioteca palatina, 11–12, no. 38 and see Manoscritti ebraici della Palatina de Parma, 16; see there also, 20, a manuscript of the Former Prophets, twelfth to thirteenth century, MS. Parma 1889; Richler and Beit-Arié, 52, no. 231). Menahēm “ha-Meiyriy” quoted the colophon of another Torah codex.
corrected in Toledo according to Abulafia (Qiryat sēfer, 48; the scribe was the aforementioned Israel b. Isaac Ibn Israel, but no date is given).

156 Apparently, he did not see Abulafia’s book. Abraham Ḥasan wrote, concerning the statement that in matters of “full” or “defective” (lacking a vowel letter) spellings in a Torah scroll we follow the majority, that this does not apply to Torah scrolls in his time (early sixteenth century, in the Ottoman Empire) since they are not prepared according to the careful collation with scrolls done by Abulafia but rather in accord with the book of Menaḥēm “ha-Meyriy,” who did not see the work of Abulafia (Pisqey, 106; in general, the entire letter is important on the history of Torah scrolls). Obviously, this statement about Menaḥēm is incorrect.

157 In Simon b. Ṣemaḥ Duran (his father), Yavīyun šemu’ah (Livorno, 1744; but only in the rpt. ed., Jerusalem, 1969); and with Solomon’s responsa, rpt. s.t. Sifrey ha-Raḥibash (Jerusalem, 1986); and separately (Jerusalem, 2000).

158 Letter of his student Abraham (Ibn?) Ḥasan (ha-Lēvy?), who became a very important scribe (also, after the Expulsion, in Salonica), cited, in Taitachek, Pisqey, 101–02. Abraham also wrote that neither the book of Abulafia nor of Menaḥēm was readily found in Spain, and when his teacher Isaac corrected the Torah scrolls it had been necessary to send to different places in an effort to find Abulafia’s book.

The reason for the errors in all those [Torah] scrolls was the scarcity of this book on the masorah, or generally the loss of precious and valuable books [probably biblical codices or scrolls] due to the persecutions that were decreed by the wicked kingdom on all the [Jewish] communities of Spain in every generation, and especially in that generation,

referring to the decrees in the fifteenth century (ibid., 103).

159 MS. Vat. ebr. 447 (Richler, Hebrew Manuscripts in the Vatican Library, 392–93); Joseph Caro and other authorities prohibited the practice.

160 Teshuvaḥ ha-meyūḥasōn, no. 232. Ibn Adret’s responsum was also cited by Nisiym Gerundiy (commentary on Sanhedrin 4a); perhaps he wrote that after his earlier decision (see also Duran, Sēfer ha-tashbēṣ, 1, no. 125). See Chapter 1, n. 68 on the masoretes (the two major traditions are those of the schools of ben Asher and ben Naftali (writers usually incorrectly capitalize the word ben, which means “son of”).

161 Moses b. Naḥman, Peyrūshey ha-Tōrah 1: 4, 6–7. On the Sēfer taqiyyu mentioned there (4), see Chapter 4 above, n. 86. In his commentary on the talmudic tractate Megillah (17a) he also wrote that even one letter that is missing or incorrectly written invalidates a Torah scroll until it is corrected, concluding “on every letter [in the Torah] laws and interpretations [agadot] are deduced and on every title heaps of laws” (cf. Menahot, 29b; ‘Erwin, 21b), and he cites also the opinion of Maimonides on this, adding “know that even to keep [such a scroll] is forbidden due to [the verse] ‘do not settle iniquity in your house’ [Job 10.14]” (Ḥidūshey ha-Ramban 1: 139–40; Hidūshey ha-Ramban [on Shabbat, ‘Erwin, Megillah], ed. Herschler, 24). In his commentary on Shabbat 103a (ibid., 70), he discussed the shapes of letters and drew them as they correctly and incorrectly are written and added that any error in the shape of the letters invalidates a Torah scroll (so also tefillin and mezūzōn). It is, incidentally, unfortunate that the various scholarly studies on the nature of Hebrew writing in Spain fail to mention this or any of the above; see also n. 172 below.

162 Biyūr ‘al ha-Tōrah 1: 168–69; 3: 287 and cf. 62. The talmudic sage Rabbi Ishmaēl cautioned Rabbi Meir, a scribe, to be careful in his work lest he omit or add a letter (in a Torah scroll) and thus the world might be destroyed (‘Erwin 13a).
On Hebrew printing in general, and early printed bibles in particular, see Frei.

Photo rpt. Jerusalem, 1962; 1969, with an introduction by A. M. Habermann

S fer ha-tashbēṣ 1, no. 127 (and cf. no. 125, a similar question which mentions

abib, J., lot u-teshūvōt

ēṣ

ō

ō

ī ṭēṣḥ tahat, no. 127, defended Maimonides, saying that also according to him if the scroll was corrected it is fit for use; he also stated that in Barcelona scribes were accustomed to correct errors following the ruling of Ibn Adret, adding that in time of need it is certainly right to rely upon Ibn Adret who permitted it. Simon b. Ṣemaḥ Duran, Sēfer ha-tashbēṣ 1, no. 127, defended Maimonides against Ibn Adret, but also wrote that it was possible to rely on Ibn Adret.

Sēfer ha-tashbēṣ 1, no. 238.


Judah b. Asher, Zikkurōn Yehūdah, no. 23, and see nos. 26–28.

Ibn Adret, Sheʾēlōt u-teshūvōt ha-meyyūḥasōt, no. 238; Isaac b. Shēshet, Sheʾēlōt u-teshūvōt, no. 286. Both responsa are also cited by Caro, “Beyt Yōṣēf” on Tūr, “Yōreh dēʾah” no. 274, who adds that only a separation which is indicated by dots, as is done in codices, is prohibited, but not merely in leaving a space, since scribes sometimes do this when there is not enough room left to write the word on the line and it is written on the following line (nevertheless, Isaac wrote about spaces between verses, not between words).

Moses b. Naḥman, Ḥidūḥey 1: 70 (Shabbat 103b), said that a mistake in any of the forms of letters he discussed invalidates the entire scroll; Ibn Adret, Sheʾēlōt u-teshūvōt 1, no. 1. See also Isaac b. Shēshet, Sheʾēlōt u-teshūvōt, no. 120; and Jacob b. Asher, Tūr, “Yōreh dēʾah,” no. 274. Meḥaḥēm b. Solomon, Qiryat sēfer, 35.

Sēfer ha-tashbēṣ 1, nos. 50–51.

Sheʾēlōt u-teshūvōt, 3.11. However, his statement there that there are major differences in the form of letters “in our land” (Germany, from whence he came) and in “this land” (Spain) and that most of these are not such as would invalidate a scroll is in contradiction to the aforementioned (n. 161) statement of Naḥmanides in his commentary on Shabbat. It is possible that he indeed wrote this responsum while still in Germany where he had not yet seen the novellae of Naḥmanides (not that he necessarily would have changed his opinion).

Ibn Ḥabib, J., Sheʾēlōt u-teshūwōt (Lemberg, 1865), no. 1 (1a, col. b).

Sēfer ha-tashbēṣ 1, no. 127 (and cf. no. 125, a similar question which mentions the custom of Barcelona). Duran’s lengthy replies in both instances are important. On the scribe Vidal (En is a Catalan honorific like Castilian “don”), see Hershman, Isaac Ben Sheshet Perjet, 202 (also 24 n. 39 and 25).

Photo rpt. Jerusalem, 1962; 1969, with an introduction by A. M. Habermann (the copy used, unfortunately, was that of Hebrew University, lacking in several places; there is a complete copy at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York). The second edition of his commentary, incidentally, was Lisbon, 1489 (facsimile rpt. Comentario ao Pentateuco, with an introduction by M. Cadafaz de Matos [Lisbon, 1989]; colophon in Friedberg, Tōldōt ha-defās, 102–03). The facsimile rpt. is also scarce, there is a copy at Harvard (cataloged under Naḥmanides). Some authorities consider the Rome ed. of the commentary of Rashi the first printed Hebrew book; since none of the early Rome printings bears a date, it is nearly impossible to determine.

On Hebrew printing in general, and early printed bibles in particular, see Freimann, ha-Otsar [oṣar] la-malekhet ha-defās ha-ʾiriy; Goldschmidt, Hebrew Incunabulae; J. Kauffmann Buchhandlung und Antiquariat Katalog No. 48; Stegmüller,
Bible texts in Spain 377

Repertorium Biblicum Medii Aevi (Christian only); Friedberg, Tōldōt ha-defūs. Also useful is Pick, “History of the Printed Editions of the Old Testament” (see there, for example, the full description of the Bologna ed. of Psalms, 48–49); yet there are errors in his listing and he overlooked completely the Spanish and Portuguese editions of the Hebrew Bible.

176 See the colophon of the Reggio di Calabria Pentateuch in Friedberg, Tōldōt ha-defūs, 26. On the Guadalajara ed. of Rashi, see ibid., 92–93 (colophon). The printer was Solomon b. Moses Alqabēṣ (often erroneously transcribed Alkabiz, etc.). On the Guadalajara Pentateuch, see Sonne, “Incunabulo ebraico spagnolo,” and K’S 14: 368–78; Ludwig Rosenthals Antiquariat... Hebräische Inkunabeln, 1475–1496, no. 51, and facs. 22 (this booklet is extremely rare, at Harvard, University of Pennsylvania and Manchester University in England; I also have a copy). This ed. was unknown to Ginsburg, Introduction, and to many modern scholars who continue to believe that the Bologna 1482 ed. was the first printed Hebrew Pentateuch. The distinctive versions of the commentary of Rashi in the Guadalajara Pentateuch and that of Lisbon, 1491, are discussed by Sonne, “Le-vikōret ha-tekst shel pērūsh Rashiy ‘al ha-Tōrah.” There has been no investigation of the other texts of the commentary in previously-mentioned Spanish manuscripts and editions, nor for that matter of the biblical texts themselves.

177 See Roth, Conversos, 180–81 and bibliographical details in the notes. Some of the achrymose information in Friedberg, Tōldōt ha-defūs, 95, is incorrect. A. Yaari reported on fragments of Psalms found which are apparently of the same text as the ten pages of Job listed in Fränkel, David. Hebräische Inkunabeln 1475–1494... Katalog 71 (Vienna, 1933), 14, all of which may be from the Bible printed by Juan de Lucena (“Defūṣiyim qadmōnîyim,” K’S 22 [1945]: 234; other fragments were reported by Yaari, “Inyanim be-iyqūnabiyyim ‘ivriyyim,” ibid. 24 [1947]: 153–55). Iakerson expressed skepticism about Lucena’s printing, yet finally admitted that the fragments described belonged to his press and included also the mahrzōr of the Jewish Theological Seminary, but with no mention of the Bible (“Early Hebrew Printing,” 127, 134–35). The most important article on the mahrzōr (not cited by Iakerson) is Bloch, Joshua. “An Early Spanish Mahzor,” J.Q.R. (N.S.) 30 (1939): 51–57 (against the nonsense that this was oblong in shape so that it could be hidden by a converso, see Bloch, 55 n. 8).

178 Friedberg, Tōldōt ha-defūs, 96–97 (Zamorá); 98–100 (Hijar), with colophons. Arroyo, Antonio Peiro. Bibliografía Turolense: libros impresos en la provincia de Teruel (1482–1950) (Teruel 1982), 33, claimed that the first book printed in Teruel province [Hijar] was Devarīym (Deuteronomy), with the commentary of Rashi [Hijar, 1482], and that the only copy is in the J.T.S. library. In fact, no such work exists; possibly he confused this with the Bologna, 1482 ed. of the Torah with the commentary of Rashi (communication to me from the reference library of J.T.S.). Copies of the Hijar, 1490 ed. of the Pentateuch are at J.T.S. and at the Jewish National and Hebrew University Library, Jerusalem and other libraries. (note the partial copy described in Octavio de Toledo, José M. Catálogo de la Biblioteca de cabildo toledano [Madrid, 1906], part II: printed books, 95–96, no. 363). This, but none of the aforementioned editions, is described by Ginsburg, Introduction, 831–36, but with no mention of the second ed. with the translation of Onkelos and commentary of Rashi; see details of these and for online texts in my Dictionary, no. 92. There is a facsimile of the opening page of Deuteronomy from this edition in Mottis Dolader, Miguel A. “Los ‘Judíos’ en el reino de Aragón,” Metodología de la investigación científica sobre fuentes aragonesas 7 (1992): 223 (with no identifying information); reprinted in Aragón Sefarad (Zaragoza,
2003) 2: 299 with the erroneous date of 1485 in the description on 298. The same page appears in Sclar, David, ed. Treasures of the Valmadonna Trust Library (N.Y., London, 2011), 10. A copy of the 1488/89 edition is at Madrid, B.N. (erroneously dated 1487 in Aragón Sefarad 2: 300, illustration, 301). Vinograd, Oṣar ha-ṣefer ha-‘ivry, Jerusalem, 1993; cited by Barco, “Libros hebreos e inquisición,” 4 n. 14) apparently claims that a complete Hebrew Bible was published at Hijar No such edition exists, of course. According to an exhibition catalog from the Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, they have a “thirteenth-century” Spanish (Hebrew) manuscript of the Torah and hafṭarot in which part is missing and has been replaced “in 1488” with six printed leaves, not at the bottom of the page as indicated, but on the facing page (From Written to Printed Text: Transmission of Jewish Tradition [Philadelphia, 1996], 41 and 42, fig. 14; also on the internet: http://www.library.upenn.edu/exhibits/cajs/exhibit1996/Bible.html). See also a photograph of facing pages of the printed text and the manuscript in Stern, David, et al. Chosen: Philadelphia’s Great Hebraica (Philadelphia, 2007), 28. Undoubtedly these leaves are from the 1488 edition (there is no indication in the catalog of how this date is known). The dating of the manuscript (“thirteenth-century”) is highly suspect, however; undeniably the fifteenth century.

179 Fragments of the Pentateuch at Jewish National and Hebrew University Library, Jerusalem; not mentioned by Friedberg or any other bibliographer. This definitely needs further investigation. It was possible to print Hebrew books in 1492, just before the Expulsion, and conceivably such a printing could have been carried to completion by Christian printers (not, of course, conversos) even after 1492 but this seems unlikely.

180 Unique copy at the British Library. A facsimile reprint, with introductory studies, was published in 1991 (Pentateuco: reprodução fac-similada do mais antigo livro impresso em Portugal). The printer’s name of course is not “Gacon” as in Iakerson, “Early Hebrew Printing,” 130.

181 St., C.B., 163 (No. 1072); see Bibliography; Friedberg, Töldt̩ ha-defūs, 101, mentions only the second ed. Ginsburg, Introduction, 815–20 is incomplete on this. Iakerson, “Early Hebrew Printing,” does not mention the second edition.

182 See Ginsburg, 836–47, with the text and translation of the colophon, 841–42; also Friedberg, 103–04. It appears that David b. Joseph Ibn Yahya was the editor of the book. In addition to the copies mentioned by Ginsburg, 847, there are three copies at J.T.S. There was an earlier Eli‘ezer Toledano (1440s), a surgeon (Pimenta Ferro Tavares, Os judeus em Portugal 1: 154; there is no mention of the printer, however, and in fact no mention of printing at all in that book). The Lisbon origin of this Pentateuch is disputed by Goldschmidt, Hebrew Incunables, 64, without justification.


184 A copy of the Leiría ed. is at J.T.S.; the Lisbon ed. at Jewish National Library. The printer at Leiría was Samuel Dortas, “from a distant land,” whose son Abraham designed the letters. The printing was at the expense of Samuel Kolodro (Colodro); see Ginsburg, 859–60, and Friedberg, 105 (colophon of the Leiría eds.) and 104 (brief mention of the Lisbon Proverbs ed.). The Leiría Proverbs ed. is briefly mentioned, no description, by Iakerson, “Early Hebrew Printing,” 132.

185 Friedberg, 105–06. Fragments are at J.T.S.; a complete copy of Judges is at the Library of Congress. Not in Iakerson, “Early Hebrew Printing.”

186 Letter, in Taitachek, Pisqey, 105. This is all the more remarkable because many important printed books, including even talmudic tractates, were often not to be found in the Ottoman Empire in the sixteenth or early seventeenth centuries.
187 See (Sources): Biblia Romanceada I.I.8: Salterio de Hermann “el Alemán.” The question remains how much of the translation is from Hebrew and how much actually from the Latin version. The earlier Arabic translation of some Psalms, as well as of Genesis, by Ḥāfs b. al-Barr al-Qūṭī (“the Goth”), ninth century, was mentioned in Chapter 1 above.

188 See Bibliography: Sources; the title was given to the work by Lazar. Others have questioned the dating; see especially Santiago, “Para una nueva edición.” Lazar gave a detailed analysis of the reliance of the work on the Hebrew text of the Bible and its relation to later “Romance” bibles. Séphiha, “‘Ladinismes’ dans La fazienda de ultra mar,” discussed a few examples of the translation of Hebrew verses in that work (again, wrongly characterized by him as “Ladino”) and in the actual Ladino Bible of 1547, reaching no significant conclusions. See the important remarks on this work by Sánchez-Prieto Borja, “La Biblia en la historiografía,” 101–12. David Arbesú has prepared a new edition, available online: http://www.lafaziendadeultramar.com., and separately as Texto & Concordancias de la Fazienda de Ultramar (N.Y., Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies, 2011). There is no commentary to accompany the edition, but there is an extensive bibliography of studies. It would take us far afield to discuss the interesting topic of biblical influences in Spanish medieval texts and the significance of this for textual studies; see, for example, a good analysis of this for the Chronica Adefonsi imperatoris (Alfonso VII) in Sánchez Belda’s introduction to his edition (Madrid, 1950), lxii–xvi.

189 An excellent constantly updated bibliography online is: http://www.bibliamedieval.es/biblio/. See specialized studies, such as Puig i Tárrech, “Traduccions catalanes medievals de la Bíblia;” Avenoza, Biblias castellanas medievales; Pueyo [Mena] (see Bibliography); Reinhardt and Santiago-Otero, Biblioteca bíblica ibérica medieval.

190 Mansi, J. D., ed. Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio (Florencia, 1759–1927) 23; col. 329, canon ii; cf. also Reinhardt, “Hebräische und spanische Bibeln,” 37, no. 64. Apparently, the council of Tolosa in 1229 already issued a similar prohibition, directed against the heretical Waldensians or the Albigensians.

191 Enciso Viana, “Prohibiciones españoles de las versiones bíblicas en Romance;” see the documents relating to the Inquisition after the Expulsion in the Apéndice there; the statement of the archbishop of Toledo: 529–30. It is nevertheless extremely doubtful that the Ferrara Spanish Bible, produced in 1553 by descendants of Jews expelled from Spain, would have been available to descendants of conversos in Spain (the Inquisition would have made this dangerous if not impossible). See also the important general study by Fernández López, Lectura y prohibición de la Biblia en lengua vulgar.

192 Avenoza, Biblia de Ajuda, 5.

193 On the Inquisition, not only in the fifteenth century but also in the fourteenth century, see my Conversos. Due to years of misconception, the popular belief is that Jews were victims of the Inquisition, when in fact they rarely were (only if they aided Christians to convert, or proselytized conversos). Even more erroneous is the still prevalent notion that conversos were “secret Jews;” in fact, for the most part, they were enemies of Judaism and of Jews and did not hesitate to write the most inflammatory anti-Jewish polemic. All of the following information is documented in my aforementioned book.

For the Inquisition and Catalan translations of the Bible, see Hernando, “Notícies sobre la bíblia en català i la inquisició española.” See also Riera i Sans, “Bíblies en català no cremades per la Inquisició espanyola.”

Pere Casanellas i Bassols, “Versiones bíblicas catalanas e inquisición: fragmentos de biblias catalanas encontrados entre la documentación inquisitorial conservada en el Archivo Histórico Nacional de Madrid,” in III Simpósio internacional de estudos inquisitoriais: novas fronteiras (Cachoeira, Bahia [Brazil], 2016), 14–15 (article 1–20, each article in the collection has the same pagination); online: https://www. ufrb.edu.br/simposioinquisicao/anais-eletronicos-2/anais-eletronicos-2015/.

Text quoted in full in Llamas, Biblia medieval romanceada judío-cristiana 1: xv–xvi. See also Reinhardt, “Hebräische und spanische Bibeln,” 17 ff. The word brivia (Bible) appears also in the Spanish text of the second part of the anti-Jewish polemic of de Santa Fe, Jerónimo, in Carlos del Valle Rodríguez, ed., Errores y falsedades del Talmud (Madrid, 2006), 114, c. 21; 149; and in Inquisition documents (Baer, Juden 2: 476, no. 404 [Toledo, 1487]; 542, no. 425 [1509–11]). The word does not appear in any modern dictionary, but is found in (R.A.E.) Diccionario de la lengua castellana (Madrid, 1726; this ed. only), 685.


Known as Sêfer y’"a"r, although the correct title apparently is Patshegen (cf. Esther 4.8, “copy”); see Chapter 5 above, text before n. 14 on it. The references to his having found something in a Spanish Bible translation are on f. 20b, 24a (twice), 28b (twice), 29b and 31b of Adler’s ed. (thus, this was a complete translation at least of the Pentateuch).

For a complete listing of published editions, see my Dictionary, 58–59. The bibliography of studies is too vast to list here. Important are the studies of Llamas, cited here throughout (as well as other articles not cited), M. Morreale, and many others. Avenoza and Enrique-Arias, “Bibliografía,” is complete for Castilian (only) versions and manuscripts. See also the brief overall survey of some, but by no means all, of the translations by María Verd, “Biblias romanizadas: criterias de traducción;” the article offers nothing new. Pueyo, “Biblias romanceadas y en Ladino,” provides a thorough discussion of post-medieval and modern Ladino translations; less so on medieval. There is a general survey of Spanish translations (not limited to Jewish examples) by Morreale, M. “Vernacular Scriptures in Spain,” in Cambridge History of the Bible (Cambridge, 1975), 2: 465–91, and more briefly “Bible Translations” in Gerli, ed., Medieval Iberia. The E.J. article on Bible, section on translations, is worthless and ignores medieval Jewish translations in Spain altogether. Avenoza, Biblias castellanas medievales, is a detailed technical analysis of the physical characteristics and contents of the Spanish Jewish translations. There are, of course, studies dealing with manuscripts of non-Jewish biblical translations, which I will not detail here. A complete list of such manuscripts may be found in Ballesteros Herrera, A. “El manuscrito 2386 de la Universidad de Salamanca: una curiosa biblica del siglo XIII,” Helmantica 170–171 (2005): 318 n. 11 (art. 299–343). Pueyo Mena and Enrique-Arias, “Romanceamientos castellanos de la Biblia hebrea,” is an interesting analysis of the translation terminology used for the 29 most frequently occurring Hebrew words in the Bible (and see the companion study by the same authors mentioned here in the Bibliography).

Reported by Ballesteros-Beretta, Antonio. Alfonso X el Sabio (Barcelona, etc., 1963), 509. In fact, Alfonso ordered the Bible translated from Latin into Romance in 1260, and this may have resulted in the later confused rumor. Ballesteros also noted that the seventeenth-century historian Diego Ortiz de Zúñiga claimed that in his time there were manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible in the cathedral...
Bible texts in Spain 381

(Toledo?) which were “not dissimilar” to those of the period of Alfonso (how he would have been able to judge this is not stated). Incidentally, the Ferrara (Jewish) Bible is not “Ladino” as it is sometimes wrongly described, but Spanish. “Ladino” correctly means Spanish transliterated in Hebrew characters. The first Ladino Bible was published in Constantinople, 1547 (reprinted, not a facsimile edition, but reset in modern readable type, with transliteration in Romance characters, *Ladino Pentateuch: Constantinople, 1547*, ed. Lazar [Culver City, C.A., 1988]); the transliteration of course makes it no longer “Ladino.” See also Amigo [Espada], *Pentateuco de Constantinopla y la Biblia medieval romanceada judeoespañola*. There are two facsimile eds. of the Ferrara Bible: *La Biblia de Ferrara*, ed. Hassán (Madrid, 1992; 2 vols., with introductory studies) and *Biblia de Ferrara*, ed. Lazar (Madrid, 1996). Although cataloguing the (original) correctly as “Bible. O.T. Spanish,” libraries nevertheless describe it as “Ladino.” Haim Vidal Séphiha even edited a book, *Le Ladino, judéo-espagnol calque: Deutéronome, versions de Constantinople (1547) et de Ferrare (1553)*, an edition of Deuteronomy in the two bibles (Paris, 1973), in which the Ferrara Bible is again wrongly classified as “Ladino.” M. Morreale uniquely describes “Ladino” as Jewish terminology or “expressions” in an otherwise Spanish text, distinguishing it from “Judezmo,” an erroneous modern term invented to describe the language used by (some) Sefardic Jews (article “Bible Translations,” 172, in Gerli, ed., *Medieval Iberia*). The problem with this, among other things, is that the existence of “Jewish expressions” in a text hardly justifies designating that as a dialect. See there, loc. cit., for a good brief discussion of the Ferrara Bible. Again, Ladino means (only) Spanish written in Hebrew letters. It is not a dialect. It is not “spoken.”


203 See especially Hauptmann, O. H. “The General Estoria of Alfonso X el Sabio and Escorial Biblical Manuscript I-j-8,” *Hispanic Review* 13 (1945): 45–59. The evident collaboration of a Jewish translator in the *General Estoria*, at least in Genesis, is evident in the praise of the Jewish people and the Land of Israel (see the citations from the critical edition in the review by Carlos del Valle in *Iberia Judaica* 3 [2011]: 267–68); a thorough examination of the entire work may reveal other such examples. It is only with extreme caution, if at all, that we should postulate “oral translations” that may have existed prior to the thirteenth century (as does Pueyo, “Biblias romanceadas,” 207, following the controversial suggestion of Lazar). On MS. Esc. 1-i-8 see also n. 213 below. Llamas dated it as twelfth century, but Littlefield argued for fifteenth century Avenoza, *Biblias castellanas medievales*, 42 ff., gives a detailed description of the manuscript.

204 In medieval France, some Jewish authorities allowed the reading of a vernacular translation of the Torah in the synagogue if the people did not understand
Hebrew; e.g., Simḥah b. Samuel, Maḥzōr Viyṭriy (ed. Hurwitz [Berlin, 1889–97]), 713; and the anonymous (possibly thirteenth-century) “Ḥiqey ha-Tōrah,” in Assaf, Meqōrōt le-tōlōdōt ha-ḥiynūkh 1: 11–12, no. 7. However, the Tōsafōt (Berakhot 8) did not permit it. The Šefer ha-yiyrah, a spurious work attributed to Jonah b. Abraham Gerundiy but actually written in France or Germany, states that, while the requirement is for each individual to read the weekly Torah portion with the Aramaic translation, if one does not have that translation he may read it with a vernacular translation; cited by Gutwirth, E. “Religión, historia y las biblias romanceadas,” R.C.T. 13 (1988): 122, from Ashkenazi, Joseph. Ōhel Yōsēf (Benei-Berak, 1969), which contains the text of Šefer ha-yiyrah, 71. Gutwirth was not aware that the book is spurious, nor did he choose to cite any of a number of standard eds. of the work; for information, see my Dictionary, 471, “Spurious,” no. 3. For Zedekiah b. Abraham in Italy and permission for women to hear the Torah reading in Italian, see my Medieval Jewish Civilization, 105, col. b.

205 Aaron b. Joseph ha-Kōhēn, Ōr ḥōt ha-ḥayiym 1: 77b–78a, no.7.

206 There are some interesting sources relating to this practice in medieval Spain, which I shall discuss elsewhere; some of these are significant for their mention of particular Spanish words used in such translations. Curiously, although we have testimony as to this practice, apparently no such separate scroll in the vernacular has survived from Spain. It should be mentioned that the reading of the scroll of Esther on Purim is a rabbinical law, and therefore does not have the same strict laws as the reading of a Torah scroll in the regular synagogue service.

207 “Libro del rey Asueros” (Biblioteca universitaria de Salamanca MS. 2.015); see Sáinz de la Maza, “Versión judeo-española del libro de Esther” (the author suggests, 228, that it is “very possible” that it is the work of a converso, for which there is no internal evidence). Sáinz published the entire text in his article. The syntactical/lexicographical peculiarities in the text, enumerated 230–32, are primarily due to a very literal translation of the Hebrew text. In fact, this text adheres more closely to the original Hebrew syntax and particularly the spelling of proper names than do most Spanish biblical translations. The article concludes with an important glossary of unusual words used in the translation. A companion article by Alba, Amparo and de la Maza, Sáinz. “La declaración de los Diez Mandamientos en su versión judeoespañola,” Bulletin hispanique 103 (2001): 369–402, deals with another text in the same manuscript which the authors correctly identified as a Spanish translation of the minor midrash on the Ten Commandments, and yet they also claim that this is the work of conversos. Once again, as I hope that I have proved at length in Conversos, the myth of “crypto Jews” must be laid to rest. The simple fact is that if any of these apostates had such a passion for “Jewish traditions” nothing compelled them to convert in the first place. The very possession of such manuscripts, much less their translation, would have resulted in the death of the converso owner.

208 An edition of the Pentateuch, based in part (Genesis – Lev. 7) on this manuscript, was published: Biblia medieval romanceada, ed. Castro, et al. (see Bibliography); but the complete manuscript has since been published: Biblia Ladinada.Escorial 1.I.3, ed. Lazar. It has been customary in printed eds. of the Jewish biblical translations, and so even in some scholarly articles, to cite them as “I.I.3,” etc.; however, the small j is simply the medieval i. Llamas correctly referred to all these manuscripts using the modern letter; Barco del Barco, “Formas verbales,” reverts to the old system, as does Dodi, “Transcriptions of Hebrew Proper Nouns.” It is now fashionable to refer to them simply as E3, etc. Lazar’s introduction contains
a thorough study of the manuscript, particularly with regard to comparison with other manuscripts of Jewish biblical translations from Spain and details on orthography. On the provenance of the manuscript, see the important observations of Avenoza, *Biblia de Ajuda*, 125–27. Avenoza, *Biblias castellanas medievales*, 131 ff. describes the manuscript in detail. Llamas, who in spite of his devotion to studying Jewish biblical translations was apparently no friend of Jews, harshly condemned the language of the translation of I-i-3 as “not pure Castilian but of the Jewish type which, as is known, does not conform to the essence and quality of the national Castilian” (“Biblia del siglo XIV,” 328). Such comments were more characteristic of his time and are not reflected in the current Spanish scholarship. It of course also is not “Ladinada,” i.e., written in Ladino (see n. 201 above on this term), as Lazar mistakenly indicated; Avenoza, “Traducciones,” correctly wrote that Lazar “called” it *Ladinada* (implying, if not overtly, disapproval of that incorrect usage).

209 The manuscript contains the coat of arms of the powerful Mendoza-Sarmiento families; significantly, some members of these families were *conversos* (see index for both in my *Conversos*). Interestingly, there is a manuscript in Paris, B.N., which contains the first book of Maccabees translated (in 1442) by a Jew from the Latin translation which was read to him in Spanish by a Christian; why he did not simply use the Spanish translation already found in several bibles is not clear (Zotenberg, *Manuscrits orientaux*, no. 585.7). Spanish translations of the books of Maccabees are included also in Esc. I-i-4, I-i-6 and in Madrid, Real Academia de la Historia MS. 87 (*Biblia Romanceada*, ed. Lazar, et al.). The I-i-6 version was published: Wiese, Leo and Hiernemann, Theodor, eds. “Los libros de los Macabeos,” in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Kulturgeschichte Spaniens* (Münster, 1930) 2: 300–60. There is a fifteenth-century (non-Jewish) Catalan adaptation of Maccabees, first published in 1916 and re-edited by Jaume Riera i Sans with the title *Història del malvat rei Antíocu* (Barcelona, 1981). Probably the earliest medieval Hebrew version of Maccabees (Book I) was that done apparently in Germany in the second half of the twelfth century (“Sariyd ū-faliyt me-targūm ‘ivrīy yeḥan le-sēfer ha-rīšōn mi-sifrey ha-hāšēmōnaiym,” *Kovets* [Qōvēṣ] ‘al-yad 7 [1895] and offprint, Berlin, 1895).

210 Llamas, “Antigua biblia castellana;” see more generally his brief description in *Biblia medieval romanceada judío-cristiana* 1: xix–xx. Lazar (who apparently did not see the cited article) disagreed and claimed that “the surviving *biblias romanceadas*, [Spanish translations] even those closest to” the Hebrew text, were all commissioned by Christian patrons (introduction to his ed., xi; and cf. xiii). Llamas also suggested that such translations were done for baptized Jews (*conversos*); see Lazar, xii (his criticism of Littlefield and Nordstrom there is correct). Both Llamas and Littlefield classified some manuscripts (Llamas: Escorial I-i-4, 5 and 7, and Ms. 87 of the Real Academia de la Historia, and the “Biblia de Alba;” Littlefield only I-i-3 and “Alba”) as made for “both” Christians and Jews, which of course is unlikely (and in the case of the Alba Bible absolutely false). Once again, that any biblical translations could have been made for or by *conversos* is virtually impossible. Ora (Rodrigue) Schwarzwald, “On the Jewish Nature of Medieval Spanish Biblical Translations,” 119, 140, also stated that there are no Spanish translations made for Jews prior to the Expulsion. Lazar (see Bibliography: *Biblia Ladinada* 1: xiii) made the same statement. These claims are, of course, incorrect. Pueyo, “Biblias romanceadas,” 205, denies that there is any distinguishing characteristic in any of the manuscripts which can provide a clue that they were done for Jews or for Christians. As we see in the case of I-i-3, this statement is also incorrect (Pueyo says that the division of books according to *parashiyōt* in
I-ii-19, discussed below, also applies to I-i-3 and thus somehow is no proof of intended Jewish readership. We shall yet see other examples of uniquely Jewish characteristics which prove that the intended audience (or recipient) was Jewish; probably sponsored by Jews who could not read, or only with difficulty, the Hebrew text. The continuous decline of Jewish education throughout the fifteenth century makes this a plausible explanation.

211 Pérez Alonso also commented on this in her study of vocabulary and orthography in MSS. I-i-4 and I-i-7 (“Contribución al estudio de los hebraísmos léxicos;” especially 13–14). This is an excellent article, with a careful analysis of these texts which also has significance for the development of medieval Spanish (these are the earliest extant translations, of the fourteenth century). See also the earlier articles of Hauptmann, “Glossary of the Pentateuch of Escorial Biblical Manuscript I-j-4;” and Levy, “Vocabulary of Escorial Manuscript I.j.4;” comparing some of the Spanish words with French Jewish sources. Again incorrect is the claim of Ora (Rodrique) Schwarzwald, article cited in the previous note, 123, that the medieval Spanish translations use the word Dios or el Señor, “which is a sign of the non-Jewish nature of the text” (translation); i.e., the translations were supposedly made for Christians. In fact, as stated, the use of Adonay or Adonay Dios is an indication of the Jewish nature of the translation (she is correct with regard to the use of el Señor).

212 See Llamas, “Nueva biblia medieval judía e inédita en romance castellano.” See the edition: Escorial Bible: I.ii.19 (see Bibliography: Sources); the editor speculates that it is a copy of a thirteenth-century translation. The translation of the Pentateuch closely follows the Aramaic translation of Onkelos (Llamas, and Amigo-Espada, Pentateuco de Constantinopla, 236). Avenoza, “Traducciones,” 18, nevertheless lists it as a translation made for Christians, which is incorrect. In her Biblias castellanas medievales, 79 ff., while describing the manuscript in detail she gives no opinion as to the intended audience.

213 See the description of all these in Llamas, Biblia medieval romanceada judío-cristiana 1: xxiv ff. The oldest of these manuscripts (fourteenth century?) are I-i-5 and I-i-7 (see ibid., lv; however, in an earlier article Llamas dated I-i-6 and I-i-8 as thirteenth century; “Biblia del siglo XIV,” 323). The Pentateuch, based on I-i-6 and 8 (as well as 13) was published in 1927 (Biblia medieval romanceada, ed. Castro, et al.); also El libro de Jeremías (Ms. I.I.6 de la Real Biblioteca del Escorial), ed. Franco (Málaga, 1989); Isaiah, Bech, Virginia Alfaro, ed. “Léxico del romanceamiento medieval castellano de Isaías comparado con el de la «Vulgata»,” (dissertation, Málaga, 1989); Joel, de la Fuente, Olegario García, ed. “Orden de palabras en hebreo, griego, latín y romanceamiento castellano medieval de Joel,” Emérita 51, 1 (1983): 41–62; and Obadiah: “Edición de la versión castellana medieval inédita de Abdías del ms escurialense I.I.6,” Anuari del centre associado de la UNED de Málaga 4 (1990): 16–18. Finally there is a complete edition of I.6 in CD form accompanying Enrique-Arias, Biblia esorial I.I.6, with important studies. See also Francomano, Emily. “The Lady Vanishes: Translation, Gloss and the Personification of Wisdom in the Alfonsine [!] Biblias Romanceadas,” Hispanic Review 73 [2004]: 308; the article, 307–25, is interesting on the treatment of Wisdom in Spanish translations. There is a completely erroneous description of I-i-5 in the exhibition catalog Vida judía en Sefarad, 258, no. 18, claiming that it was ordered by Alfonso X (!). Gemma Avenoza apparently considers I-i-5 and 7 to be products of the fourteenth to fifteenth centuries (“Relaciones entre los ms. Esc. I.i.5 y esc. I.i.7: ¿dos proyectos codicológicos independientes o una biblia en dos volúmenes?” Anuari de filologia. Antiqua et mediaevalia 1 (2011): 1–14. Pueyo Mena and Enrique-Arias, “Romanceamientos castellanos de la Biblia hebrea,”
208–10, demonstrated that, contra Avenoza, *Biblias castellanas medievales*, 111, but in agreement with other authorities, I-i-5 and 7 are in all probability parts of the same Bible. MS. I-i-8, written possibly in Rioja, is in Castilian, but with Aragonese influences; editions: Llamas, “La versión bíblica castellana más antigua” (both articles) and “Muestrario inédito” (both articles). *The Books of Samuel According to Escorial Ms. I.I.8 [I.i.8]*, ed. Brown (Ann Arbor University Microfilms, 1982; dissertation, Tulane University), not seen; *A Critical Edition of the Spanish Translation of the Books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth according to Escorial manuscript I.j.8*, ed. Littlefield (Berkeley, University of California, 1974; dissertation) and Biblia Romanceada I.I.8, ed. Littlefield (see Bibliography). Also (Psalms) *EL Salterio de Hermann “el Aleman”* (see Sources). Avenoza, *Biblia de Ajuda*, 115, lists as translations “by and for Jews” MSS. I-i-3, 5, 7 and J (I)-ii-19, and by Jews for Christians I-i-4, R.A.H. 87, Esc. I-i-2, I-i-6, I-i-8 and Y-j [i]-8 (the last not otherwise described; probably an uncorrected error for I-i-8) and Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid 10.288 (a fifteenth-century manuscript containing only Isaiah to Daniel; see Bibliography here: *Biblia romanceada. Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, Ms. BNM 10.288*; also Edición del romanceamiento del Eclesiástico contenido en los manuscritos Escorialense I.1.4 y Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid 10288, ed. Sánchez-Prieto Borja (Madrid, Universidad Complutense, 1986, dissertation; and Morreale, “Ms. 10288,” and translations from the “Vulgate” (old Latin in the Spanish version; see n. 220 below). The author gives no rationale for these identifications (also in her “Traducciones de la Biblia,” 18–19). It is, incidentally, obvious that I-i-8 was translated directly from the “Vulgate” (or old Latin) and not from the Hebrew, at least for the most part. Psalms 1–70, however, were translated directly from the Hebrew by the famous translator Hermann “the German,” who was in Toledo from 1240 to 1256 and later was bishop of Astorga. J (I)-ii-19 clearly was written by and for Jews. It contains the Pentateuch and the “Former” Prophets, and is divided into chapters according to the Jewish tradition, with Hebrew forms of proper names and other indications (see Llamas, “Nueva biblia medieval judía e inédita”). There is a complete edition of Song of Songs in various Judeo-Spanish translations, including Ms. 10.288, by Fernández López, Sergio. *Las biblias judeo-romances y el Cantar de los Cantares* (Logroño, etc., 2001).

214 See the list (abbreviated) in Lazar’s introduction to his ed. of *Biblia ladinada* 1: xviii; every manuscript there identified as “E” refers to an Escorial manuscript, a convention generally followed for the sake of brevity. Neither these nor the others briefly described there are identified by Lazar. See the more detailed description by Cantera Burgos, “Manuscritos hebreo-bíblicos,” 1251–52; see also Llamas, “Escorial”. All of these are now replaced by the catalog of Barco del Barco, et al. (Bibliography: Catalogs).

215 Juan-Carlos Conde, “A Neglected Old Spanish Biblical Translation: The ‘Biblia De Alfonso Ximénez’”; to date the promised publication of the text has not appeared, but a digitalized version of the manuscript may be seen at http://viewer.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/icv/page.php?book=ms._canon._ital._177. Further details are provided by Pueyo Mena and Enrique-Arias, “Romanceamientos castellanos de la Biblia hebrea,” 219, according to whom the book of Joshua is a copy of the translation in Esc. I-i-5 and Ruth a copy of Esc. I-i-7. The rest of the translation is unique; the authors do not mention any dependence on the Vulgate.

216 I-i-4 has been published, *Biblia medieval romanceada judío-cristiana*. The Pentateuch alone was also edited by Hauptmann (see Bibliography:[Bible. O.T. Pentateuch. Hebrew]. *The Pentateuch*), who was unaware of Llamas’ edition(s); however, Hauptmann’s is a superior edition of the Pentateuch (totally accurate,
according to the important review by Raymond S. Willis in *Hispanic Review* 24 [1956]: 71–79). His “Glossary of the Pentateuch of Escorial Biblical Manuscript I.j.4” (see Bibliography) first appeared at the end of his dissertation, which was an edition of the Pentateuch (University of Wisconsin, Madison, 8 August 1932 [typescript]); see also Levy, “Vocabulary of the Escorial Manuscript I.j.4.” Jiménez Forcada, “El manuscrito Escurialense I-J-4...” after some misleading statements about the text itself, discusses only the Latin basis of the translation of Psalms. Joshua–2 Maccabees was re-edited by Mark Littlefield (Madison, W.I., 1987), an important edition which replaces that of Llamas. The translation is generally from the “Vulgate” (with the exception of some particular words, directly from the Hebrew) and the books included are all those of the Christian canon, including the apocryphal book of Baruch which was added to the canon at the Council of Florence in 1441. There were apparently three different translators, according to Llamas, at least one of whom may have been a Christian. The alleged prologue of St. Jerome to Ecclesiastes there is actually the prologue from the Septuagint version. Morreale, Margherita. “Los Evangelios y epístolas de Gonzalo García de Santa María y las biblias romanceadas de la edad media,” *Archivo de filología aragonesa* 10–11 (1958): 277–89, briefly discussed the apparent dependence on I-i-4 by the converso translator Gonzalo García de Santa María, d. 1521 (on whom see my *Conversos*, 149–50). Avenoza, *Biblias castellanas medievales*, 53 ff., gives a detailed description of I-i-4, without, however, mention of anything noted here. She does suggest (56) the plausible hypothesis that it belonged to Juan de Luna (Hauptmann had already noted a connection with the Luna family) but without mentioning that he was an important converso (see my *Conversos*, index); if so, it likely was in his possession before he converted. Eventually, it came into the hands of the Duque de Medina Sidonia and was used, together with the manuscript that came to be known as I-i-3, by Benito Arias Montano (1527–98) and donated by him to the Escorial library (Fernández López, Sergio. *El Cantar De Los Cantares en el humanismo español: la tradición judía* (Universidad de Huelva, 2009), 143; this extremely important study details the influence of Jewish sources on post-Expulsion humanist writers. Escorial MS. I-i–7 (Gen. 8.11–Kings) was edited by Mark Littlefield (*Escorial Bible I.1.7*); see also the comparison of two chapters of Genesis in I-i–7 and the Constantinople Ladino Pentateuch by Amigo Espada, “De las biblias romanceadas” and his *El Pentateuco de Constantinopla y la Biblia medieval romanceada*. A comparison of I-i–4 (ed. Llamas) with I-i–3 (ed. Lazar) clearly demonstrates that the former was in fact written for a Christian patron (and see below on “virgin”). For instance, the books of Samuel are included as the first two books of Kings (which thus contain four books, as in Christian bibles). All names are spelled in the Christian manner (and in lower case letters) and there are few of the “Hebraisms” found in abundance in I-i–3. In addition, the apocryphal book “Wisdom of Solomon” (*Libro de sabiduria de Salamon*) is included (vol. 2, following Song of Songs), never found in Jewish bibles.

217 Llamas, “Nueva biblia medieval judía,” 57–58. This was a major text in medieval polemics, of course.


220 Actually, the common medieval Latin translation was the so-called “Vetus Latina,” and not the translation of Jerome, which was known as the Vulgate
only from the sixteenth century; see Sutcliffe, E. F. “Jerome,” in *Cambridge History of the Bible* (Cambridge, 1975), 2: 99. See also *Vetus Latina Hispana*, particularly the introduction (vol. 1). It appears that some early medieval texts nevertheless conform to the Vulgate; see Fischer, “Algunas observaciones sobre el ‘Codex Gothicus’.” See also Cantera, “La Vetus Latina y el masora.” Loewe, R. “The Medieval History of the Latin Vulgate,” in *Cambridge History of the Bible* (Cambridge, 1975), 2: 102–54 was unduly critical of the aforementioned studies, particularly with regard to the undeniable influence of the Spanish Latin texts in Europe. Exaggerated conclusions about the relationship of the “Vetus Latina” and Jewish translations were made by Blondheim, David. *Les parlers judeo-romans et la Vetus Latina* (Paris, 1925); these theories were criticized by Umberto Cassuto and others. It should be noted that there are clear references in Spanish Jewish sources to the translation of Jerome; for instance, Ibn Bil‘am (on Isa. 16.1.), David Qimḥi on Ps. 110.7 (*giyrōnymos*, Jerome), Joseph Ibn Kaspiy (thirteenth century, Catalonia; see on him in Chapter 4) noted that because of the complexity of meanings in Hebrew, translators of the Bible are not completely able to render the correct meaning “and there is no doubt that the Christian translator [Jerome] knew this,” and thus did not translate the Tetragrammaton but left it in Hebrew, “and the explanation for this is deep” (*Mishnēh kesef* 2: 4–5); and see on the “Duke of Alba” Bible below, Spanish translations. These prove that Jerome’s version was not only known but in fact held an official status at least among Christians of al-Andalus. On the other hand, later medieval *conversos*, such as Pablo de Santa María of Burgos and Pablo Coronel, cited versions that differed from the “Vulgate,” and they were instrumental in seeking revision of Latin translations to better conform to the Hebrew text (see Reinhardt-Santiago, *Biblioteca bíblica*, 12–13; but their discussion of Latin versions is inadequate). There is a complete critical ed. of the medieval Latin text of the so-called “Old Testament,” *Biblia sacra iuxta latinam vulgatam versionem,...* (Rome, 1926–95; 18 vols.). There is also an edition of the “New Testament” translation: Wordsworth, J. and White, H. J., eds. *Novum testamentum Latine secundum editionem Sanctii Hieronymi* (Oxford, 1889–1954), with an important introduction. A new critical edition of both parts is being published by the Vetus Latina Institut in Beuron, Germany.


222 Avenoza, *Biblia de Ajuda*, 102; however, no details are provided about the “corrections of the rubrics” (description of chapters) of the manuscript which were made, nor why the plural “Jews.” The further effort, 103 ff., to identify the fifteenth century Portuguese owner who acquired the manuscript as “Jewish” (more possibly a *converso*) simply because he was *almoharife* (tax official) of the Jewish taxes rests on flimsy evidence (incidentally, *sisa*, the kind of taxes mentioned, is incorrectly described, it is interesting that this common Castilian term found its way into Portugal; all of this is repeated in her *Biblias castellanas medievales*, 268–69). Intriguing is Avenoza’s reference (in *Biblia de Ajuda*) to Jewish translations of the Bible in Portugal allegedly “for use in the synagogues,” which as mentioned earlier would be prohibited by Jewish law; but note the immediately following statement that “among these” are Spanish translations of (David) Qimḥi and Ibn ‘Ezra, which indicates that the source for all this (if there is one) refers to *commentaries* (which may have been studied in the synagogue but not read as part of the service), and not biblical translations (ibid., 104–05; quoting an early nineteenth-century writer). Surprisingly, Avenoza claims (116) that the rubrics in Genesis of the Ajuda Bible differ from those of Esc. 1-i-3, and
then provides a comparative listing in which, on the contrary, they are nearly identical. Both are taken essentially from the Vulgate. Nevertheless, note such things as (corrupt) Hebrew name for Leviticus (Va-yiqra; here [vaycra], apparently), shared only with I-i-5 and 7; also for Deuteronomy (Devariym; adebarim and hadabarim). See also her much briefer description, with none of this information, “Traducciones,” 28–30 (incorrect, of course, is the claim that all medieval Romance biblical translations not in Spain today are found in Portugal, looking those in France, England and the U.S.).

223 Ibid., 106 ff.


225 Parma MS. 2192 (Richler and Beit-Arié, *Biblioteca Palatina*, 78, no. 382; very brief description). The term “old Christian” refers to a Christian who was not a convert.

226 The manuscript in the exhibition catalog *La vida judía en Sefarad*, 255, no. 17; the suggested date is impossible. Of more interest is a complete Hebrew biblical manuscript, possibly fourteenth century, in the same library (MS. Or. 1197), with elaborate marginal micrography of masoretic notes (photograph and brief description ibid., 257, no. 25).

227 He is portrayed as presenting the finished Bible to the master of the Order of Calatrava (illumination, f. 1v; full-page reproduction in Fellous, *Histoire de la Bible de Moïse Arragel*, facing 71; so also consulting with his Franciscan and Dominican advisors, ibid., 72 and 73, and prostrating himself before the king, Juan II; f. 11r (ibid., 74). If these illustrations are realistic, Arragel appears to have been relatively young when he undertook this work. The initial letters (or words, in the Hebrew and Spanish texts) are illuminated, clearly by the same hand.

228 (Bible. O.T. Old Spanish) *Biblia traducida* (facsimile rpt.: *La Biblia de Alba: an illustrated manuscript Bible in Castilian* see Bibliography, Sources for other eds.). See detailed description of the manuscript in Avenoza, *Biblias castellanas medievales*, 199 ff. Important studies include: Paz y Mélia (the accent is frequently misplaced or omitted in citations of his name), “Biblia puesta en romance por R. Mosé Arragel;” Berger, “Les Bibles castellanes,” 521–36; Morreale, “Glossario de Rabi Mosé Arragel” and especially Fellous, *Histoire de la Bible de Moïse Arragel*, a massive volume containing a detailed study and full-page color reproductions of some of the illuminations. The only fault is her “lachrymose” insistence on focusing on its background in relation to persecutions of the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries, which allegedly continued until the Expulsion. There are other minor errors, such as the claim (25 n. 2) that Christians only used the title “rabbi” to refer to Maimonides or Naḥmanides (neither of whom, incidentally, was a rabbi); Spanish sources are replete with the title “rabi.” Overall, the book is a thorough and excellent study. There is a nearly complete bibliography of other studies there, 367; missing are Blondheim, “Gleanings from the Bible of Alba,” and Lipton, “A Blurred Encounter in Moses Arragel’s Epistle in the Alba Bible” and his “Anti-Iconic Preliminaries to the ‘Biblia de Alba’.” Both of these are important for various names and words found in the glosses (the first article ingeniously explains rabbinic legends about Phineas (“Phinees”) and Zimbrí (“Azenbry”). See also the important observations of Gutwirth, “Medieval
Romance Epistolarity: The Case of the Iberian Jews,” 213–18. Like Lipton, whose article he does not cite, Gutwirth focuses on the “treatise” on hunting in Arragel’s reply letter. Of more value would be a detailed analysis of Arragel’s chapter on the problems of translation. In a subsequent article, Gutwirth wrote a curious mixture of criticism of (almost) all previous scholarship on the Alba Bible (again he did not mention Blondheim or Lipton), remarks on Américo Castro, and sidelines, however interesting, on the history of the production of the first edition (“Transmission of Rabbi Moses Arragel”); incidentally, the title of Fellous’ study, n. 1, is incorrect, nor is there a Spanish translation. The article is of no value with regard to the actual content of the Bible. An article focusing on the apparent negative portrayal (at least, in terms of position) of Arragel in the illuminations is de la Maza, Carlos Sáinz. “Poder político y poder doctrinal en la creación de la Biblia de Alba,” e-Spania 3 June 2007 (online journal: http://e-spania.revues.org/document116.html), 1–16. Interesting also is Javier Pueyo Menà, F. “La Biblia de Alba...en las Bienandanzas e Fortunas de Lope García de Salazar,” in Elena Romero, ed., Judaísmo hispano (José Luis Lacave memorial volume) (Madrid, 2002) 1: 229–42, showing the influence of the work on that Castilian author; see also Fernández López, Sergio. “Las biblias judeorromances, fuentes de humanistas: el caso de Lope García de Salazar,” Rassegna iberistica 88 (2008): 23–34 and his important article on what happened to the manuscript in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, “Algo más sobre la supuesta biblia de Alba,” Etiópicas 4 (2008): 143–65; see 146 n. 11 on theories of the date of completion. Important also is Enrique-Arias, Andrés. “Sobre el parentesco entre la biblia de Alba y la biblia de la Real Academia de la Historia ms. 87,” Romance Philology 59 (2006): 21–43.

229 MS. Vat. Urb. ebr. 7 (Richler, Hebrew Manuscripts in the Vatican Library, 603–04); Fellous, Histoire, 114–15 and notes 268 and 270. It is unlikely that there was another Isaac b. Moses Arragel, and so he must have gone to Sicily from Toledo. On another manuscript of Psalms written in Naples, see n. 119 above.

230 Baer, Die Juden 2: 434; and see the index to León Tello, Judíos de Toledo for others of that name.

231 Particularly noteworthy is his reliance on the commentary of Ibn ‘Ezra; also Qimḥi and traditional sources, as well as numerous classical and Spanish authors (including anti-Jewish polemicians); cf. Fellous, Histoire, 159. These glosses are independently important for understanding certain Jewish, as well as Christian, religious ideas at the time, as well as linguistically (so also, of course, the translation itself). See Morreale, “Glosario de Rabi Mose Arragel;” idem, “Biblia romanceada y diccionario histórico;” Amigo Espada, “Las glosas de RabiMose Arragel al Cantar de los Cantares;” idem, “Influjo de latín en el vocabulario de la ‘Biblia de Alba;’” Fellous, “Castille 1422–1430, un juif traduit la Bible pour les chrétiens;” idem, Biblia de Alba, “Traduction et exégèse;” Barco, “Formas verbales en las biblias de Alba y Ferrara;” Enrique-Arias, “Texto subyacente hebreo;” and especially Fellous, Histoire, Chapter 5. The relationship with “Real Academia de la Historia 87” has been noted above. There is now a complete concordance of the Arragel Bible (as well as all other manuscripts discussed in this chapter) online, courtesy of the Hispanic Seminary of Medieval Studies: http://www.hispanicseminary.org/t&c/bib/arragel/index.htm.

232 The statement about Jerome in his introduction, 17. See on that, and on the polemical passages in his glosses on Isaiah, Sicoff, “The Arragel Bible.”

233 Fellous, Histoire, 78 and elsewhere, insists on referring to the “harangue” of Arragel at this meeting; nothing in the text indicates this or that there was any sort of disputation. Aside from this, she provides (Chapter 3) a good analysis
of Arragel’s concerns about translating the Bible and adhering to his principles of faith. This is not the place to go into detail on these matters; see also Lazar, “Rabbi Moses Arragel as Servant of Two Masters.” Apparently in the latter part of the fifteenth century the “Alba” Bible and also the manuscript now known as Esc. 1–3 came into the possession of the notorious Juan de Pacheco, marqués de Villena and one of the instigators for the Inquisition in Castile (Fernández López, Sergio. “Algo más sobre la supuesta Biblia de Alba,” Etiópicas 4 [2008]: 158; on Pacheco see index to my Conversos).

234 These are best seen in the facsimile ed. (n. 228 above) and in Fellous, Histoire (throughout there are important discussions of individual illustrations; see especially Chapter 9).


237 See on the first two my Conversos, 198 and notes; important information on Juan de Vergara is on 100 but I neglected to mention his converso status.

238 Reinhardt and Santiago, Biblioteca bíblica, 41, 43 (and note the editions there of this manuscript). The Portuguese adaptation of the first book of Maccabees, not mentioned by Reinhardt–Santiago: Paris B.N. hébr. 585, fols. 118–147v; cf. Zotenberg, Catalog. 62; Rothschild, J.P. “Une pièce tardive à verser au dossier médiéval des Livres des Maccabées,” in A. Vivian, ed., Biblische und jüdisch-scheidische Studien; Festschrift für Paolo Sacchi (Frankfurt a. M., 1990), 545–74. The Biblia historical de Acobaça is noted, with no mention of Reinhardt and Santiago, by
Gemmes Avenoza, “Traducciones,” 12, in Pomer, L. et al. Les literatures antiques a les literatures medieval (Amsterdam, 2009); she also overlooked the adaptation of Maccabees.

239 (London. The British Library. Egerton MS. 1526, dated 1465), see Perarnau, “Aportación,” 35 ff. and 81. and Avenoza, Bíblia de Ajuda, 8–9 (the book of Josep Izquierdo which she cites, which disagrees with the suggested identification, is not to be found in any U.S. library). The Paris manuscripts mentioned are B.N. esp. 2, 3, 4 and 5; see Avenoza, 9–11 and bibliography cited. At best, the identification of these as the work of (or for) conversos remains conjectural. Perarnau’s study is the most comprehensive on medieval Catalan translations generally, but aside from the conjecture about the Egerton manuscript, there is nothing regarding possible Jewish translations. Casanellas, “La influència hebraica…” examines Hebrew influence on two books (Ex. and Lev.) of the Catalan translation of the fourteenth century (supposedly), the aforementioned MSS B.N. esp. 2–4, and concludes that the influences are primarily from Latin translations, with some portions directly from the Hebrew text, as well as some with clearly rabbinical influences. He also concludes that the translation was probably the work of conversos. The Edgerton and two of the Paris manuscripts have been edited as Bíblia del segle XIV: Èxode. Levític, transcribed by Jaume Riera i Sans, with critical apparatus, notes and a glossary by Casanellas and an introductory essay by Armand Puig i Tàrrech (Barcelona, 2004), the first of a projected series of volumes of medieval Catalan biblical translations. An additional volume, Bíblia del segle XIV: Primer i segon llibre dels Reis (2011) is of less significance as far as Hebrew goes, although there are again some “influences.” A Bible in “Romance” (Catalan?) and Hebrew was sold in Valencia in 1390 (Blasco Martínez, A. “Corredores de comercio judíos en Zaragoza (1300–1425),” Anuario de estudios medievales 29 (1999): 163; art. 141–73). Jaume Riera i Sans called attention to the report of the discovery of a Bible manuscript translated from Castilian into Catalan by a Gabriel Gralla in 1478 while he was a prisoner in Tunisia; however, there is no evidence that he was a converso, as Riera assumed (“Un recull d’oracions en català dels conversos jueus (segle XV),” Estudis romànics 16 [1971–75]: 52; article, 49–97); published by him as El siddur en català dels conversos jueus (S. xv) (Barcelona, 1993). It is also highly doubtful that the “prayers” (actually, translations of psalms, etc.) discussed there were by conversos (see my Conversos, 219), yet this has misled scholars of Catalan Bible translations.

240 On another medieval, Christian, Catalan translation (partial, together with rhymed biblical legends), see Perarnau, “Manuscrit biblic catala de la Colombina de Sevilla.” Dated but still useful is the survey in Reinhardt–Santiago, Biblioteca biblica, 34–40. See also the updated survey by Puig i Tàrrech, “Traduccions catalanes medievals de la Bíblia;” also Bonet i Balta, “Bíblia en llengua vulgar en els països catalans” and Casanellas, “Medieval Catalan Translations of the Bible.” On the Catalan translation printed in Valencia in 1478 see text above before n. 197. Missing from all the studies (except, briefly, Puig, “Traduccions,” 114, 116) is the following information: in 1287, Alfonso III authorized Jaime de Montjuich to make a translation, possibly in Catalan (“ydioma nostra”), or Castilian, from a French translation (document in Antoni Rubió y Lluch, ed., Documents per l’historia de la cultura catalana mig-evil [Barcelona, 1918–21] 1: 6–7, no. 4; attention was already called to this by Francisco Carreras i Candi, “Primera traducción catalana de la Biblia,” Revista de bibliografía catalana 4 [1904]: 48–58; and note the “vibliam in romançio,” Bible in Romance, which Prince Jaime sent to his father Jaime II for safekeeping in 1319; ibid., 72; however, when Pedro IV
requested from his sister a Bible, he specified Catalan: “que es escrito en vulgar cathala,” Rubió y Lluch, 154, no. CLI). Similarly, Prince Juan, son of Pedro IV, requested a Bible in Catalan from his sister, Queen Leonor of Castile (ibid., 302). It is curious that Prince Juan asked for a Catalan translation from Castile, given that there were already such translations in Catalonia. Queen Yolande in 1421 requested the loan of a Catalan Bible so that a copy could be made for her chaplain (Vielliard, “Nouveaux documents sur la culture catalane au Moyen Âge,” 39–40).


242 Baer, Die Juden 2: 467, no. 398.

243 Paris B.N. esp. 244; see Puig i Tàrrech, “Traduccions,” 136. This was also apparently the work of a converso, although denouncing it as obviously “apologetic” and “judaizing” seems a bit rash (Salmeron, Constantino Vidal. “Un Saltiri català traduit de l’hebreu,” in X. Terrado and F. Sabaté, eds., Les veus del sagrat (Lérida, 2014), 299–302. On other examples of translations or publications of Psalms in Naples, see index here “Naples.”
Ibn ‘Ezra

Chronological works, such as Seder olam (see Gen. 11.1; 22.4; and Ex. 40.2; see ed. Weiser 2: 232 n. 1) and Yosifon (Isa. 2.1; not “Josephus” as Friedländer translated there, 14, the Heb. text reads “Yosif ben Gorion;” medieval Jews did not know the actual work of Josephus); also on Gen. 37.25; Haggai 1.9; Ps. 49.20; 120.5; Dan. 2.39, 7.6, 8.21, 9.24, 11.4, and “second recension” of Esther (Ve-yosif Avraham, 31).

Midrash – see generally Isa. 21.8; Friedländer, Essays, 95 n. 2. Including those previously mentioned (Chapter 1) which he specifically rejected as worthless, such as Divrey ha-yamiym de-Mosheh, Sfer Zerubavel or Eldad ha-Daniy (the latter two works, at least, were generally accepted by Spanish authorities). In addition to the regular midrashiym, also Midrash Tanhumah (Dan. 2.11). Also such works as Sifra and geonic sources.

He also was familiar with mystical literature, including Sfer yesiyrah, Shiyur qomah (see Ex., ed. Weiser 2: 216 n. 93); also “other recension” Gen. 2.18 (ed. Weiser 1: 103, 155–56), Sfer Raziyel (Ex. 14.19; ed. Weiser 2: 93), but the same statement is in the “short recension” of his comm. on Ex. 3.13 (ed. Weiser ibid., 245), in the name of Sfer ha-raziym; thus, one of the two citations is incorrect.

As noted in Chapter 2, he had extensive knowledge of the Talmud, including the “Jerusalem” Talmud.

NAMES CITED: Melamed, Meforshey ha-miqra 2: 671–75 listed some of the names cited, but missed some as well as overlooking several citations of those he mentioned. The same is true of Weiser’s listing (1, intro., 59–71), although it is more complete. Krinsky, Mehoqeiy Yehudah 1: 33–44, gave the most detailed information on those cited only in the Torah commentary, but even this is not complete. The task is made more difficult by the inadequate or non-existent indices of the few critical editions of Ibn ‘Ezra (with the exception of the editions and Spanish translations of the commentaries on Ecclesiastes and Job). The following listing is as complete as I am able to make
Appendix 1

it. The Qaraite authors mentioned in the introduction to his commentary are not here listed since they have already been noted in Chapter 1. See also other citations in Ibn ‘Ezra mentioned in Chapter 3.

Aaron (b. Sarjado) ha-Kohēn Gaōn. Gen. 34.30, 49.6; Lev. 18.6; “short recension” of Ex. 36.16. He was head of the Pumpedita yeshivah, probably 943–60 (according to Sherirah Gaon). He was the bitter opponent of Sa‘adyah, and composed a commentary on the Torah (but supposedly only from Deut. 16.18 to the end, according to a text from the Genizah; ed. Jacob Mann in J.Q.R. 11 [1921]: 426; and in his The Jews in Egypt and Palestine [Oxford, 1920–22; photo rpt. N.Y., 1970] 2: 310), yet obviously Ibn ‘Ezra had a text of his commentary on other parts of the Torah.


Abraham bar Ḥayya (or Ḥiyya); Avraham ha-nasiy. Dan. 11.31. Possibly also Gen. 3.23 and 6.3 (see intro. to his Megilat ha-megaleh, xxii. See also the index here for additional influences or probable influences not cited by name

Adōniyō; see Ibn Tamiym

‘Anan (founder of the Qaraite sect). Ex. 34.21 (“may his name be erased”). “Ben Ėfrayim;” see Jacob b. Ephraim

“ben ha-yoṣēr;” see Ibn al-Fakhkhār

“Ben Zūṭa;” see Sahl b. Maṣliyaḥ.

Eḥad ha-geōniym (“one of the geōniym”) Ps. 22.15; Dan. 2.3.

Eḥad mi-gedoley Sfarad (“one of the sages of Spain”). “Other” recension on Gen. 2.6; ed. Weiser 1: 166 (probably Judah ha-Lēvy).

Eḥad mē-hakhmev Afriqiy (“one of the sages of Africa;” i.e., Ifrīqiya, modern Tunisia, but North Africa in general; perhaps Samuel Ibn Jama’ of Gabes, see Chapter 2, n. 123). “Second recension” on Esther 7.4 (Ve-yōsēf Avraham, 29).

Eḥad mē-hakhmev dōrenū (“one of the sages of our generation”). Genesis, “other recension,” 160 and see 163; cf. Ex. 20.13, ed. Weiser 2: 139 (eḥ ad mē-hakhmev ha-dōr). Possibly Judah ha-Lēvy; see also Deut. 32.3; Eccles. 5.1.

Eḥad mē-hakhmev Miṣrayim (“one of the sages of Egypt”) Ps. 106.47

Eḥad mē-hakhmev Sefarad (“one of the sages of Spain”) Ex. 12.8 ha-Gaōn; probably Sa‘adyah, but not necessarily. Ex. 24.12: Isa. 3.24, 7.14, 21.11, 44.16, 52.13; Amos 1.1 (end), 2.13, 5.21; Jonah 1.3; Ps. 89.2; Eccles. 5.1 (end), 7.3; Song of Songs, introduction (text at end of the commentary on the “Scrolls”). Citations of ha-Gaōn throughout Genesis probably refer to Sa‘adyah, e.g. 1.1, ed. Weiser, 12 (cf. “other recension,” ibid., 156).
Geôniym – see Ehåd ha-geôniym; ha-Gåôn; Hai (Hayê) Gaôn; Ḥakhmey ha-geôniym

Hai (Hayê) Gaôn (apparently lost commentary). Ex. 28.6; Isa. 46.8, 48.16, 49.5 (=not Sa’adyah’s translation, and so must be that of Hai); Amos 5.22; Ps. 58.10; Job 4.15, 6.10, 13.25, 21.32, 37.20. (Deut. 32.39 is an error; see Ibn Paqudah below).

Ḥakhm be-Ṛomiy (“a sage in Rome”) Lev. 23.11.

Ḥakhm eh ad bi-Ṣfarad; Ḥakhm gadôl Sefardiy* (one of the scholars of Spain) Gen. 1.14; Gen. 3.23; Ex. 24.12; Hos. 2.10; Ps. 51.20; Dan. 3.2; Ps. 89.2, 53 (and see Chapter 1, n. 186).

Ḥakhm gadôl (“a great scholar”) Ex. 36.2; Lev. 8.34.


* Ḥakhm gadôl Sefardiy – see also Mar Ḥasân

Ḥakhm me-ha-hakhhamiyym (“one of the scholars”) Deut. 3.24.

Ḥakhm ha-geôniym (“sages of the geôniym”) “long recension” Ex. 19.17.

Ḥakhmey Ṣarfat (“scholars of France”). Zech. (intro.: “scholars who had been in France”); Ps. 64.7; Ḥakhm hayah be-Ṣarfat (“a scholar who was in France”) Eccles. 5.1.

Ḥakhmey Sefarad (“scholars of Spain”). Amos 2.13, 3.12; Jonah 4.6

Ḥakhmey Yisraēl be-ereṣ Yavan (“Jewish scholars in the land of Greece,” i.e., Byzantium). Jonah 1.2.

Ḥananēl (b. Ḥushiyēl of Qayrawān). Lev. 18.22.

“Ḥasân” – apparently Yafet (Yefet) b. ‘Ali (see here on him); see Chapter 2, n. 113.

Mar Ḥasân (Ḥasân b. Mar Ḥasân, eleventh century). “Other” recension on Gen. 1.6 (ed. Weiser 1: 160). Apparently, he is the “Ḥakhm gadôl Sefardiy” of the regular commentary on Gen. 1.14, according to Sela, Astrôlôgiyâh u-farshanût, 242 n. 30

Ḥayyûj, Judah. (often as ha-medaqdēq, “the grammarian,” or ha-medaqdēq ha-rîshôn, “the first grammarian”). Gen. 41.51; Ex. 7.5, 10.8, 21.2, 8; “short recension” Ex. 10.30; Num. 10.36, 23.13; Deut. 29.28; Isa. 2.9, 14.20, 26.20, 49.5, 65.17; Amos 5.24; Habakkuk 2.19 (end), 3.2; Job 38.5; Ps. 102.2 (Yēhūdah b. David ha-medaqdēq ha-rîshôn), 137.2; Ruth 1.20; Eccles. 9.11, 9.12 (Yēhûdah b. David ba’al ha-diqdûq). Also in one manuscript in addition to Deut. 32.18 (http://mg.alhatorah.org/Devarim/32#18)

Ḥīwî al-Balkhiy (Kalbiy, possibly “dog-like,” as a term of contempt; he was a heretic; on his quarrel with Sa’adyah see Saadia’s Polemics Against Hiwî al-Balkhi, ed. Davidson [N.Y., 1915]). Gen. 3.9, “other recension” (ed. Weiser 1: 169); Ex. 14.27, 16.13, 34.29, and possibly 20.20 and “short recension” Ex. 16.15.

“ha-hōlēm” (“the dreamer”). Ex. 5.9. Clearly not Ibn Janâḥ (whom he frequently criticized, since he did not give the explanation cited there (cf. his Sēfer ha-riqmah 1: 277, line 9); may refer to “Isaac” (see below) but this is unlikely.
Ibn al-Fakhkhār (*ben ha-yośēr*), “son of a potter,” an allusion to Ar. meaning of the family name). On the family, see my *Jews, Visigoths & Muslims*, 128 ff. Whoever it was, he wrote a book on the end of days. Dan. 10.17; 11.31


Ibn al-Tabbān, Lēvy (*R’ Lēvy*), probably. Ps. 7.10.

Ibn Asad, Abū’l-Farāj (*Yeṣu’ah*; ha-Yerūšalmīy, “the Jerusalemite”). See Chapter 1, n. 26 on him. He was a famous Qaraite scholar. Gen. 28.12, 49.27; Ex. 3.2, 3.13, 4.4, 6.3, 7.3 and 12, 8.22, 10.6, 12.5, 15.4, 17.16, 21.37, 22.7, 35.5; “short recension” Ex. 18.2; Lev. 16.1, 23.11; Hosea 4.7; Joel 3.1; Amos 9.10; Obadiah v. 17; Job 3.3; Micah 2.7, 7.12; Haggai 2.10; Zeph. 3.1; Habakkuk 2.7; Malachi 2.6; Ps. 44.10, 49.13, 88.1, 119.60, 122.1, 149.5; Dan. 1.3, 2.5, 4.17, 7.14.

Ibn Bil’am, Judah. See above, Chapter 1, n. 199 for citations.

Ibn Chicatilla, Moses. Torah: see Weiser, intro., 66. Ex. “short recension” 15.2, 28.4 (ed. Weiser 2: 269, 322; neither was mentioned by Weiser); Isa. 4.2 (also probably “some refer this to Hezekiah” see Chapter 1, n. 132), 6.9; 9.18; 10.12; 11.10, 14; 13.9; 18.7; 26.20; 27.1, 3, 5; 28.15, 29; 30.26, 28; 32.10; 34.2; 35.1, 3; 39.8, 18; 40.1; 44.19; 52.1, 11; 54.1; 65.2, 11; 66.5, 11; Hos. 8.13, 10.8, 13.1; Joel 3.1, 4.1; Amos 7.1; Obadiah 20; Jonah 1.6. Also Nahum 2.4; Habakkuk 2.10, 3.14 (see); Zeph. 1.4, 2.1, 3.1; Haggai 1.19; Eccles. 5.11, 9.12, 10.17, 18; Dan. 4.10; and 150 citations in the commentary on Psalms are found in Poznański’s study cited in Chapter 1, n. 174.

Ibn Gabirol, Solomon. Gen. 3.21 and see Chapter 1, n. 170 for other citations.

Ibn Ghiyāth, Isaac (*meفارشييت*; “commentator”? this usage is not recorded in any dictionary). Deut. 10.6; Eccles. 7.1, 10.6. and throughout Chapter 10 and 11 (alluded to, see notes in the Spanish translation); Ps. 147.3 (*Yiṣḥaq ha-Sefardi*); see also *Meفارشيים* below.

Ibn Janāḥ, Jonah (*R’ Yōnah; R’ Marīnus = Marwān*, his Ar. name). Gen. 3.8, 19.15, 20.2 (see Chapter 1, n. 155), 41.43, 44.5, 50.26; Genesis “other recension” 3.8 (p. 141); “long recension” of Ex. 1.10, 5.21, 6.3, 9.17, 12.22, 13.8, 14.20, 15.9, 16.20, 18.10 and 14, 19.5 and 12 (see Chapter 1, n. 156), 21.2, 4 and 18, 30.32, 34.9; “short recension” of Ex. 1.10, 13.8, 19.12, 21.8 (see Chapter 1, n. 156), 22.17; Lev. 6.14, 11.14, 14.1, 20.3; Num. 13.30, 16.1, 22.13; Deut. 12.2, 20.19, 26.5, 29.18; Isa. 12.9, 30.16, 27.3, 44.13, 54.15; Hos. 2.18, 11.3 and 4, 14.3; Joel 1.17; Amos 3.15, 6.6, 9.7; Obadiah verses 7, 20; Jonah 4.8; Micah 1.5, 7.3; Nahum 2.5; Zech. 3.5, 7.13; Ps. 40.8, 49.15, 74.8, 80.11, 11.2, 119.3; Job 4.7; Dan. 1.1, 2.8; Esther 9.23 (*medaqdēq*); “second” recension of Esther. p. 28; Ruth 3.16, 4.4; Eccles. 9.12. See also Wesier’s introduction 1: 63 on the terms *medaqdēq gaddol*, etc., to which add Gen. 20.2; Ex. 19.12, 21.8; Ps. 10.7. Also in addition to Deut. 29.18 in one manuscript: (http://mg.alhatorah.org/Devarim/29#18)
Appendix 1

Ibn Labrāṭ, Dunash (Adōniym ha-Lēvy, Ben Labrat [sic]). Ps. 9.1, 7, 10; 42.5; Dan. 2.12. Also Gen. 5.24 in two manuscripts: (http://mg.alhatorah.org/Bereshit/25#24)

Ibn Mar Saul (Sha’ūl), Isaac b. Lēvy (Yiśhaq b. Sha’ūl). Deut. 32.1, Isa. 27.3; see 1, n. 143.

Ibn Naghrillah, Samuel (“ha-naqiyyd”). Ps. 109.10. See Chapter 1, n. 141.

Ibn Paqudah, Bāh ya (eroneously: Hai Gaōn). Deut. 32.39 (see Michael, Ḫilufey nūshā’ōt,” 90 see Bibliography).

Ibn Qasṭār – see below, “Isaac”

Ibn Quraysh, Judah (Tāhart, Morocco; early tenth century, important grammarians). Ex. 1.16 (“long” recension, ed. Weiser 2: 11); Amos 6.10. (see Orfali in Esteban, ed., Abraham Ibn Ezra y su tiempo, 228; and see Comentarios... al libro de Amos, 209 n. 1. Neither statement is in the extant work of Ibn Quraysh.

Ibn Sarūq, Menahēm. Ex. 6.3; Deut. 22.9; Haggai 1.12; Dan. 2.12.

Ibn Shahīn, Nissim (b. Jacob, known as Nissim Gaōn). Ex. 34.6

Ibn Tamiym, Dunash (Adōniym; Ben Tamiym). Gen. 38.9; “other recension” Gen. 1.31 (ed. Weiser 1: 165; Ex. 3.2 (Weiser 1: 59 said this is “probably” Ibn Labrāṭ, yet in his note on the passage he correctly identified him as Ibn Tamiym; cf. already Joseph b. El’azar “Bonfils,” Šafnat pa’nēāh, 155). Isa. 5.30; Eccles. 12.5.

Ibn Yashush (Ibn Qastā’är) – see below, “Qastār”

“Isaac” (Yiśhaq, ha-Yiśhaqiyy)

One of the commentators severely criticized by Ibn ‘Ezra was “Yiṣḥaq” (Isaac), also referred to by him derogatorily as “ha-Yiḥshaqiyy.” He mentioned him as one of “the sages of the yeshivot in the Muslim kingdoms.” He has been identified by many scholars as the eleventh-century grammarian Abū Ibrāhīm (Isaac) Ibn Qasṭār (called also Ibn Yashūsh; on whom see M. Steinschneider, “Zur arabischen Literatur,” Z.D.M.G. 8 (1853): 551; there are errors in Ibn ‘Ezrah, Kitāb al-müḥādan, in spite of the fact that we have no evidence that he taught in a yeshivah.

The most amusing statement on this is by Ashtor, author of the article on Ibn Yashūsh in E.J., “[he] wrote a Bible commentary named Yiẓḥaki in which the method of investigation comes very close to that of modern Bible criticism,” confusing the appellative given to him by Ibn ‘Ezra with the “name” of his commentary.

Joseph “Bonfils” was the first to make this identification; Šafnat pa’nēāh, 10, where he claimed that Ibn ‘Ezra referred to him on Dan. 1.1; however, in fact, the reference there is to Ibn Janāh (see Chapter 1 above, n. 138). Bonfils cited Ibn ‘Ezra as having said that this grammarian wrote “ten” books, which is not in the text as we have it. Furthermore, Ibn ‘Ezra cited approvingly an explanation of Ibn Yashūsh (so, not “Yashiyysh”), the other name by which Ibn Qasṭār was known, in his first (“other”) recension on Gen. 1.31 (ed. Weiser 1: 165). Weiser, intro,
64–65 thought that this refers to Isaac Gaon (and distinguished between “R’ Yiṣḥaq” and “Yiṣḥaq aqiy,” perhaps this is correct, but if so, the identity of R’ Yiṣḥaq” remains problematic; certainly not “Isaac Gaōn,” a very minor figure not known to have written anything).

Another suggestion made by some, that he was Isaac b. Solomon “Israeliy,” also is not plausible since he does not fit the description of a sage in a yeshivah (and see below, Ibn ‘Ezra’s citation of Isaac “Israeliy”). Krinsky, Mehōqeqiyy Yehūdah 1: 24a (erroneously printed as “44”), n. 8, mentions the claim by E. Carmoly that he saw a manuscript which specifically stated that this Isaac was the “Yiṣḥaq” cited by Ibn ‘Ezra; however, Carmoly was notoriously unreliable.

“Yiṣḥaq” is cited: Gen. 36.31 (where he is said to have written that because Moses could not possibly have known the names of Edomite kings mentioned there, who came after him, this section was written in the days of Jehosaphat), 37.24, 49.18; and see Gen., ed. Weiser, 165; Lev. 5.7; Num. 6.11, 24.17; Hos. 1.1, 2; Job. 42.16; and cf. Sēfer ha-Shēm, 3b; see Friedländer, Essays, Heb. appendix, 33 (Gen. 1.31). See also (possibly) above: “ha-hōlēm.” Weiser’s statements in his introduction, 1: 65, are incorrect and contradict what he had earlier written (correctly) that this refers to Ibn Janāḥ, nor is it by any means correct that Ibn ‘Ezra generally “behaved respectfully” towards Ibn Janāḥ; see above on him. Ibn ‘Ezra mentions the commentary of “Isaac” on Genesis, which was not complete, and harshly attacked it.

Contrast the high words of praise by Moses Ibn ‘Ezra(h) for the same commentary, Kitāb, 270/271, line 54; in addition to the sources cited there by Halkin, see St., C.B., col. 1116. There is, of course, no merit to the argument of Ezra Fleischer, in his Hebrew article in H.U.C.A. 38 (1967), that “Isaac” was the author of the “ancient questions” (“She’ēlot ‘atiyyōt”), or critical observations on the Bible composed in poetic form (see there, 17 ff.). That work was written, as the unknown author says, by one who had come from a far, distant land to study in the yeshivah of the Land of Israel (thus, he certainly could not have been a “sage” in one of the yeshivot). Fleischer was able to cite a few verses which at best bear a remote similarity, coincidentally, to one or two of Ibn ‘Ezra’s criticisms of “Isaac.” Fleischer thought that the references in Ibn ‘Ezra’s Ṣahōt and the “short” recension of Ex. 21.8 were also to “Isaac” (instead of, correctly, Ibn Janāḥ; see above).

Isaac b. Solomon (“Israeliy”). In the first (“other”) recension of his commentary on Genesis, ed. Weiser 1: 162, he mentions the explanation of that passage (Gen. 1.20) given by “Rabbi Isaac b. Solomon.” Weiser, certain that there was an error in the text, corrected it to “Solomon b. Isaac,” i.e., “Rashi;” but there is no such explanation found in the commentary of “Rashi,” and it is certainly a reference to Isaac b. Solomon “Israeliy” (and see Krinsky Mehōqeqiyy Yehūdah 1, into., 39). On Isaac, see Altmann, Alexander and Stern, S. Isaac Israeli:a Neoplatonic Philosopher of the Early Tenth Century (Oxford, 1958). This commentary of Isaac Israeli


Joseph (Qara?) (R’ Yosēf; possible identity). Hos. 14.3; Ps. 45.5

Judah ha-Lēvy. Ex. 4.10 (cf. Gen. 43.20 where Ibn ‘Ezra gives this as his own explanation), Ex. 9.1; 13.14; 24.11; Num.27.3; Deut.14.22; 26.17; 29.18; 33.5; the “other recension” to Gen. 1.3 and 6.1 (ed. Weiser 1: 159, 174); Zech. 8.6; Ps. 18.5, 30.8, 49.20, 72.20, 73.25, 80.16, 82.8, 89.53, 139.14, 150.1, 150.6; Dan. 9.2 “Lēvy.” Ps. 7.10, 35.13 (probably Ibn al-Tabbān), see index on him.

*Ma’atiyiq* (frequent). Sages of the Talmud, the rabbis.


*Medaqēq gadōl*, etc., see Ibn Janāḥ.

*Medaqēq ha-yerūshalmiyiy*; see Ibn al-Faraj.

*Medaqēqey Sefarad* (“Spanish grammarians”). Amos 5.24; Ps. 64.7 *Mefārēsh gadōl bi-Sfarad* (“a great commentator in Spain”); Deut. 7.13 *Mefārēhiym* (“commentators”); sometimes he means Ibn Ghiyāth; e.g., Esther 10.8 (see Abramson, *Mi-piy ba’aley leshonot*, 100), and so probably Esther 10.17.

*Menaḥēm* – see Ibn Sarūq.

*Mevaser ha-Lēvy. Gaon*. Lev. 16.8; Jonah 1.3. His *Hasagōt* on Sa’adyah were published (N.Y., 1945).

*Moses ha-nagiyd* – see Ibn Naghrīllah

Moses [b. ‘Amram] *ha-Pārsiy* (“the Persian,” cf. Judah *ha-Pārsiy*). Qaraite. Ex. 12.5 (and see Weiser’s n. 84 there, and Krinsky, *Meḥōqeqiy Yehūdah* 1, intro., 40); Amos 7.14; Simon’s objection there as to this identification is without foundation.

*Natan* (b. Yeḥiyl of Rome). Ex. 25.29. Nissim; see Ibn *Shahīn*.

*Ptolemy (Talmiy)*. Lev. 25.9

Qayyara, Simon (*Halakḥōt gedōlōt*). Ex. 20.1. “Rashi” – see Solomon b. Isaac Sa’adyah (Se’adyah) *Gaon*. Almost always in disagreement with him (see Chapter 2, n. 84). Weiser, introduction (1: 67–68) lists all the references in the commentary on the Pentateuch, but there are, of course, citations throughout the other commentaries. Of particular interest is his mention of Sa’adyah’s treatise on Sabbath lights, against the Qaraites (“long recension” on Ex. 35.3). See also *ha-Gaon* above.


Samuel b. Ḥofniy. Gen. 3.1, 28.11; Ex. 4.24 and 25, 8.6, 19.13; Lev. 8.33*, 16.8; Num. 22.28. See also Chapter 1, criticism of him in the introduction to his commentary.
Appendix 1

*(Probably; see his Peyrūsh ha-Tōrah, ed. Greenbaum [Jerusalem, 1978], 440 and 442; in the editor’s introduction, 25, he added this verse to the citations noted by Weiser but without reference to the source; Gen. 1.3 there is an error copied from Weiser, nor did he see Num. 22.28).

_Shelōmōh ha-Sefardiy_; see Ibn Gabirol.

Solomon b. Isaac ("Rashi"). Cited usually as “Rabeynu Shelōmōh.” Gen. 32.9; Ex. 9.30, 12.6, 15.2, 16.15, 18.14 and 26; 19.2, 23.19, 26.18 and 31, 28.6 and 36; “short recension” Ex. 28.22, 30. Melamed, 673, suggests other places, where he is not cited by name. See also above: _Ma‘attiyqey ha-Tōrah_.

_Talmiy_, see Ptolemy.

Yafet (Yefet) b. ‘Alī (Qaraite). On Exodus, repeatedly (see Weiser’s introduction, _Peyrūshey_ 1: 63–64), and Hosea 3.4, 4.3, 4.7, 5.3, 5.5, 5.7, 8.1, 8.4; Joel 1.4, 1.14, 1.15, 2.23, 4.11; Amos 4.13, 8.7, 9.7, 9.9; Obadiah 16, 17; Jonah 1.5, 2.4, 4.4; Micah 1.14, 4.8, 7.5; Nahum 2.4, 2.6; Habakkuk 1.4, 1.8, 19, 2.6; Zeph. 3.1; Haggai 1.9; Zech. 1.5, 1.8, 5.1, 8.23, 11.3, 13.7; Malachi 2.6, 2.12; Ps. 8.7, 11.7, 71.19, 78.47, and alluded to often in Ecclesiastes (see the notes in _El comentario de Abraham ibn Ezra al libro del Eclesiastes_; Dan. 2.5, 3.4, 4.9, 5.20, 7.1, 8.2, 9.23).

_Yēshū‘ah_; see Ibn Asad.

_Yiṣḥaq, ha-Yiṣḥaqiy_; see “Isaac.”

_Yiṣḥaq ha-Sefardiy_; see (probably) Ibn Ghiyāth.

_Yiṣḥaq b. Sha‘l_; see Ibn Mar Saul.

_David Qimḥi_

_Names of Spanish authorities cited_

(Frank Talmage, _Apples of Gold in Settings of Silver_, has a lengthy discussion, 45–70, of the “literary sources” of Qimḥi, yet he overlooked most of these.)

Abraham b. Hayya (Ḥiya). Jer. 9.23; Ps. 147.4 (and cf. Gen. 1.21 and Isa. 43.7 = _Megiylat ha-megaleh_, 66; see further Talmage, 49)

Ḥaṭṭūyj, Judah. Isa. 40.15; Jonah 4.1; Job 6.7, 30.12 (Qimḥi used Hebrew translations of this and all other Arabic works mentioned here)

Ibn Chicatilla, Moses (undoubtedly from Ibn ‘Ezra or another source). Ps. 77.5; 132.6; Job 6.17

Ibn Daûd (“Abraham ha-Lēvy of Toledo;” _Séfer ha-qabalah_) Zech. 11.14

Ibn ‘Ezra, Abraham. Gen. 1.1, 3, 5; 2.2, 4, 8, 10, 17; 3.1, 4, 4.1; 30.14; Hos. 7.9; Amos 5.8; 9.6; Zech. 12.1; Ps. 2.3; 6.1 and 19.11; 41.1 (ve-yēš onriyym in these places); 45.7; 51.7, 16; 55.7; 71.7; 72.8; 79.8; 88.6; 89.9; 94.15; 103.18, 20; 104.1; 105.35; 126.1; 130.4, 6; 135.7; 139.3, 6, 15, 16

Ibn ‘Ezra(h), Moses. Gen. 1.5; Isa. 51.1 (however, this is probably an error for Ibn ‘Ezra; see Kirchheim as cited by Lipshitz, _‘Iyuniym_ (see Bibliography,
19 n. 51) Ibn Gabirol. Jer. 2.24; Ps. 25.9; Ps. 37.8, 23 (the source is Improvement of the Moral Qualities, intro., 47 and 4; Tiqun midot ha-nefesh, intro., 7b and 8a [note that Qimḥi had a different translation of 8a], and see Chapter 1, n. 171.

Ibn Janāḥ Frequent.
Ibn Naghrillah, Samuel (“ha-nagiyd”). Ps. 109.10.
Ibn Paquda, Baḥya. Gen. 1.5, Ps. 35.10. Ibn Ṣ adiyq, Joseph (philosopher). Gen. 2.7.
Ibn Sarūq, Menahēm. 2 Sam. 3.35, 4.2 and Isa. 54.8–9.
Ibn Tibbon, Samuel. Gen. 3.6; Jer. 17.12 (and see Talmage, 65).
Judah b. Barzilay. Jer. 17.2; Ps. 132.2.
Judah ha-Lēvy (“he-haḵhām ha-Kūzariy”). Gen. 1.2; Isa. 6.3, Jer. 10.16, Zech. 4.2; Hosea 2.1; Ps. 102.15; 139.3 (Talmage, Apples of Gold, 48) complained that Qimḥi rarely cited ha-Lēvy; he missed some of these. Qimḥi, Joseph (“adōniy aviy z”l). Frequently, especially in commentary on Psalms

Naḥmanides (references are to volume and page of Chavel’s edition)

Classical Sources: Talmud, also “Jerusalem;” Onkelos (frequent); many midrashiym, including works like Tanḥūma (see list of citations in ed. Buber Vilna, 1885 [and rpt. ed.] 1: 48a of introduction, but compare this carefully also with Chavel’s references in textual notes); Pirqey de-Rabiy Eli’ezer; Sēfer yeṣiyrah (1: 13, 371, 404, 494); Yōsiyfōn [Pseudo–Josephus] (1: 275; 2: 190). Wisdom of Solomon (Apocrypha) in Aramaic translation: introduction, ed. Chavel 1: 5.

Medieval Sources – General:
Midrashiym (most of them); Sa’adyah Gaōn (1: 224, 292; 2: 21); Halakhēt gedōlōt (frequent); Hai (Hayē) Gaōn (Ex. 28.30; ed. Chavel 1: 475); Sher-irah Gaōn (1: 47); Rabeynū Hananēl b. Ḥūshiyyēl (1: 320; 2: 132); Nathan (Nathan) b. Yeḵ iyē 1 of Rome (‘Arūkh; 1: 236 n. 46; 329 n. 83; 496; Job 12.18; and cf. Chapter 2 on him);“Rashi” frequently, of course; “ha-Ṣarfatiyym”=Ḥizqūniy (2: 162, see 522, note), this refers to an esoteric commentary on the Tōrah by Hezekiah b. Manōḥa, thirteenth century, (first published Venice, 1554 and repeatedly, especially Vilna, 1880; rpt. Jerusalem, 1975, 1995); the author or the commentary is not mentioned by any of the modern scholars of qabalah. Moses “ha-darshān” (Narbonne, eleventh century), simply as midrash (see Gross, G.J., 411; see Bibliography), but these are all taken from citations in “Rashi.” Maimo-nides: “Guide” (1: 14 [see 543], 18, 40, 48, 72, 98, 103, 125, 246, 292, 391, 406, 407, 492; 2: 11, 12, 30, 100, 115, 402, 426, 439, 448, 449, 504); M.T. (1: 93, 403, 404, 495, 501; 2: 54, 97, 98 [see note], 125, 373, 417,
427 [see note], 438; Sefer ha-mišvōt (directly and indirectly several times), Shemōnah peraqiyym (2: 274). For other allusions to Maimonides (not direct citations), see my notes.

Medieval Sources – Spain:

al-Fāsī (1: 493).

“grammarians” (1: 49; 2: 488; and so often). Ibn ʾEzra. Frequent.

Ibn Gabirol. Not mentioned directly, but indirect citations from his “Mivḥar ha- peniyniym”: Gen. 37.15 (ed. Chavel 1: 209 and see his note there)

Ibn Janāḥ, Jonah (1: 40).

Ibn Sarūq, Menahēm = “Menahēm” (1: 185, 186, 195); probably cited from “Rashi.”

Judah ha-Lēvy. (Kūzariy 1: 17 “qeṣat mefūrshiym;” 2: 135 “be-nefēṣh aṣūlah me-rūah ha-hayiym” [see Talmage, Peyrūšiym le-Sefer Mishley le-beyt Qimḥiy, 35]; 2: 315, 395; Job 38.21).

Qimḥi, David (1: 195), and see Chapter 4, text before n. 94.

Qimḥi, Joseph (1: 27).

Appendix 2

Commentaries by name of book and of author

(For details, see the name of each author in the index here. Only complete published commentaries are included).

1 TORAH (complete)
   Baḥya b. Asher
   Ibn Bil‘am, Judah
   Ibn ‘Ezra, Abraham
   Ibn Ḥabīb, Joseph
   Ibn Kaspiy, Joseph
   Ibn Naḥmias, Joseph
   Jacob b. Asher
   Jacob d’Illescas
   Menahēm b. Solomon “ha-Meyriy”
   Moses b. Naḥman (“Naḥmanides”)
   Natan b. Samuel
   Solomon Astruc (Astruc is not a “last name”)

Genesis only:
   Judah b. Moses Ḥallāva; Nissim b. Reuben Gerundiyy; Qimḥi, David

2 FORMER PROPHETS (Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings)
   Ibn Bil‘am, Judah (Joshua, Judges)
   Ibn ‘Ezra, Abraham
   Ibn Kaspiy, Joseph (Joshua, Judges, Samuel)
   Qimḥi, David

3 “MINOR” PROPHETS (The Twelve)
   Ibn Bil‘am, Judah
   Ibn ‘Ezra, Abraham Ibn Kaspiy, Joseph Qimḥi, David (Hosea)
4  LATER PROPHETS (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel) Ibn Bil’am, Judah
   Ibn ‘Ezra, Abraham (Isaiah)
   Ibn Kaspîy, Joseph Ibn Naḥmias, Joseph
   Menaḥēm b. Simon of of Posquières
   Qimḥî, David

5  WRITINGS
   Psalms:
      Ibn Chicatilla, Moses
      Ibn ‘Ezra, Abraham
      Ibn Naḥmias, Joseph
      Ibn Shū‘ayb, Joel
      Menaḥēm b. Solomon “ha-Meiyriy”
      Qimḥî, David
   Proverbs:
      Ibn Kaspîy, Joseph
      Ibn Naḥmias, Joseph
      Jonah b. Abraham Gerundiy
      Menaḥēm b. Solomon “ha-Meiyriy”
      Qimḥî, Joseph
      Qimḥî, Moses
      Shēšhēt b. Isaac Gerundiy
      Zeraḥyah b. Isaac Gracian (Ḥēn)
   Job:
      Duran, Simon
      Ibn Chicatilla, Moses
      Ibn ‘Ezra, Abraham
      Ibn Kaspîy, Joseph
      Moses b. Naḥman (Naḥmanides)
      Qimḥî, David
      Qimḥî, Joseph
      Qimḥî, Moses
      Zarch, Perfet
      Zeraḥyah b. Isaac Gracian (Ḥēn)
   Scrolls (all):
      Ibn ‘Ezra, Abraham
      Ibn Kaspîy, Joseph
   (Song of Songs):
Appendix 2

Ibn ‘Aknīn, Joseph
Abraham b. Isaac ha-Lēvy
‘Ezra of Gerona
Moses b. Solomon (attributed)
Ibn Chicatilla, Joseph (attributed)
Ibn Kaspiy, Joseph
Ibn Sūan, Joseph
Ibn Sahūlah, Isaac
Ibn Ibn Shū‘ayb, Joel
Ibn Tibbon, Moses
Abraham b. Isaac ha-Lēvy
Jacob b. David Provençal
Moses b. Isaac H-α-l-γ-ū-γ (?)
Solomon Alqabēš
Joseph Ḥayūn

(Ruth):

Isaac b. Joseph ha-Kohēn

(Lamentations):

Ibn Ḥabīb de Vidas, Samuel
Ibn Shū‘ayb, Joel
Moses b. Joshua Narboniy

(Ecclesiastes):

Ibn Ghiyāth, Isaac
Ibn Latīf, Isaac
Ibn Tibbon, Samuel

(Esther):

Ibn ‘Ezra (“second recension”)

(Daniel):

Ibn Naḥmias, Jos e p h
Ibn ‘Ezra, Abraham
Qimḥi, David

Ezra, Nehemiah, Chronicles

Ibn Kaspiy, Joseph
Qimḥi, David (Chronicles)
Qimḥi, Moses (Ezra, Nehemiah)
Bibliography

Catalogues


Codices orientales bibliothecæ regii haviensis (ed. N. L. Westergaard and A. F. Mehren [Copenhagen, 1846–1857], Bd. 2 (Hebrew and Arabic manuscripts).


Hill Monastic Manuscript Library at St. John’s University (Collegeville, Minnesota). “Hebraica in HMML” handlist, compiled by Julian G. Plante (mimeograph, 3/18/92); the “online” catalogue: http://www.hmml.org/research06/handlists/spanish.rtf is not nearly as complete as the handlist, which unfortunately is not found there in the listing of available handlists.


Park-Bernet, Sotheby. *Important Hebrew and Samaritan Manuscripts from the Collection Formed by the Late David Solomon Sassoon… no. 11. Western Manuscripts and Miniatures…* (London 1999).

Perani, Mauro. *Frammenti di manoscritti e libri ebraica a Nonantola* (Nonantola, 1992).

Reif, Stefan C. *Hebrew Manuscripts at Cambridge University Library* (Cambridge, 1997).


Róth, Ernst. *Hebräische Handschriften* (Bd. VI, 2 of Wolfgang Voigt and Hans Striedl, eds., *Verzeichnis der orientalischen Handschriften in Deutschland*), (Weisbaden, 1965).


Schiller-Szinessy, S. M. *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts Preserved in the University Library Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1876), vol. 1 (no more published).


*See also Steinschneider in Secondary Literature.*

**Encyclopedias cited**

*Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem, 1971–72; 16 vols.; most references are to this ed. but in some cases I have consulted the second ed., Detroit, 2007).


Roth. *Medieval Jewish Civilization* (see Secondary Literature below).


**Sources**


Abraham b. Ḥayya (or Hiyya). *Hegayon ha-nefesh*, ed. S. J. Rapoport (Leipzig, 1860; photo rpt. Jerusalem, 1967); ed. G. Wigoder, *Hegyon ha-nefesh ha-’aṣwah* (Jerusalem, 1971); Rapoport’s ed. is poor, and while Wigoder’s is better. It is virtually without notes.
—— _Megilat ha-megaleh_, ed. S. Poznañski and J. Guttmann (Berlin, 1924; photo rpt. Jerusalem, 1967); _Llibre revelador_, tr. (Catalan) J. M. Millás Vallicrosa (Barcelona, 1929).

—— _La obra enciclopédica ‘Yisóde ha-tíbuná u-nigdal ha-imuná’_, ed. (Heb.) and tr. (Castilian) José Millás Vallicrosa (Madrid, Barcelona, 1952).


Abraham b. Isaac of Narbonne. _Séfer ha-eshkol_, ed. B. R. Auerbach (Halberstadt, 1868; photo rpt. N.Y., s.a.).


Abraham b. Solomon of Torrutiel. _Séfer ha-qabalah_, ed. Abraham Harkavy, _Hadashiyym gam yeshaniyym_ 2 (in Graetz, _Divrey yemez Yisraēl_ 6 [1898]: 6–24; photo rpt. (see Harkavy in “Secondary Literature” below), 285–304; and in Neubauer, Adolf, ed. _Mediaeval Jewish Chronicles_ (Oxford, 1887) 1: 101–14 (same manuscript, but without Harkavy’s notes); photo rpt. David, Abraham, ed. _Shitey keroniyyot ‘iriyot me-dor geyrush Sefarad_ (Jerusalem, 1979), with notes (I cite the pages of Neubauer’s ed., with David’s ed. with in parentheses).


Abravanel, Isaac. _Commentary on Dan. 3_ (with text, Bible. Latter Prophets [Pesaro, 1520]).

—— _Mashmiya‘ yeshua‘h_ (Königsberg, 1860).


—— _Yad ramah…Sanhedrin_ (Jerusalem, 1999).


Abulafia, Ṭodoros b. Judah. _Gan ha-meshaliym ve-ha-iydot_, ed. D. Yellin (Jerusalem, 1932–34); 2 vols. al – see under the following name.


Allony, Nehemia, ed. _Mi-sifrey ha-balshanut ha-‘iriyot bi-mey ha-beynayiyim_ (Jerusalem, 1971).

Almanzi, Joseph and S. D. Luzzatto, eds. _Avney zikaron_ (Prague, 1841).


Asher b. Yeḥūd. She’elot u-teshuvot, ed. Y. Yudlov (Jerusalem, 1994).
“Averroes” – see Ibn Rushd.
(Bible. O.T. Hebrew. Aleppo Codex, 1992). Miqr’a’ot gedolot ha-keter (Ramat-Gan, 1992–).
The Bible in Aramaic 1. The Pentateuch According to Targum Onkelos, ed. A. Sperber (Leiden, 1959, 1999); the five-volume edition contains all of the targumiyim.
Biblia del segle XIV: Êxode. Levitiq, transcribed by Jaume Riera I Sans, with critical apparatuses, notes and a glossary by Pere Casanellas i Bassols, and an introductory essay by Armand Puig i Tárrech (Barcelona, 2004).


Conforte – see “Secondary Literature”.


Duran, Profiat – see Isaac b. Moses ha-Lévy.


——— *Sēfer ha-tashbēṣ* (so, correctly, is the title) (Lemberg, 1891; photo rpt. Tel Aviv, s.a.).


—— *Ḥamishah meʻorot ha-gedoliym* (Johannesburg, 1952).
*


Ha-Lēvy – see Judah b. Samuel.


Bibliography

———. She’elot u-teshuot...mi-ketav-yad, ed. A. Zolznik (Jerusalem, 2005).
———. Teshuot ha-meyuhasot la-Ramban (Warsaw, 1883; photo rpt. Jerusalem, 1976; She’elot u-teshuot, vol. 3).
———. Teshuot ha-Rasha ha-hehadashot (She’elot u-teshuot, ed. S. Z. Havlin [Jerusalem, 2000/01], vol. 9).


——— (Jeremiah), ed. and tr. M. Perez (Ramat-Gan, 2002); the commentary on Jer. 1–4.1, tr. M. Goshen-Gottstein appeared (apparently without his permission) in Gad, op. cit., 45–47; Jer. 31.14 and 49.25, ed. J. Israelsohn, in Günzburg and Markon, eds. (q.v.), Festschrift Harkavy; Heb. section, 273–308.
——— (Ezekiel) ed. and tr. M. Perez (Rama-Gan, 2000).
——— Sheloshah seforiyum shel Yehudah Ibn Bil’am, ed. Shraga Abramson (Jerusalem, 1975).
Ibn Chicatilla, Moses (catalogued in U.S. libraries as “Gikatilla, Moses”). Moses b. Samuel Hakkohen Ibn Chiquitilla [sic] nebst den Fragmenten seiner Schriften (Leipzig, 1895), ed. and tr. (German) Samuel Poznański (see also Chapter 1 here, n. 119).


——— Abraham ibn Ezra’s Hiobkommentar, ed. J. Galliner (Berlin, 1901).


——— The Book of Reasons (Sēfer ha-ṭe’amiym), critical ed. and tr. Shlomo Sela (Leiden, 2007).


——— El comentario de Abraham ibn Ezra al libro del Eclesiastes, ed. with Spanish tr. by Mariano Gómez Aranda (Madrid, 1994).


——— The Commentary…on Hosea, ed., from six manuscripts, and tr. (Eng.) Abe Lipshitz (N.Y., 1988).


——— Commentary on the Canticles, ed. H. J. Matthews (London, 1874; rpt. s.l.s.a. [1968?]).

——— Divan, ed. and tr. Jacob Egers (Berlin, 1886).

——— Ibn ‘Ezra’s Commentary on the Pentateuch, tr. H. Norman Strickman and A. M. Silver (N.Y., 1985; 5 vols.); not, however, based on Weiser’s text below and therefore missing important sections.

——— Igeret Hay ben Mēqiṣṣ, ed. Israel Levin (Tel-Aviv, 1983).

——— Margaliyot tovah (Amsterdam, 1722; rpt, same pagination, Stanislaw, 1927; photo rpt. of Amsterdam ed., Jerusalem, 1973); commentary on the Torah, with (abridged) supercommentaries.

——— Peyrush Shiyr ha-shiyriym – see Commentary on the Canticles.

——— Peyrushey ha-Torah, ed. Asher Weiser (Jerusalem, 1976), 3 vols. (see also, on Genesis, Prijs, in “Secondary Literature”).

—— Şefat yeter, ed. G. Lippmann (Frankfurt a. M., 1843; photo rpt. [Tel-Aviv? 1966?]).
—— Sēfer ha-aşamiyun, ed. M. Grossberg (London, 1901; photo rpt. in Ibn ‘Ezra, Kitvey 2 [Jerusalem, 1970]).
—— Sēfer ha-tibur, ed. S. Z. H. Halberstam (Lyck, 1874; photo rpt. in Kitvey 2, Jerusalem, 1970).
—— Sēfer ha-shēm, ed. with Germ. tr. G. H. Lippmann (Fürth, 1834; photo rpt. in Ibn ‘Ezra, Kitvey 1, Jerusalem, 1970); ed. Levin in Yalqūṭ, below.
—— Sēfer saḥōt (Fürth, 1827).
—— Yesod diqduq (ed. N. Allony as Yesod diqduq hu sefat yeter [which it is not], Jerusalem, 1984).
((See also Friedländer, Michael. Essays; and Krinsky, Mehoqueiy Yehudah. in “Secondary Literature”).
Ibn ‘Ezra(h), Moses. Kitāb al-muḥādara wa’l-mudākana, ed. and tr. (Heb.) A. S. Halkin (Jerusalem, 1975); also ed. and tr. Montserrat Abumalham Mas (Madrid, 1986); vol. I, ed. (in Arabic letters), vol. II, tr. (Spanish). This ed. and tr. is usually not
here cited, since the volume of the translation also has the page numbers of the Judeo-Ar. manuscript utilized by Halkin, and thus it is easy to compare the two.

——— Sēfer ha-ma‘a lot (Das Buch der Grade), ed. L. Venetianer (Berlin, 1894; photo rpt. Jerusalem, 1970).
——— Improvement of the Moral Qualities, ed. (in Arabic letters) and tr. Stephen S. Wise (N.Y., 1901; photo rpt. 1966); Heb. tr. of Ibn Tibbon, Tiqun midot ha-nefesh, in Goren nakhon (Luneville, 1807; photo rpt. Jerusalem, 1967).
——— Shiyrium niḥhariym, ed. Ḥayyim Schirmann (numerous eds., I use Jerusalem, 1967; the pagination is the same in all).
——— Peyrūṣḥ le-kitvev ha-qodesh, ed. A. Z. Rabinowitz (Tel-Aviv, 1926; rpt. 1936); excerpts of some comments from his grammatical writings.
——— Tam ha-kesef, ed. I. Last (London, 1913; photo rpt. Jerusalem [1969–70]).
——— Ben Mishley, ed. Shraga Abramson (Tel-Aviv, 1948).
Ibn Na'mīniyās, Joseph. Peyrūsh 'al 'Estār, ed. Moses Bamberger (Frankfurt a. M., 1891); photo rpt. in Peyrushey Yosef ben Na'hmiyās (Jerusalem, 1982); German tr. Podgórze [Galicia], 1899; this lacks the important introduction.
——— Peyrūsh 'al Mishley, ed. Moses Bamberger, with intro. by S. Poznański (Berlin, 1911; photo rpt. in Peyrushey Yosef ben Na'hmiyās, Jerusalem, 1982).
Ibn Quraysh, Judah. Risāla, ed. (Judeo-Ar.) and tr. (Heb.) Dan Becker (Tel-Aviv, 1984).
Ibn Sāhirūq, Menaḥēm. Mahberet, ed. Herschell Filipowski (London, 1885); critical ed. and tr. (Spanish) Ángel Saénz-Badillos (Granada, 1986).
——— "La Piedra de Toque" = Eben bohan; critical ed. and tr. José- Vicente Niclós (Madrid, 1997).
Ibn Shu'ayb, Joel. (Commentary on Lamentations, together with text), s.t. Qol bokhiym (Salonica, 1521, photo rpt. Jerusalem, 1970/71 and Brooklyn, 1991/92; and another edition, Prague, 1621) and s.t. Qol negiydīym (Venice, 1589; photo rpt. Brooklyn, 1994).
Ibn Shu'ayb, Joshua. Biyūr le-feyrūsh ha-Ramban (Vilna, 1927), erroneously attributed to Meir Ibn Sahūla; photo rpt. in Miqra'ot gedolot. Sēfer peyrūshīey ha-miqra (N.Y., 1969, 1981); there is also a Warsaw, 1875 ed. of the supercommentary; photo rpt. in Ŭṣar meforsērīey ha-miqra (Jerusalem, 1976).
Bibliography


Ibn Tibbon, Samuel. Ma’amar yeqavvū ha-mayiym (Pressburg, 1837; photo rpt. Jerusalem, s.a. [197–?]).


Joseph b. Šadiyq. Qiṣṣur zēkher šadiyq, in Neubauer, Adolf, ed., Mediaeval Jewish Chronicles (Oxford, 1887) 1: 85–100; photo rpt. David, Abraham, ed., Shtey kerōniyyot ivriyyot me-dōr gedryēsh Sefarad (Jerusalem, 1979), but without the original pagination (I cite the pages of Neubauer’s ed. with David’s ed. in parentheses).

Joserphus – see Flavius Josephus.

Judah al-Ḥarīzī – see Ḥarīzī.

Jacob b. Asher. Ṭur (=Arba’ ītiyy; numerous eds., most recent Montreal, 2005, in 5 vols., with all commentaries).


Jacob b. Ḥananīl Šikīliy. Tōrat ha-minḥah (Safed [Tzefat, Israel], 1991).


Joseph b. Šadiyq. Qiṣṣur zēkher šadiyq, in Neubauer, Adolf, ed., Mediaeval Jewish Chronicles (Oxford, 1887) 1: 85–100; photo rpt. David, Abraham, ed., Shtey kerōniyyot ivriyyot me-dōr gedryēsh Sefarad (Jerusalem, 1979), but without the original pagination (I cite the pages of Neubauer’s ed. with David’s ed. in parentheses).

Joserphus – see Flavius Josephus.

Judah al-Ḥarīzī – see Ḥarīzī.


——— Sēfer ha-‘itiym, ed. Jacob Schorr (Berlin [Krakow], 1902).

—— Kūzari: (a) Kitāb al-radd wa’l-dalīl fi’l-dīn al-dhaliḥ, ed. and tr. (Heb.) David. Z. Baneth and Haggai Ben-Shammai (Jerusalem, 1977); (b) Kitab al Khazari, Eng. tr. Hartwig Hirschfeld (London; N.Y., 1905); photo rpt. as The Kuzari (N.Y., 1964), without Hirschfeld’s introduction.


Ketūviym aḥrōniym (Heb. tr. of Apocrypha, by Yiṣḥaq Z. Fraenkel [Warsaw, 1902]).

Kimhi, or Kimchi (erroneous) – see Qimḥi.


ha-Lēvy – see Judah b. Samuel.

“Maimonides” – see Moses b. Maimon.


—— Midrash berēshīyt zītā [on Genesis] (Jerusalem, 1962).

—— on Daniel and Esther (Jerusalem, 1968).


Menahēm b. Solomon “ha-Meiriy.” Beyt ha-beḥiyrah…Avot (Jerusalem, 1964; 1968) (libraries list him as “Meiri, Menahem” as if that were his “last name;” it is not, but refers to his family origin).


—— on Proverbs, first published with the biblical text in Leiria, Portugal, 1492 and frequently thereafter (latest ed., Peyrūsh…, commentary alone, by M. Mesi-Zahav [Jerusalem, 1969]).

Qiryat sēfer (Jerusalem, 1956; photo rpt. [1990?] with vol. 1 of his Beyt ha-beḥiyrah).

Midrash Tanhūma (“new” text, with commentaries), numerous eds.; (“old” text, ed. S. Buber [Vilna, 1885]; photo rpt. Jerusalem? s.a.; 2 vols.; this does not mean that the “new” text is superior, only different. Eng. translations: Samuel A. Berman of the “old” text of “Midrash Tanhuma-Yelammedenu” [sic, Yelamdēnū, a common error] (Hoboken, N.J., 1995) and a much better translation by John T. Townsend of the Buber text of Midrash Tanḥuma (Hoboken, N.J., 1989–2003), 3 vols.


Mosca – see Judah b. Solomon.


Haqdamōt le-veyrūq ha-miṣnah, ed. M. D. Rabinowitz (Jerusalem, 1960); tr. Y. Shailat (Jerusalem, 1996).


[M.T.=] Mishnēh Tōrah (Vilna, 1900; photo rpt. N.Y., 1946/47; Jerusalem, 1972; N.Y., 1975; etc.).

Mōreh nevōkhīyim, tr. Samuel Ibn Tibbon (Vilna, 1909); Mōreh ha-nevōkhīyim, modern tr. Joseph Kafiḥ (Jerusalem, 19918 (this ed. has different pagination than the first ed. and is a corrected text).


Sēfer ha-miṣvōt, ed. Ḥayyīm (Charles) Chavel (Jerusalem, 1981; with the “strictures” of Naḥmanides).


—— Peyrūshey...ha-Tōrah (commentary on the Torah), ed. Ḥayyim (Charles) Chavel (Jerusalem, 1959, etc.; I use the1996 ed.), 2 vols.
—— “Tōrat ha-Shēm temiymah,” Kitvey 1: 141–75; Italian tr., La legge del signore è perfetta, with introduction and notes, by Mauro Perani (Rome, 1989); Catalan tr., in Ben Nahman de Gerona. El libro de la redempcion i altres escrits, tr. E. Feliu i Mabres (Barcelona, 1993).

al-Nadīm – see Ibn al-Nadīm.

“Naḥmanides” – see Moses b. Naḥman.


Pirke (Piqey) de-Rabiy Eli’ezer (Jerusalem, 1972; 2004); Pirkē de Rabbi Eliyzer, tr. (Eng.) Gerald Friedlander (N.Y., 1965); Los capitulos de Rabbi Eliezer, tr. M. Pérez Fernández (Valencia, 1984).

Bibliography

—– ha-Peyrūš ha-shalēm ’al Tehilīym, ed. A. Darom (Jerusalem, 1966; rpt. 1970; etc.).
—– Petiyāḥ le-fērūš ha-Tōrah, ed. Avraham Golan (Jerusalem, 1982).

—– see also Talmage, below.

—– see also Talmage, below.


—– Kitāb al-anwār w’al-manāqib, ed. Leon Nemoy (N.Y., 1939–43).

—– Peyrūšheyy raḥaynū Sa’adyah Ga’on ’al ha-Tōrah (collected from various writings), ed. Joseph Kafiḥ (Jerusalem, 1963).

—– Taḥsīr kitāb al-mabādī (commentary on Sēfer yešiyrah), ed. and tr. (Fr.) M. Lambert, Commentaire sur le sefer yesira (Paris, 1891).


See also (Bible. O.T. Pentateuch Polyglot. 1929).


See also (Bible. O.T. Pentateuch Polyglot. 1929).


See also (Bible. O.T. Pentateuch Polyglot. 1929).


See also (Bible. O.T. Pentateuch Polyglot. 1929).

Adang, Camilla. Muslim Writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible from Ibn Rabban to Ibn Hazm (Nijmegen, 1993).


Afterman, Adam. Derëgût (Heb.) (Los Angeles, C.A., 2011); Eng. version “And They Shall Be One Flesh”: On The Language of Mystical Union in Judaism (Leiden, 2016).

Albright, William F. From Stone Age to Christianity (Garden City, N.Y., 1957).


——— El Pentateuco de Constantinopla y la Biblia medieval romanceada judeoespañola: criterios y fuentes de traducción (Salamanca, 1983).


Bibliography

Aschkenazi, Eli’ezar – see Sources.


——— Teqīfāt ha-geōniyim ve-sifrūtah (Jerusalem, 1955).


Avenoza, Gemma. La Biblia de Ajuda y la Megillat Antiochus en romance (Madrid, 2001).

——— Biblias castellanas medievales (San Millán de la Cogolla, 2011).


Avishur, Yitshak. Targu’ey ha-Tanakh be-‘araviyt yehūdyit be-mizraḥi (Yafo [Israel], 2001).


———, et al., El manuscrito hebreo bíblico G-II-8 de la Biblioteca de San Lorenzo de El Escorial (Madrid, 2000).

Azulai, Ḥayyim Yosėf David. Shēm ha-gedōliyim: (a) (Livorno, 1774–86; photo rpt. Tel-Aviv, 1960); (b) (Warsaw, 1876; photo rpt. s.l.s.a. [Jerusalem? 1967?]).


——— Die Bibelexegese Mose Maimuni’s (Strassburg, 1897); ha-Rambam parshān ha-miqra, tr. A. Z. Rabinowitz (Tel-Aviv, 1932).


——— Grammatical Terminologie des Ḥayyuj (Vienna, 1882).


——— Hilufey nusha’otz’ – see Variaten.


—— Variaten zu Ibn Esra’s Pentateuchkommentar (aus dem Cod. in Cambridge No. 46) (Strassburg, 1894); originally “Hilufey nusha‘ot le-feyrush ha-RAV”A’ ‘al ha-Torah,” Otar [Oṣar] tōr (Hebrew supplement to Magazin für die Wissenschaft des Judentums 18 [1891]: 1–51; 20 [1893]: 55–108).
—— Vier Abhandlungen über Abulwâlîd Ibn Gânâh (Amsterdam, 1970); photo rpt. of four separate books on Ibn Jânâh.


—— “Libros hebreos e inquisición: uso y reutilización de manuscritos e incunciles hebreos requisados por el Santo Oficio,” III Simpósio internacional de estudos inquisitoriais: novas fronteiras (Cachoeira, Bahia [Brazil], 2016); online: https://www.ufrb.edu.br/simposioinquisicao/wpcontent/uploads/2016/04/Javier_del_ Barco.pdf.


Baumstark, Anton. Geschichte der syrischen Literatur (Bonn, 1922).


The Re-Creation of Jewish Literature in Medieval Hebrew Manuscripts (Manchester, 1993 [Bulletin of the John Rylands Library 75]).


——— Mi-ginsze Yissrā’el ha-‘Aviyyan (Jerusalem, 1954).


Birkhat Avraham – see Freimann and Hildesheimer.
Blau, Joshua. The Emergence and Linguistic Background of Judaeo-Arabic (Jerusalem, 19812).


——— Nahmanides in Medieval Catalonia (University of Notre Dame, 2007).


Carreras y Candi, Francesch. L’aljama de jueus de Tortosa (Barcelona, 1928).


La Cataluña judía (Barcelona, 2002).


Chone, H. Nachmanides (Nuremberg, 1930; rpt. Zurich, 1986).

Claret García Martínez, Antonio and Elena E. Rodríguez Díaz, “Un codice de la biblioteca de Alfonso X en la catedral de Sevilla,” Sevilla 1248. Congreso internacional


Cohen, Mordechai Z. “‘The Distinction of Creative Ability’ (Faṣl al-ibdā‘): From Poetics to Legal Hermeneutics in Moses Ibn Ezra,” in Yeshaya and Hollender, q.v., Exegesis and Poetry, 83–121.


Colloques internationaux du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique. La Paléographie hébraique médiévale (Paris, 1974).


——— Léxico árabe andalusí según el ‘Vocabulista in arabico’ (Madrid, 1989).


——— “Los estudios targúmicos en la actualidad,” *Estudios bíblicos* 62 (2004): 347–90. (See also Sources).


Distefano, Michael G. *Inner-Midrashic Introductions and Their Influence on Introductions to Rabbinic Medieval Bible Commentaries* (Berlin, N.Y., 2009).


Durán y Sanpère, Agustín. *Discursos legíts en la “Real academia de buenas letras” de Barcelona* (Barcelona, 1924).


——— *Me-qadhōnīyōṭ ha-yehudiyym* (Vienna, 1887; photo rpt. as Kitvey 2).
Epstein, Barukh ha-Levy, ed. *Tōrah temiymah* (N.Y., 1962 and other eds.).
Fenton, Paul B. *Philosophie et exégèse dans le Jardin de la métaphore de Moïse Ibn ‘Ezra...* (Leiden, etc., 1997).
——— *Lectura y prohibición de la Biblia en lengua vulgar* (León, 2003).

Fischer, B. “Algunas observaciones sobre el ’Codex Gothicus’ de la R. C. de S. Isidoro en León y sobre la tradición española de la Vulgata,” Archivos leoneses 15 (1961): 5–47.


Frankel, Zechariah. Darkhey ha-mishnah (Leipzig, 1859).


——— and Baruch Friedberg. Tōdōt ha-defūṣ ha-‘ivri be-Italiah, Ispamiah-Pōrtugliyah ve-Tōgramah (Tel-Aviv, 1956).


Friedländer – see also Ibn ‘Ezra, Commentary.


—— Science in Medieval Jewish Cultures (Cambridge, 2012).


García Blanco, Antonio. Análisis filosófico de la escritura y lengua hebrea (Madrid, 1846), t. 3.

Gelles, B. J. Peshat and Derash in the Exegesis of Rashi (Leiden, 1974).


——, ed. Melo’ haḥfnayim (Berlin, 1840).


—— The Song of Songs (1857; photo rpt. N.Y., 1970, with his Coheleth).


——— Tōldōt ha-yehûdiyim ba-ʿîr Rûan bi-mey ha-beynayim (Jerusalem, 1976).


——— Karaite Exegesis in Medieval Jerusalem (Tübingen, 2011).

Gómez Aranda, M. “Aristotelian Theories in Abraham Ibn Ezra’s Commentaries to the Bible,” Mediterranea. International Journal for the Transfer of Knowledge 3 (2018): 35–54 (this and all of the following are available online).


González Palencia, Ángel – see Sources


Gottlieb, Efraim. Meḥqariyim ba-sifrūṭ ha-qabalah (Tel-Aviv, 1976).
Günzburg, David von and Isaac Markon, eds., Festschrift zu ehren Dr. A. Harkavy (Zikhron Avraham Eliyahu) (St. Petersburg, 1908; photo rpt. Jerusalem, s.a. [1968/69], 2 vols.).
Halberstamm, S. Z. H., ed., Qevuṣat miktavīym be-’inyaneq ha-maḥlōqet ‘a”d ha mōreh - ve-ha-mada’ (originally in Jeshurun 8 [1875]; separate photo rpt. s.l. [Haifa] s.a.).
Halbertal, Moshe. ‘Al derekh ha-emet. ha-Ramban ve-yeṣiyratah šel masāret (Jerusalem, 2006).
——— Beyn Tōrah le-hakhmah (Jerusalem, 2001; “corrected ed.”).

Hämeen-Anttila, Jaako. The Last Pagans of Iraq (Leiden, 2006).


Harkavy, Abraham (U.S. libraries list as “Albert”). Hadashiym gam yesḥaniym (Jerusalem, 1970).

——— Me’asēf nedaḥiy (Jerusalem, 1970).

——— Zikhroņ la-rishōniym, maḥberet 4 (Zikhroņ kamaḥ geōniym [Berlin, 1887]; photo rpt. Jerusalem, s.a.[1965/66]).

——— Zikhroņ la-rishōniym ve-gam la-ahroniym 1, 3: Zikhroņ ha-qaln rav Shemuēl ben Ḥōnîy ve-sijaf (St. Petersburg, 1880; photo rpt. in Harkavy, Me’asēf nidaḥiy).


Heller-Wilensky (catalogued by libraries as Wilensky), Sarah. R’ Yiṣḥaq ‘Aramah u-mishnātō (Jerusalem, 1956).


Hengel, Martin. The Septuagint as Christian Scripture: Its Pre-History and the Problem of Its Canon (Edinburgh, 2002).

Henoch, Chaim. ha-Ramban ke-ḥōqēr u-ke-meqūhal (Jerusalem, 1978).


Herring, Basil – see Sources: Ibn Kaspiy.
Hershman, Abraham M. *Rabbi Isaac Ben Sheshet Perfet and His Times* (N.Y., 1943).


———, ed., *Ha-Miqra be-re’iy meførkhaV. Šefer zikanın le-Sarah Qamin* (Jerusalem, 1994).


(See also “Sources”).


La vida judía en Sefarad (s.a.s.l. [Toledo? 1992?]).
Lange, Nicholas de. *Greek Jewish Texts from the Cairo Genizah* (Tübingen, 1996).
León Tello, Pilar. Los judíos de Toledo (Madrid, 1979), 2 vols.
Lieberman, Saul. Greek in Jewish Palestine (N.Y., 19652).
Lipshitz, Abe (Abraham). Ḥiḥniym be-biyyōr al ha-Tōrah le-rabeynō Baḥya ben Asher (Jerusalem, 2000).
Llamas, José. “Biblia del siglo XIV” – see Sources: Biblia medieval romanceada judío-cristiana.
Bibliography

Ludwig Rosenthal’s Antiquariat. Munich. Kat. 151: *Hebräische Inkunabeln*, 1475–1496 (Munich, s.a. [189?-19?]); extremely rare, at Harvard and at Manchester University (I have a copy).


Macintosh, A. A. *Hosea* (Edinburgh, 1997).


Mann, Jacob. *The Bible as Read and Preached in the Old Synagogue* (Cincinnati, O.H., 1940; rpt. N.Y., 1971).


——— *Studies in Jewish History and Booklore* (N.Y., 1944).


——— “La masora ornamentale et le décor calligraphique dans les manuscrits hébreux espagnols au moyen âge,” in *Paléographie hébraïque* (q.v.), 87–111 and plates.


Monferrer Sala, Juan Pedro. “A Nestorian Arabic Pentateuch used in Western Islamic Lands,” in David Richard Thomas, ed., The Bible in Arab Christianity (Leiden, 2007), 351–68.


Morreale, M. “Biblia romanceada y diccionario histórico,” *Studia philologica: Hon- 
——— “El códice de los profetas en latín y castellano que se conserva en la Bibli- 
teca de la Academia de la Historia (87),” *B.A.H.* 150 (1962): 133–49.
——— “El glossario de Rabi Mosé Arragel en la ‘Biblia de Alba’,” *Bulletin of Hispanic 
——— “El ms. 10288 de la Bibliotecal Nacional de Madrid: traducción parcial 
Mossé ben Nahman i el seu temps (symposium; Gerona, 1994 [published 1995]).
Motis Dolader, Miguel A. “Estudio de los objetos litúrgicos de las sinagogas zarago- 
zanas embargados por la Corona en el año 1492,” *Aragón en la Edad Media* 6 (1984): 
247–62.
——— *La expulsión de los judíos de Zaragoza* (Zaragoza, 1985).
——— *La expulsión de los judíos del reino de Aragón* (Zaragoza, 1990).
Mulder, Martin Jan, ed. *Mikra* [sic; miqra]. *Text, Translation, Reading and Interpreta-
tion of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity* (Assen, Maastricht, 
——— *Notice sur Abou'l-Walid Merwan ibn-Djana'h et sur quelques autres grammairiens 
hebreux du X-e et du XI-e siecle* (Paris, 1851; originally in Journal asiatique, 4e. ser., 
1850).
Nadav, Yael. “Ha-eskatològiyah shel R’ Mòshheh [de León] be-sèfer Mishkan ha-
——— *HIMBRI = Hebrew Illuminated Manuscripts in the British Isles: A Catalogue Rai-
——— “Manuscrits hébreux enluminés conservés dans les bibliothèques de France,” 
——— “The Relation between the Author, Scribe, Massorator and Illuminator in 
Medieval Manuscripts,” in *Paléographie hébraïque* (q.v.), 79–83.
Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines* (Cambridge, 
Nehorai, Michael. “Maimonides on Miracles” (Heb.), *Mehqarey Yerushalayim be-
Netzer, Nissan. “Terūmatō shel RD”Q le-pitrōn miliym yehiyadiyt-shōresh ‘ap”y 
——— “The Introduction of the Square Characters in Biblical Mss., and an Ac-
count of the Earliest Mss. of the Old Testament,” in *Studia Biblica: Essays in Bib-
lical Archaeology and Criticism and Kindred Subjects* (Oxford, 1885–1903) 3: 1–36 + 3 
plates.
——— “Notes sur des manuscrits hébreux existant dans quelques bibliothèques de l’Es-
(See also Sources).

Newman, Jacob – see Sources: Moses b. Naḥman.


——— Estudio masorético interno de un manuscrito hebreo bíblico español (Madrid, 1977).


——— Texto hebreo bíblico de *Sefarad en el Or Tōrah* (Madrid, 1980).


*Paléographie hébraïque* – see Colloques internationaux du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique


______ “Yāḥasō shel R’ Yehudah Ibn Bil’am le-qōdmav be-feyrūshav,” Eighth World Congress of Jewish Studies. Proceedings (Division A) (Jerusalem, 1982), 53–58.


Pimenta Ferro Tavares, Maria J. Os judeus em Portugal no seculo XV (Lisbon, 1982), 2 vols.


Pinsker, S. Liqūṭei gadamniyyōt (Vienna, 1860).

—— The Karaite tradition of Arabic Bible Translation (Leiden, N.Y., 1997).
Pons, Antonio. Los judíos de Mallorca (Palma de Mallorca, 1984).
Poznański, S. “Anshey Qayrawān” (Heb.), in David von Günzburg and Isaac Markon, eds., Festschrift zu ehren Dr. A. Harkavy (Zikhron Avraham Eliyahu) (St. Petersburg, 1908), 175–220.
—— Moses b. Samuel Hakohen Ibn Chiquitilla – see Sources.
Rapoport, Solomon. Sēfer tōldōt (Warsaw, 1913).
Bibliography


——— Ḫāṣar ha-lashōn ha-‘araviyṭ be-Tafsiyr R’ Sa‘adyah Ga‘on [Ramat-Gan, 1985].


Rhode, Joseph Francis. The Arabic Versions of the Pentateuch in the Church of Egypt (Leipzig, 1921).


——— Poders publics i les sinagogues segles XIII-XIV (Girona [Gerona], 2006).


Bibliography


——— Dictionary of Iberian Jewish and Converso Authors (Madrid, Salamanca, 2007).


——— “Muslim Knowledge of the Hebrew Bible and Jewish Traditions in the Middle Ages,” Maghreb Review 16 (1991): 74–83; online: www.academia.edu/36447180/Muslim_knowledge_of_the_Hebrew_Bible_and_Jewish_Traditions_in_the_Middle_Ages.pdf.


—— see Sources: Ibn ‘Ezra, Abraham Ibn Ezras langer Kommentar zum Buch Exodus.
Sacks, Steven Daniel. Midrash and Multiplicity: Pirke de-Rabbi Eliczer and the Renewal of Rabbinic Interpretive Culture (Berlin, 2009).
Salfeld, Siegmund. Das Hohelied Salomo’s bei der jüdischen Erklären des Mittelalters (Berlin, 1879).
Sapir, Jacob. Even sapiyr (Lyck, 1866).
Saracheck, Joseph. The Doctrine of the Messiah in Medieval Jewish Literature (N.Y., 1932; rpt. 1968).
Ṣarfatti, Gad. Mūnaheyyaḥ ha-matematīyyah be-sifrūt ha-mad'aiyyt ha-‘ivrīyyt šel yemey ha-beynayim (Jerusalem, 1968).

Sarton, George. Introduction to the History of Science (Baltimore, 1927–48), cited by volume (Roman numeral) and part.


Schirmann – see Sources


Scholars, Gershon. Kabbalah (N.Y., 1974).

Schreiner, Martin. Studien über Jeschua ben Jehuda (Berlin, 1900).

Schwarz, ed. Tiqvat enōsh – see Sources.


Secall i Güell, Gabriel. Les jueries medievals tarragonines (Valls, 1983).


—— “Hebrew Manuscripts from Toledo and Tudela: Creation or Transmission?” in Fernando Díaz Esteban, ed. Abraham Ibn Ezra y su tiempo (q.v.), 301–07.

Shavit, Yaacov and Mordechai Eran. The Hebrew Bible Reborn: From Holy Scripture to the Book of Books (Berlin, N.Y., 2007).
Simon, Uriel. Arba’ giyshôt le-sèfer Téhilûm (Ramat Gan, 1982); tr. as Four Approaches to the Book of Psalms, tr. Lenn J. Schramm (Albany, N.Y., 1991); not all of the text was translated, however.
—— “Who Was the Proponent of Lexical Substitution Whom Ibn Ezra Denounced as a Prater [sic] and a Madman?” in Walfish, q.v., Frank Talmage Memorial Volume 1: 217–32.

—— Hebrew Manuscripts of the Middle Ages (Cambridge, 2002).


Smith, Mark S. The Early History of God: Yahweh and the Other Deities in Ancient Israel (San Francisco, 1990; Grand Rapids, M.I., 2002).

Spinoza, Benedict (Baruch). Theologico-Political Treatise, tr. R. H. M. Elwes (N.Y., 1951; rpt. of 1883 ed.).
Stegmüller, Friedrich. Repertorium Bibliicum Medii Aevi (Madrid, 1940 [i.e., 1950]), 11 vols.
——— C. B. = Catalogus Librorum Hebraeorum in Bibliotheca Bodleiana (Berlin, 1931, 3 vols.).
——— Cat. Munich = Die hebraischen Handschriften der K. Hof-und Staatsbibliothek in Muenchen (Munich, 18952).
——— G. S. = Gesammelte Schriften, Bd. 1 (Berlin, 1925; photo rpt. N.Y., 1980).
——— Jewish Literature (London, 1857).
Torres Santo Domingo, Marta. *Los manuscritos hebreos de la Biblioteca histórica “Marqués de Valdecilla”* UCM: guía de recursos [Madrid], Documentos de trabajo U.C.M. Biblioteca histórica; 2010/12.


Touitou, E. “ha-Peshaṭṭor ha-mirḥadshyim be-khal yōm,” ‘Iyunim be-feyrūnsho shel Rashbam le-Tōrah (Ramat-Gan, 2003), 34–47.


Unna, Isak. ha-Ramban, hayyav u-fe’ūlatō (Jerusalem, 1942; photo rpt. 1976).

Urbach, Ephraim E. Ba’aley ha-tosafōtō (Jerusalem, 1968).


——— *The Sages* (Jerusalem, 1975).


——— “Le commentaire kairouanais sur le Livre de la Création,” *R.E.J.* 112 (1954): 5–33 (almost always incorrectly cited; also continued in other vols.).


——— Historia de la gramática hebrea en España, 1 (Madrid, 2002).
Vollandt, Ronny. Arabic Versions of the Pentateuch (Leiden, 2015).
——— History of the School of Nisibis (Louvain, 1965).
——— “Typology, Narrative, and History,” in McAuliffe, q.v., With Reverence for the Word, 119–32.
——— and Mikhail Kizilov, Bibliographia Karaítica (Leiden, 2011).


Wolfson, Elliot R. “Asceticism and Eroticism in Medieval Jewish Philosophical and Mystical Exegesis of the Song of Songs,” in McAliffie, q.v., With Reverence for the Word, 92–118.


——— Through a Speculum that Shines: Vision and Imagination in Medieval Jewish Mysticism (Princeton, 1994).


Yafeh, Mordechai Gimpel. Tekh été Môrdekhay (Warsaw, 1865; rpt., Jerusalem, s.a. [195–?]).
Yeivin, Israel. Introduction to the Tiberian Masorah (Missoula, M.T., 1980).
——— Masorah le-miqra (Jerusalem, 2003).
Yeshaya, Joachim and Elisabeth Hollender, eds., Exegesis and Poetry in Medieval Karaite and Rabbanite Texts (Leiden, 2016).
——— Gesammelte Schriften (Berlin, 1875–76), 3 parts.
Index

Note: **Bold** page numbers refer to tables and page numbers followed by “n” denote endnotes.

Aaron b. Gērshon Abu’l-Rabī 10
Aaron b. Jacob ha-Kōhēn 332–333
Aaron b. Joseph ha-Kōhēn 86, 89
Aberdeen Codex 322
Abraham b. David 166, 169
Abraham b. Ḥayyā 194
Abraham b. Ḥayyim (Ibn) 277
Abraham b. Isaac ha-Lēvy 278
Abraham b. Meir Ibn ‘Ezra: Arabic syntax 74; biblical passages 72; chronological order 74; commandments 84–87; customs and reports 87–89; exegetical and grammatical approach 73–75; Ezekiel 76; geographical information 89–91; innovations and “digressions” 79–84; Jeremiah 76; Job and Daniel 78–79; Land of Israel 84–87; Maimonides 72; Nahmanides 72–74; Pentateuch 75–76; Psalms 77–78; Rabbinical Bibles 76; Song of Songs 76–77; “theological” writings 72
Abraham b. Natan ha-Yahyī 323–324
Abraham b. Natan of Lunel 309, 311
Abravanel, Isaac 321
Abravanel Pentateuch 321
Abravanel, Samuel 321
Abulafia, Meir 164, 326
Abu’l-Fārāj 5
Active Intellect 161, 180
Adam 86
Albalag, Isaac 134
Akonstantin, Solomon 276
Aleppo Codex 347n34
Alexander, Philip S. 29n4

Algeria 4
allegorical interpretations 85, 158, 161
Allony, N. 46n85, 59n138, 70n183
Anatoliy, Jacob 159, 165
al-Andalus 158
angels 181–182; of destruction 182
Apocrypha 1
Aptowitzter, Victor 30n5, 205n38, 268n237, 300n61, 356n70, 359n81
Arabic syntax 74
Arabic translations 2–5
Aragón-Catalonia 190–197, 319; Castille 281–284; customs 189–190; esoteric interpretation 167, 176–185; exegesis characteristics 170–171; Gerona circle 167; Land of Israel 168, 188–189; magical/theurgic teaching 173–174; Meir of Trinquentaille 169; Muslim communities 166; Nahmanides 167, 168; Navarre 280–281; non-esoteric interpretation 185–187; philosophical rationalism 170; Sicily 278–279; Song of Songs 167–168; Torah as secret 172–173; typology 174–176; Valencia 279–280
Aramaic translations 1–5, 7, 29n4, 330
Aristotelian concept 161
asceticism 58n135
Asher b. Abraham Crescas 136
Asher b. David 181, 194
Asher b. Solomon 328
Asher b. Yeḥiēl 311, 326, 328, 329
astrology 181–182, 182–185, 196, 277
documentary hypothesis 14
Duran, Profiat 2, 135, 312, 362n91

Ecclesiastes 15, 22, 158–159, 164
Ehyeh 80
Eisen, Robert. 290n8
El and Shaday 176
El’azar b. Matityahu 132
Elijah ha-Kohān, Ishaq 276
Elisha b. Abraham Benvenist 319
Elōhiym 79
Epiphanius of Salamis 6
Escorial MS 333–334
esoteric interpretation 7, 28, 171, 174,
278; angels and astrology 181–182;
creation 178–179; God 176; magic and
astrology 182–185; miracles 176–178;
prophecy 180–181; soul 179–180
evil students 181
Exodus 75
Ezekiel 76
‘Ezra b. Solomon Gatigno 134

al-Fārābī 159
Farhi i Bible 319
Feldman, Leon 295n39, 296n40
Fenton, Paul B. 107n42, 141n15
feral children/wolf boys story 88–89
Fez 4
fifteenth-century commentators see
Christian Spain
al-Fikrah 82
Finkelstein, Louis 106n39, 205n38,
208n48
First Kennicott Bible 321
Fishbane, Michael 30n6, 305n89
Fleischer, Judah 92n2, 98n18, 100n24,
103n27
Former Prophets 321, 323, 403
fourfold interpretation 6, 170
France 2
Franco, Solomon 133
Freimann, A. 150n48
French commentators 161
Freudenthal, Gad 101n25
Friedländer, Michael 92n3, 97n18,
100n24, 102n27, 103n29, 104n30,
144n27, 154n67, 393
Funkenstein, Amos 174, 221n97, 230n119

Gamaliel, Rabbi 2
Gaōn, Nathronai 3
Joseph b. Eli‘ezer 133, 135
Joseph b. Isaac “ha-Seniyriy” 166
Joseph b. Jacob of Moudeville 76
Joseph b. Solomon Ibn Sūsan 313
Joseph ha-Ēzōbiy 89
Joseph Ibn Kaspiy 14
Judaeo-Arabic translation 34n23
Judah b. Barzilay 2, 3
Judah b. Yaqar 168
Judeo-Arabic translations 4–5

King’s Bible 321
Kīṭiym 78–79
Krinsky, Judah 55n126, 99n22

Land of Edom 4

Leilah, Avrin 340n2
León, Luis de 73
Leqaḥṭōv of Ṭūvah 129

Miqdashyah 319, 320; Oxford Ibn Gaon Bible 318; Pentateuch codex 314; Perpignan Bible 319; in Portugal 314; Seruqiel Bible 318; Seville Bible 322; Spanish manuscripts 318; in Toledo 314–316; Vernon Bible 322

Maqāṭal al-ḥāḍīqa 77, 130
Marmorstein, A. 106n36
Martí, Ramón 73, 94n9
Marx, Alexander 307n102

Menaḥēm b. Solomon “ha-Meiyriy” 184
messianic era 163
“messianic” interpretation 132
Midrash 393
midrashiym 1
Minor Prophets 403

Mishnah 325
Mosconiy, Judah Leon 133
Moses b. Jacob 168–169
Moses b. Joseph 278
Moses b. Joshua Narbōniy 274–275
Moses b. Maimon 309
Moses b. Meir 75
Moses b. Naḥman 168
Moses b. Shēshet 167
Moses Nārbōniy 134

Muslim exegesis 6
Muslim Spain 22–26; grammarians and biblical commentary 15–19; lost commentaries 19–22

Mystical Jerusalem 246n160

Nabatean Agriculture 72, 91n1
Narkiss, B. 318
Natan b. Samuel 274
Natan b. Yeḥiel 168
Navarre 280–281
Nebuchadnezzar 89
necromancy 182
Neubauer, Adolf 300n62, 301n67
Nisim b. Reuben 313
Nisim b. Reuben Gerūndiy 273, 327, 328
Noah 86
non-esoteric interpretation:
Maimonides 186; Naḥmanides 186; qabalistic interpretation 187; Ten Commandments 185
Norzi, Yedidyah Solomon 315
Oceanus 90
Origen 6
Oxford Ibn Gaon Bible 318
Palestinian 9
paper 310, 312
Pauline 174
Pentateuch 4, 5, 75–76, 310, 312, 329
Pentateuch codex 314
Perez, M. 47n87, 70n120
Perpignan 133, 134
Perpignan Bible 319
Perreau, Pietro 198n5
Pinsker, Simḥah 139n5
Pirqey de-Rabiy Eli’ezer 179
Poitiers, Alphonse de 315
Polgar, Isaac 317
Prez Bayer, Hebraist F. 315
Prijs, Leo 114n64
prophecy 162–163, 180–181, 193–196
Provence, Christian Spain: commentary fragments 166; Ibn Tibbon family 157–159; Maimonides 163–166; miracles 163; prophecy 162–163; Qimḥi family 159–166
Psalms 77–78, 160, 162, 329, 334
qabalistic interpretation 187, 195
Qaraite 4, 5, 14, 128, 161
Qimḥi, Joseph 159–160, 167
Qohelet (Ecclesiastes) 1, 14, 79
Qur’ān 6
Rabbi El’azar b.Judah 167
Rabbinical Bible IV 217n85
Rabbinical Bibles 75, 76, 161
Rashi 3, 5, 6, 91, 311, 313; commentary on Chronicles 166; Jews of Provence 157; talmudic commentaries 169
“religious-esoteric” interpretation 170
“religious-traditional” interpretation 170
Rimoch, Abraham 121n88, 277–278
Rodríguez Arribas, Josefina 116n67
Rouen 75
Rudavsky, T.M. 42n57
Sabbath 1, 4
Samuel b. Abraham 312
Samuel b. Ḥofniy 128, 162, 194
Samuel b. Meir 313
Samuel b. Nisim Masnūt 73
Samuel Ibn Naghrillah 313
Ṣarfati 96n14
satirical criticism 92n3
Scholem, Gershom 5, 6, 35n28
Schwartz, Dov 40n47, 292n22
secret interpretation 7
Sēfer y’ “ a” r 274
Sela, Shlomo 101n25, 110n55
Sennacherib 131
Serugiel Bible 318
Seville Bible 322
Shabbat 183–184
Shaday 80
Shalom b. Solomon 135
Shalōm, Joseph 133
Shekhiynah 176, 180, 188
Shemiyniy 333
Sicily 278–279, 329
Simon b. Joseph 159
Simon b. Şemah Duran 325, 328, 329
Simon, Richard 73
Simon, Uriel 107n41, 124n104, 135, 200n19
Solomon Alqabēṣ 277
Solomon Astruc 275
Solomon b. Simon Duran 326
Solomon b. Solomon Ḥazan 317
Solomon Ibn Adret 310
Song of Songs 76–77, 164, 167–168
Soria Bible 318
Spanish codex 310
Spanish commentators 161
Spanish Jews 2
Spanish manuscripts 318
Steiner, Richard C. 40n51, 41n55
Steinschneider, Moritz 51n110, 98n19, 124n102

_ al-takhayyul_ 82
Talmage, Frank 201n21, 203n30, 293n31
Talmud 1–3, 6, 188
talmudic interpretation 30n5
_Targum Onkelos_ 3, 4
Ten Commandments 83, 185, 195
“theological” interpretation 77
“theological” writings 72
threefold interpretation 6
“threefold” interpretation 76
Toledo community 164
Torah 1–3, 7, 84–85, 128, 325, 403
_Tōsafot_ 76

Valencia 279–280, 331
Valle Rodríguez, Carlos del 368n121
Vernon Bible 322

Weiser, Asher 48n98, 55n126, 96n15, 99n22, 103n29, 113n62
Weiss Halivni, David 36n29, 38n41, 43n62
Wolfson, Elliot 66n165
Wolfson, Elliot R. 199n16, 227n113
Writings 61n144, 404–405

Yafet 78, 128
Yeda’yah “Bedersity” 136
Yerushalmi, S. 289n3

Zacut 316
Zamora, Alfonso de 315, 336
Zaragoza 133, 134, 278
Zarch, Perfet 276
Zarza, Samuel 132–134
Zechariah, Frankel 3, 14, 86, 87
Zeraḥyah b. Isaac Gracian 8, 273–274
Zeraḥyah b. Isaac ha-Lēvy 16
_Zohar_ 5
Zoroastrian religion 88