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R. Abraham Ibn Ezra's Sojourn in Ashkenaz: Melting Pot or Multi-Cultural Experience?

A medieval itinerant scholar arrives in a foreign land, bereft of physical belongings but proudly bearing the rich cultural and religious traditions of the land he left behind. As his sojourns continue, he learns to communicate with the locals, sharing his unique knowledge with some in the process. This scholar is the illustrious Sephardic Rishon, R. Abraham b. Meir ibn Ezra, whose biblical commentaries are ubiquitous today and are studied alongside those of Rashi, Ramban, and other Torah giants. Ibn Ezra was born in Muslim Spain in 1089. In 1140 at the age of 50, he was forced to leave Spain – possibly due to the persecutions wrought by the radical Islamic Almohad invaders.¹ While the Almohad oppression also forced out other illustrious Jewish notables from Spain, (e.g., the Maimon family [Rambam], the Kimchis, and the ibn Tibbons), Ibn Ezra's trajectory was unique. After residing in Italy for several years, a perpetually impoverished Ibn Ezra wandered throughout Christian Europe for the last 25 years of his life, seeking the support of Ashkenazic patrons in Italy, Provence, Northern France, and England, where he died, presumably in London, in 1164.²

Ibn Ezra's extant exegetical and grammatical works contain an “encyclopedic wealth” of recognized literary resources available to Sephardic commentators of the Golden Age of Spain. His extensive erudition includes diverse sources “ranging from traditional rabbinic literature (Tannaitic through Geonic); Sephardic and Karaite exegesis; polemical, philological, poetic and liturgical works; as well as works of historiography, philosophy, mathematics and astronomy, among others.”³ All of Ibn Ezra's surviving

1 J. Gerber, *The Jews of Spain: A History of the Sephardic Experience*. (New York: The Free Press, 1994), pp. 80-89. Gerber's theory of Almohad invaders displacing Ibn Ezra from Spain in 1140, however, is debatable, as most historians posit that the Almohad persecutions did not begin until 1147-48.

2 Numerous scholarly studies have been devoted to Ibn Ezra's life and achievements. For a comprehensive listing of Ibn Ezra's works, and when and where they were written, see Gad Freudenthal and Shlomo Sela's “Abraham Ibn Ezra's Scholarly Writings: A Chronological Listing,” *Aleph* 6 (2006), pp. 13-47.

3 A. Mondschein, “Only One in a Thousand of his Comments may be Called *Peshat*’: Toward Ibn Ezra's View of Rashi's Commentary to the Torah” [Hebrew]. In *Iyunim Mikra U-Parshanut*, ed. M. Garsiel et al. Ramat Gan, 2000, pp. 223-224 [Translation mine].

literary works are in Hebrew – written in Christian Europe, with his earlier Arabic compositions having been lost or “relegate[ed] ... to oblivion”⁴ by the ravages of time and historical circumstances.

The question arises: was Ibn Ezra’s biblical commentary – by virtue of his 25-year sojourn throughout Christendom – influenced by his Ashkenazic surroundings? This essay attempts to assess the extent to which various Ashkenazic cultural and literary traditions, as well as Ibn Ezra’s personal experiences in Christian lands, may have influenced or factored into his biblical commentary. The methodology used herein examines Ibn Ezra’s exegetical works, both in form and in content, for possible traces of Ashkenazic influence, through a two-way comparison: relative to those of Rashi (1040-1104), the emblematic Ashkenazic exegete of the time, and relative to his own works from another time and place.

The first method compares Ibn Ezra’s commentaries with those of Rashi, his renowned Ashkenazic predecessor. “[O]ne of the most important Jewish Bible commentators of all time and the most famous and influential of all,”⁵ Rashi selectively integrated rabbinic homiletics (*derash*) with the literal meaning (*peshat*) of the text, according to available rules of grammar and linguistics. Rashi states, “There are many *midreshes aggadah*... As for me, I am only concerned with the plain meaning of the Scriptures and with such *aggadah* as explain the biblical passages in a fitting manner.”⁶ Ibn Ezra, too, focused on the literal – grammatical and linguistic – textual meaning, but unlike Rashi, he bypassed *derash* interpretations, except for *halachic* matters.⁷ He states, “Only regarding laws and statutes will I rely on our early Sages, according to whose words I will correct the grammar... Only ... [where] there is no mitzvah will I state the correct interpretations.”⁸

How familiar was Ibn Ezra with Rashi’s biblical commentary? Several factors contribute to a reasonable expectation that he would have acquainted himself with

4 Uriel Simon, “Transplanting the Wisdom of Spain to Christian Lands: The Failed Efforts of R. Abraham Ibn Ezra,” *Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts* 8 (2009), 155. See also A. Mondschein, “Only One in a Thousand,” pp. 225-226.

5 A. Grossman, “The school of literal Jewish exegesis in Northern France,” *Hebrew Bible/ Old Testament* [HBOT]. Volume 1, (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2000), p. 332.

6 Rashi, Gen.3:8. Translation cited in Grossman, *ibid.*, pp. 334-335.

7 For an analysis of the interplay between *peshat* and *derash* in Rashi’s commentaries, see Grossman, “The school of literal Jewish exegesis in Northern France,” HBOT, pp. 334-336.

8 Ibn Ezra, “Introduction to Commentary on Pentateuch II (long commentary), (‘Fifth Way’), Genesis I, II, & III: M. Cohen, ed. *Migra’ot Gedolot ha-Keter*, Genesis, (Ramat Gan, 1992), p. 29. [Translation is mine.]

Rashi's *perush* during his long residence in Christendom. First, Rashi's revered status among the Ashkenazic readers for whom Ibn Ezra now wrote his own *peshat*-based commentary would have demanded no less from a practical consideration. In addition, Ibn Ezra's total financial dependence on his Ashkenazic patrons, whom (or whose sons) he tutored in Bible studies and Hebrew grammar, should have necessitated an acquaintance with Rashi for practical, economic reasons. Finally, his near-encyclopedic and comprehensive knowledge of biblical exegesis, across ideological divides, would have called for familiarity with Rashi as an added venue for truth. Indeed, Ibn Ezra's uncompromising quest for intellectual honesty is underscored in his nearly identical statements in both of his Introductions to the Pentateuch: "It is God alone that I fear, and I will not show favoritism in [the realm] of Torah."⁹

Contrary to expectations, direct references to Rashi by Ibn Ezra are scant, with only fourteen or fifteen in his entire Torah commentary.¹⁰ According to Ibn Ezra-scholar Aaron Mondschein, Ibn Ezra's only other direct reference to Rashi is found in his grammatical work, *Safah Berurah*, in which he scathingly attacks Rashi's biblical commentary and claims that "only one in a thousand of his comments may be called *peshat*."¹¹ In this work, Ibn Ezra explained that the Talmudic Sages had used *derash* as one of many exegetical approaches, never intending for it to negate or replace the text's true, literal meaning (אֶחָד מִקְרָא יֵצֵא מִידֵי פָשׁוּטוֹ). He claimed that later Ashkenazic generations veered from the truth by using rabbinic homilies exclusively and mistaking them for the true, plain meaning, as did Rashi. Moreover, he contended that the current spiritual leadership that extolled Rashi as a literalist compounded the distortion.¹²

In light of these surprising facts, Ibn Ezra's level of familiarity with Rashi's biblical *perush* is speculative and the source of a scholarly dispute between Mondschein and historian and Ibn Ezra-scholar Uriel Simon. Though both scholars analyze Ibn Ezra's biblical and grammatical works for traces of Ashkenazic references in general, and Rashi

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Yehuda L. Krinsky and Asher Weiser both list 14 Ibn Ezra references to Rashi in his Torah Commentaries.

Krinsky, *Mehokekei Yehuda*: Supercommentary on Ibn Ezra's Commentary on Pentateuch: vol. 1 (New York, 1973), Introduction, ('ש אות), pp. 42-43; Ibn Ezra's Commentary on Pentateuch, A. Weiser, ed. vol. 1 (Jerusalem, 1976), Introduction, p. 68. Mondschein cites 15 references, based on Krinsky and Weiser. Mondschein, "Only One in a Thousand," p. 226, n.16.

¹¹ Mondschein, "Only One in a Thousand," p. 226.

¹² Mondschein, "Only One in a Thousand," pp. 224-226.

references in particular, they arrive at opposite conclusions.¹³ Simon contends that Ibn Ezra did not bother to fully or systematically acquaint himself with the exegetical *peshat* works of Ashkenazim overall, as he considered them to be culturally inferior. In his view, Ibn Ezra's scant references to Rashi indicate his superficial and sporadic approach to Rashi's *perush*. Accordingly, Simon argues Ibn Ezra remained a pure, Spanish-oriented exegete throughout his stay in Christendom, and was largely aloof and disengaged from the writings of Ashkenaz.¹⁴ Mondschein, on the other hand, maintains that Ibn Ezra was well aware of his Ashkenazic environment to varying degrees, and particularly of Rashi's biblical commentary. He cites Ibn Ezra's noted "one in a thousand" condemnation in his *Safah Berurah* as proof of his intimate familiarity with Rashi's *perush*. Mondschein argues that Ibn Ezra's indictment was bold and justified; otherwise, making such a baseless claim in Ashkenazic lands would have constituted "professional suicide" on his part.¹⁵ Moreover, Ibn Ezra's total reliance on the patronage of wealthy Ashkenazim precluded his direct criticism of their champion, as Rashi was emblematic of Ashkenazic biblical (and also Talmudic) *peshat*.¹⁶ Thus, Mondschein posits that Ibn Ezra did, in fact, devote a sizeable part of his Torah commentary to a

13 This debate extends further to Rashi's eleventh-century, *peshat*-oriented successors, who were Ibn Ezra's contemporaries, namely, R. Shmuel b. Meir [Rashbam], and R. Joseph Kara. Though it is beyond the purview of this essay, this argument remains inconclusive.

Rashbam (1080-1160), acclaimed Tosafist and grandson and student of Rashi, was the brother of the renowned Tosafist, Rabbenu Tam, whom Ibn Ezra had befriended in Northern France.

Mondschein maintains that although Ibn Ezra was not familiar with Rashbam's biblical works until arriving in London at the end of his life, it was then that he wrote *Iggeret ha-Shabbat* in response to Rashbam. See A. Mondschein, "Concerning the Inter-relationship of the Commentaries of R. Abraham Ibn Ezra and R. Samuel B. Meir to the Pentateuch: A New Appraisal," [in Hebrew], *Te'uda* (2001), especially pp. 40-45.

On the other hand, U. Simon claims that though initially unaware of Rashbam's writings while in Italy, Ibn Ezra largely ignored the local *peshat* school while in Northern France, due to the Rashbam's lack of knowledge of contemporary Hebrew grammar, which had originated in Arabic, in Spain. U. Simon, "Transplanting the Wisdom of Spain to Christian Lands," p. 170, and n.107.

Finally, for a comprehensive analysis of the *peshat* "revolution" in eleventh-century Northern France; its origins and participants, and its ultimate demise, see A. Grossman, "The school of literal Jewish exegesis in Northern France," HBOT, pp. 323-371.

14 U. Simon, "Transplanting the Wisdom of Spain to Christian Lands," p. 170; Mondschein, "Only One in a Thousand," pp. 226-227, p. 248, f.n.43.

15 Mondschein, "Only One in a Thousand," p. 226.

16 Mondschein, "Only One in a Thousand," pp. 226-246, esp. pp.226, 242-243.

negative critique of Rashi's interpretation. He did so, however, in an indirect, oblique manner, due to his extreme professional caution while in Rashi's home territory.¹⁷

The dispute appears unresolved, regarding "what" Ibn Ezra knew of the commentaries of Rashi and other Ashkenazic *pashtanim*. However, a closer look at their analyses shows that both Mondschein and Simon evaluated Ibn Ezra's works as one collective unit. Neither one considered the possibility that Ibn Ezra's views or tones might have changed or developed over time, during his quarter century residence in Christendom. Thus, a significant historiographical element appears absent from this debate – namely, the question of "when" Ibn Ezra knew what he knew. This time factor might account for Ibn Ezra's strangely contradictory tones toward Ashkenazic *pashtanim* generally and Rashi in particular, in his different works, as will be discussed herein. Some scholars have noted Ibn Ezra's often contrasting tones in his works, but they viewed them solely in relation to the different geographic locales in which he wrote,¹⁸ rather than to any substantive changes on Ibn Ezra's part. To my knowledge, there has been no attempt to analyze these different tones contextually, from both geographical, as well as chronological points of view. Moreover, a linear comparison between Ibn Ezra's earlier and later works might also demonstrate a level of change or adaptability, which he may or may not have acquired during his stay in Christian Europe.

Due to several unique factors, the task of uncovering evidence of Ibn Ezra's acculturation in Ashkenaz (if any) is complex and multi-faceted. First, he wrote his scholarly works almost continuously throughout his twenty-five years in Ashkenaz, in different periods and in diverse geographic locations. Furthermore, he often wrote more than one version of his biblical commentaries and grammatical works.¹⁹ Consequently, before comparing Ibn Ezra's views to those of Rashi, one would first have to compare his own positions to each other – namely, those in his earlier works

17 Mondschein cites many compelling examples of what he claims are indirect references to *Peirush Rashi* on Torah by Ibn Ezra. This is based on similar language between the two commentaries, extraneous words in Ibn Ezra's *perush*, and the like. Mondschein, "Only One in a Thousand," pp. 228-232. See Krinsky, who likewise maintains that Ibn Ezra often cited Rashi indirectly in his *perushim*. Krinsky, *ibid.*, p. 43.

18 Examples by Friedlander and Simon are cited by Mondschein, "Only One in a Thousand, p. 242, n. 31. Mondschein also cites Friedlander's claims of cultural openness in medieval Italy, relative to Northern France. In Ibn Ezra's Short Commentary on Daniel: A. Mondschein, ed.; M.A. thesis, Bar-Ilan University; Ramat Gan 1977, Introduction, ch. 5, p. (תז).

19 Sh. Sela and G. Fruedenthal, "Abraham Ibn Ezra's Scholarly Writings: A Chronological Listing," *Aleph* 6 (2006), pp. 13-47. See also U. Simon, "Abraham Ibn Ezra," HBOT, p. 378; Mondschein, *ibid.*

to those in his later writings. While a systematic comparison of all of Ibn Ezra's extant, earlier and later, exegetical works is beyond the purview of this essay, several cases demonstrate a clear shift in his tone over time, as he reflected on Ashkenazic standards of exegesis and grammar. For example, according to historians Shlomo Sela and Gad Freudenthal, Ibn Ezra wrote his strongly-worded work, *Safah Berurah*, in Verona, Italy, in 1146,²⁰ merely six years after having left Spain and his native Sephardic culture, with which he associated on many levels.²¹ Thus, the fact that he delivered his sarcastic "one-in-a-thousand" jibe at this early stage, rather than during his later residence in Northern France, is not surprising. Ibn Ezra might also have felt comfortable issuing his sharp satire of Rashi's commentary from his residence in Italy, as such comments – due to their distance from Rashi's home environment – would likely have been tolerated more by Italian Jews than by the local, Northern French Jews of Rashi's home territory. Furthermore, Italy's central location, viz. trade routes and exposure to various cultures, might have rendered its Jewish environment more culturally adaptable and open, thereby enabling Ibn Ezra to more freely voice such caustic comments without fear of ostracization.²² Thus, factors of both time and place may have accounted for Ibn Ezra's caustic reference to Rashi in his *Safah Berurah*, during his early residence in Italy.

To summarize: this essay tests for indications of Ibn Ezra's possible acclimatization or acculturation in Ashkenaz. The methodology is a two-way comparison of his writings, where extant – i.e., to each other and to Rashi – in three of his different exegetical works:

1. Ibn Ezra's two Introductions to Pentateuch I, II (short and long);
2. His two extant Commentaries to Pentateuch I, II (short and fragmentary long);

²⁰ Sh. Sela and G. Fruenthal, "Abraham Ibn Ezra's Scholarly Writings," pp. 19, 21.

²¹ Indeed, Simon contends that "Ibn Ezra was perceived [in Christian Europe] – in his own eyes, as well as in the eyes of others – as a representative of Jewish culture in the realm of Islam." U. Simon, "Transplanting the Wisdom of Spain to Christian Lands," p. 167.

²² The suggestion of twelfth-century Italian Jewish cultural openness should be compared with A. Grossman's study of what he considered the openness of Northern French scholars. Grossman claims that Northern French scholars' "readiness... to draw on the cultural heritage of Spanish Jewry in biblical exegesis was consistent with [their] receptivity... in general to influence from other Jewish centers." Moreover, he contends that "French Jews were... more open in this respect than any other Jewish community in Europe..., borrow[ing] copiously from the Jewish cultures of Germany, Provence, Italy and Byzantium..." A. Grossman, "The school of literal Jewish exegesis in Northern France," HBOT, pp. 327-328. See also E. Kanarfogel, *The Intellectual History and Rabbinic Culture of Medieval Ashkenaz*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2012), for a comprehensive and compelling study of the cultural openness of rabbinic scholarship in medieval Ashkenaz.

3. His two Commentaries on the Book of Daniel I, II (short and long).

Ibn Ezra's Introductions to Pentateuch

In his Introduction to his first Commentary on Pentateuch I (Short Commentary – *Sefer HaYashar*) which he wrote in Lucca, Italy, (ca. 1142-1145),²³ Ibn Ezra revealed his early condescension toward the exegetical and grammatical standards of Ashkenazic scholars. In this work he enumerates five methods of Bible study, the fifth one of which – namely, his own Sephardic, linguistic/rationalistic approach, he terms the “true” approach. His “fourth method,” i.e., Midrashic hermeneutics, is “the way of the scholars in the lands of the Greeks and Romans [i.e., Christendom], who do not look at grammar or dictates of logic, but instead rely on Midrash, such as [the works] *Lekach Tov* and *Or Einayim*.²⁴ Throughout Ibn Ezra’s early account of the various types of *midrashim* (allegorical, pedagogical, or inspirational) he intersperses numerous jibes toward those who understand them literally. For example, he argues that one who tries to explain the reason for Creation homiletically, by asserting God’s show of strength to His creatures, provides a “pathetic answer” of “confusion and emptiness.”²⁵ This barb appears to be directed at Rashi, whose opening statement on Bereishit asserts just that. Moreover, when explaining the irrationality of understanding a particular homily in its literal sense, Ibn Ezra adds cynically, that “there are absolute proofs to those with eyes and not for blindness.”²⁶ After showing that *midrashim* may be produced by those “with limited intelligence” and learned scholars alike, Ibn Ezra concludes by stating that “there is no end to *derash*.²⁷ Once again, his derogatory comments were written shortly after his arrival in Italy and reflect his clear Sephardic chauvinism toward Ashkenazic, *derash*-based exegesis.

23 Sela and Fruenthal, “Abraham Ibn Ezra’s Scholarly Writings,” p. 18.

24 Ibn Ezra, “Introduction to Commentary on Pentateuch I (short commentary) (*Sefer HaYashar*), Genesis I, II, & III: M. Cohen, ed. *Miqra’ot Gedolot ha-Keter*, Genesis, 2 vols. (Ramat Gan, 1992), p. 25; also, in Weiser ed., vol. 1, pp. 6-10. Ibn Ezra might also have had another allusion by his choice of Midrashic works, whose titles translate literally as ‘A Good Portion’ and ‘Light of the Eyes.’ Perhaps they hinted to being superficially attractive while lacking substance.

25 Ibn Ezra, Introduction to (Short) Commentary on Pentateuch, “Fourth Way,” Weiser, ed., pp. 7-9. [Translation mine.]

26 Ibn Ezra’s “Fourth Way,” Weiser, ed., vol. 1, p. 6. [Translation mine.]

27 Ibn Ezra’s Introduction to Commentary on Pentateuch I (short commentary): *Sefer HaYashar*, Genesis I, II, & III: M. Cohen, ed. *Miqra’ot Gedolot ha-Keter*, Genesis, 2 vols. (Ramat Gan, 1992), p. (15); Weiser, ibid. [Translation mine.]

A comparison between Ibn Ezra's earlier and later works is particularly relevant here, as he wrote another introduction to Pentateuch, as well as a later Torah commentary.²⁸ A close reading of his later Long Introduction II reveals a noticeable change in Ibn Ezra's tone toward the exegetical standards of Ashkenaz since his early arrival in Italy. Ibn Ezra wrote his second introduction in Rouen, Northern France – Rashi's home territory – in 1155, fifteen years after arriving in Christian Europe, and about a decade or more after writing his Short Commentary I on Torah and his *Safah Berurah*.²⁹ Unlike Ibn Ezra's earlier references to Ashkenazic exegesis and its practitioners as misguided (in his first Introduction I), his later comments are respectful and tolerant. For example, Ibn Ezra legitimizes “the fourth method” of *derash*, by associating it with the ancient Talmudic sages, who knew and used both *peshat* and *derash*. This stands in contrast to his earlier association of *derash* with the mistaken exegetes of Ashkenaz, who used the latter method overwhelmingly.³⁰ Furthermore, before building his detailed case of the importance of examining *Midrashim* critically – a position antithetical to the Ashkenazic, literal understanding of *derash* – Ibn Ezra prefaces his controversial stance with a cautionary but respectful note. He states, “[T]he method of *peshat* was not hidden from [Hazel]..., but [they] adopted the method of *peshat*, because there are seventy facets to Torah.”³¹ Additionally, after clarifying his own (grammatical-literalist) “fifth method,” Ibn Ezra provides the reader with his “abridged version of the laws of grammar,” noting simply that “the [Ashkenazic] scholars of our generation did not engage in [the study of] grammar.”³² Thus, while Ibn Ezra continues to argue against understanding *midrashim* literally, his later style appears to be pedagogical and informative, rather than condescending and sarcastic. Despite his changes in tone and attitude over time and place, Ibn Ezra remains steadfast in his loyalty to God and in his commitment to the principles of biblical *peshat*, which he views as God's truth in Torah, (except for matters of *halakha*, in which literalism is displaced).³³ Perhaps Ibn Ezra's later comments demonstrate a new level of respect – if not “acculturation” per se,

28 Weiser, “Introduction: The Long Perush of Ibn Ezra to Sefer Shemot” [Hebrew], pp. 22-29; The Perush of R. Avraham Ibn Ezra on the Torah: Another Version: Weiser, ed., vol. 1, pp. 137-146.

29 Long Commentary on Genesis II, Rouen, Oct. 1155; Long Commentary on Exodus II, Rouen, 1155-1157. Sela and Fruenthal, “Abraham Ibn Ezra's Scholarly Writings,” pp. 21-22, 45-46.

30 Ibn Ezra, “Introduction to Commentary on Pentateuch II (Long Commentary),” Genesis I, II, & III: M. Cohen, ed. *Miqra'ot Gedolot ha-Keter*, Genesis, (Ramat Gan, 1992), p. (הכ).

31 Ibn Ezra, “Introduction to Commentary on Pentateuch II,” M. Cohen ed., pp. (טכ-חכ).

32 Ibn Ezra, “Introduction to Commentary on Pentateuch II,” M. Cohen ed., pp. 29-31; Weiser ed., p. 142.

33 As noted earlier, Ibn Ezra's near-identical statements in both versions of his “fifth method” – i.e., his fear of God alone and his quest for truth in Torah – remain constant. See “Introduction to

due to his prolonged stay and contact with the methodology and scholars of Northern France.

Ibn Ezra's Commentaries on Torah:

Ibn Ezra's later, moderate stance toward Ashkenazic *parshanut* is evident in his Long Commentary on Pentateuch II, as well. In this *perush*, nearly all of his direct citations of Rashi are instructive and respectful (see Appendix). This again supports the idea of Ibn Ezra's newfound respect for Ashkenazic *parshanut*. Due to historical circumstances, however, a similar comparison between Ibn Ezra's earlier and later Torah commentaries is not possible, as was done with his Short and Long Introductions to Torah, I, II. Although he wrote numerous recensions of his Torah commentaries in different times and places, most of these other versions are no longer extant. Ibn Ezra's existing *perush* on Torah includes his Short Commentary I on the whole Pentateuch (Lucca, Italy, 1142-45); his Long Commentary II on a fragment of Bereishit (the first two and a half *parshiyot*) and on the entire Book of Shemot (Rouen, 1155-57).³⁴ Ibn Ezra's *perush* in standard Mikraot Gedolot editions is a combination of his earlier and later writings.³⁵ Since more than three-quarters of his Long Torah Commentary II do not exist, the only possible comparisons between both *perushim* (I and II) would be fragmentary at best. Thus, an attempt to evaluate Ibn Ezra's acculturation by such a comparison would be inconclusive.

Notwithstanding these drawbacks, this essay's second method – i.e., comparing Ibn Ezra's references to Rashi – is more feasible, though still limited in scope. This approach provides a compelling alternative to the views of Ibn Ezra as remaining unchanged towards Rashi's commentary – either in cautionary opposition (per Mondschein), or indifference (per Simon). By cross-referencing Ibn Ezra's fifteen citations of Rashi,

Commentary on Pentateuch II," pp. 26, 29; Weiser ed., pp. 10, 142. See also A. Mondschein, "Only One in a Thousand," p. 244, n.33.

34 A paraphrase of Ibn Ezra's teachings on *Parashat Ve'yechi* exist as well, written by his student in London. Weiser, Introduction: "The Long *Perush* of Ibn Ezra on Sefer Shemot," [Hebrew], vol. 1, pp. 22-29. See also Mikraot Gedolot HaKeter. For chronologies of these writings, see Sela and Fruenthal, "Abraham Ibn Ezra's Scholarly Writings," pp. 18, 21.

35 Four of the Books in standard Mikraot Gedolot contain his Short Commentary I, (i.e., Bereishit, Vayikra, Bamidbar and Devarim), while the Book of Shemot contains his Long Commentary II. While Ibn Ezra's entire Short Commentary II on Shemot exists, as well, it is not included in most standard Mikraot Gedolot editions, but is classified separately as such. Weiser, vol. 2, pp. 239-355; See also Mikraot Gedolot HaKeter.

in his existing Torah Commentaries (I and II), one finds that thirteen out of fifteen come from his Long Commentary on Shemot II and the remaining two from his Short Commentary I. Statistically, this means that close to 90% of Ibn Ezra's citations of Rashi derive from less than 25% of his total (extant) Torah commentary. One could hypothesize that if the rest of his Long Commentary II were to have survived, it would most likely contain many more direct references to Rashi. The ramifications of this analysis are noteworthy. It explains the scarcity of direct references to Rashi in a new way, by attributing it to the historical loss of most of Ibn Ezra's Long Torah Commentary II, rather than to any intentional motive on his part. This is contrary to the perception of Ibn Ezra as having been continuously disengaged from Ashkenazic culture, due to his Sephardic aloofness throughout (per Simon). It also negates the premise of Ibn Ezra's self-censorship in masking his true negative views towards Rashi's commentary, due to professional and economic necessity (per Mondschein).

In this vein, while only two early references to Rashi remain from his Short Commentary I, a comparison of them to his thirteen later references, from his Long Commentary II, is relevant. In his first early citation (Short Commentary I, Ber. 32:9), Ibn Ezra dismisses Rashi's *perush* without any explanation, referring to it simply as *derash*.³⁶ In his second, early reference (Short Commentary II, Shemot 28:30), Ibn Ezra prefacing his rejection of Rashi's *derash*-based interpretation on this verse with a sarcastic directive: "Open your eyes."³⁷ This language is reminiscent of the similarly worded condescension in his Short Introduction to Pentateuch I (noted earlier) in which he claims, "[T]here are absolute proofs to those with eyes and not for blindness."³⁸

In light of these findings, the study of the remaining thirteen Rashi references from his Long Commentary II on Shemot, is important. Indeed, in this later commentary, Ibn Ezra is consistently respectful towards Rashi, and his disagreements are straightforward and instructive, without any condescension. To the contrary, he often excuses what he perceives as Rashi's mistakes, by noting the latter's lack of access to Arabic or other (Sephardic-related) knowledge. For example, before elucidating a particular text, Ibn Ezra respectfully and matter-of-factly provides his readers with a basic lesson in philology. Regarding the pronunciation of a particular word, he states, "And he who

36 ... מה שאמר רビינו שלמה שהיה לפיליטה בעל כרחו הוא דרך דרך ... "Ibn Ezra's Other [Short] Version," in Weiser, ed. vol.1 p. 98. See also Mikraot Gedolot HaKeter.

37 ... ורב שלמה מפרש התורה מ"כ [מצאת?] כתוב כי האות בשם המפורש...ועתה פקח עיניך ... [Translation mine.] "Ibn Ezra's Short Commentary," in Weiser, ed., vol. 2, p. 323.

38 Ibn Ezra's "Fourth Way," Weiser, ed. vol.1, p.6. [Translation mine.]; Mikraot Gedolot HaKeter, p. (כח).

understands the Arabic language would know the difference there is between them.”³⁹ In another verse, Ibn Ezra is prepared to defer to Rashi’s view of a reportedly miraculous phenomenon in the Mishkan, even though it contradicts the literalist interpretation of the text. He states: “According to... Rabbenu Shlomo [the middle bar in the Mishkan] was standing by a miracle. If this is a rabbinically received interpretation (*קבלה*), we will hear and accept it.”⁴⁰ Moreover, even when disagreeing with Rashi, he goes into lengthy explanations as to why he feels differently, citing other biblical verses and grammatical rules, when relevant (see Appendix). Thus, Ibn Ezra’s two early references to Rashi (from his Short Commentary I) appear to reflect a mindset of Sephardic superiority, while his later references (in his Long Commentary II) reflect one of respect. This stands in contrast to an attitude of “restraint” or professional “caution.” Ibn Ezra’s newfound respect may have been attributed in part to his experiences and friendships formed in Northern France, as well as to his increased familiarity with Ashkenazic exegesis, as part of his education there.

Indeed, Ibn Ezra’s residence in Northern France, during which time he wrote his second Introduction to Pentateuch II, and his Long Commentary on Pentateuch II, among others, coincided with his new, deep friendship with Rabbenu Tam – the leading contemporary Tosafist and grandson of Rashi. This unique relationship is documented in a moving literary exchange between the two, in which Rabbenu Tam humbly acknowledges Ibn Ezra’s poetic superiority. Ibn Ezra responds with a striking poetic masterpiece, crafted in the form of a tree, in which he deferentially submits to Rabbenu Tam’s preeminence.⁴¹ The mutual respect between Rabbenu Tam and Ibn Ezra is not only poetic, it is also evidenced in Tosafist references to the latter in the Talmud. For example, the Tosafot commentary twice cites an exchange in which Rabbenu Tam

39 אמר רבינו שלמה ז”ל, כי יש הפרש בין עז' בקמץ חטף ובין עז' בכבוז...ומי שיבין בלשון ישמיעאל... ידע ההפרש שיש בינהם... [Translation mine.] Ibn Ezra’s (Long) Perush on Pentateuch, Shemot 15:2. (Similarly in Shemot 23:19.) In Weiser ed., vol.2; Mikraot Gedolot ed. Though U. Simon perceives Ibn Ezra’s scientific explanations negatively – as an indictment of Ashkenazic scholars for “their ignorance of the sciences” (Simon, p. 185) – it can instead be seen as a helpful, pedagogical aid to great Torah scholars who were deficient in this area.

40 Shemot 26:18. This interpretation is based on a Talmudic source (BT Shabb. 98b) and does not appear in the standard version of Rashi’s Torah commentary. The miracle relates to the “middle bar” – הבריח התיכון. See Weiser; p. 180 n.37; Krinsky, *Mechokekei Yehuda*, Shemot, *Yahel Or*, p. 488 n. 69.

41 Weiser, intro, p. 10. Simon depicts the undated poetic correspondence between the two in U. Simon, “Transplanting the Wisdom of Spain to Christian Lands,” pp. 185-189. Dr. Avigail Rock ob”m provides a detailed explanation of this moving poetic exchange, translated into English. <https://www.etzion.org.il/en/lecture-13-r-avraham-ibn-ezra-part-i>, nn. 18-20.

mentions Ibn Ezra by name and answers his question relating to the date of the bringing of the Omer, upon the Jews' entrance into Eretz Yisrael.⁴² Ibn Ezra is mentioned in Tosafot again by name in another context, in which he is cited as an example of a family name, uncommon in medieval Christendom.⁴³ While this comment is brought anonymously, it suggests Ibn Ezra's noted recognition in general, among Tosafists of the day.⁴⁴ Thus, through his ties of mutual respect and friendship with Northern French Tosafists, Ibn Ezra likely developed a new respect and acceptance for their methods of exegesis. And while he did not adopt *derash* usage in his own commentaries, except in matters of *halakhah*, he may have come to see it as a different, but legitimate method of Torah study (*שביעים פנים לתורה*).

Ibn Ezra's Commentaries on Sefer Daniel

As was done with both of his Commentaries on Torah I, II, Ibn Ezra's two Commentaries on the Book of Daniel I, II (Short and Long) are examined herein for possible signs of his "acculturation" in Ashkenaz. This essay's two-way comparison of his commentaries (i.e., in relation to Rashi, where possible, and to each other) focuses on two primary themes in Sefer Daniel. The first subject deals with the possibility of deriving messianic calculations of the End of Days; the second topic focuses on the identities of the "Four Kingdoms" of the Jewish Exile, as represented in Nebuchadnezzar's dreams and Daniel's visions. These topics relate to Daniel's despondency following the destruction of the First Temple, and his longing for an end to the Exile and the rebuilding of the Second Temple. The devastation and spiritual crisis suffered by Jews who experienced the destruction of the First Temple and its initial aftermath was mitigated in part by the knowledge that the Second Temple would be rebuilt after seventy years (Daniel 9:2). This was not the case for the Jews who experienced the destruction of the Second Temple, or for the many succeeding generations of its nearly two-thousand-year Exile, for whom the final Messianic Redemption remains elusive and obscure.

From Tannaitic times following the failed Bar Kokhba revolt, until today's modern era, which witnessed the Holocaust, Jewish experiences of persecution and destruction have spurred concomitant speculations of Messianic predictions among Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jews, on both Rabbinic and popular levels. The Talmudic position opposes the use of messianic speculations (BT San. 97b) in light of devastating

42 BT RH 13a, BT Kid. 37b. Cited in Weiser, Introduction, p. 10.

43 BT Taanit 20b. Cited in Weiser, *ibid.*

44 Weiser, Introduction, vol. 1, p. 10.

consequences wrought from their failures to materialize. Nevertheless, many great Rabbinic leaders (including R. Saadiah Gaon, Rashi and Rambam), engaged in End of Days predictions in order to comfort the suffering and despairing Jewish masses. Their speculations ranged from “activist” predictions of the imminent Messianic revelation, to distant forecasts of the Advent, based on the Talmudic interpretation of the biblical verse, “in its time... I will hasten it” (*בָּעֵת הַאֲמִתָּה אֶחֱשֹׁן*) (Isa. 60:22).⁴⁵

As noted, this essay will evaluate the messianic calculations of Ibn Ezra relative to Rashi when possible, in order to gauge his acculturation (or non-acculturation) in Christian Europe. Before doing so, it is necessary to contextualize Rashi’s speculations within the greater medieval Ashkenazic framework in which he lived. In previous decades, historians Gerson Cohen and Yisrael Yuval classified the calculations of medieval Rabbanim (especially in the twelfth- and thirteenth-centuries), according to geographic regions – Ashkenazic or Sephardic. Though both scholars were diametrically opposed in their characterizations of “Ashkenazic” or “Sephardic” forms of messianism, their methodologies were the same, in that they both viewed their groups as entirely monolithic. Accordingly, Cohen regarded Ashkenazic messianism as entirely “restrained” and limited – i.e., being too far away from contemporary times to generate messianic excitement – while Yuval viewed it as being completely “activist” – i.e., eliciting messianic fervor with imminent dates.⁴⁶ Moreover, both historians

45 The Talmudic explanation on this verse reads: “If they are worthy, I will hasten [the Redemption]; if they are not deserving, in its appointed time” (BT San. 98a). See N. Scherman, Introduction, ch. VI, “The Scripture and the ‘End,’” in *Daniel: A New Translation*, trans. by H. Goldwurm, ArtScroll Tanach Series, 9th ed., N. Scherman and M. Zlotowitz, ed., (New York, 2014), pp. 47-56.

46 Cohen viewed “Ashkenazic” messianism as restrained, with far-away dates, and resulting from obscure, esoteric means. These methods include superstition, prophecies and dreams, as well as independent *gematriot* unrelated to the biblical context, as part of their approach. He contrasted this with what the “activist,” i.e., nearby dates, and rationalistic speculations by Sephardic Jews. Thus, Cohen viewed Rashi’s messianic interpretations in Daniel and the Talmud as “nothing more than an exegete’s elucidation of texts,” by being too far away from contemporary times to elicit messianic excitement. See G. Cohen, “Messianic Postures of Ashkenazim and Sephardim,” *Studies of the Leo Baeck Institute*, ed. M. Kreutzberger, New York, 1967, pp. 271-297, esp. 276-277, 278-279, 282.

In contrast, Yuval classifies the messianic calculations of Northern French *rabbanim* as vibrant and activist, especially prior to the fifth Jewish millennium, corresponding to the year 1240 CE, which he claims was a direct response to Christian influences. Yuval’s theory does not address Rashi’s messianic calculations, even though they correspond to much later dates. Yuval cites Ashkenazic *gematriyot* related to 1240 CE and the *aliyah* of Northern French rabbis to Eretz Yisrael ca. 1210 as examples of this millenarian fervor. He also notes *gematriyot* connected with contemporary events/dates in Christendom (e.g., 1096, whose messianic expectation culminated in tragedy, in the first Crusade), or

included Rashi within their own respective “Ashkenazic” settings, despite the fact that Rashi’s more rationalistic tendencies did not comport with the “typical,” *derash*-based approach of greater Northern France, either in form or in content.

Historian Ephraim Kanarfogel presents a third group – i.e., Rashi and his followers – whose speculations do not adhere to the extreme features of either category noted above.⁴⁷ According to Kanarfogel, Rashi’s methodology was neither “distant” nor connected with independent *gematriyot* (per Cohen’s view); nor was it “imminent,” based on millenarian events (per Yuval). Rather, it contained overlapping features of both. Kanarfogel concludes that there was not a homogenous system of messianic calculations by Ashkenazic rabbis in the late eleventh- through thirteenth-centuries. Instead, a “two-tiered” system of dates – imminent and distant, and of multiple approaches – coexisted simultaneously, based on the above-noted rabbinic interpretation: “If they merit, ‘I will hasten [the Redemption]; if they do not [merit], ‘in its time’ (BT San. 98a).⁴⁸ The comparisons between Rashi and Ibn Ezra discussed herein are based on Kanarfogel’s view of Rashi’s messianic calculations.

The Calculations in Sefer Daniel, According to Rashi and Ibn Ezra

The messianic calculations discussed herein are based primarily on three verses in Sefer Daniel:

- 1) the number of “days” – 1,290 and 1,335, “from the time the daily sacrifice was taken away”⁴⁹ (*מעת הוסר התמיד*), after which the Redemption is expected to come *וְמֵעַת הַתְּמִיד וְלֹתֶת שָׁקֹוע שָׁמָם יְמִים אַלְף מְאַתִּים וְתִשְׁעִים: אֲשֶׁר הַמִּתְּבָאָה וַיָּגַע לִקְמִים אַלְף שָׁלַשׁ מֵאוֹת שָׁלַשׁ וְתִמְשָׁה* (Dan. 12:11-12).

related to Jesus’ birth and crucifixion. In Yuval’s view, the above examples attest to a vibrant culture of messianic speculation among Northern French (and secretly active, German Pietist) Jewish scholars, which was in direct response to Christian events and theology. Indeed, Jewish millenarianism in answer to Christian theology is part of Yuval’s larger, controversial theory in his book.

See also E. Kanarfogel, “Ashkenazic Messianic Calculations from Rashi and his Generation through the Tosafist Period” [Hebrew], in *Rashi: Demuto vi-Yetsirato* vol. II, ed. by A. Grossman and S. Japhet. Jerusalem, 2008, pp. 381-401. Kanarfogel provides a summary of Cohen’s and Yuval’s views and illustrates how both utilized the same body of primary source material but arrived at opposite conclusions. He similarly notes A. Grossman’s rejection of Yuval’s stance on another messianic topic – the fate of Gentiles – to be discussed later (see n. 75).

⁴⁷ Kanarfogel, “Ashkenazic Messianic Calculations,” *ibid.*

⁴⁸ Kanarfogel, *ibid.*, pp. 384 (n. 5), 399-401.

⁴⁹ Translations of Sefer Daniel herein are by Koren unless otherwise noted. *Sefer Daniel*, Koren Publishers Jerusalem, Translated by H. Fisch, (Jerusalem, 1982).

- 2) the cryptic phrase, “for a time, times, and a half” (Dan. 12:7)
and its Aramaic equivalent “עד עזון ועקדין ופלג עזון” (Dan. 7:25);
“כִּי לְמוֹעֵד מוֹעֲדִים וְחַצִּי וּכְכָלּוֹת נֶפֶץ יְד עַם קָרְשׁ חַכְלִינָה כָּל אֱלֹהָה”
- 3) the hint, “For 2,300 evenings and mornings; then shall the sanctuary be restored”,
(Dan. 8:14). “וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים עד עָרֵב בְּקָר אַלְפִים וּשְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת וְנַצְדָּק קָרְשׁ”

Rashi's *Perush* on Calculations

Rashi's calculations are based on the methodology of his illustrious Geonic predecessor, R. Saadiah Gaon, whom he cites, although their final dates differ.⁵⁰ Rashi interprets the 1,290 “days” as the number of years “from the time the daily sacrifice was taken away” (i.e., six years before the destruction of the Second Temple – 62 CE), after which the messiah will arrive (Rashi 12:11). This corresponds to the date 1352 CE.⁵¹ Rashi claims the difference between 1,290 and 1,335 represents the 45 years after the messiah's initial arrival, during which time he will be in hiding prior to his revelation, which will then complete the Redemption (Rashi 12:12). Second is the cryptic phrase, “for a time, times, and a half” – “לְמוֹעֵד מוֹעֲדִים וְחַצִּי” and its Aramaic equivalent “עד עזון ועקדין ופלג עזון”. Rashi claims these “times” represent two unequal periods in Jewish history which anticipate the Redemption (Rashi 7:25).⁵² These periods begin with the Exodus from Egypt and end with the Messianic Advent, once again in 1352 CE.⁵³ Third is the verse, “For 2,300 evenings and mornings; then shall the sanctuary be restored” “עד עָרֵב בְּקָר אַלְפִים וּשְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת וְנַצְדָּק קָרְשׁ”. Rashi's *perush* here uses the addition of a hidden *gematriya* from the verse itself “עָרֵב בְּקָר”, which equals 574 (Rashi 8:14).

⁵⁰ Rashi 8:14. Rashi is presumed to have used a Hebrew version of Rasag's work (*אמונות ודעות*), originally in Arabic, for his method of calculations in Daniel (see below, n. 53). Cited in Kanarfogel, *ibid.*

⁵¹ The adding of 1290 or 1335 years to 68 CE – for messianic dates of 1358 CE and 1403 CE respectively – was used by later exegetes (e.g., Ramban). It was a slight modification of Rashi, who used 62 CE as the starting date.

⁵² Description is per Kanarfogel, “Ashkenazic Messianic Calculations,” p. 383.

⁵³ Like Rasag, Rashi interprets *le-moed* as prefatory to two and a half (unequal) periods (*מוֹעֲדִים וְחַצִּי*) of Jewish dominion before the destruction of the First Temple. According to this calculation, the first period was 410 years (the duration of the First Temple); the second was 480 years (from the Egyptian Exodus until the building of the First Temple), totaling 890 years. When adding 445 (*חַצִּי* – half) to 890, the sum total is 1,335 years – the number mentioned by Daniel. Rashi's and Rasag's numbers differed slightly. Rasag added 1,335 years to the date of Daniel's prophecy (which he did not give), to calculate the Messianic arrival (ca. 965 CE – before Rashi's time). In contrast, Rashi's method added 1,290 to 62 CE (*מעת הוסר התמוי*), thereby arriving at 1352 CE for the messianic advent.

Rashi explains the sum of 2,300 and 574 (2,874) as representing the total number of years from the first Exile of Egypt to the Messianic Arrival. This sum 2,874 also accords internally with the earlier two messianic verses – i.e., 1290 “days,” and “for a time, times, and a half” “למֹעֵד מָעוֹד וְחַצִּים”⁵⁴. This is achieved by being the composite of two time periods which culminate in the Messianic Age: 1. the total number of years from the beginning of the Egyptian Exile until six years preceding the destruction of the Second Temple “הַתְּמִיד מָעוֹת וְחַצִּים”, which equals 1,584 years; 2. the 1,290 “days” i.e., years, “from the time the daily sacrifice was taken away” until the arrival of the Messiah. Once again, the final date in this set of computations is 1352 CE.⁵⁴ Kanarfogel suggests that Rashi's later dates (i.e., 1352 CE, some two hundred fifty years after his death, in 1104 CE) might have contained an indirect polemical message of restraint and moderation, in the face of Jewish millenaristic fervor (and disappointment) happening in his day. The notorious *gematriya* of 1096, circulating as the year of the Messianic Redemption, culminated instead in catastrophe for the Jews of Ashkenaz in the wake of the First Crusade (1096 CE).⁵⁵

In his interpretations of the above three messianic verses, Ibn Ezra does not make any reference to Rashi, although he refers to Rasag's speculations in both his Short and Long Commentaries I, II on Daniel (see below). Since Rashi's messianic calculations did not comport with the “typical” Ashkenazic mode of *derash* and deviated from his own usual *derash*-based exegesis, perhaps they were not well known or accessible to the general public, even in his home territory. Furthermore, even if Ibn Ezra were aware of Rashi's calculations, he consistently directs his comments at their originator, Rasag, whose *perush* he cites numerous times throughout his biblical commentaries.⁵⁶ Thus, a comparison to Rashi is not meaningful in this context.

Ibn Ezra's *Perush* on Calculations (Long and Short)

Ibn Ezra analyzes the above-mentioned messianic computations in a bold and unique fashion, in which he is consistent in both his Short and Long Commentaries I, II. First, contrary to the standard interpretation by medieval Jewish exegetes, in which

⁵⁴ Kanarfogel claims that Rashi's use of *gematriya* here is both plausible and exegetically sound. Furthermore, as his interpretations in the above verses are all unified in one cohesive system, Rashi's approach should not be seen as purely “exegetical” and remote; rather it should also be considered as “actively” messianic. Kanarfogel, “Ashkenazic Messianic Calculations,” pp. 383-384.

⁵⁵ Kanarfogel, *ibid.*, p. 401.

⁵⁶ Indeed, in his commentaries on Torah and Megilot alone, Ibn Ezra cites Rasag's writings 284 times and refers to him reverentially. Krinsky, Introduction, (ס אות), p. 41.

1,290/1,335 “days” refer to years, Ibn Ezra claims they are actual days. He maintains the word “days” may only be understood as “years” if it is mentioned on its own, but not if it’s associated with a number, like “1,290 days” (Dan. 9:24).⁵⁷ Consequently, instead of spanning more than a millennium in time, they comprise merely some three and a half years. According to this interpretation, 1,290 days refers to the amount of time in which the Second Temple stood “without the daily sacrifice” “זְמִינָה וּסְרֵךְ הַמִּזְבֵּחַ” before it was destroyed. Likewise, the 1,335 days correspond to a similar period of intense Jewish suffering before the Messianic advent.⁵⁸ In a unified fashion, Ibn Ezra shows that the three and a half years also defines the period of time in the second verse, “for a time, times, and a half” (Dan. 12:7) “לְמִזְדֵּבֶת מִזְמֹעֲדִים וְחַצִּי”. Ibn Ezra claims, (like Rasag, and Rashi), that the first reference to *moed* “לְמִזְמֹעֲדֶל” is prefatory. He then argues that the minimal number of a Hebrew plural form is *three* – not two, unless it is a dual-plural form – For example, שְׁנִיתִים are two years, while שְׁגִיגִים are at least three years.⁵⁹ Ibn Ezra also claims that the Aramaic translation of *moed*, *idan*, refers to a single year; and *hetzi* refers to half a *mo’ed*, which is half a year. Thus, *moadim va-hetzi* “מִזְדֵּבֶת מִזְמֹעֲדִים וְחַצִּי” totals three and a half years, which approximates the 1,335 days mentioned above. He concludes that this period will entail great Jewish suffering and will precede the futuristic war between “the king of the North” and “the king of the South,” after which the messianic “Redeemer will come to Israel.”⁶⁰ Finally, Ibn Ezra explains the third verse in a similar linguistic fashion. Thus, the “2,300 evenings and mornings” refer to 2,300 actual days (and not years, per Rasag and Rashi). Ibn Ezra claims that these approximately six years and three months refer to past years of intense Jewish suffering under the persecution of a Greek ruler.⁶¹ In both his Short and Long commentaries,

57 Ibn Ezra’s Short Commentary, Daniel “The Fourth Prophecy,” Mondschein ed., pp. 61-62; Long Commentary to Pentateuch II, Mikraot Gedolot, Dan. 9:24.

58 Ibn Ezra’s Long Commentary II, Dan. 12:11; Ibn Ezra’s Short Commentary, Daniel, “The Fourth Vision,” Mondschein ed., pp. 61, 62, 76.

59 For a similar analysis, see Ibn Ezra’s elucidation on the term (בֵין הַעֲרָבִים) in Long Commentary to Pentateuch II, MG Shemot 12:6. Similarly, see Ibn Ezra’s Short Commentary, Daniel, “The Fourth Vision,” Mondschein edition, p. 75, n. 82.

60 Ibn Ezra’s Long Commentary II, Dan. 12:11; Ibn Ezra’s Short Commentary, Daniel, “The Fourth Vision,” Mondschein edition, pp. 74-75. Ibn Ezra identifies the northern kingdom as Rome, and the southern one as Egypt. Ibn Ezra’s Long Commentary II, Dan. 11:40.

61 While his exegetical position is the same, Ibn Ezra identifies the Greek king differently in his Short and Long Commentaries. In his Short Commentary, he refers to a Greek king, “Geskelgas.” Short Commentary Daniel, Mondschein edition, “The Second Prophecy,” (Ch. 8), pp. 28-29, n. 29. In his Long Commentary II (citing Josephus), he refers to “King Antiochus who fell off a roof and died” (Dan. 8:25-27).

therefore, Ibn Ezra's interpretations of these messianic verses show his exegetical consistency and his lack of ideological change (i.e., messianic "acculturation"), during his residence in Ashkenazic lands.

Ibn Ezra's Views on Speculation of the End of Days

How did Ibn Ezra regard the possibility of predicting the End of Days from Sefer Daniel? Ibn Ezra consistently rejects the practice of messianic speculation in both of his commentaries on Daniel. For example, in his Short Commentary I, he cites and dismisses the "rational," text-based calculations of Rasag.⁶² Using arguments of grammar and logic, Ibn Ezra explains the implausibility of interpreting 1,290 "days" as years, and, hence, of calculating a messianic date. He states: "If the interpretation was as [Rasag] said, the simplest of simpletons would know this secret (הקל שבקלים ידע זה הסוד). And how would one explain [the angel's order of secrecy], 'Shut up the words, and seal the book, until the time of the end?'" (Dan. 12:4). Ibn Ezra further notes the absurdity of the angel's telling Daniel to wait for 1,335 "years" (Dan. 12:12), as people do not live that long.⁶³ Similarly, he refers to Rasag's calculations of "2,300 evenings and mornings" (8:14) as "all vanity" and no longer relevant, as "their time had already long passed." Accordingly, it is impossible to derive any messianic calculation from this verse.⁶⁴

Perhaps Ibn Ezra's most scathing attack against such speculations can be seen in his Long Commentary II (Dan. 11:31). Here he explains the irrationality of deriving messianic calculations, particularly by *gematriyot*. He states: "All who interpret words or numbers by calculations of *gematriya*, it is all emptiness and evil spirit; because Daniel did not know the End, and [certainly, neither did] those who came after him..."⁶⁵ Mondschein notes that Ibn Ezra's strong opposition to messianic

62 Rasag's cohesive method of messianic calculations in Daniel was practiced in part by Rashi, although most likely, Ibn Ezra was not aware of that when he wrote his short *perush*, during his early time in Italy.

63 Ibn Ezra's Short Commentary, "Fourth Prophecy," ibid. p. 62; also in Ibn Ezra's Long Commentary II, Dan. 9:24. See also A. Mondschein, "On the Attitude of R. Abraham Ibn Ezra to the Exegetical Usage of the Hermeneutic Norm *Gematria*" [in Hebrew], *Teudah* 8 (*Mechkarim bi-Yetsirato shel Avraham Ibn Ezra*), (1992), p. 145.

64 (הקל הבלתי וכבר עבר זמן משנים רבים). Ibn Ezra's Short Commentary, Daniel, "Second Prophecy," p. 29, n. 39; see also Ibn Ezra's Long Commentary II on Daniel (8:14).

65 Ibn Ezra's Long Commentary II on Daniel (11:31) [translation mine]. Also cited in A. Mondschein, "On the Attitude of R. Abraham Ibn Ezra to... *Gematria*," p. 144. Similarly, on Daniel's statement, "And I heard, but I did not understand" (12:8), Ibn Ezra states: "And behold, it is clear that Daniel did not comprehend the End – the arrival of the Redeemer."

speculations and *gematriyot* was contrary to his usual method of indirect criticism of Ashkenazic exegetes or their methods while in France, even though in this case he was citing Sephardic exegetes. Accordingly, Mondschein suggests that Ibn Ezra's vehement opposition here may have stemmed from the fear of furthering messianic excitement – and thus, mass disillusionment – in the context of failed, twelfth-century Sephardic messianic movements and global turmoil spurred by the Crusades in both Muslim and Christian empires.⁶⁶ If that is true, then Ibn Ezra's polemical concerns precluded any acculturation on his part – either in substance or in tone in this area.

The Four Kingdoms in Daniel

Another theme in Sefer Daniel is that of the Four Kingdoms, which represent the four Jewish Exiles. They are symbolically prophesized in Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dan. 2:31-45) and in Daniel's first and second visions (chapters 7-8). Nebuchadnezzar's dream contained a personified "terrible" image, comprised of four, increasingly inferior metals, from its golden head down to its iron-clay feet. Daniel explained to Nebuchadnezzar, "You are this head of gold" (2:38) – i.e., the first kingdom is that of Bavel. After it, a second, "lesser," kingdom of silver would then rule; followed by a third, brass realm (2:39). The iron legs (with clay-iron feet) represent a fourth empire, which will "crush all others," before an eternal kingdom of G-d will "break... and consume all these [mortal] kingdoms" (2:40-45). Similarly, in Daniel's first, frightening vision (ch. 7), "four great beasts" were explained as symbolizing four successive empires. The fourth, exceedingly fierce and warmongering beast was "different" and enigmatic. With its ten horns and "blaspheming little horn," it was foretold to "devour the whole earth" until its eventual destruction and replacement by the eternal messianic kingdom. Daniel states, "I wished to know the truth about the fourth beast" (7:19). Although additional information was given about this kingdom (7:23-28), its identity remained elusive. Finally, in Daniel's second vision (ch. 8), animals once again symbolized the ruling empires which followed Bavel. In this vision, the second and third kingdoms are clearly identified by the angel Gabriel. He states: "The ram with two horns which you saw are the kings of Medea and Persia. And the he-goat is the King of Yavan (Greece)..." (8:21-22). While the identities of the first three kingdoms are revealed in Sefer Daniel, the fourth kingdom is not. It thus remains a source of debate between Ibn Ezra and the overwhelming majority of commentators.

66 A. Mondschein, "On the Attitude of R. Abraham Ibn Ezra to... Gematria," pp. 137-160, esp. p.144.

R. Saadiah Gaon's interpretation of the Four Kingdoms was based on the classic midrashic interpretation of Hazal. This view, to which Rashi ascribed, was nearly universally accepted by Sephardic and Ashkenazic commentators alike.⁶⁷ *Hazal* identified the four kingdoms as Babylonia (*Bavel*), Media-Persia, Greece (*Yavan*), and Rome (*Edom*).⁶⁸ According to this paradigm, the final pre-messianic battle in *Eretz Yisrael* would culminate in the total destruction of Edom (Rome) for its persecution of the Jews.⁶⁹ With the ascendancy of Islam, medieval Jewish exegetes living under its auspices began factoring *Ishmael* into the four kingdoms.⁷⁰ Thus, Ibn Ezra cites Rasag's understanding of the fourth kingdom as being a combination of Rome and Islam, who together will conquer *Eretz Yisrael* before the messianic redemption.⁷¹ While Ibn Ezra also includes Islam in his own model of the four kingdoms, he does not categorize it as a subsidiary or hybrid of Rome. Instead, he combines the individual third and fourth kingdoms of Greece and Rome into one large "third kingdom" – i.e., *Yavan-Romi*,⁷² and he classifies Islam as the fourth empire. Ibn Ezra concludes, "Thus,

67 Rashi clearly identifies the first three kingdoms in Nebuchadnezzar's vision according to the view of *Hazal* (Dan. 2:39). His commentary, however, does not identify the fourth kingdom (Rome) in this dream, simply calling it "difficult" (2:40). Rather, he identifies Rome only by allusion in later verses (e.g., in stating that the eternal heavenly kingdom would be established "while the reign of the Romans was still ongoing" [2:44].) This is likely due to medieval censorship. A. Grossman notes in the context of another messianic topic – the fate of the gentiles at the End of Days – that the printed edition of *perush* Rashi on Isaiah and Psalms frequently showed the more innocuous term "Amalek," instead of Rashi's term "Esav" (reference to Rome). See A. Grossman, "Redemption by conversion" in the teachings of early Ashkenazi sages," Zion LIX-4 (1994), 336, n. 27.

68 H. Goldwurm, "Prefatory Note to v. 40," *Daniel: A New Translation*, trans. by H. Goldwurm, p. 104. See also Mondschein, ed., Ibn Ezra's Short Commentary on Daniel, "Nebuchadnezzar's Dream," p. 20, n. 15, (p. 109).

69 E.g., Ovadiah's prophecy of Edom's obliteration ("For your violence against your brother Yaakov, shame shall cover you, and you shall be cut off forever" [1:9]) is classically understood by *Hazal* and medieval exegetes – including Rashi and Radak (but not Ibn Ezra), as occurring at the End of Days.

70 Ibn Ezra's Short Commentary, Daniel, Mondschein, ed., "First Prophecy," p. 20, n. 1-2, (p. 97).

71 Ibn Ezra's Short Commentary, Daniel, Mondschein, ed., "First Prophecy," p. 20, n. 15-16 (p. 109). Mondschein clarifies Rasag's interpretation of the fourth beast – Rome, working together with "the little horn," Ishmael.

72 Ibn Ezra maintains consistently that Rome and Greece are one kingdom. For example, his short *perush* on Daniel's First Vision reads: "The third kingdom [was] likened to a leopard, namely, Alexander. And its four wings (7:6) [represent] the four kings who reigned after him, as his empire was divided into four regions, one of them being the kingdom of Rome," ibid., p. 20, n.13. Similarly, in his Long Commentary II on Nebuchadnezzar's dream, Ibn Ezra claims Alexander of Greece is the king of "Aram." As Aram was referred to as "Kittim" and translated by the Targum as *Romai* (Rome)

the brass kingdom is the kingdom of Greece, and the kingdom of *Aram* (Rome) is [that] of Greece. Therefore, the iron [fourth] empire is the realm of Ishmael" (Dan. 2:40). Accordingly, Ibn Ezra's four realms are: *Bavel*, Persia-Media, Greece-Rome, and Islam, with the final battle resulting in the total destruction of Ishmael, contrary to Rashi's view.⁷³

While Ibn Ezra's criticizes Rasag's fourth realm – Rome-Islam – for its lack of a common law/religion,⁷⁴ he maintains that his own hybrid, "third empire" (Rome-Greece) will be pitted against a singular Islam at the End of Days (Dan. 2:40). Referring to Daniel's "third" and "fourth" kingdoms as the existing realms of his day,⁷⁵ Ibn Ezra notes the wars being waged between them (Crusades), with neither side being fully victorious: "Indeed, until today, there are places in which Ishmael vanquishes the kingdom of Aram [Rome], and places in which it is defeated [by it]."⁷⁶ Accordingly, it seems clear that Ibn Ezra's view of the pre-Messianic battle between Rome-Greece and Islam (Dan. 7:14) is of a religious war between Christianity and Islam: Christianity being represented by "Greece" (i.e., Byzantium, the "Eastern Roman Empire") and its Western counterpart in Italy – "Rome."

The exegete's consistent and primary focus, in both his Short and Long Commentaries on Daniel I, II, is with the fourth kingdom – Islam, which will be totally eradicated at the End of Days. Commenting on its destruction, he states: "The fourth beast will lose its entire body, and there will not be any remnant or refugee for Ishmael... And one like the son of man (כבר אנווש), which is the Holy Nation, who are Yisrael, ... [will] take vengeance on the fourth beast for all the evil it inflicted on

in Balak's prophecy, they are the same person (Num. 24:24). Ibn Ezra also comments on the biblical verse identifying *Kittim* as one of the sons of *Yavan*, "Therefore I said in ... Daniel, that the kingdoms of *Yavan* and *Romi* (Rome) are one" (Gen. 10:4). Also referenced in Ibn Ezra's Short Commentary on Daniel, Mondschein ed., Appendix 1, p. 201.

73 Ibn Ezra consistently maintains throughout his biblical exegesis that the current (third) Exile is not that of Edom, but of *Yavan*, e.g., "*Yefet* is from the sons of *Yavan*; so... we are in the *Galut* of *B'nei Yefet* – not in *Galut* Edom" (Gen. 10:1). He further claims independently that Ovadiah's prophecy of Edom's destruction was not messianic, as Edom had already been decimated in the aftermath of the destruction of the First Temple and was no longer in existence (Ovadiah 1:10). (See above, n. 66.)

74 Ibn Ezra's Long Commentary on Dan. 2:40 (ואין תורהם).

75 Dan. 2:40 (שתי מלכויות, מלכوت ארם שהוא מלכوت יון ומלכות ישמעאל, ואלו השתיים מלכויות ביום זהה).

76 Ibid [Translation mine.]

Israel.”⁷⁷ Ibn Ezra’s preoccupation with the fate of Islam is noteworthy in light of his personal experiences of persecution in both realms: Ibn Ezra fled his native Spain during the violent, Almohad invasions, and he escaped to Christian Europe during the Second Crusade (1144-1155). Clearly, his continued stance on the Fourth Kingdom as representing Islam, despite his long residence in Christendom, shows his lack of acculturation in this area.⁷⁸

A Comparison of Ibn Ezra’s Commentaries to Each Other (Daniel I, II)

As previously noted, this essay’s second method of testing for Ibn Ezra’s exegetical adaptation is by comparing his earlier and later commentaries to each other. Ibn Ezra wrote his early, Short Commentary on Daniel I between 1140-1145,⁷⁹ shortly after his arrival in Italy; he composed his second, Long Commentary on Daniel II in Rouen, Northern France, in 1155. Despite stylistic differences between his Short and Long Commentaries on Daniel I, II, both are consistent in their exegetical orientation (viz. messianic speculations and the Four Kingdoms). This again points to Ibn Ezra’s steadfast consistency in his messianic principles and methods in *Sefer Daniel*, throughout his time in Christendom.

77 Ibn Ezra’s Long Commentary II Dan. 7:14 [Translation mine]. Ibn Ezra contrasts the fourth beast’s obliteration with the fate of the three earlier beasts, “[whose] dominion was taken away, yet [whose] lives were prolonged for a season and a time” (Dan. 7:11-12).

78 Ibn Ezra’s emphasis on futuristic Jewish vengeance against the Gentiles – Islam, in his paradigm – counters Yuval’s claim of an absolute dichotomy between medieval Sephardic and Ashkenazic exegetes on this topic. Yuval posits Ashkenazim characteristically believed in a “vengeful Redemption” (i.e., exclusively Jewish), while Sephardim supported a “conversionary Redemption,” i.e., a universalistic model (Yuval, *Sh’nei Goyim be-Vitnech*, pp. 109-131). He notes that Ibn Ezra interprets the term *Edom* in numerous biblical passages prophesying messianic vengeance as referring to “biblical Edom and not Rome,” (*ibid.*, p. 126). However, Yuval’s conclusion that Ibn Ezra typified “the Sephardic view of conversionary Redemption, instead of [the Ashkenazic] stance of vengeful Redemption” is incorrect. Indeed, Ibn Ezra saw the theme of vengeance as an integral precursor of the Redemption; however, in his view, the vengeance was aimed at the religion of his native Spain (Islam), (e.g., Ibn Ezra on Dan. 12:1), rather than on the Christian world in which he ended up. See also A. Grossman, “Redemption by conversion,” pp. 325-242, for his rejection of Yuval’s monolithic stance viz. medieval Ashkenazic sages. Grossman illustrates that Ashkenazic rabbis, including Rabbenu Gershom and Rashi, supported a “two-tiered system,” which incorporated the conversion of Gentiles after the period of vengeance. He further shows that the theme of pre-messianic vengeance had ancient Jewish origins (biblical, Talmudic and apocalyptic) and was not an exclusively Ashkenazic, anti-Christian notion.

79 Sela and Fruenthal, “Abraham Ibn Ezra’s Scholarly Writings,” p. 18. See also A. Mondschein, ed., *Ibn Ezra’s Short Commentary on Daniel* (Ramat Gan, 1977), Introduction, (2).

Aside from their literary style, the only notable difference between the two Daniel commentaries I, II⁸⁰ is Ibn Ezra's object of criticism. While openly critical of Ashkenazic practitioners of *derash* in his early, Short Commentary on Daniel I, he is circumspect in his later, Long Commentary II.⁸¹ For example, in his early, Short Introduction to Daniel I, Ibn Ezra laments the contamination of "the pure spring of truth," whose water gets increasingly more contaminated as it moves further away from the source (מימי הנהל הנבע הקרוביים ממנה תרמסם רגל, ויתערבו בם מים זרים...). His metaphor denounces the Ashkenazic practice of using *midrashim* literally and taking the biblical words out of context, contrary to the intent of Hazal. He sees this process as one which gets increasingly more corrupted and entrenched with each passing generation. In contrast, Ibn Ezra is more circumspect in his later, Long Commentary on Daniel II. Despite his biting attacks against *gematriyot* and midrashic explanations in both his commentaries I, II, Ibn Ezra does not attack its Ashkenazic practitioners directly in his later commentary. Instead, he directs his criticism against an anonymous "great commentator in Spain" (Dan. 1:1). He then states: "These [interpretations] are all full of air, since how is it possible that a person would speak a word, but his intent was another word? And one who says this is considered crazy (מהמשוגעים הוא נחشب) ... And it would be better for him to say, 'I don't know,' rather than to distort the words of ... God." Ibn Ezra's redirected tirade in this case is significant. Scholars like Mondschein would likely attribute this change to his professional caution in Ashkenaz. However, it is also possible that Ibn Ezra's change stems from a newfound sense of respect for the Ashkenazic practitioners of *derash*, which he developed during his time in Northern France.

This essay addressed the novel subject of Ibn Ezra's acculturation in Ashkenaz, by assessing his earlier and later exegetical works relative to each other and to Rashi, the representative Ashkenazic *pashtan*. The scope of this paper was narrowly focused on Ibn Ezra's Introductions to Pentateuch I, II, his Torah Commentaries I, II, and his Commentaries to Daniel I, II. Thus, a wide-ranging comparative analysis of all his early and later extant works would be needed to fully assess this issue. Notwithstanding these limitations, it seems clear that Ibn Ezra did not modify his ideological-exegetical views to conform with his fellow Ashkenazic exegetes. His principles remained consistent

⁸⁰ Ibn Ezra's later *perush* is a running commentary on the entire book of Daniel, while his Short Commentary I is arranged topically and contains an introduction and five chapters: Nebuchadnezzar's dream, and Daniel's four prophecies. Mondschein, Ibn Ezra's Short Commentary on Daniel, Introduction, pp. (כ"ז, ז"י, י"ז).

⁸¹ Mondschein, *ibid.*, p. (ב"ח).

from his early years in Italy to his later years in Northern France. What did change over time, however, was his tone and manner of address to his Ashkenazic readers during his residence in Christendom, moving from sarcasm and condescension to intellectual respect. Indeed, Ibn Ezra's later respect for *derash*-exegesis is neither a form of "cultural tolerance" nor expedience; rather it is a recognition of the value of religious, exegetical diversity in Ashkenaz, under the rubric of *Shiv'im Panim le'Torah*.

APPENDIX

	Source	Long or Short version	דבר המתייחס	Ibn Ezra's Commentary and References to Rashi	Comments
1.	Bereishit 32:9	Short (Standard version M"G)	"וְרָאֵה הַמִּנְחָה הַנֶּשֶׁאָר לְפִלְיטָה"	ונוה שאמור רבינו שלמה שוויה לפוליטה בעל כrhoו הוא דרך דרש ...	IE dismisses Rashi's view as <i>derash</i>
2.	Shemot 28:30	Short (Non-standard version)	"וְנִתְתַּחַט אֶל חַשּׁוֹן הַפְּשָׁעָט אֲתָּה אֲוֹרִים וְאֲתָּה תְּתַפְּמִים"	ובב שלמה מפרש התורה מ"כ [מצאי תחוב] כי האו"ת בשם המפורש ... ועתה פכח עניין ...	"Open your eyes" appears sarcastic
3.	Shemot 9:30	Long (Standard Version M"G)	"אַתָּה"	אמר רבינו שלמה ... וזה המילה איננה נמצאת כאשר חשב ...	Respectful manner of disagreement
4.	Shemot 12:6	Long	"בֵּין הַעֲרָבִים"	מליה קשה. ורבינו שלמה אמר... ולא נתן טעם למה ערבים שניים ...	IE respectfully prefaces his comment by noting it is a difficult word
5.	Shemot 15:2	Long	"עַזִּי"	אמר רבינו שלמה ז"ל, כי יש הפרש בין עז בקמץ חטף ובין עז בקבוץ...ומי שיבין בלשון ישותually ידע ההפרש שיש בינהם ...	Respectfully excuses Rashi's ignorance of the Hebrew grammatical rule, due to the inaccessibility of Arabic language to Ashkenazic Jews
6.*	Shemot 16:15	Long	"וַיֹּאמְרוּ אִישׁ אֶל אֶחָיו מִן הָאָזְן"	אמר רבינו שלמה, כי בלשון ישותually תרגום מה הוא מן הוא. והמגיד לו בכח לא דבר נכון, כי AINNO NOPFL MAN BLASHONIM CI על אדם ...	IE respectfully excuses Rashi for an alleged grammatical mistake due to his being misinformed about Arabic. However, IE appears to be mistaken: our version of Rashi's <i>perush</i> is exactly the opposite and it agrees with IE's view

	Source	Long or Short version	דבר המתחיל	Ibn Ezra's Commentary and References to Rashi	Comments
7.	Shemot 18:14	Long	"גַּיְנָא... אַת כִּל אָשֵׁר הַוָּא עֲשֵׂה לְעַם"	ובבינו שלמה אמר, בעבר שמשה יושב [מלך] לבדו שישראל נצבים... ואין זה דרך מוסר. ואין ספק כי מעלת משה דולה... ומשה עשה הדרכן הנכונה, כי השופט יושב ובעל היריב עומדים...	After presenting Rashi's viewpoint, IE matter-of-factly offers his own, differing opinion, thereby legitimizing both stances.
8.	Shemot 18:26	Long	"שְׁפּוֹטוּ הֶם"	כי ישפטו בשורוק תחת חולם, ר' שלמה רצה להפריש בינהם... וכן לומר דרך[Dekha]...	IE misquotes Rashi (or had another version), but he does so respectfully, by suggesting a grammatical approach (which Rashi, in fact, agrees with)
9.	Shemot 19:2	Long	"וַיִּתְחַנֵּן שֵׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל"	... על כן הזכיר וחון, כי מיעוטים הם... ורבינו שלמה אמר כי כנגד ההר מזרחה...	After citing his own opinion, IE matter-of-factly cites Rashi's view.
10.	Shemot 23:19	Long	"רְאֵשִׁית"	ורבי שלמה אמר כי גדי והוא הקטן הרך... וואינו כו, כי גדי... רך שהוא מהצעיים. ובלשוון ערבי... ואל תחתה, בעבר שלא נהגו אנשי אלה המקומות לאכול כדי עזים... וכן אוכלים אותו בספרד ואפריקה וא"י...	IE respectfully engages Rashi via Arabic linguistics and other "medical" facts unknown to Ashkenazim
11. ***	Shemot 26:18 (twice)	Long	"קְרֻשִׁים" [את] "קְרֻשִׁית"	... ועל דעת רבינו שלמה כי בעמעה נס היה עמוד... ואם קבלה היא שהעובי היה כך, נשמע ונΚבל...	Ibn Ezra's comments pertain to Rashi's interpretation, based on BT Shab. 98b. He is prepared to defer to Rashi's interpretation, if it is the proper tradition
12.	Shemot 26:31	Long	"עַשְׂתִּית" "פְּרַכְתִּת"	ככה מצאנו שיעשה שלמה לפתח הדבר... ופירש רשי"ז"ל ...	IE challenges Rashi indirectly with other biblical references
13.	Shemot 28:6	Long	"חַפְּדִית"	ורבינו שלמה אמר כי האות ה' היו כתבי שם המפורש. ואילו ראה תשובה רבינו hei לא אמר ככה	IE respectfully disagrees with Rashi, while "excusing" Rashi's ignorance of Rav Hai Gaon's responsa.

	Source	Long or Short version	דבר המתחיל	Ibn Ezra's Commentary and References to Rashi	Comments
14.	Shemot 28:36	Long	"יְעַשֵּׂית צִיּוֹן"	... כי בארץ ישמעה אל ובספרד ... והשרים עולים ציון זהב... על מקום המצח... כי מנהג א"י... אינו כמנהג אלה המקומות. והוחרך רבינו שלמה לתקן המקראות.	IE goes to great lengths to explain cultural Islamic and Sephardic practices unknown to Ashkenazic Jews, which affected the understanding of the verse.
15.	[Ber. 1:20]	Long/ Fragmentary שיטה האחרת	"יָרַצֵּה הַמִּים"	רב יצחק בן שלמה אמר... [צ"ל ר' שלמה בן יצחק...]	[Mondschein adds this citation within the list of Rashi references.]

* 6. In his early Short Commentary I, Ibn Ezra explains this similarly, though indirectly – without referring to Rashi's name. (... והמפרשים שהוא בלשון ישמיעאל תעוז).).