"Open Rebuke and Concealed Love": Nahmanides and the Andalusian Tradition

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FOR A VERY long time there has been an almost irresistible urge to juxtapose Naḥmanides to Maimonides. They were the two most influential teachers of the Hispano-Jewish tradition, differed on many crucial issues and represented rival spiritual tendencies. Sometimes one also suspects the old rhetorical pull of *paranomasia contrarium*: look how that little shift from מ to נ moves us from Rambam to his antithetical counterpart Ramban![1] In any case, rather than repeat such stale Rambam-Ramban oppositions as reason and faith, thought and feeling, philosophy and mysticism, I prefer to succumb to the traditional temptation with a contextual contrast: Maimonides was the last great figure formed by the "golden age" of Andalusia. Naḥmanides was the first great Spanish figure belonging totally to the cultural environment of Christian Europe.[2]

[1]For an interesting example, see the contrast of R. Ḥayyim Vital and its reinterpretation by Solomon Schechter, *Studies in Judaism: A Selection* (New York, 1958), pp. 193ff.; see too the string of contrasts in Heinrich Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden* (Leipzig, 1897-1911), VII, pp. 40-42. For early juxtaposition of Maimonides and Naḥmanides, see e.g. R. Aaron ha-Levi, *Sefer ha-Ḥinnukh*, ed. C. Chavel (Jerusalem, 1961), no. 537, p. 657; R. Yom Tov ben Abraham al-Ishbili, *Sefer ha-Zikkaron*, ed. K. Kahana (Jerusalem, 1956), pp. 31-34. Cf. too Abraham Abulafia cited by J. Perles, "Ueber den Geist des Commentars des R. Moses ben Nachman zum Pentateuch," *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums*, 7 (1858):88, n. 1. For its persistance, see e.g. Yosef Yerushalmi, *From Spanish Court to Italian Ghetto* (New York, 1971), p. 330. (For evidence of Hispano-Jewish attraction to paranomasia, see e.g. David Yellin, *Torat ha-Shirah ha-Sefaradit*, ed. Dan Pagis [Jerusalem, 1978], pp. 220-242; on its semantic function, see D. Pagis, *Shirat ha-Ḥol ve-Torat ha-Shir le-Mosheh ibn Ezra* [Jerusalem, 1970], pp. 92ff.)

[2]On the transfer from Andalusia to Christian Spain and its cultural implications, see my *Hispano-Jewish Culture in Transition: The Career and Controversies of Ramah* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1982). Ramah (R. Meir ha-Levi Abulafia) was

Naḥmanides and his circle represent a distinctive Catalan strain within thirteenth-century Hispano-Jewish culture.[3] Catalonia had been under Christian rule since Carolingian times. Nevertheless, as long as the bulk of the Spanish Jewish community was based in Andalusia, Catalonia remained an outpost of Judeo-Arabic civilization. But with the destruction of the Andalusian Jewish communities in the middle of the twelfth century, a rapid reorientation was inevitable. Naḥmanides' Gerona, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, was as remote from Arabic influence and as close to the Jewish cultures of northern Europe as any community in Spain had ever been.[4] Naḥmanides was born in a thoroughly Christianized environment and was saturated from earliest youth in northern Jewish scholarship. His career so strikingly represents the new directions taken by Jewish culture in Christian Spain that it is easy to overlook lines of continuity. The Andalusian-Christian Europe dichotomy is helpful—but mostly as a prelude to its qualification.

Another integrating perspective on Naḥmanides is to view him as a genius at intellectual crossroads. At Naḥmanides' birth, the Tosafists had

an intermediate figure—formed educationally by the Andalusian tradition, but living his whole life under Christian rule in Castile. On Naḥmanides' relationship to Ramah, see below.

[3]Catalonia, for the purposes of Jewish intellectual history, consists almost exclusively of Barcelona and Gerona. On the cohesiveness (cultural and political) of Naḥmanides' circle in Barcelona and Gerona, see my "Piety and Power in Thirteenth-Century Catalonia" in *Studies in Medieval Jewish History and Literature*, ed. Isadore Twersky (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1979), pp. 197-232. In later generations Catalonia is singled out as an area in which Naḥmanides' ideas held sway; see e.g. R. Isaac ben Sheshet, *She'elot u-Teshuvot* (New York, 1954), no. 415, p. 133c.

[4]Figures like Judah ben Barzilai and Abraham bar Ḥiyya in Barcelona at the beginning of the twelfth century are totally saturated with Judeo-Arabic culture. This remains true of figures like Sheshet ben Isaac Benveniste and Joseph ibn Zabara at the end of the century. An older contemporary of Naḥmanides like Abraham ibn Ḥasdai of Barcelona still remained at home in Arabic; but this already reflects a special cultural commitment. Naḥmanides, despite occasional mention of individual Arabic terms (see e.g. Perles [above, n. 1], pp. 87f.), read even basic Andalusian works (like Maimonides' *Guide*) in translation. Cf. Ch. Heller, ed., *Sefer ha-Mizvot le-R. Mosheh ben Maimon* (Jerusalem, 1946), intro., p. 8. In the generation following Naḥmanides, R. Solomon ibn Adret could find no one in Barcelona to translate Maimonides' *Commentary on the Mishnah* from Arabic into Hebrew and had to assign the task to scholars in Aragon, where Arabic was better known; see the introduction of R. Joseph ben Isaac ibn al-Fawwāl to his translation of Maimonides' *Commentary* to *Mo'ed* (in the standard Vilna edition of the Talmud, *Shabbat*, 187a).

just completed their revolution of talmudic studies;[5] Kabbalah had recently emerged into the light of history in Provence;[6] and Maimonides, the greatest representative of the Andalusian tradition, was completing his career in exile.[7] All of these traditions converged at the turn of the twelfth century in Catalonia during a period of relative security and prosperity, releasing a remarkable burst of creative energy and versatile achievment. Naḥmanides was the leading figure in this little Catalan renaissance.[8] Certainly, the influence of Franco-German talmudic culture and Provençal Kabbalah set him on a cultural course unknown in Muslim Spain. But the confluence of these northern traditions with the still powerful and often divergent tradition of Andalusia contributed to the remarkable level of creative tension in Naḥmanides' thought and helped to form his cultural ideal.

A careful consideration of the complexity of Naḥmanides' attitude is particularly pressing with regard to the tradition of Andalusian rationalism. The current image of Naḥmanides tends to underscore his opposition. Baer's characterization is especially emphatic but by no means atypical.

> The attack against rationalism in the name of faith is typical of all the cabalistic works produced during this period. It is most pronounced in Naḥmanides' commentary to the Pentateuch. His vigorous opposition to the allegorical interpretation of the Torah is expressed on every page of this work, the most popular of

[5]See e.g. E. E. Urbach, *Ba'ale ha-Tosafot*, 2 vols. (Jerusalem, 1980). On Naḥmanides' ties to the Tosafists see pp. 26, 263f., 479, 586. A crucial role in the twelfth-century revolution of talmudic studies was also played by Provence; see I. Twerky, *Rabad of Posquières* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1962). For Rabad's influence on Naḥmanides, see pp. 56-59.

[6]See Gershom Scholem, *Les origines de la Kabbale* (Paris, 1966).

[7]Despite the fact that Maimonides may have fled Andalusia at a relatively early age, there is no doubt that both in terms of scholarship and self-perception he belonged to the Andalusian tradition; for Nahmanides' perception, see below, n. 83.

[8]Besides Naḥmanides, outstanding Catalan contemporaries include kabbalists like R. Ezra and R. Azriel of Gerona, Naḥmanides' cousin the talmudist-pietist R. Jonah Gerondi, the civil-law codifier R. Samuel ha-Sardi and the poet Meshullam da Piera. Naḥmanides' students include very important figures like R. Solomon ibn Adret and R. Aaron ha-Levi of Barcelona. See further, Scholem, *Les origines de la Kabbale*; H. Schirmann, *Ha-Shirah ha-'Ivrit be-Sefarad uve-Provence* (Jerusalem, 1961), II, 238ff., 285, 291, 295ff., 319f., 326; C. Chavel, *Rabbenu Mosheh ben Naḥman* (Jerusalem, 1967), pp. 47-71.

> Naḥmanides' writings. His avowed aim was "to silence the mouths of the men of little faith and meager wisdom who scoff at the words of our sages," and to refute the opinions of Abraham ibn Ezra and Maimonides, on whom the rationalists leaned for support.[9]

The only kinship that Baer recognizes is to Ha-Levi—a rebel, from within, against the Andalusian tradition.[10]

This image of Naḥmanides has had a decisive—and I would maintain, not wholly fortunate—impact on the interpretation of two dramatic historical episodes in which Naḥmanides stood center stage: the Maimonidean Controversy and the Disputation at Barcelona

The story of the Maimonidean Controversy—the great struggle over Maimonidean rationalism that erupted among the communities of Spain, Provence and northern France in the 1230's—is well known. During this controversy, Naḥmanides—still young, but already well established as a major scholar—struck a diplomatic pose. He attempted to defend the Montpellier anti-rationalists from the ban of a Provençal communal establishment for whom Maimonides had become sacrosanct. At the same time he wrote a classic open letter to the Tosafist schools of northern France in defense of Maimonides and sought (apparently with some success) to have their ban against *Sefer ha-Madda'* and the *Guide of the Perplexed* withdrawn.[11] However, those who view Naḥmanides as an unmitigated opponent of Andalusian rationalism are led to the conclusion that in principle he must have agreed with the anti-Maimunists—that his only real difference with them was tactical.[12] Naḥmanides' defense of Maimonides is thus seen as an act of realistic statesmanship rather than an act of conscience.

[9]Yitzhak Baer, *A History of the Jews in Christian Spain* (Philadelphia, 1966), I, 245. Contrast the much more nuanced and still very interesting characterization of Naḥmanides' *Commentary* offered long ago by Perles (above, n. 1), 80-97, 113-136, 145-159.

[10]See Baer, *History*, I, 67-76.

[11]For a balanced account of Naḥmanides' activities during the controversy, see A. Shoḥet, "Berurim be-Farashat ha-Pulmus ha-Rishon 'al Sifrei ha-Rambam," *Zion* 36 (1971):27-60. Naḥmanides' position in the controversy is also touched on in my "Piety and Power" (above, n. 3).

[12]Baer, *History*, I, 103-105; H. H. Ben-Sasson, *Toledot 'Am Yisrael Bimei ha-Benayim* (Tel Aviv, 1969), pp. 155f.; Y. Kaplan, *Encyclopaedia Hebraica*, s.v. "Mosheh b. Naḥman." Perhaps the strongest formulation is that of S. Krauss ("Ha-Yiḥus ha-Madda'i ben ha-Ramban veha-Rambam," *Ha-Goren* 5 [1905]:84) despite the abundant evidence for qualification that his own article contains. Cf. Shoḥet (above, n. 11), p. 39 (bottom) and Perles (above, n. 1), pp. 85-86, 157-158.

A central issue of the Maimonidean Controversy—the authority and interpretation of aggadah—crops up again, some thirty years later, during the Disputation at Barcelona.[13] Here a new development in the history of Jewish-Christian polemic comes to the fore: an attempt by the Church to argue the truth of Christianity from aggadic as well as biblical *testimonia*. Naḥmanides sought to cut the foundation out from under this new Christian method of argumentation by denying the authority of aggadah.[14] This had been a long-standing position of geonic and Andalusian authorities,[15] but what did Naḥmanides himself believe? The current picture of Naḥmanides has led many scholars to the conclusion that Naḥmanides was arguing, under polemical pressure, against his own profound belief.[16]

The historiographical parallel is obvious: in both the case of the Maimonidean Controversy and the Disputation at Barcelona, the accepted image of Naḥmanides has resulted in a refusal to accept what he actually said as representing his true conviction. This picture of diplomatic insincerity dominating the two major public pronouncements of "the faithful master," while not *ipso facto* impossible, should at least give pause.

A first step toward a balanced view is to recognize complexity in the Andalusian tradition itself. I doubt that the picture of Halevi as a lonely rebel against a uniformly rationalistic Andalusian Jewish culture is a useful one. Medievals, as far as I am aware, did not perceive him as such.[17] Ha-Levi's defense of the faith with philosophical weapons could be viewed as in perfect Andalusian character. A critical stance toward philosophy is already evident in such eleventh-century stalwarts of the

[13]A recent study is R. Chazan, "The Barcelona 'Disputation' of 1263: Christian Missionizing and Jewish Response," *Speculum* 52 (1977):824-842.

[14]*Kitvei ha-Ramban*, ed. C. D. Chavel (Jerusalem, 1963), I, 308.

[15]Naḥmanides' declaration at Barcelona was put into this geonic-Andalusian context by S. Lieberman, *Shikiin* (Jerusalem, 1939), pp. 81-83.

[16]Baer, *History*, I, 153; idem, "Le-Biqqoret ha-Vikkuḥim shel R. Yeḥiel mi-Paris ve-shel R. Mosheh ben Naḥman," *Tarbiẓ* 2 (1930):184 and n. 1; M. Cohen, "Reflections on the Text and Context of the Disputation of Barcelona," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 35 (1964):157-192; Scholem, *Les origines de la Kabbale*, p. 484.

[17]See e.g. Yedaya ha-Penini, *Ketav ha-Hitnaẓlut* in *She'elot u-Teshuvot R. Shelomo ben Adret* (Benei Berak, 1958), I, 166, no. 418. Cf. Profiat Duran, *Ma'aseh Efod* (Vienna, 1865), p. 25.

Andalusian tradition as Jonah ibn Janaḥ and Judah ibn Bal'am.[18] Ha-Levi's more sustained and thoroughgoing critique probably reflects the twelfth-century challenge of Aristotelianism more than any idiosyncratic repudiation of the whole Andalusian tradition. Naḥmanides, I think, was making a similar point about the sources of anti-rationalism when, in the course of the Maimonidean Controversy, he quoted the anti-philosophical responsum of Hai Gaon to Samuel ha-Nagid.[19] Whatever our view of the authenticity of this particular document, the general point is well taken: thirteenth-century Spanish anti-rationalism was not simply a northern European import; it had roots in the geonic and Andalusian traditions.[20] Moreover Naḥmanides' relationship, even to Andalusians like Ibn Ezra and Maimonides, was hardly one of simple and diametric opposition. An instructive contrast to Baer's judgment is Naḥmanides' own characterization of his relationship to Ibn Ezra. In the introduction to his *Commentary on the Torah*, Naḥmanides announces that he will engage in dialogue with two classic predecessors: Rashi—an exemplar of Franco-German culture, and Ibn Ezra—a great synthesizer and representative of Andalusian culture. Toward Rashi he expresses reverence. Rashi's mastery of biblical and talmudic literature and his centrality are stressed. But Naḥmanides tells us that he plans "to be infatuated with the love of Rashi's words"—perhaps ironically hinting at critical distance as much as passionate commitment. He will subject Rashi's words to careful analysis—"his plain and midrashic explanations and every impregnable aggadah quoted in his commentary." Of course, Rashi's anthologizing of difficult *aggadot* made them no less "impregnable"—that task was left to Naḥmanides.[21]

[18]See e.g. Harry Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1976), p. 93; E. Ashtor, *Qorot ha-Yehudim be-Sefarad ha-Muslamit*, II (Jerusalem, 1966), 293.

[19]See the edition of Naḥmanides' letter to the scholars of northern France published by J. Perles in *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums* 9 (1860):194.

[20]See further in my *Hispano-Jewish Culture in Transition*, pp. 75-103.

[21]Naḥmanides' *Commentary* is, among other things, a sustained critique of Rashi's more midrashic interpretations of Scripture. Although this criticism never approaches the harsh language occasionally directed at Ibn Ezra, it seems to me, substantively, more fundamental and thoroughgoing than the critique of Ibn Ezra. For some critical comments on Rashi, see e.g. the *Commentary* to Gen. 6:3, 19:24, 28:17, 49:22, Exod. 4:9, 10:14, 24:1, Lev. 19:16, Num. 14:21. But the more fundamental criticism is often understated or implicit; see e.g. on Lev. 19:19. Even when interpreting aggadic material quoted by Rashi, Naḥmanides' assumption seems to be that Rashi himself simply quoted it at face value. See e.g. the *Commentary* to Exod. 19:13; cf. Maharal of Prague, *Gur Aryeh*, ad loc.

Naḥmanides' definition of his relationship to Ibn Ezra is, by contrast, terse and explicitly tense: "For R. Abraham ibn Ezra we will have open rebuke and concealed love."[22] In light of Naḥmanides' well-known and sometimes stinging criticisms of Ibn Ezra, one nineteenth century *maskil* was moved to rhetorical bewilderment: "[Naḥmanides] filled his commentary with the open rebuke and even added derision and ridicule, but where is the hidden love?"[23] In fact, Naḥmanides' cryptic characterization of his relationship to Ibn Ezra seems designed precisely to caution the careful reader against letting occasional denunciations deflect attention from deep spiritual affinities. The occasions for Naḥmanides' "rebuke" of Ibn Ezra are roughly threefold: cavalier treatment of aggadah;[24] overly rationalistic exegesis;[25] and pretension to esoteric wisdom.[26] I would suggest that Naḥmanides' "love"—his sense of spiritual kinship with Ibn Ezra—is often to be found hiding not far from his "rebuke."

Keeping in mind Naḥmanides' problematic proclamation during the Disputation at Barcelona, I will concentrate on the question of aggadah. Andalusian uneasiness with aggadic exegesis stemmed from a twofold desire to interpret grammatically and sensibly. These were qualities that Naḥmanides liked in Ibn Ezra and strove to emulate.[27] His conception of

[22]See Prov. 27:5, where, however, open rebuke and concealed love do *not* coexist. In a poem of Samuel ha-Nagid to his son (in Schirmann, *Ha-Shirah ha-'Ivrit* I, 119) they do coexist, but for educational purposes. Naḥmanides' striking combination of open rebuke and concealed love expresses a sense of tension and complexity.

[23]I. H. Weiss, *Dor Dor ve-Dorshav* (Vilna, 1904), V, 7.

[24]See e.g. the *Commentary* to Gen. 1:1, 11:28, 24:1, 46:15.

[25]See e.g. Naḥmanides' *Commentary* to Gen. 18:20, Exod. 6:7, 28:30.

[26]See e.g. Naḥmanides' *Commentary* to Gen. 24:1. For disagreement with Ibn Ezra on kabbalistic grounds, see e.g. the *Commentary* to Exod. 3:2, 13:21, 14:19, Num. 8:2.

[27]Even Naḥmanides' implicit declaration of exegetical independence in his introduction to the *Commentary* ("...and may God, whom alone I fear....") is probably influenced by a very similar declaration in the introduction to Ibn Ezra's commentary. Cf. also Naḥmanides' earlier introduction to his *Milḥamot Ha-Shem* (*Kitvei ha-Ramban*, I, 412). There are innumerable instances in which Naḥmanides prefers Ibn Ezra's philological explanation to Rashi's interpretation; see e.g. the *Commentary* to Exod. 6:12, 9:30, 24:1, 33:12, Num. 4:20, Deut. 20:19. But more important than any individual instance of influence is the overall impact of Ibn Ezra's method. Besides Ibn Ezra, the other major channel through which Andalusian philology reached Naḥmanides was David Kimḥi. Though mentioned only

peshat is profoundly indebted to Ibn Ezra. The immense energy that Naḥmanides devoted to uncovering the plain sense of Scripture—sometimes even engaging in lengthy linguistic discussions[28]—shows him entirely free of the frequent kabbalistic tendency to devalue *peshat.*[29] Naḥmanides significantly advanced the Andalusian tradition of *peshat* —not merely by proposing new interpretations but by broadening the conception of interpretation. Naḥmanides went beyond Abraham ibn Ezra's definition of the exegetical enterprise as anchored primarily in the consecutive grammatical exposition of individual words and phrases (which seems somehow analogous to Moses ibn Ezra's atomistic conception of *poetic* criticism)—in the direction of a more organic, structural, and conceptual approach to the plain sense of the text.[30]

once (see the *Commentary* to Gen. 35:16), his works were a major source for Naḥmanides; see e.g. M. Z. Eisenstadt, ed., *Perush ha-Ramban 'al ha-Torah*, I (New York, 1959), pp. 34 n. 11, 39, 40 n. 8, 43 n. 4, 53 n. 8, 57 n. 3, 58 n. 2, 64 n. 1. For studies of Naḥmanides as a biblical exegete, see Perles (above, n. 1); M. Z. Segal, *Parshanut Ha-Miqra* (Jerusalem, 1952), 96-102; E. Z. Melammed, *Mefarshei ha-Miqra* (Jersualem, 1975), II, 937-1021.

[28]See e.g. the *Commentary* to Gen. 9:20, 14:16, 24:64, 30:14, 30:20, 32:21, 32:25, Exod. 25:26, 25:29, Lev. 5:22, 19:16, 19:20, 23:28, Deut. 1:4, 2:23, 7:12. See further M. Moreshet, "Ha-Ramban ke-Balshan 'al pi Perusho la-Torah," *Sinai* 60 (1962):193-210.

[29]For this tendency, see Zohar, III, 152a. For an even stronger formulation, see Naḥmanides' older contemporary, R. Azriel of Gerona, *Perush ha-Aggadot*, ed. Isaiah Tishby (Jerusalem, 1945), p. 37. In Naḥmanides' *Commentary* to Gen. 1:1, the implicit assumption is the opposite—that if the non-legal sections of the Torah were really meaningful only to kabbalists and without an ethical-historical significance accessible to everyone, they would not have been written! Naḥmanides' formulation there suggests that affirmation of the importance of the non-mystical sense of Scripture is a correlative of his strict esotericism. The closest that Naḥmanides comes to the reasoning of the Zohar is his suggestion that the apparent redundancy of a story (Isaac's wells) points to (non-esoteric) typological interpretation; see his *Commentary* to Gen 26:20. On Naḥmanides' typological interpretation, see A. Funkenstein, "Parshanuto ha-Tipologit shel ha-Ramban," *Zion* 45 (1980):35-59.

[30]For Abraham ibn Ezra's characterization of his exegetical method as the application of grammar, see the introduction to his *Commentary on the Torah.* Although, in practice, Ibn Ezra's commentary offers more than grammatical interpretation, this characterizetion accurately reflects its centrality. The linkage of linguistic and biblical studies is characteristic of the Andalusian tradition, in which these disciplines are barely distinguishable. On the non-holistic view of poetry in Andalusia, see e.g. Pagis (above, n. 1), p. 142. The observation that the poetry of the Gerona school shows a new emphasis on the unity of the individual poem (see Prof. Fleischer's essay in this volume) completes the parallel between poetry and exegesis. The decline of atomism in both domains may reflect weakening Arabic influence. An obvious example of Naḥmanides' more total exegetical approach is his careful attention, throughout the *Commentary*, to questions of ordering, thematic unity and overall structure; see e.g. the introductions to the various books of the Pentateuch and on Exod. 4:19, 18:1, 23:7, 24:1, 25:1, 33:7, 35:1, Lev. 1:1, 7:38, 8:1, 14:43, 16:1, 25:1, Num. 1:1, 3:1, 7:1, 8:2, 9:1, 16:1, 28:2, Deut 1:4, 3:24, 4:41, 12:32, 31:24. The shift away from the grammatical approach is most apparent in the central role Naḥmanides assigns to questions of theology (see Perles (above, n. 1), pp. 118ff.), history, ethics, politics, rhetoric and character. A telling semantic symptom of Naḥmanides' broadening of exegetical horizons is his application of the formula "'al derekh ha-peshat" (itself derived from Ibn Ezra) to a question of *ta'amei ha-mizvot*; see the *Commentary* to Num. 6:11.

Certainly the defense of rabbinic exegesis is a major concern of Naḥmanides' commentary. But it is a defense that was made necessary by, and that at times made use of, the Andalusian exegetical tradition. There could be no return to the innocence of Rashi. Naḥmanides attempted, for the first time, to show how the Andalusian philological sensibility could, at least sometimes, come to terms with aggadah. He presents *midrash*—both halakic and aggadic—as a legitimate method distinct from and parallel to *peshat*, which uses a real textual difficulty as a springboard for intelligently imaginative interpretation.[31]

Naḥmanides did *not* see kabbalistic interpretation as a universal key to the understanding of all aggadah. When he does resort to kabbalistic defense it is often of *aggadot* that are entirely beyond the reach of Andalusian understanding. Rashi can simply quote such *aggadot*; Ibn Ezra disparages them. Neither knew of Naḥmanides' kabbalistic solutions; but Ibn Ezra and Naḥmanides are closer—in sharing a common problem that Rashi never felt.[32]

[31]For a few examples of *midrash aggadah* given a basis in *peshat*, see the *Commentary* to Gen. 1:11, 2:20, 11:32, Exod. 2:2, 4:3, 6:2, Num. 14:1, Deut. 6:18, 12:22. For some examples of *midrash halakhah* given a basis in *peshat*, see *Commentary* to Exod. 21:1, 21:9, 21:36, Num. 15:22. For rabbinic halakhah *identified* with *peshat*, see e.g. *Commentary* to Exod. 12:6, 22:6 (cf. Rashbam), 30:33, Lev. 3:9, 7:25, Deut. 12:21.

[32]See the *Commentary* to Gen. 1:1 (directed against Ibn Ezra in the introduction to his commentary) and Gen 24:1 (against Ibn Ezra, ad loc.). Whatever the *original* function of these kabbalistic interpretations, Naḥmanides makes it clear that their function in *his* commentary is to serve as a response to rationalistic critique. The plain sense of the *aggadot* under discussion, apparently accepted by Rashi, seems as unacceptable to Naḥmanides as it is to Ibn Ezra. Cf. too the *Commentary* to Exod. 19:13. Here an original kabbalistic interpretation of aggadah serves precisely the function of philosophical allegory: it provides a non-literal interpretation

But did Naḥmanides also share Ibn Ezra's sense of freedom from aggadic authority? Did he agree with the French anti-Maimunists for whom it was self-evident that any denial of the authority of aggadah was tantamount to heresy, or was there some glimmer of conviction behind his statement at Barcelona? I would venture to say that anyone who reads Naḥmanides' commentary will find ample evidence that he did not accept the absolute authority of all aggadah. This is not really a new observation; an anonymous note published some eighty years ago in *Ha-Goren* listed a handful of instances in which Naḥmandides' commentary rejected aggadic interpretation, accused Naḥmanides of allowing himself precisely the sort of freedom for which he flayed Ibn Ezra, and chalked up pious acceptance of Naḥmanides' commentary to the operation of luck in literary history.[33] Needless to say, Naḥmanides' true position needs to be delineated with much greater responsibility and nuance.[34] Though I

of an aggadah (quoted by Rashi) that seems unreasonable when interpreted literally. Of course, not all kabbalistic interpretation of aggadah in Naḥmanides' *Commentary* serves such an immediately defensive function; see e.g. the *Commentary* to Gen. 1:11, 2:3, 2:7.

Malice mixes with insight in the following lines from a poetic attack on Naḥmanides by an anonymous defender of the rationalistic faith:

גם את יחיד הדור/ חכם אבן עורא/ קנאה מסותרה/ קנא בשממון
חשב בחידושיו/ לעשות כפירושיו/ אל יאמן בשוא/ נתעה ובישימון
וירא כי לא יכול/ ויהפוך הכל/ ובסוד דרש בכל/ רומם כמו הגמון.

("Shir 'al ha-Ramban," ed. Y. H. Schorr, *He-Haluz* [1853], p. 162) Naḥmanides' attitude toward Ibn Ezra is characterized here as one of "concealed jealousy" rather than "concealed love." Naḥmanides, it is claimed, attempted to match Ibn Ezra's rationalistic exegesis, but finding himself unequal to the task overturned everything *(ha-kol)* by capitulating to Kabbalah. "Ha-kol" and "ba-kol" have a double meaning here—alluding also to the specific kabbalistic sense attached to these terms in Naḥmanides' *Commentary* to Gen. 24:1. The expression "דרש... כמו הגמון" cleverly alludes to Naḥmanides' own use of a bishop's sermon as an example of non-authoritative preaching; see below. But it may also imply the stock rationalistic argument that Kabbalah is as bad as, if not worse than, Christian theology; see e.g. Isaac ben Sheshet, *She'elot u-Teshuvot*, no. 157. Cf. the evaluation of Joseph Solomon del Medigo: "Naḥmanides is generally right on target. I am passionately attached to his *Commentary on the Torah* with the exception of those places in which he embraced the alien woman [Kabbalah]..." (quoted by Perles [above, n. 1], p. 90 n. 5). Cf. (from a rather different quarter) R. Jacob ben Asher, *Perush ha-Tur 'al ha-Torah* (Jerusalem, 1961), introduction. Much of this commentary is a dekabbalized summary of Naḥmanides.

[33]"Le-Toledot ha-Ramban," *Ha-Goren* 4 (1903):112-114. The note is signed שמ״י.

[34]Far more satisfactory is the brief characterization of Naḥmanides' attitude to aggadah by Perles (above, n. 1), p. 120. Perles, quite correctly in my view, notes the

cannot pretend, now, to fulfill this desideratum, I would like to call attention to a basic terminological point of contact between Naḥmanides' polemical disclaimer and his mature exegesis.

Here is the way Naḥmanides explained the nature and status of aggadah at Barcelona:

> We have besides the [Bible and Talmud] a third [kind of] book called *midrash*, that is to say sermons—rather like the case should a bishop get up and preach a sermon and one of the listeners like it and write it down. Now this [kind of] book, if one believes in it —well and good—and if one doesn't believe in it, there's no harm in that [either]....We also call this [kind of] book aggadah...that is to say that they are merely things that one man tells another.[35]

Peculiar to this denial of aggadic authority is the claim that aggadah is essentially sermonic and—especially important—that its non-authoritative status is implicit in the term "aggadah" itself.

That this interpretation of the term "aggadah" was not foreign to Naḥmanides' real understanding is confirmed by his own usage in the *Commentary on the Torah*. Although Naḥmanides' attitude toward the non-halakhic material in classical rabbinic literature is highly complex and undoubtedly more reverent than Ibn Ezra's, he almost invariably attaches the *term* "aggadah" to those interpretations about which he seems uneasy, which make sense only when interpreted non-literally, or whose seriousness and authority he is calling into question.[36] "Aggadah" can even be rejected in favor of kabbalistic interpretation.[37] There is also support in Naḥmanides' usage for the linkage of the term "aggadah" and

relevance of the declaration at Barcelona to the spirit of the *Commentary on the Torah*.

[35]See above, n. 14.

[36]See e.g. the *Commentary* to Gen. 1:1, 14:17, Exod. 1:1, 2:6, 19:13, 33:7, Lev. 19:29, Num. 20:1, 25:5, Deut. 12:4, 27:26. Note that the term "aggadah" is applied even to material from the Babylonian Talmud; see, e.g., the *Commentary* to Num. 1:3, 25:18, Deut. 3:9.

[37]See the *Commentary* to Num. 20:1. Naḥmanides certainly understood *some* difficult *aggadot* kabbalistically—a position he even alluded to at Barcelona (*Kitvei ha-Ramban*, I, 306). But the assumption that, because Naḥmanides was a kabbalist, he must have accepted the authority of *all* aggadah seems to me fallacious; cf. Scholem, *Les origines de la Kabbale*, p. 484. In fact, the *Commentary* to Num. 20:1 is one of many instances in which Kabbalah and the search for *peshat* seem to converge in Naḥmanides; see e.g. the *Commentary* to Gen. 11:3, 31:42, 38:8, 48:15, Exod. 3:13, 6:2, 33:14, Lev. 1:9, 10:2, 16:8, Num. 4:20, Deut. 32:7. Cf. Funkenstein (above, n. 29), p. 46. This phenomenon requires separate treatment.

popular homiletics—including one striking instance of an original interpretation proposed by Naḥmanides "in the manner of aggadah."[38] By contrast, a position referred to by Naḥmanides as "the words of our masters *(divrei rabbotenu)*" is treated with respect and seriousness of a different order.[39] The term *"rabbotenu"* tends to suggest a somewhat more weighty consensus. Naḥmanides' tendency may therefore be akin to those geonic and Andalusian authors who deny absolute authority to individual *aggadot* while recognizing the more binding character of rabbinic teachings that represent a classical consensus.[40] I wish to stress, however, that, though the term "rabbotenu" generally accompanies respectful treatment, it does not imply acceptance as a binding last word. Naḥmanides felt free, even in such cases, to offer his own alternatives "according to the method of *peshat*."[41]

[38]*Commentary* to Num. 1:32. See also the somewhat condescending approval of Ibn Ezra's explanation of sacrifices ("devarim mitqablim moshekhim ha-lev ke-divrei aggadah") in the *Commentary* to Lev. 1:9.

[39]Naḥmanides' use of "rabbotenu" is similar, in some ways, to Ibn Ezra's "qadmonenu"; see Joseph b. Eliezer Tov Elem, *Ẓofnat Pane'ah*, ed. D. Herzog (Cracow, 1912), p. 7. I do not wish to suggest that "aggadah" or "rabbotenu" function, for Naḥmanides, as strict technical terms with fixed meanings and evaluations. Thus in the *Commentary* to Exod. 3:19 and Num. 13:2 both terms can be applied to the same interpretation; cf. too the *Commentary* to Num. 26:13. But the general pattern seems clear and significant. Note that Rashi can ascribe to "rabbotenu" an interpretation that Naḥmanides will reject outright; see e.g. Naḥmanides' *Commentary* to Gen. 46:29; cf. Melammed (above, n. 27), I, 377f.

[40]See e.g., my *Hispano-Jewish Culture in Transition*, p. 77. Note that this position is also implied in the frequent dismissal of *aggadot* as "the words of an individual"; see e.g. Maimonides, "Letter on Astrology," ed. A. Marx, *Hebrew Union College Annual* 3 (1926), 356; *Guide of the Perplexed*, 2:29; Ibn Ezra, *Short Commentary* to Exod. 13:18.

[41]This is sometimes the case even on halakhic questions; see e.g. the *Commentary* to Lev. 19:26, Num. 5:18. Naḥmanides was probably operating here with a conception of the biblical text as multilayered; see *Sefer ha-Miẓvot leha-Rambam 'im Hassagot ha-Ramban*, ed. C. D. Chavel (Jerusalem, 1981), pp. 44-45. (Note the restrictive "be-'inyan ha-miẓvot" here.) See also Naḥmanides' *Commentary* to Lev. 27:29 and his earlier justification of the same interpretation in his *Mishpat ha-Ḥerem* (in *Ḥiddushei ha-Ramban, Shevu'ot*, ed. M. Hershler [Jerusalem, 1976], pp. 296-297). But comparison of the halting apologetic manner in which this non-rabbinic interpretation was first presented in *Mishpat ha-Ḥerem* and the natural, confident tone of the *Commentary* suggests a certain development.

In the realms of aggadah, historical prediction, and Kabbalah, Naḥmanides often uses the root רמז to indicate a layer of meaning coexisting with but going beyond the plain sense of the text; see e.g. his introduction to the *Commentary* and

Other aspects of Naḥmanides' "concealed love" that require exploration are his borrowing and adaptation of theological themes from Ibn Ezra[42] and—most intriguing—his consciousness of points of contact with Ibn Ezra on kabbalistic questions.[43]

to Exod. and the *Commentary* to Gen. 1:1, 3:14, 47:28, 48:7, Exod. 32:34, Lev. 26:16, Num. 3:1, 7:2, 14:1, Deut. 17:14, 18:21. Note too Naḥmanides' approving quotation of Ibn Ezra on the simultaneously esoteric and exoteric meaning of Scripture (*Kitvei ha-Ramban*, I, 180 and II, 297; referring to the introduction to Ibn Ezra's *Commentary on the Torah*). But in innumerable instances Naḥmanides simply and straightforwardly presents his alternative to "the words of our masters" as if the two interpretations are mutually exclusive; see, e.g., the *Commentary* to Gen. 1:21, 2:5, 4:17, 13:7, 23:19, Exod. 2:14, 40:34, Lev. 7:38, Num. 13:2. Cf. too Num. 3:45 ("ve-yitakhen...ke-divrei rabbotenu"). Note too that very often Naḥmanides rejects Rashi's interpretation when the latter is simply repeating a rabbinic source; see e.g. the *Commentary* to Gen. 12:11, 25:22, 38:26, Num. 1:18.

[42]To give one example, Naḥmanides' conception of "hidden miracles" (see David Berger's essay in this volume), which plays a central role in the "open rebuke" of Ibn Ezra in the *Commentary* to Gen. 46:15, may itself be influenced by Ibn Ezra's *Commentary* to Exod. 6:3. (See the allusion to this source in the *Commentary* to Gen. 17:1 and Exod. 6:2) (This may be the acid point of Naḥmanides' anonymous poetic critic [above, n. 32] דעתו אשר גנב, הפך ביוכבד לסתור דברין His reference may also be to Ibn Ezra's *Commentary* to Ruth 14:17.) Naḥmanides argues (contra Ibn Ezra) that it is Scripture's practice not to narrate "hidden miracles" which are nevertheless preserved by rabbinic tradition. This may account for the fact that, alongside the tradition of "our masters" about Abraham's deliverance from Nimrod's fiery furnace, Naḥmanides gives equal billing to a "hidden miracle" version of the escape from Ur that comes (via *Guide*, 3:29) from the *Nabatean Agriculture*! See the *Commentary* to Gen. 11:28, 12:2 (cf. too *Mishneh Torah, Avodah Zarah*, 1:3). Naḥmanides also opposes his theory of hidden miracles to Maimonides' naturalistic tendency (*Kitvei ha-Ramban*, I, 153) and yet elsewhere acknowledges a very important point of contact between that theory and Maimonides' theory of Providence (*Kitvei ha-Ramban*, I, 109). The distinction between "hidden" and "revealed" miracles is also integrated into Naḥmanides' Kabbalah; see the *Commentary* to Gen. 17:1, Exod. 6:2 and *Ma'arekhet ha-Elohut* (reprint: Jerusalem, 1963), pp. 65a, 70b-71a. This theory thus provides an example of the complex convergence of anti-rationalistic concerns, Kabbalah and Andalusian ideas in the thought of Naḥmanides. Note also that Naḥmanides' famous interpretation of Ps. 19:8 as stating the superiority of Torah to nature as a source of knowledge of God (*Kitvei ha-Ramban*, I, 141)—which can be regarded as a counterstatement to Maimonides, *Yesodei ha-Torah*, 2:2 and *Teshuvah*, 10:6—is based on Ibn Ezra's *Commentary* to Ps. 19:8. Of course Naḥmanides' relationship to other Andalusian figures (e.g. Ibn Gabirol, Ha-Levi, Abraham bar Ḥiyya) also requires careful treatment.

[43]See e.g. the *Commentary* to Gen. 17:1, Exod. 20:19, 29:46, Lev. 17:18, 18:25, 18:29, 25:2, Num. 23:1, Deut. 11:22 (cf. to 26:19), 21:22, 31:16, 32:7, 32:35; Meir ibn

We have seen that Naḥmanides differed from the French anti-Maimunists on the issue of aggadah. I believe that analysis of Naḥmanides' *Commentary on the Torah* with regard to other issues debated during the Maimonidean Controversy would further support the sincerity of his famous letter to the scholars of northern France in defense of Maimonides.[44] Naḥmanides' anti-rationalistic criticism of Maimonides in his *Commentary on the Torah* is primarily directed against the latter's philosophical naturalism and points of inconsistency with Kabbalah. On many of the issues raised in the French (as opposed to the Spanish) arena of the controversy, Naḥmanides, consistent with mainstream Andalusian tradition, seems closer to Maimonides than to his critics.[45] Naḥmanides'

Sahula, *Be'ur le-Ferush ha-Ramban* (Vilna, 1887) to these verses; *Kitvei ha-Ramban*, I, 165, 169, II, 297. The fundamental question is to what extent this reflects a sense of affinity to Ibn Ezra's "philosophical mysticism," or a belief that Ibn Ezra was actually privy to some genuine kabbalistic traditions, or both.

[44]*Kitvei ha-Ramban*, I, 336-351 and ed. by J. Perles in *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums* 9 (1860), 184-195.

[45]On the differences between the French and Spanish arenas of the Maimonidean Controversy, see my *Hispano-Jewish Culture in Transition*, pp. 75-103. For examples of Naḥmanides' criticism of Maimonidean naturalism see the *Commentary* to Gen. 5:4, 18:1. (Cf. however Naḥmanides' scientific explanation [contra Rashi] in the *Commentary* to Lev. 13:3.) The vehemence with which Maimonides' historical explanation of sacrifices is dismissed in the *Commentary* to Lev. 1:19 is probably related to the fact that that explanation seems so diametrically opposed to the kabbalistic understanding. Elsewhere, Naḥmanides does not hesitate to borrow Maimonides' historical explanations; see e.g. the *Commentary* to Lev. 19:19 (end), to Deut. 12:22. Naḥmanides (as opposed to the French anti-Maimunists) felt an affinity to Maimonides on the issue of "reasons for the commandments"; see e.g. the *Commentary* to Deut. 22:6. (For a detailed study of Naḥmanides on the commandments, with frequent comparison to Maimonides, see Ch. Henoch, *Ha-Ramban ke-Ḥoqer uke-Mequbbal* [Jerusalem, 1978].) On the issue of anthropomorphism, Naḥmanides stood firmly within the geonic-Andalusian tradition. See e.g. the *Commentary* to Gen. 6:6 borrowing the formulation of Ibn Ezra. The hasidic scholar R. Zadoq ha-Kohen of Lublin perceptively observed that Naḥmanides, in his letter to northern France, after quoting geonic and Spanish authorities, added a quotation from R. Eliezer Rokeaḥ "so that his words would be acceptable to the French scholars" (*Divrei Soferim* [Benei Beraq, 1967], p. 55). For Naḥmanides' complex relationship to the Andalusian tradition on eschatological issues, see below. For Naḥmanides' interesting defense of scientific studies in his letter to northern France, see Perles' edition (above, n. 44), p. 186:

והותר לקרובי מלכות ללמוד חכמה יונית...אף כי אלה חכמות מותרות, ורבותינו הזהירונו בהן וצונו עליהן. וכאשר אבדו ספרי חכמתינו באבדן מולדתנו והצרכנו ללמוד בהן מספרי היונים...התחילו בשבח וסיימו בגנות, והנה שם הרב הגדול ז״ל ספריו כתריס לפני הפורענות.

defense of Maimonides was thus not only an act of diplomacy but also a statement of conviction. It was, moreover, of crucial historical importance. Naḥmanides' letter seems to me to represent the single most important step in the development of the heroic image of Maimonides beyond its original role as an element of rationalistic ideology into a component of all Jewish culture.[46]

Literary elegance and cultivated style were as much a part of the Andalusian educational ideal as philosophical and philological sophistication. Naḥmanides shows strong lines of continuity with this aspect of the Andalusian tradition. Particularly interesting is the way in which the Andalusian ideal of gentlemanly refinement *(musar)* as well as its political application live in the sensibility of this master of Tosafistic and kabbalistic learning.[47] Naḥmanides proudly proclaims his ability to conduct himself with dignity at court.[48] And if a biblical hero's behavior should appear less than courtly, that constitutes an exegetical problem for Naḥmanides' commentary to address.[49]

Besides the political-economic justification for cultivation of Greek wisdom, Naḥmanides argues that scientific studies are permitted and in fact mandated by "our masters." Problems began only with the loss of Jewish scientific works due to Exile (see *Guide* 1:71), when recourse to non-Jewish scientific books became necessary. Against the dangers posed by these foreign books, Maimonides' works now stand as a shield. Cf. the text in *Kitvei ha-Ramban*, I, 339. Chavel's note, ad loc., requires correction. Naḥmanides' own philosophical competence was called into question by R. Zeraḥyah Ḥen (in connection with the former's criticisms of Maimonides); see the letter to Hillel of Verona in *Oẓar Nehemad* 2 (1860), 125. Zeraḥyah was born to political and spiritual opponents of Naḥmanides ("the nedivim of Barcelona"); see B. Z. Dinur, *Yisrael ba-Golah*, vol. II, bk. III (Tel Aviv, 1968), p. 304; Septimus, "Piety and Power," p. 223 n. 32. But cf. also R. Yom Tov al-Ishbili, *Sefer ha-Zikkaron*, pp. 33, 35f., 39. While it may be conceded that Naḥmanides did not have rigorous philosophical training, he could nevertheless do some very interesting and perceptive things with his "layman's knowledge" of the Jewish philosophical classics.

[46]For the emergence of the heroic image among the rationalists of Spain and Provence in the early thirteenth century and the reaction of early anti-rationalists, see my *Hispano-Jewish Culture in Transition*, pp. 41-48, 63-64, 97-103.

[47]*Musar* is a loan-translation of the Arabic *adab*; see B. Klar, *Meḥqarim ve-Iyyunim* (Tel Aviv, 1954), pp. 353-354. For Naḥmanides' use of the term, see e.g. the *Commentary* to Gen. 23:9, 24:15, 29:15, 33:5, 45:19, 47:7, 47:9, Exod. 10:17, Lev. 20:17, Num. 16:4, 27:19; *Kitvei ha-Ramban*, I, 354f., 360f., 366, 370.

[48]See *Kitvei ha-Ramban*, I, 303 (note the use of "musar" here).

[49]See the *Commentary* to Gen. 47:9. Very interesting is the passion with which Naḥmanides insists (contra Ibn Ezra) on the wealth, prestige and power of the Patriarchs; see the *Commentary* to Gen. 25:34. (For a biographical explanation of

The style of Naḥmanides' *Commentary on the Torah* is compressed and, at times, quite challenging. In part, this stems from Naḥmanides' intensive cultivation of the classic Andalusian "mosaic style."[50] This rhetorical tendency to incorporate classical bits and pieces in formal writing assumes a somewhat more substantive role in Naḥmanides' exegetical-theological prose. A random illustration may clarify this: when introducing his famous figural interpretation of Jacob's victorious struggle with the angel, Naḥmanides comments that "His [i.e. God's] angels [are] mighty ones who perform His bidding, and the reason that the angel could not prevail over him...is that he was not given permission to do any more than he did...—putting his thigh out of joint."[51] The first words of this comment—"His angels [are] mighty ones who perform His bidding"—are borrowed from Ps. 103:20. The reader is perhaps expected to remember Ibn Ezra's explanation that "no creature can withstand them—and the angel who confronted Jacob was limited by divine decree."[52] Naḥmanides' statement thus elegantly constitutes its own prooftext. This sort of allusion is everywhere present in Naḥmanides' commentary and helps give the work its unique flavor and occasional difficulty.[53]

No reference to Naḥmanides as a stylist can fail to mention that scattered here and there in his *Commentary on the Torah* are some of the more memorable prose passages in medieval Hebrew literature. In particular, his discussions of exile and redemption can, at times, capture some of the power and pathos of Andalusian *piyyut* in understated exegetical prose. The masterful way in which these passages slip unobtrusively into first person plural at crucial points gives a sense of movement beyond the realm of objective study to an almost liturgical act of collective self-definition.[54]

Ibn Ezra's position, see Profiat Duran, *Ma'aseh Efod* (Vienna, 1865), p. 23.) Cf. the readings of Naḥmanides and "our masters" in the *Commentary* to Gen. 23:19. See also the *Commentary* to Gen. 40:15, 46:32. For Naḥmanides as an observer of the political process, see the *Commentary* to Exod. 1:10. Cf. also Naḥmanides' unsentimental interpretation of Gen. 45:1.

[50]On the "mosaic style" in poetry, see Schirmann, *Ha-Shirah ha-'Ivrit*, I, general introduction, pp. 31-34; Pagis, *Ḥiddush u-Masoret*, pp. 70-77. For an early recognition of "mosaic style" as particularly characteristic of Hebrew rhetoric, see Duran, *Ma'aseh Efod*, p. 43.

[51]*Commentary* to Gen. 32:26.

[52]Ibn Ezra, *Commentary* to Ps. 103:20.

[53]For a few more random examples, see the *Commentary* to Gen. 2:3 (alluding to Deut. 32:7), Gen. 33:26 (alluding to Exod. 22:19), Exod. 35:1 (alluding to Jer. 31:31 and 2:2).

[54]See e.g. the *Commentary* to Gen. 32:4-26, Exod. 17:9, Lev. 26:16, Num. 24:18-20, Deut. 29:42, 32:26, 32:40.

Like any good Andalusian gentleman, Naḥmanides was educated in the art of Hebrew verse, a skill that he could use for social as well as liturgical purposes. His few surviving poems are of extraordinarily high quality.[55] Naḥmanides and his poet friend Meshullam da Piera illustrate two interesting aspects of the reorientation of Andalusian poetic tradition in thirteenth-century Catalonia. Da Piera, standing in the old Andalusian tradition of the poet as public-relations man, propagandized brilliantly for the new non-Andalusian Kabbalah and against Andalusian rationalism,[56] while Naḥmanides was the first to pour new kabbalistic themes into an old Andalusian liturgical genre.

Nahmanides' great kabbalistic soul-poem provides a nice example of the complexity of his relationship to the Andalusian tradition.[57] Naḥmanides was very interested in Andalusian *piyyut* on the soul—not only poetically but theologically. He liked to invoke a poem of Ha-Levi, for example, when attacking the Aristotelian denial of the pre-existence of the soul.[58] Naḥmanides also observed, quite correctly, that Maimonides' controversial reinterpretation of the rabbinic *'olam ha-ba* to mean individual immortality of the soul rather than the world after bodily resurrection could be traced back through Andalusian *piyyut* to Ibn Gabirol.[59] It was this issue that had led to the very first European confrontation over Maimonidean rationalism in the first years of the thirteenth century.[60] During this controversy a strong case against bodily resurrection had been made by the *nasi* Sheshet Benveniste, the dominant figure in Catalan Jewish culture in the generation before Naḥmanides, and a man steeped in the Andalusian tradition.[61] I believe that Sheshet's letter made a strong

[55]See Schirmann, *Ha-Shirah ha-'Ivrit*, II, 319f., and the essay of Prof. Fleischer in this volume.

[56]See H. Brody, "Shirei Meshullam ben Shelomoh da Piera," *Yedi'ot ha-Makhon le-Ḥeqer ha-Shirah ha-'Ivrit*, 4 (1938), nos. 3, 11, 12, 15, 24, 40, 44, 48, 49.

[57]Published in *Kitvei ha-Ramban*, I, 392-394; Schirmann, *Ha-Shirah ha-'Ivrit*, II, 322-325.

[58]*Kitvei ha-Ramban*, I, 117, 159, 384. For the line to which Naḥmanides is referring, see *Shirei ha-Qodesh le-Rabbi Yehudah ha-Levi*, ed. Dov Yarden, I (Jerusalem, 1978), 73. However, in criticizing the way in which "the translators" use the term *aẓilut* (*Commentary* to Num. 11:17), Naḥmanides gives as an example a description of the soul ("*aẓulah me-ruaḥ ha-qodesh*") from the same poem by Ha-Levi; see *Shire ha-Qodesh le-R. Yehudah ha-Levi*, I, 67.

[59]*Kitvei ha-Ramban*, II, 311 quoting Ibn Gabirol's "Keter Malkhut" (in Schirmann, *Ha-Shirah ha-'Ivrit*, I, 273, 285).

[60]See my *Hispano-Jewish Culture in Transition*, pp. 39-60.

[61]Sheshet's letter to Lunel was published by A. Marx, "Texts by and about Maimonides," *Jewish Quarterly Review*, 25 (1935), 406-428.

impression on the members of Naḥmanides' circle. Sheshet argued that the notion of physical resurrection was religiously repugnant: the very idea that the soul, once liberated by death from earthly impurity and reunited with its heavenly source, should—as its ultimate reward—be cast down once again constituted a crass affront to spirituality. Meshullam da Piera concedes this problem in one of his polemical poems and indicates that there is a kabbalistic solution.[62] I have attempted to show elsewhere that R. Azriel of Gerona addressed this problem with a radical reinterpretation of resurrection as transmigration.[63] Naḥmanides' solution, I believe is implicit in his poem.

Naḥmanides' poem belongs to a tradition of Andalusian soul-poems having a tripartite structure and progression: the soul's origin in the upper world; its earthly exile; and ultimate reunion with its heavenly source.[64] This Neoplatonic model, upon which Naḥmanides chose to build, in itself underscored the problematic character of traditional eschatology; for the odyssey of the soul that it described clearly reached its literary/spiritual climax with the return of the soul to its heavenly source. There was no place here for the "comedown" of a bodily resurrection. Naḥmanides, in his *Sha'ar ha-Gemul*, speaks derisively of the followers of the philosophers who claim to elevate the soul by finding its source in the angelic sphere—in fact the true kabbalah raises the soul to an incomparably higher level by teaching that its origin is in the realm of divinity.[65] The magnificent opening stanzas of Naḥmanides' poem, in which the soul makes its descent through the world of the *sefirot*, thus constitute a kind of kabbalistic "tikkun" of the traditional Andalusian genre.[66] But pushing the origin of the soul still higher seems only to push

[62]See Brody, "Shirei Meshullam da Piera," p. 18.

[63]*Hispano-Jewish Culture in Transition*, pp. 111-112.

[64]Schirmann, *Ha-Shirah ha-'Ivrit*, II, 320.

[65]*Kitvei ha-Ramban*, II, 287f. Naḥmanides also took strong exception, for this reason, to the statement of R. Zeraḥyah ha-Levi, in the introduction to his *Sefer ha-Ma'or*, that the soul is emanated from the Throne of Glory, which is identical to the Sphere of Intellect *(galgal ha-sekhel)* (cf. Ibn Gabirol in Schirmann, *Ha-Shirah ha-'Ivrit*, I, 271-273); see G. Vajda, *Recherches sur la philosophie et la kabbale dans la pensée juive du Moyen Age* (Paris, 1962), pp. 371-384. Note that R. Zeraḥyah also gave this idea expression in a poetic rebuke to the soul; see Schirmann, *Ha-Shirah ha-'Ivrit*, II, 8-10. (*Kevod 'elyon* in that poem [ibid., p. 8, l. 6] is apparently equivalent to the Sphere of Intellect; cf. too Ha-Levi [ibid., I, 515, l. 3]. Correct, on this score, my "Piety and Power," p. 228, n. 117.)

[66]Schirmann, *Ha-Shirah ha-'Ivrit*, II, 322; *Kitvei ha-Ramban*, I, 392. For kabbalistic commentary, see Scholem, *Ha-Kabbalah be-Gerona* (Jerusalem, 1969), pp. 319-321.

resurrection—which Naḥmanides nevertheless included in his poem—still further away from the goal of spiritual return. Naḥmanides was able to achieve this return in his final stanza by introducing his kabbalistic notion of the ultimate post-resurrection spiritualization and reabsorption of *all* things into the realm of the *sefirot*.[67] This "return of all things to their original state" finally establishes the spiritual and literary symmetry required by Andalusian sensibility—but it establishes it on kabbalistic terms, and without abandoning the traditional doctrine of resurrection.[68]

Naḥmanides provides powerful but hidden imagery for this symmetrical process of origin from and return to divinity. In both the poem and the *Commentary on the Torah*, the soul's origin in divinity is symbolically represented by God's breathing it out.[69] But in his *Commentary on Sefer Yeẓirah* Naḥmanides also writes of that eschatological time "when the [Divine] will is reversed so that all things return to their original state—*as one who draws in his breath*."[70] There thus stands behind (although not explicitly in) Naḥmanides' poem an imagery for the soul's exile and return that might have surprised his Andalusian predecessors: the soul's odyssey begins with a divine exhalation, while its journey ends—together with that of all other things—in a final act of divine inhalation.

During the heat of the Maimonidean Controversy, Naḥmanides had occasion to propose the venerable Ramah (R. Meir ha-Levi Abulafia) of Toledo as the arbitrator of a sensitive dispute. He did so in the following bit of rhymed prose:

> Let's go to the land of *ma'arav*
> to the most excellent scholar,
> *(ge'on)* of ['*ever*] and '*arav*,
> R. Meir ha-Rav.[71]

[67]Schirmann, *Ha-Shirah ha-'Ivrit*, II, 325; *Kitvei ha-Ramban*, I, 394. See on this notion Scholem, *Ha-Kabbalah be-Gerona*, pp. 399-407.

[68]This eschatological vision is not contradicted by Naḥmanides' *Sha'ar ha-Gemul*. But there the stress is on a defense of resurrection and the talmudic eschatological tradition (see especially *Kitvei ha-Ramban*, II, 303ff.) rather than the preservation of spirituality and symmetry in the soul's odyssey. A careful study of *Sha'ar ha-Gemul* remains a desideratum.

[69]*Commentary* to Gen. 2:7; Schirmann, *Ha-Shirah ha-'Ivrit*, II, 323 (top). On this theme, see M. Ḥalamish, "Le-Meqoro shel Pitgam be-Sifrut ha-Kabbalah," *Bar Ilan Annual* 13 (1976), 211-223.

[70]G. Scholem, ed., "Peraqim mi-Toledot Sifrut ha-Kabbalah," *Qiryat Sefer* 6 (1930), 401.

[71]S. Halberstam, "Milḥemet ha-Dat" in *Jeschurun*, VIII (1872-75), 117. For the insertion of '*ever* into the text, see my *Hispano-Jewish Culture in Transition*, p. 15 and notes, upon which this paragraph draws.

This description provides a final illustration of Naḥmanides' Andalusian literary culture, for it echoes a line of Judah ha-Levi's famous first letter to Moses ibn Ezra. Ha-Levi, having traveled from Christian to Muslim Spain, addressed himself to "the light of the *ma'arav* [Andalusia], the scholar of *'ever* and *'arav* [Hebrew and Arabic], R. Mosheh ha-Rav."[72] Apparently Naḥmanides, from his Catalan vantage point, viewed Toledo as a remnant of the old Andalusia and admired Ramah's mastery of the Andalusian tradition of combining Hebrew and Arabic learning; but he could no longer view this Judeo-Arabic tradition as directly his own. Another occasion, however, shows Naḥmanides conscious of sharing a common tradition with Ramah: the Spanish halakhic tradition.

Toward the end of the twelfth century, after a brilliant Provençal career, the great talmudist R. Zeraḥyah ha-Levi returned to his hometown of Gerona. With him he brought the custom of prefixing to the *Shema* the phrase "God, the faithful King." Naḥmanides wished to suppress this northern interpolation and turned to Ramah for support.[73] Together they appear as defenders of the purity of Spanish tradition against the inroads of Franco-German custom. But one must wonder why Naḥmanides was so zealous to change what had already become the status quo on this issue. R. Zeraḥyah ha-Levi had been the one important halakhist of Catalan origin in half a century. The interpolation was widely practiced in the communities north of Spain and all in Naḥmanides' teachers—as far as we know—were northerners.[74] One, R. Judah ben Yaqar, is even known to have explicitly endorsed the custom.[75]

But whatever his reason, Naḥmanides' position in this case was by no means atypical. It would seem that, from the very beginning of his career, Naḥmanides identified strongly with the old Spanish halakhic tradition. Naḥmanides' preoccupation with the defense of Alfasi—not only in his *Milḥamot* and *Sefer ha-Zekhut* but throughout his *Ḥiddushim*—should, I think, be seen in this context.[76] Any student of the writings of twelfth-century Spanish halakhists like R. Joseph ibn Megash, Maimonides, and Ramah must be struck by the way in which Alfasi seems almost to have eclipsed all earlier Andalusian authorities.[77] When Naḥmanides began his career, there was thus a very close identification of Alfasi with the Spanish tradition itself.[78] One ought not, therefore, be overliteral in interpreting Naḥmanides' claim that his defense of Alfasi resulted from zeal for the honor of the ancients.[79] Why, after all, did Naḥmanides concentrate so much of his zeal on this one particular ancient?

Naḥmanides did feel responsibility of a more general sort toward an earlier scholarship which he perceived to be under attack "in recent generations" by "hordes and hordes [of scholars], all clever, who roaring like lions bring forward their objections and arguments to lower the lofty ramparts, who hold a double-edged sword...to kill wisdom that ought not die and to give life to words that ought not live."[80] But the "ancients" toward whom Naḥmanides' conservative sensibility inclined were the great geonic, North African, and Andalusian figures who had become the pillars of Spanish halakhah.[81] Its central pillar, "our great master" Alfasi,

[72] See the edition by S. Abramson in *Sefer Hayyim Schirmann* (Jerusalem, 1970), p. 404.

[73] See I. Ta-Shema, "'El Melekh Ne'eman'—Gilgulo shel Minhag," *Tarbiẓ* 39 (1969-1970), 184-194, and my *Hispano-Jewish Culture in Transition*, p. 35.

[74] See e.g. Chavel, *Rabbenu Mosheh ben Naḥman*, pp. 38-46.

[75] *Perush ha-Tefillot veha-Berakhot*, ed. S. Yerushalmi (Jerusalem, 1968), p. 30.

[76] For a brief description of these works, see Chavel, *Rabbenu Mosheh ben Naḥman*, pp. 83-98, 102-106. Note also Naḥmanides' early *Tashlum Halakhot*, designed to complete Alfasi's oeuvre; see ibid., pp. 73-75.

[77] In fact, Naḥmanides quotes pre-Alfasi Spaniards such as R. Samuel ha-Nagid and R. Isaac ibn Giat much more extensively than do any of the above-mentioned figures. He also quotes frequently from the early Barcelonans R. Isaac ben Reuben and R. Judah ben Barzilai.

[78] Menaḥem ben Zeraḥ (*Ẓedah la-Derekh* [Warsaw, 1880], p. 3b) writes that prior to and during the days of Ramah (d. 1244) only Alfasi's *Halakhot* (and not the Talmud itself) were studied in Spain. While this claim is doubtless exaggerated and probably reflects Ben Zeraḥ's attempt to portray R. Asher ben Yeḥiel as the real founder of serious talmudic studies in Spain, it does underscore the centrality of Alfasi. It is interesting that as late as the sixteenth century the Sefardic scholars of Safed who attempted to revive tha ancient *semikhah* established as their prerequisite for ordination a full knowledge of Alfasi's *Halakhot*. (This despite Alfasi's omission of the very *halakhot* that the revival of *semikhah* would have rescued from obsolescence!) See M. Benayahu in *Sefer Yovel le-Yitzhak Baer* (Jerusalem, 1961), p. 266.

[79] See the introduction to Naḥmanides' *Hassagot* to Maimonides' *Sefer ha-Miẓvot* (*Kitvei ha-Ramban*, I, 418-421).

[80] Ibid.

[81] See e.g. the references in Chavel, *R. Mosheh ben Naḥman*, pp. 83f., 89f. For Ibn Megash, Maimonides, and Ramah, figures like R. Sherira Gaon, R. Hai Gaon, R. Ḥananel and R. Nissim Gaon seem more important than any Andalusian predecessor of Alfasi. For the centrality of the geonim in Andalusia, see also the famous remarks of Ibn Megash, *She'elot u-Teshuvot*, no. 114. Maimonides praised Alfasi's *Halakhot* as the culmination and peak of geonic literature; see *Mishnah 'im Perush ha-Rambam*, ed. J. Kafiḥ (Jerusalem, 1963-1968), I, 47. Maimonides and Naḥmanides often use the term "geonim" broadly to include North African and Andalusian figures. This tradition must have seemed especially "Spanish" with Spanish Jewry's entry into Europe and confrontation with Franco-German halakhah.

received Naḥmanides' most sustained and deeply-felt loyalty,[82] while those roaring warriors of "recent generations" sound very much like masters of the new northern dialectic.[83]

It is important, therefore, to keep in proper perspective Naḥmanides' well-known praise of the French Tosafists in the introduction to his *Dina de-Garmi*: "they are the guides, they are the teachers, they reveal to us the hidden."[84] Following the lead of the sixteenth-century R. Solomon Luria, there has been a tendency to view this as a wholesale concession of the superiority of the Franco-German talmudic tradition to the Spanish tradition.[85] Now there is no doubt that without the achievements of the Tosafists and the Provençal school (particularly Rabad) Naḥmanides' talmudic career would have been inconceivable. But it is precisely the predominance of northern influence in the formation of Naḥmanides' analytical genius that renders so interesting his attempts to limit northern erosion of Spanish halakhic tradition. Although persuasive northern argumentation as well as Naḥmanides' own irrepressible independence

Consciousness of defending a tradition rather than a single authority can be seen already in the introduction to the second part of Naḥmanides' *Milḥamot ha-Shem* (*Kitvei ha-Ramban*, I, 412).

[82]"Rabbenu ha-Gadol" is the way in which Naḥmanides refers to Alfasi in all of his halakhic works.

[83]I say this despite the fact that the passage comes from the introduction to Naḥmanides' *Hassagot* to Maimonides' *Sefer ha-Miẓvot*. Naḥmanides, in this passage, is describing his defense of the "geonim and ancients" throughout his earlier career. The recent challenge to them by hordes of brilliant dialecticians seems to me to reflect Naḥmanides' perception of the confrontation of the geonic-Andalusian tradition with the new northern halakhah.

That there is an element of real conservatism in Naḥmanides' defense of the "ancients" is evident in the fact that his attitude toward more recent Spanish scholars like Ibn Megash and Maimonides is not nearly so deferential as it is to Alfasi and the geonim. Moreover, Naḥmanides did defend the geonic *Halakhot Gedolot* against Maimonides in his *Hassagot* to *Sefer ha-Miẓvot*. But one senses that Naḥmanides seized upon this project more as an opportunity to engage in fresh and wide-ranging exploration of fundamental issues not treated in his earlier works. More often than not, Naḥmanides, after defending *Halakhot Gedolot*, finally accepts Maimonides' position as his own; see C. Chavel, ed., *Sefer ha-Miẓvot leha-Rambam 'im Hassagot ha-Ramban* (Jersualem, 1981), pp. 13f. Contrast Naḥmanides' statement in his introduction to *Milḥamot ha-Shem* (*Kitvei ha-Ramban*, I, 414) that, although in some cases his defense of Alfasi is presented as mere *limmud zekhut*, in the majority of cases the reader will realize that Alfasi's position coincides with his own.

[84]*Kitvei ha-Ramban*, I, 417.

[85]R. Solomon Luria, *Yam shel Shelomoh, Baba Qamma*, introduction.

can be seen countering the pull of the "ancients" throughout the *Ḥiddushim*, devotion to the study and defense of the geonic-Andalusian tradition remained a major counter-theme in his halakhic career.[86]

R. Zeraḥyah ha-Levi, as the only great talmudist ever produced by Gerona, might have seemed a logical boyhood hero for the young Naḥmanides.[87] Instead he became the target of Naḥmanides' youthful and sometimes stinging criticism.[88] For Zeraḥyah's loyalty was fundamentally different from that of Naḥmanides; *he* went over to northern halakhah.[89] Zeraḥyah's criticisms of Alfasi frequently amount to an abandonment of geonic and Andalusian positions in favor of northern European positions, while Naḥmanides' defense regularly invokes geonic and Andalusian precedent in support of Alfasi.[90]

R. Zeraḥyah ha-Levi should not be viewed as an idiosyncratic defector from Spanish halakhah. In the twelfth century, it was not entirely clear where Catalonia belonged. Ibn Daud's *Sefer ha-Qabbalah* does not yet consider Catalonia part of Sefarad, whereas Ha-Meiri refers to twelfth-century Provence and Catalonia as a single "land."[91] Political and linguistic ties could have supported a view of Catalonia and Provence as constituting a single realm. There are no known representatives of the Andalusian talmudic tradition in Catalonia in the second half of the twelfth century. On the other hand, the known teachers of Naḥmanides

[86]Note, for example, that Naḥmanides stands with the old Spanish halakhic tradition, and against a very firm Franco-German consensus, in opposing the insertion of *piyyut* into the fixed prayers; see *Ḥiddushei ha-Ramban, Berakhot* 49a. For a few more examples from the *Ḥiddushim*, see to *Megillah* 2a s.v. *ve-ra'iti*; *Baba Meẓia* 34a s.v. *ela*; *Baba Meẓia* 82a s.v. *ve-hakha* (see *Magid Mishneh, Sekhirut* 10:1); *Baba Batra* 59a s.v. *ha* (see *Magid Mishneh, Shekhenim* 11:4); *Baba Batra* 114b s.v. *ve-hilkheta*.

[87]For R. Zeraḥyah's biography, see I. Ta-Shema, "Zemanim u-Meqomot be-Ḥayyav shel Rabbenu Zeraḥyah," *Bar Ilan Annual* 12 (1974), 118-136.

[88]See Naḥmanides himself, in *Kitvei ha-Ramban*, I, 413.

[89]Thus Zeraḥyah even adopts northern readings over those of the Spanish text tradition; see e.g. the *Ma'or* and *Milḥamot* to Alfasi, *Berakhot* 16a.

[90]See e.g. *Milḥamot* to Alfasi, *Baba Batra* 70a, 82b, *Shevu'ot* 26b. It is interesting that Naḥmanides (in his halakhic works) refers to Maimonides as "R. Mosheh ha-Sefaradi" (cf. the reported Christian citation in *Kitvei ha-Ramban*, I, 315). Naḥmanides also describes Maimonides as a student of Alfasi (e.g., *Ḥiddushei ha-Ramban, Pesaḥim* 7a and *Avodah Zarah* 38b) reflecting a sense of their common tradition as well as Maimonides own declarations (e.g. *Mishneh Torah, She'elah u-Fiqqadon* 5:6; cf. already *Hassagot ha-Rabad, Sekhirut* 10:1).

[91]See Abraham ibn Daud, *Sefer ha-Qabbalah*, ed. G. Cohen (Philadelphia, 1967), pp. 78 l.29, 83 l.371; Menaḥem ha-Meiri, *Bet ha-Beḥirah 'al Masekhet Avot*, ed. B. Prague (Jersualem, 1964), intro, p. 53 (cf. p. 56).

and his Catalan colleagues are all northerners.[92] The wonder then is that Naḥmanides should suddenly emerge on the scene as a self-conscious representative of Spanish tradition. The story of how and why this happened remains to be written.

To conclude: the selective fusing and shaping of divergent traditions is a major theme in Naḥmanides' thought. I have tried to give a few scattered, but hopefully suggestive, indications of the complex role played by the Andalusian component in some individual areas of his religious and literary virtuosity. This sketch has perforce omitted very many crucial points. But one cannot omit a final Andalusian aspect of the Naḥmanidean intellectual enterprise, viewed as a whole: its breadth and versatility. A cultural ideal embracing several different disciplines that enrich each other without any one dominating entirely or crowding the others out—this was perhaps one of the finest gifts of the Andalusian heritage to the mind of Naḥmanides.

[92]It is probably in a purely metaphoric sense that Naḥmanides refers to himself as "the smallest student of [Alsfasi's] students"; see the introduction published at the end of his *Hilkhot Bekhorot* in the standard editions of the Talmud. The context suggests that Naḥmanides has learned directly from Alfasi's works rather than from any living bearer of his tradition. Even Naḥmanides' relationship to Ramah appears to have been occasional. I am unable to find any evidence that Naḥmanides used Ramah's commentaries. It should be noted, on the other hand, that there was a strain of strong geonic-Andalusian influence within the Provençal tradition as a result of Spanish emigration to Provence and very strong Catalano-Provençal ties during the twelfth century. A good example of this tendency is the *Sefer ha-'Ittur* of Isaac ben Abba Mari of Marseilles. Contact with this strain in Provençal halakhah may have reinforced Naḥmanides' identification with the geonic-Andalusian tradition. Particularly interesting in this connection is the fact that Naḥmanides was a student of R. Nathan ben Meir of Trinquitaille whose father, R. Meir, composed the unfortunately lost *Sefer ha-'Ezer* in defense of Alfasi; see Twersky, *Rabad*, p. 246.

The "Gerona School" of Hebrew Poetry

Ezra Fleischer

There is no doubt that focusing on the poetry of R. Moses ben Naḥman means diverting the inquiry into the cultural legacy of one of the most prolific and colorful figures of medieval Jewry to rather a secondary field. It is true, Ramban was a highly inspired man and possessed a sensitive and poetic soul. His prose style, even on halakhic issues, was rhetorical and rich, and his somewhat eclectic Hebrew, unattuned to Sephardi puristic ideals, was of an exquisite plasticity. Nevertheless, his actual poetic output, if one may consider its remnants as representing his legacy in its entirety,[1] is small. Moreover, he expressed a rather negative attitude, even towards liturgical poetry (at least when considering the issue theoretically)[2] despite the fact that he was himself a gifted *payyetan*.[3] On the other hand, there is no need to argue the truth, especially in cultural and literary contexts, of the saying of our sages:

[1]The extant poems of Ramban, including the rhymed introductions to his various works and his sermons, were collected and published in a preliminary edition by Chavel in his *Kitvei Rabbenu Moshe ben Naḥman* (Jerusalem, 1963) Vol. I, p. 372ff. The collection includes, besides the rhymed introductions and the sermons, four poems only. Three more *seliḥot* by Ramban were recently discovered and published by I. Hasida, "Shalosh Seliḥot Ḥadashot lehaRamban," *Sinai* LXI (1967), pp. 240ff. Zunz, in his *Literaturgeschichte der synagogalen Poesie* (Berlin, 1865), p. 478, lists ten items. See also Landshuth, *Amudei ha-Avoda* (New York, 1965), pp. 234-239.

[2]See his *Ḥidusshim* on *Berakhot* 59a (quoted by H. D. Chavel, *Rabbenu Moshe ben Naḥman, Toledot Ḥayav Zemano ve-Hibburav* [Jerusalem, 1973], p. 83, no. 49): ולפי דרכנו למדנו שהמוסיפים בפיוטים וזמירות אינן נוהגים כשורה. וכן מצאתי עוד במדרש קהלת: טוב לשמוע גערת חכם אלו הדרשנים, מאיש שומע שיר כסילים אלו החזנים שמוסיפין על קבע התפילה The common editions of Kohelet Rabba have אלו המתורגמנין שמגביהין קולם בשיר להשמיע את העם.

[3]Most of Ramban's extant liturgical poems are *seliḥot*. But among them there is also an ofan ("מידך י־ה כבודך," Chavel, op. cit. [note 1], p. 394). Ramban's reserve undoubtedly refers to *piyyutim* inserted in the main body of the regular prayer and does not include *seliḥot*. However, Zunz's list of Ramban's poems contains also a *muḥarrak*, quoted by R. Simeon ben Zemaḥ Duran.