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STUDIES IN HEBREW LITERATURE
AND JEWISH CULTURE

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STUDIES IN HEBREW LITERATURE
AND JEWISH CULTURE

*Presented to Albert van der Heide on the
Occasion of his Sixty-Fifth Birthday*



EDITED BY

MARTIN F.J. BAASTEN & REINIER MUNK

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❧ Preface

ACCORDING TO THE SAYINGS OF THE WISE, reaching sixty-five is not much of an issue; at that stage in life one hasn't even attained the age of שיבה, 'grey hair'.¹ In present-day academic life, however, sixty-five seems to be a turning point in one's scholarly career. More often than not the scholar in question is asked to retreat from his position at the university and is relieved from the burden of academic administration and teaching.

The fact that Albert van der Heide will reach the age of sixty-five in July 2007 and, as a consequence, will leave Leiden University and the Vrije Universiteit, provides his colleagues from various academic institutions with an excellent opportunity to honour him with a *Liber Amicorum* in the true sense of the word. And for someone who signs himself in Hebrew as אור"ה (AvdH), what other title could such a volume carry than אודה לאור"ה, 'Ode to Albert'?

As those who know him will readily acknowledge, Albert takes an unusually broad interest in numerous aspects of Hebrew, Aramaic and Jewish studies, as well as other sides of human culture; his own scholarly development clearly attests to this fact.

Whereas Albert's MA thesis was concerned with the use of *lamed* with infinitive construct in Biblical Hebrew, his dissertation explored quite another field: the textual transmission of the Yemenite *Targum of Lamentations*. But long before, Albert had kept his end up in codicology by publishing a thoroughly revised and updated catalogued description of Hebrew manuscripts from the Leiden University Library. The nature of Rabbinic *midrash* as well as medieval exegesis, in all its ramifications, including lexicography, would take pride of place during much of Albert's career, while figures such as Rashi, Maimonides and Moses Hayyim Luzzatto enjoyed his special interest and still continue to do so. The history of Hebrew scholarship in the Netherlands, including Hebrew printing, did not pass unnoticed to Albert, while he also feels at home in Modern Hebrew literature, the novels

1. *m. Abot* 5:21.

and stories of Samuel Yosef Agnon possibly being his all-time favourite. In addition to all this, Albert cherishes an active passion for music (his collection of flutes is impressive), typography and the classic and old-fashioned printing press.



The editors hope that the present volume offered to Albert van der Heide will contain much to his liking. Indeed, most of his fields of interest—what book could actually encompass all of them?—are represented in this volume.

To begin with, several contributions deal with various aspects of rabbinic studies. Harry Sysling (Amersfoort) opted for a comprehensive study of rabbinic ‘Laments at the departure of a sage’, a fitting title for a contribution to a volume such as this, even though, fortunately, Albert’s departure is of a rather different kind. Pieter W. van der Horst (Utrecht University) traces the vicissitudes of early rabbinic traditions concerning ‘The site of Adam’s tomb’ in Jerome. Alberdina Houtman (Protestant Theological University, Kampen) explores ‘The Targumic versions of the martyrdom of Isaiah’, a story inserted in the *Tosefta Targum* on Isaiah 66.

Studies in medieval Judaism are conspicuously present in this volume, for obvious reasons. Angel Sáenz-Badillos (Real Colegio Complutense, Madrid and Harvard University) places the exegetical concerns of the well-known polymath Abraham ibn Ezra firmly within a broader cultural context in his ‘Abraham ibn Ezra and the twelfth-century European renaissance’. Wout van Bekkum (State University of Groningen) presents us with ‘“The Emperor of Poets”: Immanuel of Rome (1261–1332)’, an introduction to this Hebrew poet from the time of Dante. Colette Sirat (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Paris) emphasises the need for making new catalogues of medieval Hebrew manuscripts: ‘New catalogues for medieval Hebrew manuscripts?’. Nicholas de Lange (University of Cambridge) discusses in detail ‘An early Hebrew-Greek Bible glossary from the Cairo Geniza and its significance for the study of Jewish Bible translations into Greek’. Mauro Zonta (University of Rome, La Sapienza) presents his remarkable discovery of some Hebrew passages of Ibn Rushd not preserved in Arabic: ‘A note about two newly-discovered Hebrew quotations of Averroes’ works lost in their original Arabic texts’. Steven Harvey (Bar-Ilan University) re-examines our view of medie-

val Jewish philosophy by discussing ‘The value of Julius Guttmann’s *Die Philosophie des Judentums* for understanding medieval Jewish philosophy today’.

A specimen of early modern Hebrew studies is presented in the contribution of Johannes Tromp (Leiden University), who offers us a translation, annotation and introduction to ‘The treatise on the Patriarch Henoch by Johannes Drusius (1550–1616)’.

Quite a few articles in this volume are concerned with Judaism in the eighteenth century. Adri Offenbergh (Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana, Amsterdam) sets out on an enigmatic journey in order to solve ‘The riddle of the baskets of 1726: a glimpse of Jewish book production at Amsterdam in the first half of the eighteenth century’. Joëlle Hansel (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem) explores the twilight zone between philosophy and mysticism in ‘Philosophy and Kabbalah in the eighteenth century: Moses Hayyim Luzzatto, commentator of Maimonides’. Margaretha Folmer (Leiden University and Vrije Universiteit) studies in detail the structure and phraseology of ‘A Jewish child-birth amulet for a girl’ from the collection of the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana. Irene Zwiëp (University of Amsterdam) discusses some major concepts of Jewish exegesis in ‘From *perush* to *be’ur*: authenticity and authority in eighteenth-century Jewish interpretation’. Resianne Fontaine (University of Amsterdam) presents a comprehensive Jewish treatise on the concept of neighbourly love: ‘Love of one’s neighbour in Pinhas Hurwitz’s *Sefer ha-Berit*’. Reinier Munk (Leiden University and Vrije Universiteit) offers a discussion of ‘Moses Mendelssohn’s conception of Judaism’.

Two articles are concerned with Hebrew linguistics: Martin Baasten (Leiden University) discusses the grammatical structure of the first three biblical verses in ‘First things first: the syntax of Gen 1:1–3 revisited’, whereas Holger Gzella (Leiden University) examines some ‘Unusual verbal forms in the Book of Proverbs and semantic disambiguation’. Finally, Modern Hebrew literature receives attention in Hannah Neudecker’s (Leiden University) essay on the motif of ‘Buildings in the Love Poems by Yehuda Amichai’.



As much as the contributors to the present volume have jointly endeavoured to do justice to Albert van der Heide’s many fields of interest and to further scholarly research in every respect, they have no

intention to deny that an additional reason to bring these studies together was the wish to praise and celebrate Albert's human kindness and his inspiring congeniality as a colleague and a friend.

Mindful of the Sayings of the Wise, we, as his friends and colleagues, hereby urge Albert not to consider the age of sixty-five as a turning point of any kind. Instead, dear Albert, simply keep going and, of course, **עד מאה ועשרים!**

MARTIN F.J. BAASTEN ☞ REINIER MUNK

🌀 *Abraham ibn Ezra and the Twelfth-Century European Renaissance*

ANGEL SÁENZ-BADILLOS

A BETTER ACCESS to some of the works of Abraham ibn Ezra and new light on concrete aspects of his extensive literary and scientific production have attracted the attention of scholars in past years.¹ Most of them have focused on Ibn Ezra's life, and especially on his relation with the Jewish communities that he visited in his travels through Europe,² his significance in the history of Jewish scientific thought,³ in Hebrew poetry,⁴ grammar⁵ and exegesis,⁶ or on his con-

1. As an example of this interest, see the collections of articles in F. DÍAZ ESTEBAN, *Abraham Ibn Ezra y su tiempo / Abraham ibn Ezra and His Age* (Madrid 1990); see also I. TWERSKY & J.M. HARRIS (eds.), *Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra: Studies in the Writings of a Twelfth-Century Jewish Polymath* (Cambridge, MA/London 1993) and P.J. TOMSON (ed.), *Abraham ibn Ezra savant universel* (Bruxelles 2000). Volume 6 of *Aleph* (2006), edited by G. FREUDENTHAL, is also almost exclusively devoted to Abraham ibn Ezra.

2. See J. GENOT, 'La estancia decisiva de Abraham ibn Ezra en Roma y la constitución de un público hebreófono profano y cultivado', in DÍAZ ESTEBAN (ed.), *Abraham Ibn Ezra y su tiempo*, 109–120. The studies of N. GOLB (*The Jews in Medieval Normandy. A Social and Intellectual History* [Cambridge 1998] etc.) are doubtless illuminating, but at the same time they contain highly personal interpretations. I do not discuss any of his conclusions here, since they are not relevant to my topic.

3. See, for instance, the excellent article of Y.Tz. LANGERMANN, 'Some Astrological Themes in the Thought of Abraham ibn Ezra', in TWERSKY & HARRIS (eds.), *Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra*, 28–50; G. FREUDENTHAL, 'Les sciences dans les communautés juives médiévales de Provence: leur appropriation, leur rôle', *RÉJ* 152/1–2 (1993) 29–136; *Id.*, *Science in the Medieval Hebrew and Arabic Traditions* (Aldershot 2005); Sh. SELA, *Abraham ibn Ezra and the Rise of Medieval Hebrew Science* (Leiden 2003).

4. See I. LEVIN, *אברהם אבן עזרא, חייו ושירתו* (*Abraham Ibn Ezra: His Life and Poetry*) (Tel Aviv 1969); L.J. WEINBERGER, *Twilight of a Golden Age: Selected Poems of Abraham Ibn Ezra* (Tuscaloosa 1997).

5. L. CHARLAP (לובה הרל"פ) (*תורת הלשון של רבי אברהם אבן עזרא: מסורת וחידוש*) [*Rabbi Abraham ibn-Ezra's Linguistic System. Tradition and Innovation*] (Beer Sheva 1999) has offered a general perspective on Ibn Ezra's linguistic system; I studied some more detailed aspects of this system in 'Aportaciones literarias, filosóficas y científicas de los judíos a la renovación intelectual del Occidente europeo en el siglo

nection with Arabic writings.⁷ Thanks to a recently published, excellent chronological list of all his scholarly works written in Italy, France and England between 1140 and 1160,⁸ we are now able to follow his intellectual evolution with precision. All of these approaches have helped to see the profile of this Jewish author in a fully new light. But it could also be interesting for European scholars to contemplate Ibn Ezra not as a merely Jewish character, whose work was intended for Italian, French or English Jews, but as an intellectual who lived among other (non-Jewish) intellectuals in twelfth-century Europe. For that reason, I will try to focus on some aspects of his work from the more general perspective of his epoch, presenting him as one of the first Jews that became a European scholar.⁹ I would like to under-

xxi, in *Renovación intelectual del Occidente europeo (siglo XII). XIV Semana de Estudios Medievales, Estella: 14-18 julio 1997* (Pamplona 1998) 315-348 and 'על כמה' עזרא דקדוקיות של אברהם אבן עזרא' (*'On some grammatical views of Abraham ibn Ezra'*), *Meḥqerei Lashon* 8 (2001) 229-251. Besides the already known editions of three linguistic works of Abraham ibn Ezra, *Sefer Ṣaḥot* (ed. C. DEL VALLE; Salamanca 1977), *Yesod Diqduq* (ed. N. ALLONY; Jerusalem 1984) and *Sefer Haganah 'al R. Sa'adyah Gaon* (ed. I. OSRI; Ramat Gan 1988), two of his grammatical works have appeared recently in critical editions: *Moznayim* (ed. L. JIMÉNEZ PATÓN & A. SÁENZ-BADILLOS; Córdoba 2002) and *Safah Berurah* (ed. E. RUIZ & A. SÁENZ-BADILLOS; Córdoba 2004).

6. See, for example, I. LANCASTER, *Deconstructing the Bible. Abraham ibn Ezra's Introduction to the Torah* (London 2003). D. ROTTZOLL has also published some biblical commentaries with German translation: *Abraham Ibn Esras Kommentar zu den Büchern Kohelet, Ester und Rut* (Berlin/New York 1999); *Abraham Ibn Esras langer Kommentar zum Buch Exodus* (Berlin/New York 2000).

7. See B.R. GOLDSTEIN, 'Astronomy and Astrology in the Works of Abraham ibn Ezra', *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 6 (1996) 9-21.

8. Sh. SELA & G. FREUDENTHAL, 'Abraham Ibn Ezra's Scholarly Writings: A Chronological Listing', *Aleph* 6 (2006) 13-55.

9. The present article, being unconventional from many points of view, could be misunderstood by some traditional readers. Without forgetting the recent studies on Abraham ibn Ezra, on his biography, his stay in the Jewish communities of Italy, France or England, the article does not discuss any of these typical topics or well-known ideas. It tries simply to consider the person and the work of Abraham ibn Ezra from the perspective of the European background, not just from a Jewish point of view. Since it does not try to show real historical connections, it will not offer undisputable proofs or exact parallels. After having dedicated years to the study of the primary sources, the works of Abraham ibn Ezra, I now ask myself if it is possible to understand his work better by considering him as an European intellectual who lived in the middle of the cultural atmosphere of his epoch, which in my opinion has not been duly emphasised in most Ibn Ezra studies. I am aware that some of my ideas are

score that Ibn Ezra not only made important contributions to medieval Europe thanks to his own Arabic and Jewish legacy, but that at the same time he was living in Europe, completely immersed in its cultural trends. He experienced the same problems as other intellectuals of his time and faced the same challenges, since all of them shared a common cultural atmosphere. In my opinion, this is an aspect of Ibn Ezra's personality and work that deserves more attention.

Living during the two last thirds of twelfth-century Europe was a fascinating experience. A radical change had taken place in the educational institutions, with the creation of cathedral schools and the birth of the oldest medieval universities.¹⁰ Even if the development of these institutions was not directly significant for the Jews, the level of education and knowledge of their neighbors increased in a way that could not but affect the Jewish communities themselves. The old Latin tradition had been deeply enriched due to the recovery of many classical and oriental texts on science and philosophy. Many scholars were traveling to other countries searching for new sources of knowledge. Experimental science and technology were also increasing in their importance. No wonder that C.H. Haskins and his followers described this climate as a true renaissance,¹¹ as a complete renewal of both knowledge and sensibilities.¹²

As is well known, Ibn Ezra lived his first fifty years in the Iberian Peninsula. In 1140, he left Sefarad and spent the rest of his life in Italy,

just a beginning and will need further development by specialists in the different areas.

10. See V.L. BULLOUGH, *Universities, Medicine and Science in the Medieval West* (Aldershot 2004); A. GRABOIS, 'Écoles et structures sociales des communautés juives dans l'Occident aux IX-XII siècles', in *Gli Ebrei nell'alto medioevo: 30 marzo-5 aprile 1978* (Spoleto 1980) II, 937-962.

11. C.H. HASKINS, *The Renaissance of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, MA 1927; repr. 1979). The European renaissance of the twelfth century has not been ignored by Jewish scholars since S. BARON, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews* (New York 1937) (see I. MARCUS, 'The Dynamics of Jewish Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century', in M.A. SIGNER & J. VAN ENGEN [eds.] *Jews and Christians in Twelfth-Century Europe* [Notre Dame, IN 2001] 27-46), but has often been obscured by a particular interest in the tensions and polemics of the time.

12. J.A. GARCÍA DE CORTÁZAR, 'El Renacimiento del siglo XII en Europa: Los comienzos de una renovación de saberes y sensibilidades', in *Renovación intelectual del Occidente europeo. XXIV Semana de Estudios Medievales. Estella, 24-28 julio 1997* (Pamplona 1998) 29-62. Cf. SÁENZ-BADILLOS, 'Aportaciones literarias, filosóficas y científicas.' See also A. SAPIR ABULAFIA, *Christians and Jews in the Twelfth-Century Renaissance* (London/New York 1995).

Provence, North Western France and England. Were they two completely separate worlds: the Jewish-Muslim world on the one hand and the Christian European countries on the other? It is true that the Peninsula, with its Islamic South and Christian North was a phenomenon peculiar to this time, but in spite of all its peculiarities it was not completely estranged from other European countries. It was more a place of encounter. Distinguished European intellectuals came to Spain in search of manuscripts and translations, and much of the impulse for the European renaissance of the twelfth century was due to this fruitful encounter of East and West, of antiquity and modernity that took place—in a very particular way—in the Iberian Peninsula.¹³

Many pages have been written about the personal reasons that Ibn Ezra had for leaving Sefarad¹⁴ in search of a new life in different European countries. As some scholars maintain, it may have been a consequence of his personal problems, or of his vision of the development of the historical events in his native land, or both. The fact is that in doing so he embedded himself into the cultural life of some European countries that were deeply involved in the new trends of the twelfth century. Although the Jewish communities of Sefarad were living in their own world and could seem, in some ways, isolated from the general European tendencies of the time, their most brilliant members, and among them Abraham ibn Ezra, felt the influence of the cultural movements of their epoch, became part of these movements, and contributed, in a positive way, to their success. Ibn Ezra adapted his knowledge in scientific, linguistic and exegetical fields to the Western European Jewish communities and to these new cultural circumstances.

The Jewish communities of Italy, Southern France, and the Angevin territories, including England, had of course deep social and cul-

13. See J. SAMSÓ, 'The Exact Sciences in al-Andalus', in S.K. JAYYUSI (ed.) *The Legacy of Muslim Spain* (Leiden/Boston/Köln 1993) II, 952-973; J. VERNET, 'Natural and Technical Sciences in al-Andalus', *Ibid.*, II, 937-951; Ch. BURNETT, 'The Translating Activity in Medieval Spain', *Ibid.*, II, 1036-1058.

14. Many scholars have debated about the meaning of Abraham ibn Ezra's words: 'with pains like a woman that brings forth her first child', *Sefer Moznayim* (ed. JIMÉNEZ PATÓN & SÁENZ-BADILLOS) 1*. He describes himself a few years later as 'a wandering bird that has abandoned its nest', *Sefer Şaḥot* (ed. C. DEL VALLE) 1.

tural differences.¹⁵ It is possible that Ibn Ezra's expectations when going to Rome were not fully satisfied, since the culture and the linguistic knowledge of the Jewish community were not at the desired level.¹⁶ But unless we search for psychological motives, it is not easy to explain the reasons that he had for going from one Jewish community to the other. If his Andalusian knowledge could be well received in Italy, he could not expect a similar positive attitude in the communities from Northern France or England, which had very different sociological backgrounds and intellectual issues.¹⁷ However, our purpose in this paper is not to re-examine the relation of Ibn Ezra with these Jewish communities, but to focus on some possible points of contact with the European culture of the time.

The situation in Christian Europe was far from being uniform. It would be meaningless to try to harmonise two completely different entities or to deny the tensions that existed between two very dissimilar attitudes: the old Latin tradition that had existed alone for centuries, and the new knowledge coming from the Greeks and the Orient through the Arabic-Jewish streams. Both cultural traditions, very different in their nature, were present in twelfth-century Europe, and Ibn Ezra was a genuine representative of the second.

I would like now to focus on a few aspects of the cultural atmosphere and activity of the time that can help us understand the work of Ibn Ezra: the interest in translating the great works of the past, the diffusion of scientific knowledge, literal exegesis and knowledge of one's own language and culture. The comparison of Ibn Ezra with other intellectuals from the same century that shared significant attitudes with him, in spite of deep differences due to their dissimilar

15. See, for instance, the description of the community of Rome by GENOT, 'Estancia decisiva', 109–120. On the atmosphere in Southern France, see G. FREUDENTHAL, 'Science in the Medieval Jewish Culture of Southern France', *History of Science* 33 (1995) 23–58. About Ibn Ezra's stay in Normandy, see GOLB, *Jews in Medieval Normandy*, 253–263. On the Jewish communities in England, see R.C. STACEY, 'Jews and Christians in Twelfth-Century England: Some Dynamics of a Changing Relationship', in SIGNER & VAN ENGEN (eds.), *Jews and Christians in Twelfth-Century Europe*, 340–354.

16. See GENOT, 'Estancia decisiva', 112–115. She underlines at the same time the profound effect that Ibn Ezra's visit to this community had in the following years.

17. SELA (*Abraham ibn Ezra*, 331–333) explains these differences with two good exegetical examples from the commentaries written by Ibn Ezra in Italy and France that reflect the different familiarity with the Greek-Arabic sciences in both places.

origin, can improve our understanding of the meaning of Abraham's work.

Undoubtedly, the twelfth century in Europe was the century of translations, as Haskins underlined in his studies, observing that Greek and Arabic translations were one of the most significant manifestations of this renaissance.¹⁸ Many other scholars have studied the curiosity and admiration of Christian Europe towards a culture that had also been 'European' in its origin, but was preserved only in 'Oriental' manuscripts, and was translated into Latin, a language accessible to Western European intellectuals.¹⁹ Places like Magna Graecia and Sicily, and even Antioch, were particularly appropriate for translation from Greek into Latin.²⁰ Translations from Arabic into Latin were made in Toledo by Spanish and European scholars, such as Gerard of Cremona. In Catalonia, Aragon and other places in Northern Spain, Plato of Tivoli, Robert of Ketton, Hugh of Santalla, Hermann of Carinthia, and the converted Peter Alfonsi, also translated philosophical and scientific works from Arabic into Latin at the middle of the century. Hermann and Robert of Ketton were working in the region of the Ebro, probably not far away from the home of Abraham ibn Ezra, in the second third of the twelfth century.²¹ All these translators were active participants, if not driving forces, of the cultural revival.

Other types of translations were also common in Europe during this century. As G. Duby observed, there were many noblemen and knights who wished to be regarded as *litterati*, and spent money on education, creating a new type of culture accessible to all members of the aristocracy and to the newly rich. It was not strange that these

18. See C.H. HASKINS, *Studies in the History of Medieval Science* (Cambridge, MA 1924; ²1927, repr. 1960) *passim* and *Id.*, *Renaissance of the Twelfth Century*, 278–280.

19. See, for instance, J.M.^a MILLÁS VALLICROSA, *Las traducciones orientales en los manuscritos de la Biblioteca Catedral de Toledo* (Madrid 1942); *Id.*, *Nuevas aportaciones para el estudio de la transmisión de la ciencia a Europa a través de España* (Barcelona 1943); *Id.*, *Estudios sobre historia de la ciencia española* (Madrid 1949; ²1987); M.-T. D'ALVERNY, 'Translations and Translators', in R.L. BENSON & G. CONSTABLE (eds.), *Renaissance and Renewal in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, MA 1982) 421–462; BURNETT, 'Translating Activity', 1036–1058.

20. D'ALVERNY, 'Translations and Translators', 427; Ch. BURNETT (ed.), *Adelard of Bath: An English Scientist and Arabist of the Early Twelfth Century* (London 1987) xii.

21. BURNETT, 'Translating Activity', 1044.

aristocrats paid money for translations of important works for their personal use.²² A parallel phenomenon took place inside Jewish communities; this was one of the methods Ibn Ezra used in different cities of Europe for generating income and sponsorship. Frequently at the beginning of his works there are allusions to the request made by some patron who was interested in a translation or in an overview of scientific or linguistic questions. We should not forget that Rome as well as Narbonne, one of the Provençal cities where he resided, were considered to be centers of the twelfth century renaissance.²³ In any case, translations were not an isolated internal phenomenon within the Jewish communities; translating was a frequent practice at the time.

It is in this context of the numerous translations of the century that we have to place Ibn Ezra's linguistic and scientific translations, as well as his works in Latin.²⁴ His best-known translations in the field of Hebrew grammar, from Arabic into Hebrew, are the works of Ḥayyūj, one of his first activities at the beginning of his stay in Rome ca. 1140. Aware of the fact that Moshe ibn Chiquitilla's translation, done in the previous century, included many glosses,²⁵ Ibn Ezra wrote a new literal translation for his Italian readers.²⁶ He continued to translate until the end of his life. For example, in England, around 1160, he made another scientific translation from Arabic into Hebrew: the Commentary of Ibn al-Muthannā on the astronomical tables of

22. G. DUBY, 'The Culture of the Knightly Class: Audience and Patronage', in BENSON & CONSTABLE (eds.), *Renaissance and Renewal*, 248–262, esp. 255–257.

23. *Ibid.*, 261.

24. See on this topic MILLÁS VALLICROSA (ed.), *El Libro de los Fundamentos de las Tablas Astronómicas de R. Abraham Ibn Ezra* (Madrid/Barcelona 1947) and the recent articles by R. SMITHUIS, 'Abraham Ibn Ezra's Astrological Works in Hebrew and Latin: New Discoveries and Exhaustive Listing', *Aleph* 6 (2006) 239–338 and 'Science in Normandy and England under the Angevins: The Creation of Avraham Ibn Ezra's Latin Works on Astronomy and Astrology', in G. BUSI (ed.), *Hebrew to Latin, Latin to Hebrew. The Mirroring of Two Cultures in the Age of Humanism* (Berlin Studies in Judaism 1; Berlin/Torino 2006) 23–59, based on her PhD thesis *Abraham ibn Ezra the Astrologer and the Transmission of Science to the Christian West* (University of Manchester 2004).

25. See *Sefer Moznayim*, 5*. See also J. MARTÍNEZ DELGADO, 'Mošeh ben Šemuel ha-Kohen Ibn Chiquitilla, el traductor', *Miscelánea de Estudios Árabes y Hebraicos*, 51/2, sección de hebreo, (2002) 119–157.

26. On the translation of Ḥayyūj and Ibn Ezra's attitude to him, see SÁENZ-BADILLOS, 'על כמה עמדות דקדוקיות', 233–234. See also SELA & FREUDENTHAL, 'Abraham Ibn Ezra's Scholarly Writings', 24.

Al-Khwārizmī. It was his personal contribution to the scientific development of his co-religionists who could not read the original works in Arabic.²⁷ Two more translations of Arabic works attributed to him are not certain.²⁸

During this century many Christian scholars felt particularly attracted to the study of sciences. By this time it began to appear that the whole universe was intelligible and accessible to human reason. Nature was perceived as an orderly system, not as a mysterious, obscure phenomenon.²⁹ It was seen from a more positive and friendly angle.³⁰ The knowledge of nature stimulated the recovery of the scientific works by classical authors, such as Aristotle, Ptolemy and Galen (directly or through translations). In particular, the impulse produced Arabic versions, commentaries and enlargements. These were two different sources of a very dissimilar nature, and their integration was not always an easy task.³¹ The most important works of the classical and medieval scientists were translated into Latin from Greek and Arabic. The spectacular progress in this field was connected with the introduction in Europe of Arabic learning—coming from the East and the West—throughout the century. Although the golden age of Arabic scientific knowledge in al-Andalus had been the eleventh century, during the party kingdoms,³² Europe received this

27. According to the well-known words of Judah ibn Tibbon, 'the exiles of France and throughout Christian lands do not know Arabic so that these works were sealed to them, inaccessible, unless translated into the sacred tongue ... until the sage Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra arrived in their lands and aided them with short compositions.' *Sefer ha-Riqmah* (ed. M. WILENSKY; Jerusalem ²1964) 4; cf. N.M. SARNA, 'Abraham ibn Ezra as an Exegete', in TWERSKY & HARRIS (eds.), *Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra*, 1–27, 6.

28. See SELA, *Abraham ibn Ezra*, 75; SMITHUIS, 'Abraham Ibn Ezra's Astrological Works', 241.

29. See T. STIEFEL, *The Intellectual Revolution in Twelfth-Century Europe* (New York 1985) 35.

30. Men of the twelfth century distinguished clearly the sacred and the profane, and adopted a new attitude to nature. See GARCÍA DE CORTÁZAR, 'Renacimiento del siglo XII', 61. Ibn Ezra's scientific contribution could be also seen from this perspective.

31. The statement of G. BEAUJOUAN ('The Transformation of the Quadrivium', in BENSON & CONSTABLE [eds.], *Renaissance and Renewal*, 463–487 esp. 484) is probably correct: 'in the twelfth century, the relationship between the scholastic heritage of the early Middle Ages and the new Arabic science was like the confluence of two water currents of different salinity which do not mix well.'

32. VERNET, 'Natural and Technical Sciences', 940.

influence during the twelfth century. A great part of the progress in mathematics, astronomy, pharmacology and medicine in this epoch is to be attributed to the efforts of translators, although medieval scientists added their own contributions, in the form of experiments, to all fields of science. The adaptation of old techniques and new inventions also produced a strong development in medieval technology.³³ Technological advances of many kinds seem almost to have become fashionable in the twelfth century.³⁴ The desire and the urge to observe and experiment were present in all fields.

It is true that there was a certain tension between both scientific traditions: Adelard of Bath, who rediscovered geometry, translating into Latin an Arabic version of Euclid and other Arabic scientific works in the first half of the twelfth century, stated that he almost could not speak about sciences with his European contemporaries because he had learned about nature and mathematics from Arabs, guided by reason. However, most of his colleagues simply followed arguments of authority.³⁵ Adelard preceded Ibn Ezra and brought the results of Arabic scientific treatises to England.³⁶ It is very unlikely that these two 'wandering scholars' knew each other, but their personal interests and their contributions to the history of science in the twelfth century show many common elements.

Again, Ibn Ezra's concern about the sciences can only be understood in the context of the general atmosphere of European intellectuals at the time who were deeply interested in mathematics and astronomy.³⁷ He was far from being alone in the battlefield. More than

33. See E. WHITNEY, *Medieval Science and Technology* (Westport, CT 2004) 19.

34. S.R. PACKARD, *Twelfth-Century Europe. An Interpretative Essay* (Amherst, MA 1973) 80.

35. *Ibid.*, 214. In his *Questiones naturales* (ed. BURNETT 1998: 83) he says: 'For the present generation suffers from this ingrained fault, that it thinks that nothing should be accepted which is discovered by the "moderns". Hence it happens that, whenever I wish to publish my own discovery, I attribute it to another person saying: "Someone else said it, not I!" Thus, lest I have no audience at all, some teacher came up with all my opinions, not I.' Quoted in WHITNEY, *Medieval Science and Technology*, 186.

36. As Ch. BURNETT states (*Introduction of Arabic Learning*, 38), 'certain Arabic doctrines had arrived in England, perhaps already before 1066, via the monastic and cathedral schools of France and Lotharingia, and thanks also to scholars like Petrus Alfonsi and Adelard of Bath.

37. This interest, of course, was not always shared by everybody. William of Conches, a contemporary of Abraham ibn Ezra, said: 'Ignorant themselves of the forces of nature and wanting to have company in their ignorance, they don't want people to

twenty scientific works that he wrote after his exit from Sefarad were a notable contribution to the science of his time, a mixture of Arabic knowledge and his own reflections and observations on mathematical and astronomical topics. Because he wrote most of these treatises in Hebrew, the size of his audience was limited. However, it is remarkable that most studies on Ibn Ezra's scientific contribution³⁸ underline the meaning of his work within Jewish history, or inside the Muslim culture: his primary intention was to make accessible the best fruits of Sephardic culture to other European Jews,³⁹ rather than make Greek or Arabic culture accessible to European citizens in general. This may be true in general, but we should not forget Ibn Ezra's relationship with other scientific writers from Christian Europe.

In his scientific treatises, Ibn Ezra was thinking not only about the Jewish reader. One of the main reasons that he had for writing his scientific books was the great curiosity about these disciplines among the men of his time. The fact that he decided to write some scientific works in Latin, a language that was not very common among Jewish intellectuals, but that could be understood by his Christian contemporaries, is a proof of his deep involvement in the culture of his epoch. When he dictated a scientific work and one of his pupils wrote it in Latin, he necessarily had in mind a different, more general audience, and not only members of the Jewish communities. The two astronomical books entitled *Liber de rationibus tabularum* (one written in Pisa ca. 1142/1145⁴⁰ and the second in Angers in 1154), like the *Liber de nativitatibus*⁴¹ (written in Rouen in the same years), were

look into anything; they want us to believe like peasants and not to ask the reason behind things ...'. See WHITNEY, *Medieval Science and Technology*, 21.

38. Including SELA, *Abraham ibn Ezra*, which has no more than a short allusion to this context on p. 17.

39. See the interesting observations of G. FREUDENTHAL (*Science in the Medieval Hebrew and Arabic Traditions* [Aldershot/Burlington, VT 2005] 30–31) on the limitations of the appropriation of science within the Jewish communities of Provence during the Middle Ages, underlining that the study of sciences by medieval Jews was very widespread, but not too many of them made investigations of their own, and their creative scientific activity was less than expected.

40. *Libro de los Fundamentos* (ed. MILLÁS VALLICROSA) 87. According to MILLÁS the book was not a translation from Hebrew, see *Ibid.*, 19.

41. Venezia 1484. In this book the author states: 'ut ait ... Abraham magister nonster egregius quo dictante et hanc dispositionem astrolabii conscripsimus.'

dictated in Latin.⁴² The fact that some of his scientific and astrological treatises were immediately or soon translated into Latin,⁴³ sometimes by different translators,⁴⁴ shows the degree to which his scientific work was appreciated and coincided with the interest of his contemporaries in Christian countries. All of this can only be understood within the atmosphere of the scientific renaissance of twelfth-century Europe. The intellectual elite of the epoch was integrated to a high degree, sharing many common interests, methods and principles, and the religious origin of the authors was only a secondary issue.

Ibn Ezra was one of the first Jewish thinkers who insisted on the importance of the study of sciences. In the first chapter of one of his last books, the *Yesod Mora*, he describes his own ideal of a Jewish sage.⁴⁵ For Abraham it is not enough to concentrate on one of the traditional disciplines like the *masorah*, with the detailed study of the biblical text ('the specialist in *masorah* who did not learn any other science is like a camel loaded with silk, who is not giving anything to the silk nor having any profit from it'), or the grammar ('the sage may learn it, but he should not spend all of his life reading the grammarians'). Even to focus only on exegesis, in studying the Bible that is 'the source of life', is not enough. The same is true in respect to the study of the Talmud: it is insufficient. The sage should know all this. But in order to master all these subjects and be able to fulfill the divine precepts, he has to study the different sciences: astronomy, mathematics, psychology, cosmogony and logic, which is 'the balance of

42. It is very unlikely that Ibn Ezra mastered Latin to write a scientific treatise in this language; and his usual Jewish audience was probably not familiar with this language in the required measure. This means that when Ibn Ezra dictated these books in Latin he had in mind Christian readers.

43. The Latin version of the mathematical treatise *Sefer ha-Middot* (published by T. LEVY & Ch. BURNETT, 'Sefer ha-Middot: A Mid-Twelfth-Century Text on Arithmetic and Geometry Attributed to Abraham ibn Ezra', *Aleph* 6 [2006] 57–238) can be dated to the mid-twelfth century. Henry Bate and Meter d'Abano translated the astrological treatises of Ibn Ezra in the thirteenth century. See SMITHUIS, 'Abraham Ibn Ezra's Astrological Works', 246.

44. G. DAHAN, *Les intellectuels chrétiens et les juifs au Moyen Âge* (Paris 1990) 324–325; see SMITHUIS, 'Abraham Ibn Ezra's Astrological Works', 256–268.

45. In a way that has many similarities to the Maimonidean parable of the palace at the end of the *Guide*, III, 51. The book was probably written during Ibn Ezra's stay in London, in 1158 or 1159. See SELA & FREUDENTHAL, 'Abraham Ibn Ezra's Scholarly Writings', 46.

every science'.⁴⁶ Even if Jews were not attending the monastic or the cathedral schools of the time, nor the nascent universities, the main topics of the *trivium* and *quadrivium* were present in these words of Ibn Ezra.⁴⁷

According to Adelard of Bath, while the three first disciplines of the *trivium* deal with *voces*, 'words', the other four of the *quadrivium* study reality itself. The first of these, and 'superior by a certain excellency to the other three, who depend on her' is Arithmetic.⁴⁸ Adelard translated Euclid's geometry from Arabic into Latin, and focused his scientific interest primarily on mathematics.⁴⁹ For him, all visible aspects of the universe are subject to number. Arithmetic is known to be one of the foci of interest of Abraham ibn Ezra, and he was one of the first scholars to introduce the system of al-Khwārizmī in Europe.⁵⁰ He says about the importance of number:

As Holy Scripture says: 'God has arranged all things by measurement, number and weight.' Since, then, there are three things—measurement, number, and weight—two of them seem to need the third; i.e., measurement and weight seem to need number, because there can be no certainty about them without number. But they do not seem to be necessary for number, because we do not need weight or measurement to be certain about number.⁵¹

It is interesting to compare Ibn Ezra's ideas with those of the *Didascalicon* of Hugh of Saint Victor, who died in 1141, at the beginning of

46. *Yesod Mora*, in I. LEVIN (ed.), *ילקוט אברהם אבן עזרא* (*Abraham ibn Ezra. Reader. Annotated Texts with Introductions and Commentaries*) (New York/Tel Aviv 1985) ch. 1, 315–320.

47. But see also the *Ihṣā' al-'Ulūm* (*Catalogue of the Sciences*) by Alfarabi (cf. M. MAHDI, *Science, Philosophy and Religion in Alfarabi's Enumeration of the Sciences* [Dordrecht 1975] 113–115).

48. *De eodem et diverso*, in *Adelard of Bath, Conversations with his Nephew: On the Same and the Different, Questions on Natural Science, and On Birds* (ed. & trans. Ch. BURNETT, with collab. of I. RONCA, P. MANTAS ESPAÑA & B. VAN DEN ABELE; Cambridge/New York 1998) 47.

49. See L. CROCHANE, *Adelard of Bath, the First English Scientist* (London 1994) 62–65.

50. See T. LÉVY, 'Abraham ibn Ezra et les mathématiques; remarques bibliographiques et historiques', in P.J. TOMSON (ed.), *Abraham ibn Ezra, savant universel. Conférences données au colloque de l'Institutum Iudaicum Namur, 25 novembre 1999* (Brussel 2000) 60–75; SELA, *Abraham ibn Ezra*, 17–30.

51. *Sefer ha-Middot*, 1,1; ed. T. LEVY & Ch. BURNETT: *Aleph* 6 (2006) 80.

Ibn Ezra's stay in Italy.⁵² Twenty years earlier Hugh had offered a synthesis of different classifications of knowledge (inspired by Boethius and the Stoics), mentioning seven mechanical arts in balance with the seven liberal arts.⁵³ He tried to demonstrate that the different areas of knowledge were integrated among themselves and that they were necessary for man to attain perfection.⁵⁴ In spite of the different backgrounds, there are some basic similarities to Ibn Ezra in the intellectual attitude.

As is well known, Abraham ibn Ezra is considered one of the greatest Jewish exegetes. In commenting on the biblical books he shared many attitudes with the intellectuals of his time. One of the best-known principles of medieval exegesis is the plurality of meanings of the biblical text.⁵⁵ Christian and Jewish exegetes⁵⁶ maintain this principle in one of the many possible variants. Hugh of St. Victor says at the beginning of the fifth book of his *Didascalicon*:

First of all, it ought to be known that Sacred Scripture has three ways of conveying meaning—namely, history, allegory, and tropology.

Abraham has his own version of the plurality of meanings, speaking of the 'five paths taken by the Torah commentators.'⁵⁷

Ibn Ezra's exegesis has been labeled as literal, grammatical and rationalist.⁵⁸ When he tries to define his own method he states: 'I shall thoroughly and, to the best of my ability, seek the grammatical [form] of every word. Then I shall do my utmost to explain it.'⁵⁹ Both in his exegetical and in his grammatical works Ibn Ezra distinguishes two

52. See *Hugonis de Sancto Victore Didascalicon de studio legendi* (a critical text by B.Ch.H. BUTTIMER; Washington, DC 1939); *Didascalicon; A Medieval Guide to the Arts* (trans. J. TAYLOR; New York 1961).

53. See PACKARD, *Twelfth-Century Europe*, 214.

54. *Hugonis de Sancto Victore Didascalicon*, 3.

55. See on this question A. VAN DER HEIDE, 'PARDES. Methodological Reflections on the Theory of the Four Senses', *Journal of Jewish Studies* 34 (1983) 147–159; A. SÁENZ-BADILLOS & J. TARGARONA, *Los judíos de Sefarad ante la Biblia. La interpretación de la Biblia en el Medievo* (Córdoba 1996) 17–27.

56. As shown by J. TAYLOR in his edition of the *Didascalicon* (p. 219), Philo Judaeus and Origen are among the earliest interpreters who spoke of a threefold understanding of Scripture. The tradition of a fourfold interpretation is also very old, at least from the time of Augustine.

57. See LANCASTER, *Deconstructing the Bible*, 143.

58. See SÁENZ-BADILLOS & TARGARONA, *Los judíos de Sefarad*, 138–159.

59. In his Introduction to the *Commentary on the Torah*. See I. LEVIN (ed.), *Abraham ibn Ezra. Reader*, 143; LANCASTER, *Deconstructing the Bible*, 171.

possible types of knowledge: tradition and rational deduction, and when there are differences between both, he prefers the rational explanation.⁶⁰

This approach to texts was common among European scholars of the twelfth century. In some of the old schools where the seven liberal arts were taught there were masters such as Bernard of Chartres, William of Conches, and Peter Helie who expanded the grammatical studies. There are clear parallels between the path that these masters and Ibn Ezra followed in the explanation of the biblical text.⁶¹ William of Conches, in his *Philosophia mundi* and in his *Dragmaticon* presents a rational explanation for biblical passages, such as the formation of the body of Adam and Eve, seeing nature and natural phenomena as linked to a rational process of causes rather than to mere traditional interpretations.⁶²

It is illuminating to compare Ibn Ezra's exegesis with that of the main representatives of the Abbey of Saint-Victor in Paris, which had become a focus of renovation of religious life since the beginning of the twelfth century. One of the main points of interest of the most distinguished members of this school was a kind of literal, rationalist exegesis of the biblical text. Hugh of St. Victor taught that the explanation of Scripture had to start with the *historia*, directly based on the *littera*⁶³ and very likely in consonance with Jewish sources.⁶⁴ Like Ibn Ezra in the Introduction to his *Commentary to the Torah*,⁶⁵ Hugh clearly rejects allegorical interpretation that ignores the literal one:

60. See, for instance, in his commentary ad Gen 22:4. For his grammatical conceptions, see A. SÁENZ-BADILLOS, 'Some Basic Concepts in the Linguistic System of Abraham Ibn 'Ezra', in M. BAR-ASHER (ed.), *מחקרים בלשון העברית ובלשונות היהודים*, in M. BAR-ASHER (ed.), *מחקרים בלשון העברית ובלשונות היהודים*, מוגשים לשלמה מורג (Studies in Hebrew and Jewish Languages Presented to Shelomo Morag) (Jerusalem 1996) *125-*149.

61. See PACKARD, *Twelfth-Century Europe*, 158–163.

62. See T. GREGORY, 'La nouvelle idée de nature et de savoir scientifique au XIIe siècle', in J.E. MURDOCH & E.D. SYLLA (eds.), *The Cultural Context of Medieval Learning* (Dordrecht/Boston 1975) 193–218, esp. 195–201.

63. See P. SICARD, *Hugues de Saint-Victor et son école* (Turnhout 1991) 23–29. Dealing with the manner of reading the Scripture, Hugh of Saint-Victor says after describing the three ways of conveying meaning: 'First you learn history'. Cf. *Didascalicon* (ed. TAYLOR) 120.

64. N. HÄRING, 'Commentary and Hermeneutics', in BENSON & CONSTABLE (eds.), *Renaissance and Renewal*, 173–200, esp. 197.

65. See SÁENZ-BADILLOS & TARGARONA, *Los judíos de Sefarad*, 22–24; LANCAS-TER, *Deconstructing the Bible*, 145–156.

Since the mystical meaning of Scripture can doubtless be grasped only if first the literal sense has been well established, I cannot but wonder at the impudence of those who pretend to teach allegorical meanings when they are ignorant of the literal sense.⁶⁶

Andrew of St. Victor, his pupil, Herbert of Bosham (probably a pupil of Peter Lombardus and Andrew, the first to expound Jerome's *Hebraica*),⁶⁷ and the Cistercian Nicholas Manjacorria commented on the Bible, noting the Hebrew tradition.⁶⁸ In the words of Andrew, *solam litterae expositionem exequi temptabimus*, 'We will try to apply only the literal explanation.'⁶⁹ And again, *hanc litteram, sic exponimus*, 'We explain the text as it literally is.'⁷⁰ At the same time, his explanation respected the value of rational arguments.⁷¹ He was aware that he had learned from the Jews to search for the literal meaning of the text.⁷² He was even accused of 'Judaising'.⁷³

Andrew of St. Victor⁷⁴ and Ibn Ezra were contemporaries, but it is not very likely that they ever met. Did Andrew know some of the works of Ibn Ezra? In his *In Ezechiel*, there is a reference to Ibn Ezra's *Commentary on Psalms* that scholars consider authentic.⁷⁵ They shared some interesting tendencies and methods in their exegetical work. A clear preference for literal exegesis,⁷⁶ the rational character of their interpretation,⁷⁷ the search for historical truth, and the constant reference to grammatical questions⁷⁸ were characteristic of both exegetes. However, most of the Christian biblical commentators of the

66. *Didascalicon* (ed. TAYLOR), 148–149 (VI.10).

67. See B. SMALLEY, *The Study of the Bible in the Middle Ages* (Oxford 1941) 186–191.

68. D'ALVERNY, 'Translations and Translators', 428.

69. *In Gen.* 1:6; R. BERNDT, *André de Saint-Victor ([d.] 1175): exégète et théologien* (Paris 1991) 164.

70. *In Gen.* 7:2; *Ibid.*, 165.

71. *Ibid.*, 174–175.

72. *Ibid.*, 166.

73. HÄRING, 'Commentary and Hermeneutics', 194.

74. Very well studied by BERNDT, *André de Saint-Victor* and *id.*, 'Les interprétations juives dans le "Commentaire de l'Heptateuque" d'André de Saint-Victor', *Recherches Augustiniennes* 24 (1989) 199–240.

75. See *In Ez.* 37:25, commented on by BERNDT, *André de Saint-Victor*, 87, 223.

76. *Ibid.*, 164, like Joseph Kara or Rashbam.

77. *Ibid.*, 174.

78. *Ibid.*, 190, even comparing the Latin and the Hebrew.

Middle Ages were more familiar with Rashi and his pupils in Northern France⁷⁹ than with Ibn Ezra.

Literal exegesis was not limited to the school of St. Victor. Other Christian exegetes, such as Thierry of Chartres, also sought the literal meaning of the text renouncing the use of allegorical or moral methods.⁸⁰ His way of thinking coincided with the development of speculative grammar that was applied not only to the Bible, but also to philosophical language in general and to all kinds of texts.

Abraham ibn Ezra's interest in the widespread knowledge of Hebrew was also in consonance with some trends of the epoch. As is well known, following the best Sephardic traditions of the preceding centuries, Ibn Ezra wrote five grammatical works on Hebrew language between 1140 and 1148,⁸¹ when some of his co-religionists in several Italian cities asked him to do so. He was not simply repeating the linguistic theories of the eleventh century, but was also able to develop his own synthesis, taking into account different elements and elaborating on them on the basis of a continuous meditation on the topics. He did this in spite of the scant means at his disposal when he was writing his philological works. His contribution to the history of Hebrew philology deserves a highly positive evaluation.

Interest in grammar was also shared by many Christian intellectuals of the twelfth century.⁸² For instance, Adelard of Bath compared the seven liberal arts with seven maidens in his *De eodem et diverso*, and explained the nature and character of each one. The first of the arts is grammar, which 'nourishes in their cradles those entering the liberal arts, and instils the first milk into their mouths.'⁸³ Many commentaries on classical grammars and new manuals for teaching Latin

79. And these Jewish interpreters were not very well considered by Ibn Ezra himself. See SARNA, 'Abraham ibn Ezra as an Exegete', 16.

80. HÄRING, 'Commentary and Hermeneutics', 195.

81. See above, note 5. Cf. A. SÁENZ-BADILLOS, 'Ibn Ezra et la grammaire hébraïque au Moyen Âge', in TOMSON (ed.), *Abraham ibn Ezra, savant universel*, 35–51.

82. It would be possible, too, to compare the grammatical books of Abraham ibn Ezra and the linguistic work of one of the best-known intellectuals of the following century, Roger Bacon (ca. 1214–1292). See *The Greek Grammar of Roger Bacon and a Fragment of his Hebrew Grammar* (ed. E. NOLAN & S.A. HIRSCH; Cambridge [Cambridgeshire] 1902); B. CLEGG, *The First Scientist: A Life of Roger Bacon* (New York 2003).

83. *De eodem et diverso* (ed. BURNETT) 35.

were produced in Europe during the twelfth century.⁸⁴ Here again we can establish clear parallels.

It is possible to detect a trend to search for the original language of the texts and to try to master it. Christian intellectuals, such as Hugh of St. Victor, became interested in Hebrew as one of the sacred languages.⁸⁵ For some Christian authors, this was justified since it was the 'first language' and the 'natural language'.⁸⁶ Although knowledge of the language was rather limited, many Christians sought help from a Jew to understand the Bible in its original language.⁸⁷ Distinguished intellectuals of the time, such as Abelard, included in their Commentaries on the Bible allusions to the Hebrew original.⁸⁸ It is difficult to know if many of the Christian intellectuals at this time were able to read Hebrew, or if they were just using Hebrew references from previous Latin writers.⁸⁹ Andrew of St. Victor's commentaries include many references to Hebrew, but he does not seem to have been too familiar with the language.⁹⁰

Another aspect of the cultural renewal of the twelfth century in Europe is the individualisation in the field of linguistics, the process of transition from Latin to the Romance languages, which depended on specific instruments for adapting themselves to the new social and scientific circumstances.⁹¹ In a sense, Ibn Ezra was contributing to a use of the Hebrew language which could respond to the new needs of scientific language.⁹² He was not the only one to do so, but his contribution in making the 'holy tongue' a 'scientific tongue' was notable. Specifically noteworthy are his efforts to define, with precision, linguistic terminology in his *Moznayim* and his search for a technical vocabulary to express the scientific phenomena in his works.⁹³

84. BERNDT, *André de Saint-Victor*, 190, 194–195.

85. DAHAN, *Intellectuels chrétiens*, 239.

86. *Ibid.*, 240–241.

87. *Ibid.*, 249.

88. *Ibid.*, 266.

89. BERNDT, *André de Saint-Victor*, 203–207.

90. *Ibid.*, 212.

91. GARCÍA DE CORTÁZAR, 'Renacimiento del siglo XII', 39.

92. As I. LANCASTER says (*Deconstructing the Bible*, 177), 'The key to Ibn Ezra's approach is his unusual insistence on the exclusive use of Hebrew in his oeuvre.'

93. On the linguistic terms discussed in the *Moznayim*, see the annotated edition of the book by JIMÉNEZ PATÓN & SÁENZ-BADILLOS (2002). On Ibn Ezra's creation of a new scientific vocabulary, see my *A History of the Hebrew Language* (Cambridge 1993) 253–254 and SELA, *Abraham ibn Ezra*, 93–104. Ibn Ezra restored into use many

In addition, there could be some similarity to the *Metalogicon* by John of Salisbury.⁹⁴ John was a few years younger than Abraham ibn Ezra. Yet, Ibn Ezra wrote the *Yesod Mora* in London at the same time that John of Salisbury completed his *Metalogicon* in Canterbury, before he became secretary to Thomas Becket. Although John's book was a defense of the *trivium* (while study of the sciences was confined to the *quadrivium*), there is a clear parallel attitude in respect to knowledge in these two writings, in spite of their completely different backgrounds. John defended logic and philosophy in general, including grammar, 'the starting point of all liberal studies.'⁹⁵ His argument was aimed against people who despised both the *trivium* and the *quadrivium*.⁹⁶ In actual fact, John of Salisbury was worried about the decline of literary Latin and the danger of the loss of Latin culture no less than Ibn Ezra was concerned about the inappropriate use of Hebrew by the authors of the *piyyutim*.⁹⁷ Even the definition of grammar by both scholars was similar: John subscribes to the traditional definition of grammar as 'the science of speaking and writing correctly'.⁹⁸ It is not difficult to find a similar idea behind the *Sefer Şahot* of Ibn Ezra, or in his defense of grammatical correctness as an exegetical norm in *Safah Berurah*.⁹⁹ Grammar, John says in the vein of Ibn Ezra, 'is the basis and root of scientific knowledge' (including philosophy) and it is the foundation of virtue too.¹⁰⁰

It is possible also to find parallels in other aspects of basic linguistic conceptions: reading Ibn Ezra's comparison of the Hebrew vowels

forgotten biblical words. See SELA, *Abraham ibn Ezra*, 142. When Roger Bacon reminds us of 'the fact that translators did not have the words in Latin for translating scientific works' (*Opus Majus* 76) he is witnessing a difficulty deeply felt, in his own way, by Ibn Ezra.

94. See C.C.J. WEBB, *John of Salisbury* (New York 1932). We quote following the text of *The Metalogicon of John of Salisbury. A Twelfth-Century Defense of the Verbal and Logic Arts of the Trivium* (trans. D.D. MCGARRY; Berkeley/Los Angeles 1955). See also C.J. NEDERMAN, *John of Salisbury* (Tempe, AZ 2005).

95. *Metalogicon* I, 13.

96. *Ibid.*, I, 4.

97. See M.B. RYAN, *John of Salisbury on the Arts of Language in the Trivium*. (Washington, DC 1958) 3.

98. *Metalogicon* I, 13; I, 18. This definition comes from Isidore (*Etymol.* I, 5, 1).

99. (Ed. RUIZ & SÁENZ-BADILLOS) 10–11.

100. *Metalogicon* I, 23.

with the main movements in the cosmos at the beginning of *Sefer Šaḥot*,¹⁰¹ we may recall John of Salisbury's statement:

While grammar has developed to some extent, and indeed mainly as an invention of man, still it imitates nature, from which it partly derives its origin.¹⁰²

Both authors interpret in a similar way the 'applications of names' of Gen 2:19. According to John of Salisbury, 'although such depends on the will of man, it is in a way subject to nature, which it probably imitates [at least] to some modest extent.'¹⁰³ In his short commentary on the passage, Abraham ibn Ezra says: 'hu' šěmo, conforming to its nature.'¹⁰⁴

A major medieval application of rhetoric was in the field of verse writing. In the last part of the twelfth and during the thirteenth century many European teachers of grammar wrote Latin treatises with precepts for the composition of verse.¹⁰⁵

John of Salisbury quotes in his *Metalogicon* (I, 24) the following passage by Quintilian:

In lecturing on the poets, the grammarian must attend also to minor points. Thus, after analysing a verse, he may require the parts of speech to be specified, and the peculiarities of the feet, which need to be known, not merely for writing poetry, but even for prose composition. He may also distinguish what words are barbarous, or misapplied, or used contrary to the rules of language ...¹⁰⁶

If we remember the interest of Abraham ibn Ezra in teaching the Hebrew metres in *Sefer Šaḥot*,¹⁰⁷ or his condemnation of the barbarisms

101. (Ed. DEL VALLE) 100.

102. *Metalogicon* I, 14.

103. *Ibid.*

104. See A. SÁENZ-BADILLOS, 'The Origin of the Language and Linguistic Pluralism According to Medieval Jewish Exegetes', in H. JUUSOLA, J. LAULAINEN & H. PALVA (eds.), *Verbum et Calamus. Semitic and Related Studies in Honour of the Sixtieth Birthday of Professor Tapani Harviainen* (Studia Orientalia 99; Helsinki 2004) 293–303.

105. J.J. MURPHY, *Latin Rhetoric and Education in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Padstow, Cornwall 2005) 16–17.

106. *Institutio oratoria* I, 8,13, according to MURPHY, *Latin Rhetoric and Education* III, 169.

107. (Ed. DEL VALLE) 146–147.

of the *paytanim* in *Safah Berurah*,¹⁰⁸ we are witnessing completely parallel approaches.

Without doing violence to reality, without identifying dissimilar situations, I think that we can detect a high level of agreement or harmony¹⁰⁹ between many of the ideas and attitudes behind the grammatical, exegetical and scientific works of Abraham ibn Ezra and those of other Christian intellectuals of his time in twelfth-century Europe.

108. (Ed. RUIZ & SÁENZ-BADILLOS) 10–11.

109. I have spoken only of agreement or harmony, not of real, demonstrable, historical connections among the intellectuals of the epoch. I am not sure if this kind of relation will ever be proved, but in any case, this has not been the intention of my study.