

ture, to which he added many expressions borrowed from his native Lithuanian dialect.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: L. Binstock, in *Vos*, 1884, No. 12; Sokolow, *Sfer Zikaron*, Warsaw, 1889 (*Abramovitch, Autobiographical Sketch*); *Alle Kessovin von Mendele Mocher-Seforim*, i. ii., Odessa, 1888-90; Wiener, *Yiddish Literature*, pp. 150-160, 362, 363 (list of works).

S. M. D.

ABRAMS, HARRIET: English soprano vocalist and composer; born 1760; died in the first half of the nineteenth century. She was the eldest of three sisters (Harriet, Theodosia, and Eliza), all excellent vocalists. Harriet herself was a pupil of Dr. Arne, and made her début at Drury Lane Theater, London, in her master's musical piece, "May Day," October 28, 1775. She and her sister Theodosia sang at the opening of the Concerts of Ancient Music in 1776. She sang also at the Haudel Commemoration in Westminster Abbey in 1784 and at the principal London concerts for several years afterward, when she and her sisters retired into private life. Harriet Abrams composed several pleasing songs, two of which, "The Orphan's Prayer" and "Crazy Jane," aided by the impressive singing of her sisters, became very popular. She published, further, in 1787, a collection of Scotch songs harmonized for three voices, besides other pieces at later dates.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Brown, *Dictionary of Musicians*, s.v.; Grove, *Dict. of Music and Musicians*, 1890, vol. i.; Champlin, *Cyclopedia of Music and Musicians*, i. 4, New York, 1893.

G. L.

ABRAMSON, ARTHUR VON: Russian civil engineer; born at Odessa, March 3, 1854. He was educated at the gymnasium of his native city, and studied mathematics at the University of Odessa, which he left to take a course in civil engineering at the Polytechnikum of Zurich, Switzerland, from which he was graduated in 1876. Returning to Russia in 1879, he passed the state examination at the Russian Imperial Institute of Roads and Communications, and was appointed one of the directors of the Russian state railway at Kief. He devised, built, and managed the sewer system of Kief, and constructed the street-railroad of that city. In 1881 he founded and became editor-in-chief of a technical monthly, "Inzhener" (The Engineer). He was appointed president of the local sewer company and director of the Kief city railroad.

H. R.

ABRAMSON, BERNARD: Russian physician of the nineteenth century. He was a corresponding member of the St. Petersburg Academy of Science, and for valued work in sanitation was made a hereditary honorary citizen by the Russian government. Owing to his interest in Jewish matters, he was requested by the government to draw up a curriculum for the Jewish school at Uman in the government of Podol. In 1849 the title of collegiate councilor was conferred upon him; and in the same year he was elected a member of the Odessa English Club (composed of Russian noblemen). He wrote various medical works.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: *Orient*, 1849, pp. 31, 112; *Jüd. Athenäum*, s.v., Leipzig, 1851.

H. R.

ABRASS, JOSHUA (OSIAS); called also **Pitzi:** A famous hazan, or cantor; born in Austria about 1820, and died at Odessa in 1883. He was cantor in Tarnopol, 1840-42; afterward in Lemberg, 1842-60; and from 1860-83 he was chief cantor of the great synagogue of Odessa. He composed *זמרת יה* ("Hymns and Religious Songs for Sabbaths and Festivals of the Year"), Vienna, 1873. His daughter was Abrastzova, a popular Russian singer.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Lippe, *Bibliographisches Lexicon*, s.v.

H. R.

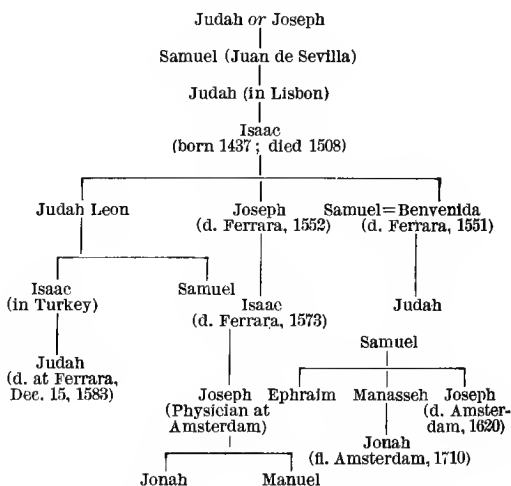
ABRAVALLA (אברבאלה), SAMUEL, called **THE GREAT:** The richest Jew in Valencia. He was forced during the persecution of 1391 to accept Christianity. The *jurados* of Valencia reported on this baptism on July 14, 1391, as follows: "Yesterday there was baptized the great Don Samuel Abravalla with great solemnity in the palace of En Gasto under the patronage of the marquis, and he has received the name of Alfonso Ferrandes de Villanueva, from an estate which he owns in the marquise, called Villanueva" (De los Rios, "Hist. de los Judíos de España y Portugal," ii. 603). This Samuel Abravalla can scarcely be identical with Don Samuel Abravanel, who was also baptized in 1391, but took the name Juan de Sevilla. Abravalla soon returned to Judaism, as did also Abravanel. He was sent with Don Solomon ha-Levi to Rome as ambassador of the Spanish Jews, and had an interview with the pope.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: *Shebet Yehudah*, No. 41; Grätz, *Gesch. d. Juden*, iv. 219.

M. K.

ABRAVANEL, ABARBANEL, or ABRA-BANEL: One of the oldest and most distinguished Spanish families, which traces its origin from King David. Members of this family lived at Seville, where dwelt its oldest representative, Don Judah Abravanel. Samuel Abravanel, his grandson, settled at Valencia, and Samuel's son, Judah (or perhaps he himself), left Spain for Portugal. Isaac, the son of Judah, returned to Castile, where he lived till the time of the great expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492. Then, with his three sons, Judah, Joseph, and Samuel, Isaac went to Italy. Their descendants, as well as other members of the family who arrived later from the Iberian peninsula, lived in Holland, England, Turkey, and elsewhere during and since the sixteenth century.

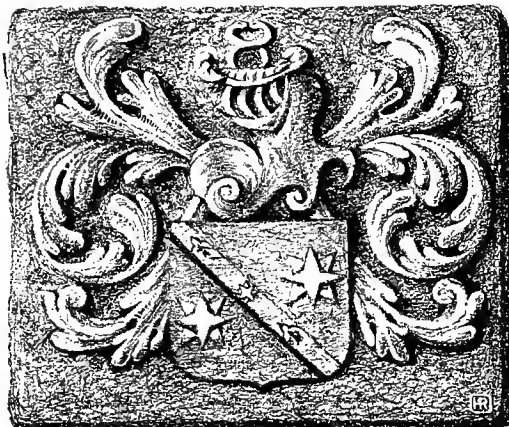
PEDIGREE.



Isaac Abravanel: Statesman and Bible commentator, son of the Portuguese treasurer, Don Judah, was born in the year 1437 at Lisbon, and died at Venice in 1508. He was buried in Padua.

Abravanel received a careful education and was a pupil of Joseph Hayyim, rabbi of Lisbon. Well versed in Talmudic literature and in the learning of his time, endowed with a clear and keen mind, and full of enthusiasm for Judaism, he devoted his early years to the study of Jewish religious philosophy,

and when scarcely twenty years old wrote on the original form of the natural elements, on the most vital religious questions, on prophecy, etc. His political abilities also attracted attention while he was still young. He entered the service of King Alfonso V. of Portugal as treasurer, and soon won the confidence of his master. Notwithstanding his high position and the great wealth he had inherited from his father, his love for his afflicted brethren was unabated. When Arzilla, in Morocco, was taken by the Moors, and the Jewish captives were sold as slaves, he contributed largely to the funds needed to manumit



Abravanel Coat of Arms.

(From the Archives of the Amsterdam Portuguese Congregation.)

them, and personally arranged for collections throughout Portugal. He also wrote to his learned and wealthy friend Jehiel, of Pisa, in behalf of the captives. After the death of Alfonso he was obliged to relinquish his office, having been accused by King John II. of connivance with the duke of Bragança, who had been executed on the charge of conspiracy. Abravanel, warned in time, saved himself by a hasty flight to Castile (1483). His large fortune was confiscated by royal decree. At Toledo, his new home, he occupied himself at first with Biblical studies, and in the course of six months produced an extensive commentary on the books of Joshua, Judges, and Samuel. But shortly afterward he entered the service of the house of Castile. Together with his friend, the influential Don Abraham Senior, of Segovia, he undertook to farm the revenues and to supply provisions for the royal army, contracts that he carried out to the entire satisfaction of Queen Isabella. During the Moorish war Abravanel advanced considerable sums of money to the government. When the banishment of the Jews from Spain was decreed, he left nothing undone to induce the king to revoke the edict. In vain did he offer him 30,000 ducats (\$68,400, nominal value). With his brethren in faith he left Spain and went to Naples, where, soon after, he entered the service of the king. For a short time he lived in peace undisturbed; but when the city was taken by the French, bereft of all his possessions, he followed the young king, Ferdinand, in 1495, to Messina; then went to Corfu; and in 1496 settled in Monopoli, and lastly (1503) in Venice, where his services were employed in negotiating a commercial treaty between Portugal and the Venetian republic (Zurita, "Historia del Rey Don Fernando el Católico," v. 342*a*). M. K.

Abravanel's importance, however, lies not only in his changeful and active career. Although his works can scarcely be said to be of an absolutely original character, they contain so much instructive material, and exerted so wide an influence, that they demand special attention. They may be divided into three classes, referring to (1) exegesis, such as his commentary upon the entire Bible with the exception of the Hagiographa; (2) philosophy, dealing with philosophy in general and particularly with that of the Jewish religion; (3) apologetics, in defense of the Jewish doctrine of the Messiah. Characteristic of Abravanel's exegetic writings is his accurate estimation of the historical standpoint in

As Author and Exegete.

the ancient annals of the Jewish people. All preceding Jewish exegetes had been too far removed from the tumult of the great world to possess a proper estimate of the historical epochs and episodes described in Scripture. Abravanel, who had himself taken part in the politics of the great powers of the day, rightly perceived that mere consideration of the literary elements of Scripture was insufficient, and that the political and social life of the people must also be taken into account. He recognized also the value of prefacing the individual books of the Bible with a general introduction concerning the character of each book, its date of composition, and the author's intention; he may consequently be considered as a pioneer of the modern science of Bible propædæutics. These excellences of Abravanel's commentaries were especially appreciated by the Christian scholars of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. No less than thirty Christian writers of this period—among them men of eminence, like the younger Buxtorf, Buddeus, Carpzov, and others—occupied themselves with the close study of Abravanel's exegetical writings, which they condensed and translated, and thus introduced to the world of Christian scholarship. Possibly somewhat of this appreciation of Abravanel by Christians was due to the latter's tolerance toward the Christian exegetes—Jerome, Augustine, and Nicholas de Lyra—all of whom were closely studied by him and quoted without prejudice, receiving praise or disapprobation as the case demanded.

Abravanel's Jewish predecessors in the realm of philosophy, whoever, by no

means received the same amount of tolerance at his hands. Men like Albalag, Palquera, Gersonides, Narboni, and others, were roundly denounced by Abravanel as infidels and misleading guides, for venturing to assume a comparatively liberal standpoint in religio-philosophical questions. Although he was the last Jewish Aristotelian, Abravanel was essentially an opponent of philosophy, for his entire conception of

As Philosopher.

Judaism, opposed to that of Maimonides and his school, was rooted in a firm conviction of God's revelation in history, and particularly in the history of the selected people. Had Abravanel not been misled by the "Guide" of Maimonides, for whom he shared the traditional veneration, he might have



Isaac Abravanel.
(Traditional portrait.)

given an exposition of his views on the relations of philosophy and religion. As it is, however, these views are confused, being at one and the same time Maimonistic, anti-Maimonistic, and, in a measure, even cabalistic. A characteristic instance of his vacillation is afforded by his most important religious work, the "Rosh Amanah" (The Pinnacle of Faith), based on Cant. iv. 8. This work, devoted to the championship of the Maimonidean thirteen articles of belief against the attacks of Crescas and Albo, ends with the statement that Maimonides compiled these articles merely in accordance with the fashion of other nations, which set up axioms or fundamental principles for their science; but that the Jewish religion has nothing in common with human science; that the teachings of the Torah are revelations from God, and therefore are all of equal value; that among them are neither principles nor corollaries from principles: which certainly is rather a lame conclusion for a work purporting to be a defense of Maimonides. It would not be just, however, to assert that Abravanel makes a pretense of championing Maimonides, while being actually opposed to him. Abravanel is no hypocrite; wherever he thinks that Maimonides deviates from traditional belief, he does not hesitate to combat him strenuously. He thus assails Maimonides' conception that the prophetic visions were the creations of imagination. Abravanel will not hear of this explanation even for the *bat kol* of the Talmud, which, according to him, was a veritable voice made audible by God—a miracle, in fact (commentary on Gen. xvi.). In like manner Abravanel exceeded all his predecessors in combating Maimonides' theory of the "Heavenly Chariot" in Ezekiel ("Ateret Ze'kenim," xxiv., and commentary on the "Moreh," part iii. 71-74, ed. Warsaw). Indeed the most noteworthy feature of all Abravanel's philosophical disquisitions is the success with which he demonstrates the weak points in the Maimonidean system.

One point of Maimonides' system, however, and one that was not strictly in the line of tradition, found in Abravanel a zealous imitator:

As Apologete. the belief in a Messiah. He felt deeply the hopelessness and despair which possessed his brethren in the

years following their expulsion from Spain, and set himself, therefore, to champion the Messianic belief and to strengthen it among his desponding brethren. With this aim he wrote the following three works: "Ma'yene ha-Yeshu'ah" (Sources of Salvation), completed Dec. 6, 1496; "Yeshu'ot Meshiho" (The Salvation of His Anointed), completed Dec. 20, 1497; and "Mashmia' Yeshu'ah" (Proclaiming Salvation), completed Feb. 26, 1498—all of them devoted to the exposition of the Jewish belief concerning the Messiah and the Messianic age. The first-named of these is in the form of a commentary upon Daniel, in which he controverts both the Christian exposition and the Jewish rationalism of this book. Curiously enough, in opposition to the Talmud and all later rabbinical tradition, he counts Daniel among the prophets, coinciding therein—but therein only—with the current Christian interpretation. He is impelled to this by the fact that Daniel furnishes the foundation for his Messianic theory. The remainder of his commentary is devoted to an exhaustive and caustic criticism of the Christian exposition.

The second work is probably unique in being an exposition of the doctrine concerning the Messiah according to the traditional testimony of Talmud and Midrash; it is valuable for its exhaustive treatment and clearness of presentation. Of no less im-

portance is his third apologetic work, which contains a collection of all the Messianic passages of the Bible and their interpretations, in the course of which latter Abravanel very frequently attacks the Christian interpretation of these passages. It contains (pp. 32-34b, ed. Amsterdam) a description of the Messianic age as conceived by the Jewish orthodoxy of the Middle Ages. These apologetic works of Abravanel were widely read by his coreligionists, as is evidenced by their frequent republication, and they contributed undoubtedly to the reassurance of many of his brethren as to a better future for Israel.

The following list of Abravanel's works is arranged alphabetically, according to the Hebrew alphabet, the date of the first edition being given in each case:

- (1) "Ateret Ze'kenim" (Crown of the Ancients), Sabbionetta, 1557; (2) "Yeshu'ot Meshiho" (The Salvation of His Anointed), Karlsruhe, 1828; (3) "Maamar Kazer" (Short Treatise), Venice, 1574; (4) "Ma'yene ha-Yeshu'ah" (Sources of Salvation), Ferrara, 1551; also at Naples, no date, possibly *ed. princeps*; (5) "Mashmia' Yeshu'ah" (Proclaiming Salvation), Salonica, 1526; (6) "Mif'alot Elohim" (Works of God), Venice, 1592; (7) "Mirkebet ha-Mishneh" (Second Chariot), Sabbionetta, 1551; (8) "Nahlat Abot" (The Paternal Inheritance), Constantinople, 1505; (9) "Perush" (Commentary) on the Pentateuch, Venice, 1579; (10) "Perush" on the Earlier Prophets, Pesaro, 1511 (doubtful); (11) "Perush" on the Later Prophets, Pesaro, 1520 (?); (12) "Perush" on Maimonides' "Moreh Nebukim," Karlsruhe, 1831; (13) "Rosh Amanah" (The Pinnacle of Faith), Amsterdam, 1505; (14) "Shamayim Hado-shim" (The New Heavens), Rödelsheim, 1828; (15) "Zurot ha-Yesodot" (Forms of the Elements), Sabbionetta, 1557; (16) "Teshubot" (Responses), addressed to Saul ha-Kohen of Candia, Venice, 1574. See also ARAMA, DAVID; BIBAGO, ABRAHAM.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Autobiographical notices are given in the introduction to his commentaries on Joshua, Kings, and Deuteronomy and in his *Teshubot*; Baruch ben Perah, preface to Abravanel's *Ma'yene* (is of great value); Carmoly, in Jost's *Annalen*, 1839, p. 101; also an anonymous writer, *ib.* p. 181; Luz-zatto, *ibid.* 1840, pp. 17, 24; Jost, *Gesch. d. Israeliten*, iii. 104-109; Grätz, *Gesch. d. Juden*, viii. and ix., see index; M. H. Friedländer, *Chachme ha-Dorot*, Brünn, 1880, pp. 138-150; Schwerin-Abaranel, in Berliner's *Magazin*, 1891, xviii. 133-145, 235-241; Steinschneider, *Cat. Bodl.* No. 5302; Fürst, *Bibl. Jud.* pp. 11-15; *The American Israelite* (Cincinnati, O.), 1893, pp. 212, 220, 228, 236, 244, contains a translation (incomplete) of the *Rosh Amanah*.

L. G.

Isaac Abravanel: 1. Son of Joseph Abravanel, and grandson of the Bible-commentator; was distinguished for his philanthropy and his devotion to science. He lived at Ferrara, Italy, where he died in 1573. He entrusted the education of his children to Isaac de Lattes in 1567. Amalus Lusitanus was in friendly intercourse with him and a frequent visitor at his house. 2. A rich and highly respected man who lived at Venice in 1668.

Jonah Abravanel: 1. Poet; flourished at Amsterdam in the seventeenth century; died there Aug. 11, 1667. He was the son of the physician Joseph Abravanel, and a nephew of Manasseh ben Israel. He wrote "Elegio em Louvar da Nova Yesiba, instituido por o Senhor Yshac Pereira, de que he Ros Yesiba o Senhor Haham Menasse ben Israel" (Amsterdam, 1644). He wrote also elegies upon the martyrs Isaac de Castro Tartas (1647) and the Bernalis (1655). He published with Dr. Ephraim Bueno, after 1630, ritualistic works and "Psalterio de David . . . translado con toda fidelidad" (Amsterdam, 1644). 2. A learned and highly respected man who lived also at Amsterdam, where