**Paper 1**

Title: Abravanel's Shifting Visions of Empire: Collaboration, Messianic Clash and Sephardic Elitism

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Abstract:

Jewish-Iberian financier and scholar Isaac Abravanel (1437-1508) is a key figure for understanding the complex participation of Jews in early modern empire-building. Abravanel, in both his actions and his writings, exhibits conflicting attitudes toward the new Iberian empires. His actions ranged from collaboration in his roles in service to Iberian crowns, to resistance to the 1492 expulsion decree by the emerging Spanish Empire, to his 1503 nomination by the Republic of Venice as an informal agent to negotiate an agreement with the new Portuguese empire then reaching the shores of India. In parallel, Abravanel’s biblical commentaries reveals a profound reflection on empires. This paper seeks to map Abravanel's changing evaluations of the imperial phenomenon, beginning with his collaboration with the emerging Spanish and Portuguese empires, continuing with his post-1492 messianic vision of a clash of empires, and concluding with his Sephardic elitism in the context of imperial conflict.