**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 over the course of his life, exhibits conflicting attitudes toward the new Iberian empires. His actions ranged from collaboration in his roles in service to both Iberian crowns, to his resistance and subsequent acquiescence to the expulsion decree by the emerging Spanish Empire in 1492, to the fact that in 1503, the Republic of Venice choose him as an informal agent to negotiate an agreement with the new Portuguese empire, then reaching the shores of India. In parallel to his engagement with empires through his political and financial activities, Abravanel’s biblical commentaries reveal a profound and complex reflection on empires. This paper seeks to map Abravanel's changing conceptions and evaluations of the imperial phenomenon, beginning with his early collaboration with the emerging Spanish and Portuguese empires, continuing with his messianic vision of a clash of empires that he expressed after the 1492 expulsion, and concluding with his late Sephardic elitism in the context of imperial conflict.