Many of the Aegean affinities of the material culture at Ashkelon disappeared after the 11th century, but the plan of the city established in the early Iron Age persisted. Further, fortifications on the north tell show that the line of defense for Iron II Ashkelon followed the line of the Middle Bronze Age ramparts and encompassed Ashkelon's full 60 hectares. The 9th- and 8th-century occupation is more difficult to characterize in the occupational areas because the deep foundations of the 7th-century buildings destroyed all but the barest foundations of 9th- and 8th-century Ashkelon in the areas that have been excavated. Ceramic assemblages fill the gap, but little can be said about life in the city during the early Iron II period. By the 7th century, the city underwent a renaissance with a surging population, renewed construction, and extensive international connections. When Nebuchadnezzar II ravaged the entire city, he destroyed the inhabitants but preserved a remarkable picture of a prosperous Iron Age port. Finds include imports from Greece, Cyprus, Syria, Lebanon, Egypt, and Judah, alongside the weights and measures for commerce, production facilities for wine, shops of all shapes and varieties, and even the skeletal remains of the inhabitants themselves.

Occupation at the site did not resume until the late 6th century, when it became a Tyrian dependency. Excavations have uncovered warehouses built along the sea and villas closer to the center of the city. Within the open spaces, hundreds of dogs were individually buried, an oddity whose significance is not fully understood. The Persian period occupation ended in a destruction numismatically dated to around 290 BCE.

The Hellenistic and Early Roman period saw renewed interest in the fortifications on the northern side of the city as well as rebuilding of the villas on the southern mound, but much of the material from these periods was overbuilt by extensive Byzantine constructions which have been uncovered in virtually every excavation area. On the northern tell, an extensive bathhouse complex was partially exposed. On the eastern side of the city, the church of "St. Mary of the Green" highlights one religious group within this cosmopolitan city. In the south, a brothel and bathhouse, complete with heart-shaped columns, erotic oil lamps, and discarded progeny in the sewers show another side of the this Mediterranean seaport.

Excavations demonstrate that Umayyad, Abbasid, and Fatamid Ashkelon followed the plan of the Earlier Byzantine city. The church became a Mosque, the fortifications were reinforced; yet the city remained multi-ethnic garden seaport that it had always been. The beauty of the city described by Julian of Ashkelon was cultivated by the later rulers of the city. The Fatamid fortifications of the city, which were the subject of such dispute during the Crusades, are still visible in their half-ruined state. Excavations have uncovered broad sections of the rampart near the northern gate, even discovering a Fatamid dedicatory inscription. The inscription had been defaced Crusader shield graffiti and tossed to the bottom of the moat, a harbinger of what would befall the entire city by the end of the 13th century.

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Daniel Master

Ashkenaz

I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament

Ashkenaz (MT *ʾAškĕnaz*) is listed in the Table of Nations in Gen 10:3 as the son of Gomer, grandson of Japheth (ancestor of the nations to the north and west of Canaan), and great-grandson of Noah (see also 1 Chr 1:5). The only other biblical reference to Ashkenaz is Jer 51:27. Jeremiah summons three nations with militaristic reputations to war against Babylon in judgment for Babylon's excessive cruelty against Jerusalem and Judah in 587 BCE. The three nations are Ararat, Minni, and Ashkenaz, a triad of enemies all associated with the northern part of the ancient Near East.

Just as Gomer and Ashkenaz are paired together in Gen 10:2–3, so too Assyrian inscriptions (Esarhaddon) linked Gimirrai and Ashkuza as a pair. The Greek historian Herodotus described

Cimmerians and Scythians as paired nations in the same area. The similarities in Gomer/Gimirrai/Cimmerians has led scholars to make a similar association with Ashkenaz/Ashkuza/Scythians. If correct, the people of Ashkenaz or Scythians were Indo-European in background, first settling in southern Europe to the north of the Black Sea. They moved and displaced the Cimmerians and settled around Lake Urmia. They engaged in military campaigns against Assyria, developing a militaristic reputation and ruling the northern Near East for a time.

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II. Judaism

The name Ashkenaz is first mentioned among the descendants of Noah (Gen 10:3). It becomes identified with Germany (and especially the Rhineland) somewhere before the 10th century. From there, as German Jews spread westward to France and further eastward to Austria and Bohemia, the term Ashkenaz takes on the larger connotation of those areas that followed the religious and cultural traditions of earlier Rhineland Jewry. With the emigration of Ashkenazic Jewry from western to eastern Europe in the 15th and 16th centuries, the center of gravity shifts to Moravia, Poland, and Lithuania.

Ephraim Kanarfogel

See also →Ashkenaz, Reception of the Bible in; →Ashkenazim; →German Pietism

Ashkenaz, Reception of the Bible in

Already in the period prior to the First Crusade and continuing through the Middle Ages, the text of the Bible served as an introduction to the reading and understanding of Hebrew for elementary-level students. In addition, tutors (*melammedim*) taught the weekly Torah portion together with the Aramaic Targum, and later with Rashi's commentary, and often taught other books of the Bible as well. Rabbenu Gershom (d. 1028) discusses the case of a *melammed* who was contracted to teach his young pupil "all of Scripture" and subsequently claimed that he had done so. The sections in *Sefer Ḥasidim* (ca. 1200) that discuss biblical studies for children attempted to guide that study, not create it.

The text of the Bible and its interpretation were studied in the leading Rhineland academies of Mainz and Worms during the 11th century, although the literary remains of that study are not extensive. Thus, Rashi's commentaries to the Bible were not composed in a vacuum, and his preferred method (as per his comment to Gen 3:8) of presenting "straightforward scriptural interpretations as well as aggadic or midrashic interpretations that resolved exegetical questions according to the context of the verses" reflects the tenor and goals of biblical studies in these academies. The deep familiarity of pre-Crusade rabbinic scholarship with the biblical corpus, and their reverence for it, is also evident in the instances in which leading decisors addressed halakhic questions and problems on the basis of biblical versions and their interpretation.

Nonetheless, the oft-cited formulation by the leading Tosafist (and grandson of Rashi), R. Jacob Tam of Ramerupt (d. 1171), that through study of the Babylonian Talmud (which Rabbenu Tam characterizes as a "mixture" of Scripture, Mishnah and gemara) one fulfills his obligation to study all of these areas or genres, suggests that tosafists saw and studied the Bible mainly as an adjunct to the Talmud and the halakhic process. This was indeed how several contemporary Spanish and Provençal biblical exegetes viewed the tosafist approach to biblical interpretation. At the same time, however, it must be noted that two of the so-called northern French *pashṭanim*, including Rabbenu Tam's older brother Rashbam and his student, R. Joseph ben Isaac Bekhor Shor of Orleans, were committed to both the tosafist method of talmudic study and to an appreciation (and extensive formulation) of *peshat* interpretation of the biblical text in its own right. Moreover, manuscript evidence suggests that two other students of Rabbenu Tam, R. Jacob of Orleans and R. Yom Tov of Joigny, as well as several tosafists in the first half of the 13th century including R. Isaiah b. Mali of Trani (who studied with R. Simḥah of Speyer) and R. Moses of Coucy, also composed quite a few *peshat* comments to the Torah, following the models of Rashi and Bekhor Shor (and serving as non-systematic super-commentaries), if not that of Rashbam.

The same type of approach can be found in the relatively simple comments to the Torah that R. Judah the Pious (d. 1217) transmitted to his son Moses Zal(t)man. To be sure, R. Judah and other members of the German Pietists, especially R. Judah's student R. Eleazar of Worms, also interpreted the Bible in esoteric ways, and suggested numerous *gimatriyot* and related forms of interpretation that can best be characterized as *remez*. These forms of interpretation, which also included interpretations based on the nuances of the MT, were preserved and developed further by one of the last of the tosafists, R. Meir of Rothenburg (and in turn by his young German student, R. Jacob b. Asher Baʿal ha-Turim, who later emigrated to Spain). Several Ashkenazic treatises on the workings of the MT are extant in manuscript, including one by Rabbenu Tam's student, R. Menaḥem of Joigny.

R. Eleazar of Worms also authored a lengthy commentary to Midrash Ekhah Rabbah, and he cautioned Torah scholars to familiarize themselves with all of the books of the Bible. Tosafists and Ger-