

THE ALHAMBRA



THE ALHAMBRA

A Cycle of Studies
on the
Eleventh Century in Moorish Spain

by
Frederick P. Bargebuhr

Walter de Gruyter & Co.

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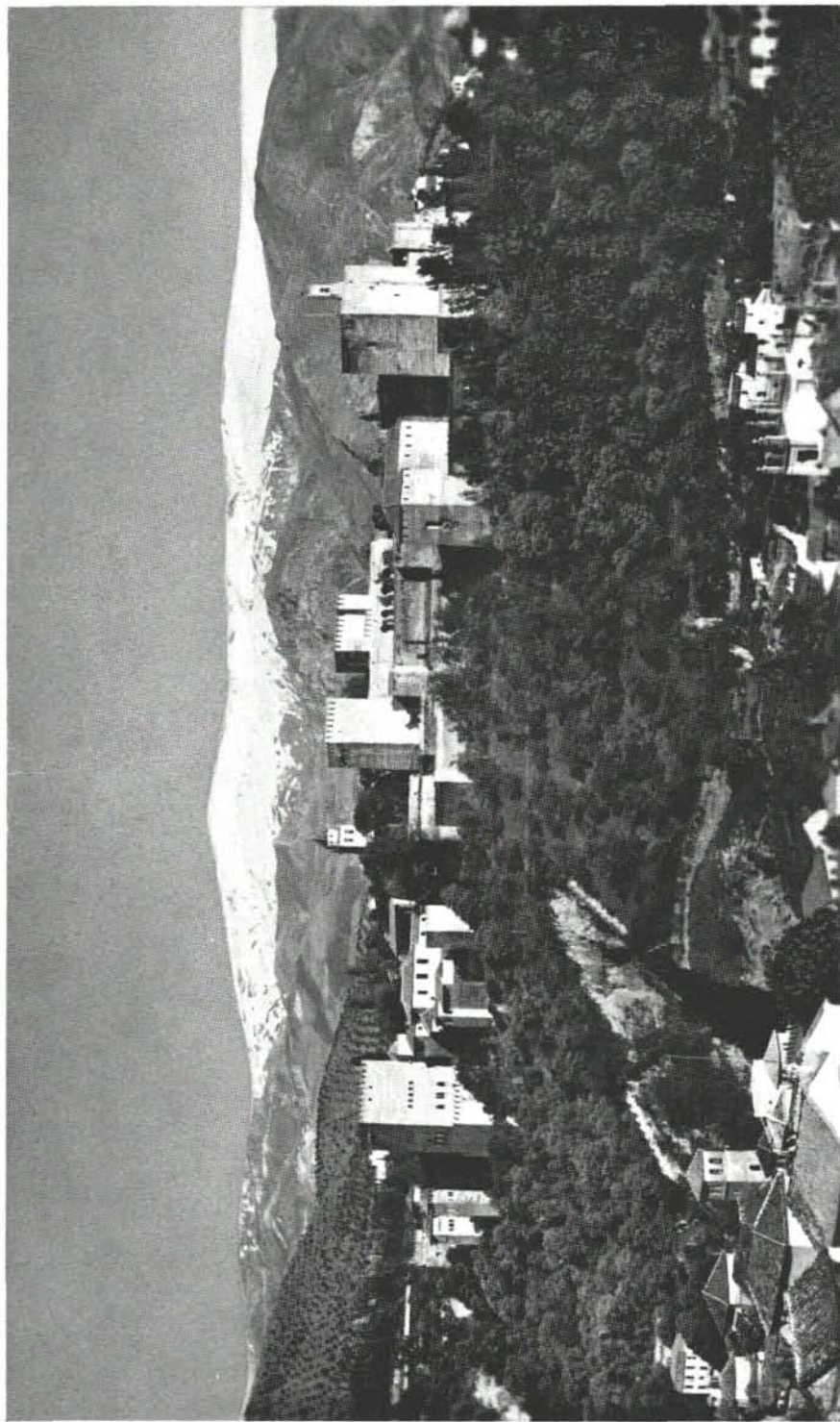
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Alhambra, General View (on the right side the Fortress, left side the Palace) with the Sierra Nevada

To
GERTRUD BREYSIG

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The Warburg Institute of the University of London, July 29, 1965
(Casa Jablonski, Montagnola, Ticino, August 16, 1965)

CHRONOLOGICAL CHART

A few year designations of the historian based on Islamic and Jewish calendars without month and year indications are subject to slight errors when carried over into the Christian calendar system.

Jews

993 Samuel ibn Naghrālla born in Cordova or Merida

1013 Samuel and the family of Ibn Gabirol left Cordova

circa

1022 Ibn Gabirol born in Malaga

1027 Samuel was named vizier by Ḥabbūs

1035 Yehōseph ibn Naghrālla born

Muslims

710 First Arab invasion of Spain

711 Mention of Alhambra in connection with the Arab conquest, designated as the year of an Arab victory over a Visigoth king

756 The Umayyad 'Abd ar-Raḥmān I established his rule over Islamic Spain

994 Ibn Ḥazm born in Cordova

1009 East side of Cordova sacked by Berbers

1011—12 The suburbs of Cordova destroyed by Berbers

1013 Ibn Ḥazm left Cordova and went to Almeria

1018 Umayyad attempt at restoration

1025 Zāwī, Berber ruler of the Zīrid dynasty, left Spain. The successor Ḥabbūs built the new capital city in Granada

circa

1027 Ibn Ḥazm completed his book *Necklace of the Dove*

1031 Attempt of Umayyad restoration failed

1037 Death of Ḥabbūs. Succession of Bādīs as king with Samuel's support

- 1038 Death of the last Gaon, Rab Hāi. Victory of Granada (with Samuel) over Zuhair, ruler of Almeria, and his vizier Ibn 'Abbās in a battle near Alfuentes
- 1039 Execution of Yeqūthiel ibn Ḥasan in Saragossa (March—April)
- 1040 Army of Granada is unsuccessful in struggle against Muḥammad ibn 'Abbād of Seville
- circa
- 1041 Revolt of Yiddir. Conquest of Somantin (with Samuel)
- 1042 Victory of Granada (with Samuel) near Lorca. (Samuel's poetical last will and advice addressed to Yehōšeph)
- 1045 Samuel rescued in battle near Jaén. Ibn Gabirol's ethical work finished in Saragossa
- 1049 Yehōšeph's wedding; Ibn Gabirol present in Granada
- 1053 Murder of the Berber notables in Seville. Samuel prevented Bādīs from wiping out the Arabs of Granada
- 1056 Between December 2—11 Samuel died in Granada
- 1057 Bādīs incorporated Malaga into the kingdom of Granada
- 1064 Buluqqīn, heir apparent to the throne, was murdered in Granada, allegedly by Yehōšeph. Death of Ibn Ḥazm
- 1066 Yehōšeph murdered
- circa
- 1070 Ibn Gabirol died
- between
- 1076—77 Bādīs died
- 1077 'Abd Allāh succeeded to power as the last Zīrid king of Granada
- 1090 'Abd Allāh dethroned and exiled to Africa

“Alhambram, pro! Dii immortales! Qualem regiam! unicam in orbe terrarum crede!”

Exclamation of Peter Martyr on seeing the conquered fortress, January 2, 1492.

Die Poesie leistet mehr für die Erkenntnis des Wesens der Menschheit (als die Geschichte); auch Aristoteles hat schon gesagt: καὶ φιλοσοφώτερον καὶ σπουδαιότερον ποίησις ἱστορίας ἐστίν. Die Dichtung ist etwas Philosophischeres und Tieferes als die Geschichte, und zwar ist dies deshalb wahr, weil das Vermögen, welches der Poesie zugrunde liegt, an sich ein viel höheres als das des größten Historikers und auch die Wirkung, wozu sie bestimmt ist, eine viel höhere als die der Geschichte ist. Dafür findet die Geschichte in der Poesie eine ihrer allerwichtigsten Quellen und eine ihrer allerreinsten und schönsten.

Jacob Burckhardt, *Weltgeschichtliche Betrachtungen*, Bern, 1947, p. 129.

. . . On y verrait comment, autour d'une pareille découverte, sont venues gronder obscurément des concupiscences et des rivalités d'érudits qui sont loin d'être anodines . . .

J. Doresse, *Les livres secrets des gnostics d'Égypte* Paris (Plon), 1958, p. 142.

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PROLOGUE

The Story of a Discovery and a Reply to Critics

In the major portion of this book my aim is to establish the fact that the old fortification buildings of the Alhambra in Granada were transformed into a palace three centuries before the date commonly accepted. This will involve a fresh examination of Hebrew and Arabic documents, some of them not hitherto considered to relate to the Alhambra, in conjunction with the archaeological evidence. All these sources, as we shall see, combine to show not only that the earliest Alhambra palace was constructed at the date indicated, but also that the patron of the undertaking was Yehōseph ibn Naghrālla, a Jewish vizier who served under the Berber king Bādīs from 1055 to 1065.

Moreover, it can be said with certainty that Yehōseph, a man of vast cultural and political ambition, erected the celebrated Fount of Lions in the Alhambra as a highly symbolic expression of his "Solomonic" aspirations. The Alhambra Palace is revealed by these studies to be the climactic monument of a most complex and deep-rooted development which springs from Islamic, Byzantine, Sāsānian and, last but not least, Hebrew artistic and literary traditions. Subsequent parts of this study will be devoted to the wider literary aspects of this movement.

At the risk of anticipating the content of the second part of this book I offer in this prologue an abrége of my thesis for those readers who do not intend to follow the proofs for it step by step. For some hasty critics of the first brief publication of my Alhambra studies do not seem to have read further than the first page and have believed themselves able to refute my arguments on that basis alone¹. I would urge, however, truly interested readers to follow my argument in its full form in Part II. To these readers I also wish to apologize for engaging in polemics, which is certainly not my inclination.

The main sources are the following:

(a) There are various references to Yehōseph in the Arabic memoirs of the last Berber king of Granada, 'Abd Allāh, the grandson and immediate successor of King Bādīs². This 'Abd Allāh speaks of Yehōseph, the vizier of his grandfather, with utter hostility, accusing him of the murder of his

Notes 1—2

1 Bargebuhr, Alhambra

royal father. Furthermore, he states that Yehōšeph had built for himself "the Alhambra fortress," (*al-Ḥiṣn al-Ḥamrā'*) [sic], to make this his living quarters once he had usurped power over Granada. He also relates, indirectly within a recounted dialogue between King Bādīs and one of his advisors, that Yehōšeph's mansion was more beautiful than the king's own palace. According to the same memoirs as well as other sources, Yehōšeph had indeed arrogated to himself the position of a major-domo in the kingdom of Granada and was plotting to dethrone the aging Berber king with the help of the ruler of Almeria.

(b) The primary document, however, which led to my discovery was a Hebrew encomium by Solomon ibn Gabirol. This poem, after a prelude of love poetry based upon the Song of Solomon, describes a palace and is, at the same time, a "descriptive" nature poem and a document of aulic policy designed to further his Maecenas' ambitions³. As such it explains the Solomonic symbolism of the building. The poem, which does not name the patron addressed, was re-edited *in toto* only recently (by one of my critics) and describes the magnificent castle erected by this patron, "exalted above all its surrounding" with "its walls fortified with towers" and many gates, with a rotating dome "like the Palanquin of Solomon" above a noble hall, with animal statuary spouting water up to the treetops, and — described in all details and with an interesting clue to its symbolic intent — a fount of lions. This fount, the poet says, was a likeness of the biblical Solomon's Brazen Sea, which was a basin supported by twelve oxen. (Pl. 5) His patron, Ibn Gabirol gives us to understand, chose lions instead of oxen to symbolize the kings whom he kept under control with his guidance as a shepherd keeps his grazing flock. In other words, the basin resting upon the lions symbolizes the patron who has established his rule over kings — symbolized by the royal animals, but by the innuendo of the Solomonic precedent "standing" for oxen. This witty flattery may very well elucidate the patron's true symbolic intent. In further contrast to Solomon's Sea the lions are described by Ibn Gabirol as spouting water.

Was this patron, the addressee of Ibn Gabirol's poem, Yehōšeph? Are the fountains described by Ibn Gabirol and the extant Fount of Lions of the Alhambra identical? (Pl. 2) We would first of all have to rely upon 'Abd Allāh's memoirs in order to relate Ibn Gabirol's praise of an anonymous Maecenas with Yehōšeph, as the builder of a magnificent castle. But is there more evidence for this connection? The first question can only be answered by an indirect but conclusive negative demonstration.

Granada had been advanced to the status of a city and of a capital by the eleventh-century usurping Berber kings, the employers of Samuel ibn Naghrālla, Yehōšeph's father who, having been trained in all the administra-

tive skills and courtly arts in metropolitan Cordova, could by his own talents and by his ability to attract others confer some splendor on this hitherto provincial town. Yehōseph, and his father, had nourished Solomonic artistic ambitions in poetry and architecture, as will become increasingly evident in the course of this study. The Solomonic implications of the Fount of Lions as it now exists in the Alhambra are not a new discovery: the better guidebooks to Spain contain the observation, made long ago by art historians, that this fount has its unique counterpart and iconographic precedent in Solomon's Brazen Sea. Samuel, who bore the title *han-Nāghīdh*, 'The Leader' (of the Jews), an outstanding Hebrew poet and patron of the arts and letters, the predecessor of Yehōseph, had employed Ibn Gabirol as his house encomiast and, most probably, as Yehōseph's tutor. Ibn Gabirol's relationship to father and son, partly friendly and partly strained, must, according to his extant poems, have overshadowed his entire life. If the patron praised in this poem were not Yehōseph, whose near-contemporary Ibn Gabirol was and with whom he had been associated from their very early years, one would have to look for another Jewish major-domo, a friend of Hebrew poetry, the *de facto* ruler over many kings by the counsel he gave them, a builder of a castle worthy of a king who was emancipated from the injunctions against images and likenesses of Islam and the Second Commandment, a palace filled with works of art of Solomonic symbolism. If such a second person had existed in the eleventh century, in the environment of Ibn Gabirol, the Jewish sources would be full of his praise and accounts of his achievements. I shall explain later why such a poem, in spite of some exaggeration which is easily isolated, cannot be regarded as simply empty flattery: praise of a fervently wooed patron for possessions which are not his, would in the way of a *lucus a non lucendo* be a foolhardy step leading to an immediate rift.

It is, therefore, I feel, incumbent upon my critics to show why King 'Abd Allāh's statement that Yehōseph had built for himself an Alhambra palace, superior to the king's own, should not be accepted as literally true. There is, in addition, another reason why the beautiful eleventh-century parts of the present Alhambra (easily identifiable by their masonry) cannot have been built by these Berber kings themselves, who are frequently described in contemporary sources as utter barbarians and miserable patrons of the arts. Their palace was on the Albaicin Hill opposite the Alhambra Hill (called "The Palace of Bādīs") and there is no reason why nor indication that a Berber king built another palace. 'Abd Allāh, if he had done so himself, would have mentioned such an accomplishment in his memoirs and he, as ruler of Granada, must have known the facts (about Yehōseph) better than anybody else. The remnants of these substantial Alhambra

constructions are traceable and are marked in maps showing the growth of the structures in a vague way as "Zirid" after the family name of this Berber dynasty or as structures antedating certain centuries. Their masonry differs from previous and later structures and consists, as the art historians have pointed out, of square patches of smaller natural stones within frames and belts of brick. We find this "striped" masonry in some of the existing towers of the Alhambra Fortress and also, as I satisfied myself, throughout quite a number of buildings of the present Alhambra Palace, even in the Comares Tower. A number of excavations have been carried out and have revealed more eleventh-century masonry, that of previous structures which connected the now separated Fortress and Palace areas. An attempt to ascribe these extended buildings to 'Abd Allāh is, to repeat, futile. He mentions in his memoirs, referring to a time after Yehōseph's death, that, while refitting Granada's fortifications, he built a wall to include the Alhambra buildings, in order to prepare the city for a siege which he expected. Evidently now, due to Yehōseph's constructions the Alhambra warranted circumvallation even under pressing circumstances. Had 'Abd Allāh built more than this on the Alhambra Hill, the passage I cited would be the place to raise such a claim, instead of ascribing the merit to the hated vizier of his grandfather. Conversely, there is no indication of the erection of Alhambra buildings — let alone a palace — before the elevation of Granada to a seat of government by the Berber kings, except older Alhambra fortifications, the foundations of which are still visible as the substructure of Yehōseph's towers. Moreover, the leading Spanish art historian Gómez-Moreno has pointed out that the lions of the existing Fount could not have been executed later than the eleventh century: the Almoravids and Almohades who succeeded the "petty kings" in Moorish Spain were intolerant of three-dimensional plastic art.

This dating is a powerful argument towards settling the second question, referring to the identity of the fount of lions in Ibn Gabirol's poem and that now existing in the Alhambra, in my favor. There are also other, indirect arguments. These all contribute to show the engagement of the Naghrāllas, father and son, in hydraulic projects. First of all, an Arabic poem composed in order to incite the Muslims of Granada against Yehōseph mentions his luxurious mansion to which he had diverted a current of water ("well") which had previously supplied the city⁴. I am convinced that this is a reference to a diversion of water from the River Darro to the Alhambra Hill, without which the hill would have remained waterless. The accusation makes sense only if this refers to quantities which were previously sufficient to supply an entire quarter (most likely highly located) of Granada and then ample enough to supply Yehōseph's watergardens.

Again, Ibn Gabirol's description of the fount of lions "like unto Solomon's Sea" and supported by water-spouting lions is extremely specific. I shall show that there is no true counterpart to this traceable in the many descriptions by Arabic poets and historians of eleventh-century fountains and pools decorated with animal statuary. The animals in all other fountains seem to have spouted *into* a basin, whereas, paradoxically enough, the Alhambra lions stand, in imitation of the oxen supporting Solomon's Temple basin, "with their hindparts inward" (I Kings VII. 25) beneath the basin and can, therefore, not spout water into it. They rather direct it away from the basin into channels in the pavement (also mentioned, in another connection, in Ibn Gabirol's poem). On the other hand, the artistic inspiration which underlies the architectural (and poetic) ambitions of Yehōseph is derived, of course, from Moorish courtly ideas. Also, the water-spouting lions themselves (a fashionable contemporary device) were most likely executed by a Muslim artist, presumably the same who fashioned the two carved lions sitting on their haunches and spouting water into the Partal Pond of the Alhambra, which they now decorate.

In two of his poems Samuel ibn Naghrālla describes the elaborate effects he had achieved by the judicious arrangement of water spouts and sources of light. In a third poem — and in the editorial prefatory remarks by Yehōseph who compiled a diwan of his father's poems — Samuel's interest in statuary is apparent: he describes a brazier ornamented with sculptured birds. He also gives a poetical account of a water-garden which Yehōseph, when a mere child, had created as a surprise for his proud father. It therefore cannot astonish us if Yehōseph, on coming to power, carried out such works with even greater ambition and with that very Solomonic symbolism which permeated the thinking of this circle, (as is evident from more than this one poem by Ibn Gabirol).

One document which, at the beginning of my studies, seemed to contradict me was the verse inscription on the basin of the present Fount of Lions, by which the Fount has hitherto been dated. The inscription is ascribed to Ibn Zamrak, the house poet of King Muḥammad V, who ruled from 1354 to 1358 and from 1362 to 1381⁵. But this source itself does not make Muḥammad V the builder of the fountain: the inscription most modestly says: "God gave to him these abodes⁶." Moreover, this apparent obstacle to my argument was removed by the observation, already made by Spanish art historians, that the present basin, oversized as it is, is not that of the original Fount of Lions. The original basin, as one might expect in the "Sleeping Beauty" country of Andalusia, seems to have been preserved and to be identical with that inserted into the floor of the Abencerajes Hall adjacent to the Court of Lions. This, most probably,

original dodecagonal basin, if it were re-placed upon the backs of the twelve stone lions of the present fount, would fit with its twelve facets evenly between their necks and fulfil the original intent of the artist. The crowns of the lions' heads would be mirrored and distorted in the undulating surface of the water in the basin (in the fashion of an Achaemenian piece supported by eight lions shown a few years ago in the great exhibition of Persian art and its catalog)⁷ (Pl. 5a). My contention that the stone lions themselves belong to a much earlier period than the basin they support at present, has already been accepted by leading Spanish art historians. For example, M. Gómez-Moreno has treated the lions in his standard volume on *El arte español hasta los Almohades* of the monumental *Ars Hispaniae*⁸. I owe my first knowledge of this endorsement of my arguments to my friends among Spanish art historians.

To reiterate: I ask my critics once more to consider my arguments *positivo*: 'Abd Allāh's clear assertion that Yehōseph built a superb Alhambra castle; and *negativo*: the evidence of Ibn Gabirol's poem which describes comprehensively a palace which his patron had erected, which two arguments allow me to challenge them, if they contend that this palace is not the Alhambra palace of the eleventh century, to state reasons why the buildings cannot be identical and to point out where such another building described by Ibn Gabirol could, with some likelihood, have existed, leaving behind, most likely, some traces, material and literary; a palace of that time containing identical motifs, with an identical fount of lions and another Jewish builder among the patrons of Ibn Gabirol who was a promoter of Solomonic architecture, sculptural art, and Hebrew poetry. Given the historical sources and the unique combination of events, in addition to the extant eleventh-century parts of the Alhambra, this would be an absurd and ultimately fruitless undertaking.

The objections leveled against my discovery, which seem to emanate from two sources, reveal a lack of understanding concerning the archaeological problems of the Alhambra, the history of architecture in general, and the documentary value of Ibn Gabirol's "descriptive" poetry, which belongs to a specific Arabic and Hebrew school of "veracity." I also repeat that any poet who writes to satisfy his patron by praise, would certainly not claim in a concise but, at important points, detailed poem, that his patron had constructed a certain palace with specific highlights of decoration when, in fact, he had not done so. Such an act would not only invite dismissal: it could in no way be representative of the philosopher Ibn Gabirol's relationship with a most refined patron of art and poetry.

At the risk of seeming to waste my readers' time, I now specify the two objections raised by my critics. The first consists of the observation

that the Arab sources (apparently 'Abd Allāh's memoirs) speak, in connection with Yehōšeph's building, sometimes of a 'mansion' (*dār*), sometimes of a 'fortress' (*ḥiṣn*), and, in another case, of a 'castle' or of a 'palace' (*qaṣr*), and that therefore these sources refer to several separate structures and not to the Alhambra palace.

The castle of Bādīs on the Albaicin Hill (of which only minor remnants are left) was called either *Qaṣr Bādīs* "The Castle of Bādīs" or later on *al-Qaṣaba al-Qadīma* "The Old Capital" or "The Old Capitol" and this at a time when the Alhambra palace, which later became the domicile of the kings of Granada, had become the "New *Qaṣaba*." There can be no doubt that what is now called the Alhambra Fortress contains the oldest parts of the Alhambra buildings (as the brickwork shows) and, as superstructures and additions, the eleventh-century palace of Yehōšeph, who added to the fortifications palatial garden courts, described in Ibn Gabirol's poem. For this reason, 'Abd Allāh's statement that Yehōšeph built for himself the Alhambra Fortress (*ḥiṣn*) makes perfect sense and it is no less logical that, when declaring Yehōšeph's building more beautiful than the king's own, 'Abd Allāh uses the word 'palace'. The extant Alhambra, consisting of an Alhambra Fortress and the adjacent Alhambra Palace, best explains the varying usage of terms. Excavations have revealed remnants of original eleventh-century structures which originally linked the two parts more closely. Since 'Abd Allāh also stresses that Yehōšeph built the Alhambra as his living quarters, the use of the word 'mansion' (*dār*) (e. g. in Abū Ishāq's poem of hatred against Yehōšeph) appears no less natural: *dār* applies to both the individual 'house' or 'farm' or, as in *Dār as-Salām* 'Residence of Well-being' (the city of Damascus), to a whole city. Nobody would be astonished to find a writer referring, for example, if only for the sake of variety, to a horse as 'mammal', or 'quadruped', or 'stallion' or 'mare'.

The second objection concerns the year of Ibn Gabirol's death. Moses ibn Ezra speaks of Ibn Gabirol's death as occurring "after he had 'overshot' the thirties" so that one would think in this connection of ca. 1052 or 1053. (The poet's date of birth was most likely 1021—22.)⁹ Yehōšeph could hardly have built his palace earlier than 1060 when Ibn Gabirol was thirty-eight; consequently, since Ibn Gabirol allegedly died seven or eight years earlier, he could, they aver, not have seen or described Yehōšeph's building. But Moses Ibn Ezra was no historian and a notorious muddler of his materials¹⁰. No more reliable are the Hebrew poet al-Ḥarizī who in his *Ṭaḥkemōnī* attributes to the poet a life of twenty-nine years, and the Arab historian Abū Qāsim ibn Sa'id who in his *Ṭabaqāt al-umam* (*Categories of the Nations*) states, on the one hand, that Ibn Gabirol died "before he was

thirty” and, on the other hand, specifies the year of his death as 1057—58 when the poet was thirty-five or thirty-six years old¹¹. Abraham Zakkūtō, the learned physician and chronicler of the fifteenth century, indicates in his *Seḡber hay-Yōḥasīn* the year of Ibn Gabirol’s death as 1070¹². This is in full harmony with an internal evidence: in Ibn Gabirol’s hymn *Shoresb Ben-ō Yīshay*, he bewails the termination of the millennium after the Jews’ expulsion from their homeland by the Romans, which would indicate the year 1068 (or 1070) when the poet must have been between forty-six and forty-eight years of age. The lines read (in Davidson’s translation):¹³

The years are a thousand since broken
and scattered we wander in exile.

Not only the poet but the Jewish community must have placed great messianic expectation in this millennial date. For this reason it would have been ludicrous and even blasphemous to speak of a frustration of these hopes before this deadline had been passed¹⁴. Furthermore, there are in Ibn Gabirol’s great meditation, *The Royal Crown*, in a passage where he speaks of “the remainder of my brief days,” words such as one would hardly write before one’s advancing thirties; “Is not the bulk of my days passed and vanished ” (Davidson’s translation)¹⁵.

In a futile attempt to save something of the alleged death “in his thirties,” against which there is so much evidence, Professor H. Schirmann decides that the poet died between his thirty-first and thirty-seventh year (1053—58), as if this could be easily reconciled with Ibn Ezra’s “over-shooting the thirties.” He dismisses a similar poem by Ibn Gabirol, *Shen-ōth-eynū sāph-ū*¹⁶ in which the poet speaks of 461 years of servitude under Ishmael. If this is 461 A. H., as is accepted by several scholars, this would refer to 1069. Schirmann disqualifies this hymn as a source for Ibn Gabirol’s biography because certain manuscripts give at this place a later, perfectly absurd date. These are evidently retouchings inserted by copyists attempting to bring the poem up-to-date for synagogical use in their day and are immaterial. As long as no manuscript gives a still earlier date, and, most important, as long as the plausible 1069 is supported by the parallel in the above-quoted poem, *Shoresb Ben-ō Yīshay*¹⁷, we are bound to accept it. If forged certificates are occasionally found, this does not mean they take precedence over all others.

Schirmann dismisses this overwhelming internal evidence in favor of the garbled data of Moses ibn Ezra and Ibn Sa’id’s mere chance scraps of characterizations of a few Jewish personalities. He omits the testimony of the later Jewish chronicler but indicates that Ibn Dā’ūd places Ibn Gabirol’s

death in the year 1070 (*Encyclopaedia Judaica*, article "Gabirol"). Such a reference in Ibn Dā'ūd's "*Sefer ha-Kabbala, Ende*" [sic Schirmann] does not exist. Perhaps Schirmann wished to refer to the author of *Shalsheleth haq-Qabbālāh*, Gedaliah ibn Yahyā, or to the *Sefer hay-Yōḥasīn* by Abraham Zakkūtō in which the late date of death appears. *¿Quien sabe?*

It is curious to find such an error a hundred years after Geiger wrote: "(Ibn Ezra) is not very exact when he gives thirty years as a figure, because Ibn Gabirol did not pass away before (4829) 1069; moreover, saying that he hardly exceeded the thirties might mean no more than he did not live much beyond forty. For even to such a figure we ought to add something." Geiger offers a psychological motivation for Ibn Ezra's slip, stating: "(Ibn Gabirol) was outstanding when still a youth and Ibn Ezra remembers him among his associates and competitors for the laurel who were much older than he; hence he believed himself justified in stressing his youth which would also offer an excuse for his considerable use of invective. It is a pity, however, that Ibn Ezra's words have been repeated so credulously and caused so much confusion¹⁸."

Schirmann knows, no doubt, that Geiger is not alone, that other scholars as thorough as Sachs, Munk, Kaempf, Graetz, Dubnow, Dreyer, Baron, and Davidson do not accept Ibn Ezra's statement and attribute to the poet a longer life, mainly on the basis of the testimony of Ibn Gabirol's religious poetry¹⁹. Yet, referring to the sources, Schirmann speaks of "a clear indication of an earlier death for Ibn Gabirol," i. e., before Yehōseph's erection of his Alhambra palace²⁰.

In order to make Schirmann's bias against my Alhambra discovery comprehensible, I must tell its story and of my experiences with scholars in this field. After offering a lecture on the Alhambra at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, where my thesis was received with active interest and without contradiction, I encountered in Spain a great deal of welcome assistance in my investigations from the lamented Leopoldo Torres Balbás, and was invited to lecture at the University of Madrid. However, shortly before this lecture, I had discussions with Professors García Gómez and Gómez-Moreno and found these scholars bitterly opposed to my thesis. I received the impression that the connection between the Alhambra and the family of the Naghrālla had not been entirely overlooked, but rejected for reasons of bias. At the end of my lecture at the University of Madrid, I found myself publicly contradicted by E. García Gómez — who is in no way an art historian — with statements as sweeping as "every Muslim ruler complains about the extravagance of his prime minister." Terrified by the antagonism of the powerful government speaker the audience had no courage to engage in a free discussion and dissol-

ved hastily. At the same time I had the opportunity to learn, much to my amazement, that even events of the eleventh century were still weighed in Spain for their value in modern politics. Later, a Spanish scholar stated bluntly that the Spanish government would, regardless of the truth, never "accept" my thesis, because it would diminish the Arab contribution to Spain's culture. (I was expected to realize that scholarship was steered by the Government council.) Such an attitude towards my work astounded me, first of all by its absurdity, and secondly, because I had never denied that both the general artistic incentive and the craftsmanship of the Alhambra structures, including those ordered by a Jewish patron, belonged to the Arab artistic domain. It took me some time to understand why eleventh-century history could still be a modern issue. The answers are to be found in present-day ambitions and, e. g., in the Spanish myth of the *sangre nuestra* and in the attitude implied by the adjective "brilliant" which the professor and politician E. García Gómez attributed to the bloodthirsty poem of incitement by Abū Ishāq from Elvira against both Yehōseph and the Jews of Granada, which contributed to Yehōseph's downfall and to mass assassinations (which poem J. M. Millás rightly calls 'terrible')²¹.

My thesis was received with warm enthusiasm at American, German, Dutch, and Israeli universities. However, offering a brief report before the Congress of Orientalists in Cambridge (1954), I was contradicted by an Egyptian spokesman whose field is philosophy, in terms of general disbelief. Also, I found that E. García Gómez was engaging in active propaganda against my thesis. In default of any counterarguments, he labeled it to, among others, French Islamic archaeologists "mysticism" and "fantasies." I was further astonished when the Israeli scholar H. Schirmann, who attended the same congress, expressed to me there and then the same disbelief, without ever previously having seen any publication of my discovery. The contrived nature of Professor Schirmann's argument and this strange alliance of opponents must have specific reasons. Should not any discovery about a building as important as the Alhambra deserve proper consideration and investigation in Israel, Spain and elsewhere? Did not my first scholarly article on the Alhambra, which appeared in the *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, become, to my satisfaction, the point of departure of Professor Oleg Grabar's lectures and forthcoming publication in this field? Knowledge of architectural history did not come within the scope of my critics. Nevertheless its validity was questioned in a very few lines of superficial observations by Professor Schirmann. I can only suppose that he feels that he has missed an opportunity. It was he who first published in full Ibn Gabirol's Alhambra poem containing all

the unique architectural details, and he could have made my discovery himself if he had had any true understanding of the content of the poems he edits and anthologizes. He should have asked himself immediately of what castle and to what patron Ibn Gabirol spoke. In that case 'Abd Allāh's reference to Yehōseph, which he himself quotes, would have led him to my discovery²². This, at least, is the only reason I can see for his antagonism.

His crude obstructionism — if partisan, then more for his own sake than in the service of his party — would be negligible, as lacking all foundation, if he did not own, since the death of the better men in his field, a position of monopoly, being a teacher at the Hebrew University (which lacks a chair of art history). A new edition of Ibn Gabirol's work on the basis of the Schocken MS. 37, which was one of the original tasks of the Schocken Institute, has never been accomplished and very little beside anthologies, based chiefly upon the achievements of the bee-like industry of the late H. Brody (who is rarely quoted) has been undertaken. What should have been done, the elucidation of the content of the Hebrew poet's works by demonstrating their Arabic and other sources, and a true comparative study of imagery and style, let alone personalities, has remained an unfulfilled desire. An outsider is not welcome there, as I have had to experience. As if any living discipline could do without a lively exchange of ideas! Good scholars have always been anxious to see their work utilized and improved by colleagues. (Professor Landsberger, for example, had to realize at an advanced age that many of his conjectured readings of the famous Nabonidus Stela were proved wrong on the basis of the better copy recently brought to light in Harran, and was happy to be confronted with the correction of his errors.) Unfortunately, there seems to be nobody, even in Jerusalem, able to comprehend the documentary content of Hebrew and Arabic poetry after the death of the late L. A. Mayer. This eminent scholar showed an immediate understanding of my thesis, when I outlined it to him at the Cambridge Congress of Orientalists, but nobody else felt competent or willing to deal with my findings, as a letter from Professor Avi-Yonah implied.

The hostility to my findings in Spain did not prevent a Spanish scholar from using some of my specific observations and the illustrations of my article in the *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* in an article of his own, without mentioning their origin or my name. Yet, having known the character of this gentleman, I am very certain that the decisions in this matter were wrested from his hands²³. Otherwise, the topic of the origin of the Alhambra has not been dealt with in Spain — as if a *cordon sanitaire* were imposed upon this topic since my discovery.

From other quarters I have received magnificent support in my work, both intellectual, from, for instance, Professor Leopoldo Torres Balbás, the Warburg Institute in London, and the Oriental Institute in Chicago, and material, from the Bollingen Foundation, enabling me to work in the American Academy and Vatican Library in Rome, from the American Philosophical Society, and the University of Iowa, among many others. I owe lasting gratitude to Professor Américo Castro both as the author of *La España en su Historia* and for his expressions of appreciation of my work.

It is regrettable that, at the present time, studies of this kind are impeded by a dearth of competent scholars and influenced by political propaganda. The great days of objective, critical, and comprehensive scholarship in the field of Arab and Jewish civilisation in Spain are past, as even the briefest mention of names suffices to show.

Scholarly work on the Arabs in Spain found a culmination in R. Dozy's *Histoire des musulmans d'Espagne*, which was later re-edited by E. Lévi-Provençal. The latter most competent historian who also published three volumes of his own *Histoire de l'Espagne musulmane*, was prevented by death from carrying this story beyond 1031, so that he did not deal with our period of the "petty kingdoms." By his labors in the field of Jewish and Arabic philosophy S. Munk, whose work was in many ways linked with Dozy's, reassembled much of the intellectual history of Moorish Spain. The great Jewish historian H. Graetz had a specific interest in this period and its poetry, and S. Dubnow incorporated the bulk of what had been reconstructed at this time in his great *World History of the Jewish People*. Still more up-to-date is S. W. Baron's magnificent *Social and Religious History of the Jews*. But, in contrast to these comprehensive works, the edition and interpretation of individual texts, in particular of the Hebrew poets, has lagged far behind. Since Bialik-Ravitzki's excellent edition of the poetry of Ibn Gabirol — made with the help of scholars like H. Brody and D. Yellin, and on the basis of the pioneering work of Dukes, Sachs, and Geiger, by now outdated — the field of the textual study of Ibn Gabirol has remained unworked and no major cultural and comparative studies of this school of Hebrew poetry have been made. The later editors of Hebrew poetry have merely decreed what the text should be, without presenting the variant readings and discussing them; and a comparison of their texts with Brody's and Bialik-Ravitzki's often reveals a backward step in the direction of inferior readings. Also, much of the interpretative work in this field has been impeded by parochial timidity and an apologetic attitude. The awesome figure of a Samuel han-Nāghīdh must not be made to appear heretical or susceptible to ridicule, so that Ibn Gabirol's blatant invective poems against him — insolent acts which were censured by the *graeculus*-

like Moses ibn Ezra — are still interpreted as poems of praise. Ibn Gabirol's arrogant poem, which in fact offers surrender to the patron only on the poet's own terms, is still characterized as a "Poem of Apology," and Ibn Gabirol's many fashionable sacrileges and heresies have not been seen for what they are²⁴. It is astonishing to find Israeli scholarship bedeviled by patron worship in this way. How much more independent was the eminent Graetz, for example, and this in his exposed position in the Treitschke era.

For a complete interpretation of the sources which elucidate the origin of the Alhambra I shall have to present a brief characterization of Arab and Jewish intellectual history and of Muslim culture in general and, in particular, of the constituents of the Arab-Hebrew symbiosis in which an emancipation of the Jews became possible. Also, I shall indicate the justification offered by Muslims and Jews for an unheard-of secularism, influenced and shielded by the liberalizing Umayyads. I shall have to discuss the value of aulic poetry as a historical source and I shall present the other Hebrew nature poetry of Solomon ibn Gabirol, with its contemporary Arabic models and counterparts and, in a later volume, his love poetry. I shall elucidate Ibn Gabirol's relationship to the Naghrālla family, the father Samuel and the son Yehōseph, by means of an interpretation of his other poems of praise for them, including his poem of true Renaissance Platonic patronage to a disciple who was most likely Yehōseph. In this fashion the following, somewhat loosely knit studies form, I hope, a ring of the kind of J. G. Frazer's *Golden Bough*, in other words a *cycle of studies* around a central motif. And indeed, the earliest Alhambra palace, as I am essaying to show, is the lofty crowning edifice erected upon an enormously composite or rather exquisitely syncretic substructure to which a Jewish revival, Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic architecture and, in particular, a new Hispano-Hebrew poetry engendered by Hispano-Arab poetry made their contributions. All these elements came together only once: in the circle of Samuel and Yehōseph ibn Naghrālla and of Solomon ibn Gabirol, a round table of émigrés from Cordova to Granada. These studies also constitute an attempt, the first of its kind, at assessing the documentary value of this poetry and, beyond this, at assessing the general merit of these Hebrew poets, pointing out which of the Arabic conceits they took over remained clichés and in what way and how deeply the Hebrew poets transformed and amplified their models. The present book is an attempt at opening free vistas upon the unduly obscured creations of a unique mediaeval renaissance.

This book offers a great many translations and interpretations of poems belonging to a school of Hebrew poetry which, unprecedentedly, originated

in Spain in imitation of Arabic poetry. The mastery of the Hebrew poets consists of an adaptation of the biblical Hebrew language to Arabic conceits. Their perfect knowledge of the Bible enables them to use the biblical wording without too much of its context. More of the context, however, remains in the mind of the poet and in that of the trained reader, and tinges the meaning of a passage. In spite of this we should not call the style of an Ibn Gabirol or a Samuel han-Nāghidh a mosaic style. This may characterize the poetry of an older generation which extracted its wording from Scripture as if it were plants still bearing bulky clods about their roots. The biblical references are listed in the margin of a poem, occasionally in parentheses when an individual word merely, and not the entire motif, is taken over. The reader is thus enabled — particularly in the second section of this book devoted to literary problems — to study the twofold origins of Hispano-Hebrew poetry which are evident in almost every line.

The reader will observe that I have had to sift a vast amount of Hebrew and Arabic material, or rather to discover this, to establish the texts and defend my readings, to translate and to interpret these texts. The Alhambra is only one of the crystallization points around which this material could be arranged. The art of the Arabic and Hebrew metaphor could have been another focus of my book.

The great variety of poetical devices reminding us strikingly of the Elizabethan school of poetry, stems from its origin in western logico-rhetorical skills which the two schools share. The wealth of metaphors, the art of which was very much in the mind of the Arab critics of poetry like al-Jurjānī, received in the hands of the eager Hebrew imitators, with their different personalities and their biblical vocabulary, a new interpretation. In the poetry of this period — as indeed in its architecture — the overriding ideal is that of θαυματοποιική τέχνη, inherited from Byzantium, which aims at the creation of a magical effect. This implies in architecture the use of light effects which dissolve the solid into seeming fluidity and a fantastic surreality, and the use of undulating water surfaces as mirrors to create kaleidoscopic distortions. In poetry, it implies the exploitation of various levels of metaphor. One of these offers a pseudo-causation for the nature it describes. The other animates and attributes human feelings to that nature and the two together, by forming chains of interlocking images, create what almost amounts to a quasi-mythology. Such a technique is not too alien to modern writers. To use the words of Ralph Freedman, "the self of the artist and his object merge together and the new object arises . . . The self is projected into the world and animates objects . . . the distortion from animation or such projection is sharpened because of emphasis."

When I was about to return the second galley-proofs of this book, Professor Spuler kindly referred me to a review by Rudolf Sellheim in *Jahrbuch für Ästhetik*, VI, 1961, pp. 209—216. I had heard of Professor Lützel's intention to commission such a review and Mr. Sellheim had once written to me for the elucidation of a point in my article and been sent an answer (which he seems not to have made use of). Neither he nor the editor of the *Jahrbuch*, however, thought it necessary to send me an offprint of this review. If they had done so, in accordance with what used to be the custom between author, reviewer, and editor, I should have been able to write a full rejoinder at the time, instead of attempting to reply to Mr. Sellheim at this late stage and in conditions which enforce brevity. But to avoid similar misunderstandings — often, in my eyes, the product of vested interest — in the future, I should like to defend myself in as short a compass as may be.

I was shocked by the primitive level of Mr. Sellheim's review, written as it was by a man who has published nothing else in the field of Spanish-Islamic studies, let alone Islamic architecture and Hebrew poetry. He seems to have been prompted by the hope of easy laurels and his methods of argument are strongly reminiscent of those of the "Homeric scholarship," cited below. To quote an example: after admitting that the builder of the earlier parts of the Alhambra is unknown, Mr. Sellheim betrays irritation at being confronted with the clear statements of King 'Abd Allāh's passage "One": "... by his (Yehōšeph's) building up the Alhambra fortress where he intended to reside .. when Ibn Šumādīḥ had entered Granada, under a stabilized situation" (see p. 90 below) and "Two," indicating that Yehōšeph's castle was "more beautiful than your (the king's) own." Mr. Sellheim's repeated attacks attempt to obfuscate these clear statements. First he terms them "too vague and too unspecific to be used immediately as a proof." (This 'immediately' is one of Mr. Sellheim's blanket-words of which we shall encounter more.) I can only ask, if we cannot use such proof now, when may we do so?

In particular this statement "Two" comes in for Mr. Sellheim's special treatment. He terms it, in parentheses, 'fictive' (*fiktiv*), having learned that the great speeches in Thucydides, for example, are not true 'reportage' but free compositions of the historian in the attempt to elucidate a situation and/or personality. Mr. Sellheim fails to take into account the fact that 'Abd Allāh's book is a collection of personal memoirs and that he reports events in which he has participated and of which eyewitnesses and those who knew of them by word of mouth were alive when the book came abroad. These persons could easily have found out the author in any lies. 'Abd Allāh, therefore, is much more literally trustworthy than a compiling

historian, although, it is true, in certain cases he writes *cum ira et studio*, which he makes no attempt to conceal. This, in fact, is the most particular proof of 'Abd Allāh's veracity. He has no reason to attribute any merits to Yehōšeph in whom he sees the murderer of his father, yet still he credits Yehōšeph with having built a superb palace.

This passage "Two" is translated by Lévi-Provençal "[il] s'est construit un plus beau palais que le tien," to which translation Mr. S. finds "in principle" (*an sich*) no objection. This 'in principle' seems to indicate a desire for second — and better — thoughts, which do not, however, materialize. Mr. Sellheim wishes to translate "[he built] something much better than your palace," which, as he hesitantly admits, can actually be "nothing but another palace." Is this not a precious piece of "Homeric scholarship?"

Here Mr. Sellheim's command of language betrays him: *Aḥsan min qaṣrik* does not mean 'something better' (or, as Mr. S. translates, with exaggeration, 'much better') than your palace'. There is no neuter here to indicate 'thing'. By attraction of meaning, the masculine noun *qaṣr*, standing so close to *aḥsan*, determines its gender, so that the only correct translation is 'a better palace than yours'. In order to express the neuter here, the author would have had to use a word like *shay*, 'matter' or 'thing', or else a (possibly paronomastic) *mā—min* construction 'what (he built) of (building)'. Nor is this all. Mr. S. continues: "Whatever this palace construction was, it is not permissible to identify such a palace *mir nichts dir nichts* with the Alhambra." (The German expression used here is the most comic of Mr. S.'s collection of blanket-words, meaning something like 'helter-skelter', but nothing scholarly.) "It is," he continues, "obviously a reference to Yehōšeph's city residence which he had, before his death, to exchange, for reasons of security, with the Alcazaba, the royal fortress." I wonder why Mr. S. uses the word 'obviously'. He obviously does so to still his doubts about his own argument. We know nothing of such a city mansion. Yehōšeph may have resided on the Alhambra hill even before he transformed the fortress into a palace.

Thus far I have presented a first sample of Mr. S.'s review, trying to render his German into appropriate English (which is, I admit, a problem). I have not begun my reply with the beginning of his review but have chosen his treatment of 'Abd Allāh's passage on Yehōšeph at random, to illustrate his need for an introductory lesson in historical methodology.

It would have been more in accord with the ideals of scholarship if Mr. S. had opened with a consideration of my arguments, but he does not. In fact, his preamble consists of reflections designed to discredit my findings in the eyes of the reader, and he poses the question of why a

Jew should have had the opportunity to become an important builder in the Hispano-Islamic environment.

Then he introduces himself as one of those old-fashioned scholars who do not believe in a possible harmony between rhyme and reason. He attempts to prejudice the uninformed reader by telling him that I had received my first inkling of the origins which I assume for the Alhambra from Ibn Gabirol's poem (which is true). He withholds 'Abd Allāh's clear statements about Yehōseph, wasting much ink in the attempt to discredit my scholarship because my hypothesis takes a poem for its point of departure. (When at last he does present 'Abd Allāh's words, as we have seen, he does so inaccurately). To Mr. S. a poem must never be the basis of a discovery, even if it has a counterpart to its content in the prose writings of the contemporary person directly involved. Mr. S. has been taught that poets are lying flatterers who sell their souls for a rhyme. I wonder whether he has ever seen any poem by Ibn Gabirol, whether he is able to read it, whether he realizes that Ibn Gabirol was, beside being an excellent poet, also a neo-Platonic philosopher important enough to become the representative of Platonism when the age-old controversy between Plato and Aristotle broke out again in the Western world (between Franciscans and Dominicans) with the appearance of Thomas Aquinas' writings, such as *De Ente et Essentia*. In other words, Ibn Gabirol's poem describing the palace of his patron is the work of a man who would have made a fool of himself if he had praised his patron for having built an imaginary castle. The very fact that Mr. Sellheim terms the content of Ibn Gabirol's poem "commonplace" (*Allgemeinheiten*) demonstrates that he lacks even a basic insight into Arabic (and Hebrew) descriptive poetry of this type. I challenge Mr. S. to show me any other poem of that time which speaks more specifically e. g. of a rotating dome decorated on its inside with star constellations, where there is reference to a replica of Solomon's Brazen Sea in which the oxen were replaced by lions and a witty iconography or reason stated for such a change. But Mr. S. deems Ibn Gabirol's poem so "indifferent" that no conclusion relative to reality must be drawn from it. He finds fault with the fact that Ibn Gabirol does not mention the name of the patron addressed in his poem nor the name of the castle-palace he describes. If Mr. Sellheim had any knowledge of the customs of that period among Arabic and Hebrew poets, he would know that the best poets were reluctant to attribute a poem to a patron before solid mutual trust and/or a salaried position was assured. Ibn Gabirol names patrons quite rarely and places never. I refer Mr. Sellheim to the passage in Maqqari, *Dynasties*, I, pp. 35f., where an author refuses to dedicate a book to a patron for very good reasons

given. Even major, most likely commissioned, encomia by Ibn Gabirol which are full of references to the character of the addressee may lack the patron's name. But by the choice of specific epithets found also in the encomia of other poets dedicated to the Naghrāllas, by the specific Solomonic symbolism employed by Ibn Gabirol in references to the Naghrāllas, and finally by the uniqueness of these viziers wealthy enough and, with avowed passion, dedicated to the construction of water gardens, the identity of the builder of the Alhambra can be regarded as established, even without the parallel support of 'Abd Allāh's *Memoirs*.

It looks as if Mr. S. had read only a few pages of my Warburg and the German (*Atlantis*) articles when he set out to refute them. He revealingly uses the word "a first glance." He concludes the first part of his review with the haughty words "Let this argument be discontinued with the remark that Bargebuhr's reflections mean nothing." Gradually, however, he seems to have discovered more and more valid proofs (partly misplaced, he regrets, in my footnotes), and he seems to have had second thoughts. He begins a second part, with which he may have hoped to save his soul in the eyes of serious scholars and more careful readers of my articles. Yet he does so without being honest enough to re-write the first part, four full pages of frantic rubbish, interspersed with blanket-words like "immediately" or "*mir nichts dir nichts*" which already betray looming second thoughts. After some seven full pages of misleading the reader by withholding important items of my documentation, such as Abū Ishāq's invective poem indicating Yehōseph's lavish building activities and the diversion of a water supply, such as the main passages of Ibn Gabirol's poem indicating the size of the palace, its towers and gates, and the Solomonic symbolism of the Naghrāllas, he terms my entire argument, based upon the statements of the most reliable contemporary witnesses one could ever hope to find, "circumstantial evidence, debatable and in one case even refuted." (I wonder in which case?) At the very last he becomes quite meek — perhaps realizing his own inadequacy? — and pleads for a *status quo*. As long as my proofs are not fully solid the matter should rest, in accordance with the old principle *in dubio pro reo*. I wonder who or what the *reus* is? The onus of valid counter-proofs, I think, rests with Mr. S., since information from clear sources must in any case be regarded better than ignorance.

A few more of Mr. S.'s points at random, lest they be repeated *ad nauseam*. The editor of 'Abd Allāh's *Memoirs* does not in the least doubt the veracity of 'Abd Allāh's work. Mr. S., however, tries to misconstrue Lévi-Provençal's footnote to 'Abd Allāh's passage "One" in which that greatest recent historian of Muslim Spain underscores the striking newness of

the fact that Yehōseph built an Alhambra castle. But, Mr. S. seems to ask, why did Lévi-Provençal not consider the conclusions which Bargebuhr draws? Lévi-Provençal did, I am sure, draw the same conclusions as I, but was prevented by his early death from writing the history of this Taifas period, including Yehōseph's career.

Mr. S. should also have observed that 'Abd Allāh's *Memoirs* were misquoted by various Arab historians. Western historians have been at some pains to weed out their misinformation. It would have been worth establishing by whom first, and through which developing stemma of false traditions, the wrong data evolved. Such a misquotation, and a very silly one, is cited by Mr. S. It stems from Lévi-Provençal's article "Zirids" in the *E. I.* of 1934, and is based upon *al-bayān al-mughrib* of Ibn 'Idhārī (composed in 1306) ed. E. Lévi-Provençal, vol. III. p. 266) quoting the *Memoirs* from memory. According to that tradition the lord of Almeria was supposed to have handed over to Yehōseph his city of Almeria in exchange for Yehōseph's delivering Granada into his hand. In fact, the passage in 'Abd Allāh's *Memoirs* is quite different: there Yehōseph is blamed for having plotted with the prince of Almeria who was to help Yehōseph in taking over the rule of Granada. Other terms are not mentioned. Yehōseph did of course not build the Alhambra to hand it over to anybody else, but, as 'Abd Allāh clearly states, to reside there after the ruler of Almeria (his ally) would have come. If Mr. S. were a historian and interested in the truth (beyond the present controversy) he would himself have observed the contradiction in the two statements he quotes.

Basing himself upon his claim that Ibn Gabirol's poem contains little more than commonplaces and no evidence, e. g. for the existence of a real walled fortress-palace (which fact is so clearly stated in the first part of Ibn Gabirol's poem, of which Mr. S. only quotes a very few lines), Mr. S. opines that there must have existed many palaces like the unknown one described by Ibn Gabirol. I had presented in my Warburg article all descriptions of fountains I could discover in contemporary sources, mainly descriptions of fountains by the Arabic poets who marveled at these rare instances of short-lived plastic art. But Mr. S. places his trust in the *E. I.*, this time in the 1913 (1) edition, which contained an article "Alhambra" by Schaade and Strzygowski (written at a time before 'Abd Allāh's *Memoirs* were available to shed light upon the early history of the palace), and cites the existence of many courts like this Court of Lions "everywhere in the Islamic orbit of the Adriatic Sea (sic) and in particular in Sicily." I can only recommend to Mr. S. to read the discussion of this point in my publication. He will find that Sicily, which borrowed heavily from full-fledged Spanish and North-African Islamic art, is mentioned there.

Mr. S. also misses, in the existing Alhambra, the waterspouting hinds mentioned by Ibn Gabirol. Unfortunately, so many old Alhambra parts were destroyed during the many intervening centuries, e. g. by Charles V, that it is a miracle that so much remains. We can only bewail the hinds' *aṭlāl*.

A question of a similar type, raised to undermine my findings, is why the Fount of Lions, if it were an imitation of Solomon's Sea, did not show the typical arrangement in "groups of three" animals, as mentioned in I Kings VII. 23 ff. I had tried to make it as clear as possible that Solomon's Sea had in its day, beside the aesthetic, mainly a functional purpose as an ablution basin, whereas that of Yehōšeph was entirely representational. I also stated in my article that the Talmud forbids a direct imitation of any element of the Temple in Jerusalem. Out of the spirit of Ibn Gabirol's poem I could deduce other conceivable motives for the avoidance of "groups of three" among the lions. They are represented (according to Ibn Gabirol's poem) as freely "grazing" under the shelter of the protecting basin, representing the ruler of peace; there is no grouping or banding together, for this would indicate a need for protection, a need which no longer existed. But I do not wish to offer interpretations for which I am unable to submit an explicit written document — I leave this to my opponents. I do think that the main reason for the present order of the lions is an aesthetic one, linked with the tradition of sculpturing waterspouting lions at that time. Mr. S. does not seem to have discovered Ibn Gabirol's witty explanation of the builder's intent in the exchange of oxen for lions.

The inscription on the present basin is mentioned by Mr. S. as follows: "Upon it (the present basin) is found 'unfortunately' (this is meant mockingly) an inscription referring to Muḥammad V (1354—1359!)." This inscription, however, proved, as far as my discovery is concerned, to be the most fortunate fact of all. Its wording: "God gave these abodes to . . . (Muḥammad)," and not "Muḥammad built these abodes," clearly indicated to me that Muḥammad only added a new basin to an inherited beautiful "bower" and that I had to look for another, original basin. Soon afterwards this basin was pointed out to me, after it had been identified by an intelligent Spanish art historian, as the Abencerages basin. At the same time further proofs of the greater age of the palace were revealed.

On the same basis, and this seems to be indicative of the progress made in acknowledging my findings, Henri Terrasse attributes, in the article "Gharnāṭa" of the newest edition of the *E. I.*, the stone lions, with no doubt, to the eleventh-century Alhambra palace.

The acme of Mr. S.'s "Dear Liza" questions is why Yehōšeph's fountain

had the function of mirroring objects whereas Solomon's did not. Yehōšeph's construction does belong, as I clearly stated, to the contemporary Islamic architectural ambience borrowed, together with its aesthetical urges and, most likely, with the craftsmen, from his environment. Yehōšeph was a true son of his time, a true Taifas pretender to a throne, in addition to being, like his father Samuel, a true carrier of Cordovan culture to a hitherto, in many ways, provincial Granada. With the arrival and rise to power of Samuel and the succession of Yehōšeph cultural ideas took their seat in Granada which outlived them there both in the continuity of additional Alhambra buildings, stone structures and water gardens, and in many artistic and intellectual activities elsewhere.

Another question raised by my reviewer is why, if Yehōšeph's Alhambra existed, the great Arab geographers of the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries did not describe it. The best answer to this question seems to be another question, viz.: why did an author as comprehensive as al-Maqqarī, who drew his materials from so many books on Spain and lived around 1600, i. e. at a time when even the latest Muslim parts of the Alhambra existed, not describe the Alhambra? Or earlier geographers who wrote when the Naṣrid buildings of the Alhambra were new and astonishing? The Arab geographers provide useful data with interspersed verses by poets — for the purpose of conveying the spirit and the visual impression — but even the poets are often (and the later the more) abstract and steeped in scholastic intellectualism. I doubt, on giving Mr. S.'s question more thought, whether he has any knowledge of this state of affairs or whether he wishes deliberately to use any, even the most threadbare argument, for his purpose. Other questions should be, to adopt Mr. S.'s interrogative style: could such descriptions have been lost? and, if so, why have they been lost? There are good historical answers to these.

Let us assume — as one tentative answer among many that are conceivable — that, after 'Abd Allāh had completed the fortification activities in the Alhambra region (mentioned in his *Memoirs*), the palace-fortress was no longer accessible to non-members of the court and of the garrison (like traveling geographers and/or to religiously sensitive mobs, likely to smash sculptured lions in their iconoclastic zeal) until the later kings established their residence there. Maybe the miracle of the preservation of the Fount of Lions should, indeed, be considered together with this seeming black-out in the descriptive records during the subsequent centuries of intolerance to plastic art. Yet, to aver that constructions were, most likely, not existing because they were not described in some books, is another demonstration of lacking historical method. Maybe that there

existed, indeed, in books of the eleventh and twelfth centuries which are now lost, whole chapters on the Alhambra. Mr. S. must forgive me if I see in his attempted *refutatio e silentio* and in his motley other asseverations mere φλυαρία.

Finally, transgressing all patience and demanding the knowledge of an oracle, Mr. S. asks why 'Abd Allāh himself did not describe Yehōšeph's palace in more detail (if it existed). The answer may be found in the relation of hatred between the two men and in the fact that 'Abd Allāh shows no artistic interest whatsoever in his *Memoirs*. His own palace, built by his grandfather, remained undescribed as well.

I am reminded by Mr. S.'s review of a remark made in a similar connection by my teacher Gotthelf Bergstraesser: "Otherwise than in the field of science, e. g. in chemistry where a piece of litmus paper demonstrates *ad oculos* whether it has been immersed in alkali or acid, the liberal disciplines depend in their progress upon an individual's insight, upon an act of apprehending the comprehensible, i. e. the ability to follow an argument." Mr. S. may have collected from many sides, as he did from myself, statements of variant views, which, as far as I can see on the basis of my own contribution, he failed to understand and integrate. I should advise him to undertake easier studies. In such as the present, a modicum of insight is required.

A useful article by Hady Roger Idris, "Les Zīrides d'Espagne," in *Al-Andalus*, XXIX, 1964 (published 1966), pp. 39ff., shows, however, that same uncritical, eclectic attitude to the sources. He reconciles 'Abd Allāh's passage ONE with Ibn 'Idhārī's report of Yehōšeph's plot (stipulating that the prince of Almeria had to cede to Yehōšeph his city against Yehōšeph's delivering Granada to him) by translating passage ONE: "...fit construire (ou fortifier?) la citadelle de l'Alhambra où il comptait se réfugier avec sa famille lors de l'entrée d'al-Mu'tašim dans Grenade. On prétend — Ibn Ḥayyān semble-t-il — qu'al-Mu'tašim, une fois maître de Grenade, aurait pensé installer le Juif à Almería dont la population était pourtant essentiellement arabe." This passage, with its reference to Granada being a Jewish city and Almeria an Arab city, incorporates a passage in Pérès, *Poésie*, p. 270, where Pérès, to whom the *Memoirs* text was not even available as counterevidence, points out this ethnic division and the absurdity of alleging such a project. If there was any truth to Yehōšeph's plotting, then he intended to enlist the help of Almeria for a final take over of the Jewish city where he had — beside all de facto power — provided for himself a regal palace.

Notes to the Prologue

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

As this book does not address itself to readers who are mainly or exclusively trained linguists, a few devices of customary transliteration are modified to facilitate printing. Arabic words are transliterated, for the most part, according to the system used in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*; but the line employed there to indicate that two Latin characters, e. g. *kh*, stand for one Arabic character has been omitted. Hebrew suffixes and preformatives are, for the sake of easier identification of the verbal themes, set off, in general, by an inserted hyphen.

Words from the Hebrew and Arabic with which the English reader is familiar are quoted in the text, but not in the quotations of the apparatus, in their accepted spelling, e. g. Midrash instead of *midhrash*. So are biblical names and those of biblical books (Jeremiah instead of *Yirmeyāhū* and Ezra, not 'Ezra). In the translation of poems, however, some biblical names may appear in their King James Version form, whereas they are transliterated in the accompanying notes, in order to demonstrate certain puns. For this reason Samuel and Shemū'el, Ahiah and Aḥīyāh, Jonah and Yōnāh may refer to the same person. Arabic *ibn*, 'son', is reserved, as far as possible, for Arabic names, and Hebrew *ben*, 'son', for Hebrew names. Since, however, some names are mixtures of Hebrew and Arabic elements, the system could not be consistently retained. I follow accepted forms as much as possible.

Since the English reader is accustomed to identify the spirants when adding an *h* to the letters *b, g, d, k, p, t* — a system devised to transcribe a language like Hebrew — I retain this as the most natural system. In this way the reader may choose if he wishes to pronounce *bb* as *b* or, as in modern Hebrew, as *v*, and *kh* as *k* or *ch* (as in Gaelic or German *loch*, etc.). The Hebrew *šādhey* is rendered *š*; *šāmekh* is rendered *š*; the *shin* in Hebrew and Arabic *sh*.

The Hebrew poets of the Spanish school treat the *ḥāṭeph* vowels and the *shewā mobile* as they fit into the meter. I therefore transliterate texts as they must be scanned metrically, so that the reader may find the same word transliterated differently, e. g., *yaledhūth* or *yaldūth*. Vowels written *plene*, and other long vowels like *qāmeṣ*, are given a length mark. In words of the *fu'l* pattern like *bosheth* and *odhem* an exception is made because of their history in the Hebrew language, and this in spite of their falling into spondaic metrical patterns. The rhyme of a Hebrew poem — mostly a monorhyme, often beginning with a consonant — is indicated above the poem together with the sources, the meter, and a title (of my own coinage). Only in a very few cases, like the "Great Nature Poem," is an imitation of rhyme and meter attempted. The typical conceits taken over by the Hebrew poets from the Arab school of poetry are capitalized in the discussion of the poems.

In points of English editorial usage this book mainly follows the *Style Sheet*, issued by the Modern Language Association of America, in *PMLA*, LXVI, 1951, pp. 3ff. Brackets are used to set off words not directly found in a translated text, inserted when unavoidable in order to adapt the translation to an English mode of expression. Angular parentheses indicate the insertion of titles or fuller forms of names into translated texts and of additions which do not fall within the

syntax of the sentence. Suspension points are exclusively used to indicate omissions in a quoted text.

1. F. P. Bargebuhr, "The Alhambra Palace of the Eleventh Century," in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, XIX, 1956, pp. 192–258, was reviewed by H. Schirmann in *Qiryath Sepher*, XXXIII, 1957–58, p. 256, in a very few lines; also by R. Sellheim in *Jahrbuch für Ästhetik*, VI, 1961, pp. 209–216.
2. See Part II, note 1.
3. See Part II, note 28.
4. See Part II, note 15, dist. 25 of Abū Ishāq's poem.
5. Cf. E. García Gómez, *Cinco Poetas Musulmanes*, Madrid, 1944, p. 99, note 3 based upon L. Torres Balbás' article "El alminar de la iglesia..." in *Al-Andalus*, VI, 1941, pp. 427ff. (quoted as García Gómez, *Poetas*).
6. See Part II, D. 6.
7. See Part II, note 116.
8. *Ars Hispaniae*, III, p. 273. For the following see Part II, footnotes 39–42.
9. The poet states his age in various juvenile poems as being sixteen or seventeen years. Since some of these poems were written on the occasion of the death of Hay Gaon in 1038 when the poet was sixteen, and in honor of his Maecenas Yeqūthiel who died in 1039, Ibn Gabirol was (in Davidson's words) "sixteen not earlier than 1038 and seventeen not later than 1039. He must have been born sometime between the end of 1021 and the beginning of 1022." See I. Zangwill and I. Davidson, *Selected Religious Poems of Sol. ibn Gabirol*, 1923, p. 127 (quoted as *Davidson-Z.*).
10. Moses ibn Ezra's Arabic text reads *wa-qad armā 'alā 'th-thalāthīn(a)* which means "he overshot the thirties," and which was understood to mean "he reached an age not much higher than thirty." (Al-Ḥarīzī seems to have read *ilā* 'he shot towards' instead of *'alā* 'beyond'; and thus M. Steinschneider cites Ibn Ezra's text in his Bodleian Catalogue, col. 2318). Dr. Noah Braun's typewritten text of the poem for a projected edition, which I was allowed to see through the kindness of Dr. N. Golb, reads *'alā*. It seems to be useless to conjecture a reading *arba'ina* or to realize that 'surpassing the thirties' might mean to reach the age of forty-six, as actually the poet did, and as Professor Roediger suggests, in S. I. Kaempf, *Nichtandalusische Poesie andalusischer Dichter*, Prag, 1858, p. 190 (quoted as *Kaempf*). Characterizing Moses ibn Ezra, Geiger says: "He was more exact as an expert in his art than as a chronicler, for he treats figures very carelessly," in A. Geiger, *Salomo Gabirol und seine Dichtungen*, Leipzig, 1867, p. 111 (quoted as *Geiger*).
11. J. Finkel, "An Eleventh Century Source for the History of Jewish Scientists in Mohammedan Lands (Ibn Sa'īd)," in *Jewish Quarterly Review*, XVIII, 1927–28, p. 5: "... also Sulaimān ibn Yahyā called Ibn Jabrival (Jibirwāl) [i. e. Gabirol] a citizen of Saragossa. He was fond of the subject of logic. He had a subtle mind and an attractive way of speculation. He was cut off in the prime of his life, passing away at an age over thirty, shortly before the year 450 A. H." (1058 C. E.). A French translation by R. Blachère is found in *Sa'īd al-Andalusī, K. ṭabaqāt al-umam*, in *Publ. de l'Inst. des H. Etudes Marocaines*, XXVIII, 1935, p. 159.
12. S. W. Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, New York, 1958–60, VII, p. 291 (quoted as Baron, *History*). Abraham Zakkūtō lists Ibn Gabirol's death in 1070, see Munk, *Mélanges de philosophie juive et arabe*, Paris, 1859, p. 156, n. 1 (quoted as Munk, *Mélanges*).
13. *Davidson-Z.*, p. 71 (166f.).
14. There is a good discussion of this problem in K. Dreyer, *Die religiöse Gedankenwelt des S. ibn Gabirol*, Leipzig, 1930, p. 59, demonstrating the validity of Ibn Gabirol's millennial hymns as sources for biographical data (quoted as *Dreyer*).

15. *Davidson-Z.*, pp. 120. The death of Ibn Gabirol is discussed by Davidson on p. XXVII and p. 131.
16. H. N. Bialik & Y. H. Ravnitzki, *Shirey Shelomoh ben Yehudah ibn Gabirol* . . . , Tel Aviv, 1925—32, II, pp. 6f. (quoted as *Bialik-R.*); vols. I & II, secular poetry, (quoted as 'vol. I'); vols. III & IV, religious poetry, (quoted as 'vol. II'); vols. V & VI, mixed poetry, (quoted as 'vol. III'); vol. VII, analects, (quoted as 'vol. IV'). H. Schirmann, *Hash-Shirah ha-ibhrith bi-Sepharedh u-bhe-Provence*, I, Jerusalem, 1959—60, pp. 244f., line 17 (quoted as Schirmann, *Shirah*).
17. Discussed in Schirmann, *Shirah*, I, p. 245, without a mention of the parallel supports of this date.
18. *Geiger*, p. 111. I think Schirmann would have profited from the idea that Ibn Ezra confused Ibn Gabirol with Ibn at-Taqana who, according to Ibn Ezra himself, also died when he was about thirty and whom he mentioned immediately before Ibn Gabirol. He calls Ibn at-Taqana "The Twin" without stating whose twin he was. I intend to discuss the exact correspondence of the situation and polemical content between the poem recently identified as the work of Moses ibn at-Taqana and of certain poems of invective by Ibn Gabirol who belonged to the same Saragossan circle, in my forthcoming studies.
19. See e. g. Baron, *History*, VII, p. 152; Munk, *Mélanges*, pp. 155ff.; *Geiger*, p. 111; H. Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, VI, Leipzig, 1861, p. 61, 388f. (quoted as Graetz, *Geschichte*); English edition: Graetz, *History of the Jews*, Philadelphia, 1956, p. 280 (quoted as Graetz, *History*); *Davidson-Z.*, p. 131; Sachs in *Ham-Maggidh*, 1874, p. 313; S. Dubnow, *Weltgeschichte des jüdischen Volkes*, IV, Berlin, 1925, p. 236, n. 1 (quoted as *Dubnow*).
20. In his review of my *Alhambra in Qiryath Sepher* (see above note 1). Also cf. Schirmann, *Shirah*, I, p. 178: "According to Moses ibn Ezra the poet died in Valencia, when he was more than thirty years old. Following the testimony of Ibn Sa'ad [sic], an Arabic author of the eleventh century, Ibn Gabirol passed away about 480 A. H. (i. e. 1057—58). From this we may deduce that his death took place between 1053 and 1058." Abraham Zakkütö, all internal evidence, and the galaxy of distinguished Jewish historians remain unmentioned.
21. See Part II, note 15.
22. In a text beneath a picture of the Alhambra in Schirmann, *Shirah*, I, opposite p. 65.
23. I am referring to an article on courtyards with crossing channels by L. Torres Balbás "Patios de Crucero," in *Al-Andalus*, XXIII, 1958, pp. 171 ff. Also an article on "Windows above doors" by the same author seems to be provoked by my publication: "Salas con linterna central en la arquitectura Granadina," in *Al-Andalus*, XXIV, 1959, pp. 197ff. with a passage on "Salas con huecos de luz y ventilación sobre las puertas y ventanas."
24. In a passage near the end of this treatise on Hebrew poetry, Ibn Ezra deals a last blow at Ibn Gabirol:

This poet, with a flimsy side-remark, modulates from the topic of a dark night and a cloud to the criticism of a song:

its chill is like the snow of Mount Senir or
the poetry of Samuel, the Kohathite . . .

This is the poem for which he [later had to] apologize and ask for forgiveness in a long poem, because it contained many shortcomings. This Poem of Apology begins as follows:

Arise, o Time, and deck thee with thy charms,
and contains in its context [the line]:

Offer a sacrifice before them . . .

In truth the wrathful soul does not achieve its aims in the above mentioned distich, for it was to force the nobler soul to write a poem full of submissiveness. He should have humiliated himself before God.

Here Ibn Ezra pretends not to relish even the witty detraction of a mighty man. But questions remain. Why does he quote the distich from Ibn Gabirol? Does he, in fact, secretly relish it? Or does he take a welcome opportunity of preaching the necessity of submission to a man of power and so to God? Is he accurate in asserting that it was this distich which caused the rift between Ibn Gabirol and Samuel? There are much graver attacks on Samuel by Ibn Gabirol, for instance the poem which begins "Samuel was dead, Ibn Labrāt" quoted from I Sam. XXV.1 which, only when re-read in a new context, allows the interpretation "Dead was, Samuel, (Dūnāsh) Ibn Labrāt," a shrewd ambiguity of diction which, like more in Ibn Gabirol, reminds one of Catullus (e. g. his ridiculing praise of Cicero as the protector of the oppressed), yet which modern editors, who apparently share the campanilismo of Moses ibn Ezra, still interpret as laudatory. In any case, Ibn Ezra is unreliable as a historian. As to the Poem of Apology mentioned, it is not in the least submissive, as pointed out above. It is almost a challenge, clearly written at a time when Ibn Gabirol knew that Samuel wanted him at almost any price. By employing the word 'Kehathite' (quoted by Ibn Ezra above) he had ridiculed Samuel's claim upon levitic ancestors like Kohath and inherited charisma, made in his ambitious manifesto of victory II, and had wounded Samuel, most likely, at his neuralgic point. The 'wrathful', indeed very angry young poet promises to praise Samuel, but only at the price he names, which is acceptance as an equal. The line 'offer a sacrifice before them', i. e. before the Naghrāllas, irks Ibn Ezra by its sacrilege, as one can feel from other instances. Sacrifices, he feels, belong to God alone. The line speaks of offering before them a scapegoat, which is a loaded *double entendre*. What could he have meant by sacrificing to the Naghrāllas? Most likely this is only lip-service, for there is no word of submission, and it is more likely that Samuel surrendered to the splendor of Ibn Gabirol's poem of reconciliation. The ghetto-soul of Moses ibn Ezra, which is unable to grasp this, is symptomatic of the decline from freedom to servility, from breadth of mind to pedantry, from emancipated wit to protestations of piety and the flattery of patrons: Woe to the respectless, theirs is humiliation, as the good teachers instruct!

As one should deduce from the sources (which are poems) Ibn Gabirol never became a pliable courtier but, admitted to the round table of the prodigiously wise and truly great man of letters and policy and to his, in many ways even more prodigious, son Yehōseph, he was disarmed and redeemed of his anger by sincere admiration and by sharing the actively redeeming plans of Samuel ibn Naghrālla.

PART I

A Solomonic Renaissance

