

FROM DIGRESSION TO COMPILATION: SAMUEL IBN TIBBON AND
IMMANUEL OF ROME ON GENESIS 1:11, 1:14, AND 1:20

Immanuel of Rome (c.1261-before 1336), the ‘Hebrew Dante’, was a poet and belletrist of the highest order. He was also an exegete, and a very prolific one. According to his own testimony, he wrote commentaries on all ‘twenty-four books’ of the Hebrew Bible. Thirteen of these commentaries survive in manuscript, but only three have been published in full, and none in a proper critical edition.¹

Immanuel’s biblical commentaries are strongly philosophical; as he wrote in his *Mahberot*, they reveal the ‘hidden secrets’ and ‘marvelous mysteries’ of Scripture.² But what they are not is original. In fact, it is becoming more and more evident that Immanuel was, despite his claims of originality, far more compiler than original exegete. In his commentaries, he draws extensively from the writings and commentaries of his philosophical predecessors and contemporaries, especially Abraham bar Hiyya, Abraham ibn Ezra, Maimonides, Samuel ibn Tibbon, Jacob Anatoli, Judah ha-Kohen, Moses ibn Tibbon, Zerahyah b. Isaac b. Shealtiel, and Judah Romano.³ He works with existing commentaries, which he abridges, rearranges, and supplements with relevant exegetical remarks found in exegetical and non-exegetical works. In some instances he provides a source-reference, but in many cases – by far the majority – he does not. Instead, he incorporates excerpted texts into his own running narrative exegesis, harmonizing discontinuities and eliminating infelicities.

What is the function of Immanuel’s work as compiler and what is his method? It has been suggested that his work was governed by early Renaissance ideas about compilation and literary authorship, and that his

¹ His commentaries on the following books survive: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Esther, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, Ruth, Lamentations. For a complete discussion of manuscripts and editions, see D. Goldstein, *The Commentary on Immanuel ben Solomon of Rome on Chapters I-X of Genesis: Introduction, Hebrew Text, Notes* (PhD Diss., University of London 1966); idem, ‘Introduction’, in *The Book of Proverbs with the Commentary by Immanuel of Rome*, Naples ca. 1487, Jerusalem 1981.

² See *Mahberot*, D. Yarden, ed., Jerusalem 1957, 538; H. Gollancz, trans., *Tophet and Eden*, London 1921, 59.

³ For research on Immanuel’s sources, see below.

compilations, which involve selection and reorganization, are in fact original compositions, greater than the sum of the parts.⁴ To what extent this is true, however, and what its significance is within the larger literary and cultural context, requires first the identification of Immanuel's sources and careful analysis of his use thereof. Only then can similarities to contemporary Latin work be seriously explored and fully appreciated.

The difficult process of identifying and analyzing Immanuel's sources began in the 1960s, with the work of David Goldstein.⁵ It has continued, in subsequent decades, with the theses, dissertations and articles by Israel Ravitzky, Aviezer Ravitzky, Deborah Schechtermann, and Caterina Rigo.⁶ What I want to do in the present *zuta* is to identify and briefly discuss an important source in Immanuel's commentary on Genesis, which has not been previously identified: Samuel ibn Tibbon's commentary on Ecclesiastes. In the first chapter of Genesis alone, Immanuel borrows four extended passages from Ibn Tibbon, without any mention of his source or even indication that he himself is not the original author. The first three of these four texts will be presented here. Immanuel will be set up, as it were, face to face with his immediate source; he will be forced to face his unnamed authority. A few remarks will introduce each of the three examples.

Ibn Tibbon on Eccl. 1:6 and Immanuel on Gen. 1:11

Ibn Tibbon's commentary on Ecclesiastes includes several exegetical digressions – and digressions within digressions. In these digressions, he explains many verses from other biblical books, sometimes at length. One example is the commentary on Eccl. 1:6: 'The wind goeth toward the south, and turneth about unto the north; it whirleth about continu-

⁴ See D. Schechterman, *The Philosophy of Immanuel of Rome* (PhD Diss., Hebrew University), 1984 (Hebrew).

⁵ Cf. n. 1. See also his article: 'The Commentary of Judah b. Solomon Hakohen ibn Matqah to Genesis, Psalms and Proverbs', *HUCA* 52 (1981) 203-252.

⁶ See I. Ravitzky, *Rabbi Immanuel b. Solomon of Rome, Commentary on Song of Songs* (MA Thesis, Hebrew University), 1970 (Hebrew); A. Ravitzky, 'On the Sources of Immanuel of Rome's Proverbs' Commentary', *Qiryat Sefer* 56 (1981) 726-739 (Hebrew); Schechtermann, *The Philosophy of Immanuel of Rome*; C. Rigo, *Judah Romano's Commentaries on the Bible: His Philosophical System as Contained in Them and His Sources in Jewish Thought and Christian Scholasticism* (PhD Diss., Hebrew University) 1996 (Hebrew).

ally, and the wind returneth again according to his circuits.’ His commentary on this verse⁷ consists of three distinct parts:

1. An astronomical explanation of the verse itself, in light of Ptolemaic ideas about natural and enforced motion and the movement of the sun along the ecliptic.
2. An explanation of Gen. 8:21-22, which, according to Ibn Tibbon, is related to Eccl. 1:6: both texts explain the influence of celestial movement on the seasons and the influence of the seasons on generation and corruption.
3. Within the explanation of Gen. 8:21-22, Ibn Tibbon also digresses to explain Gen. 1:11, which he discusses in relation to the composition of sublunar beings from the four elements.

How does Immanuel make use of Ibn Tibbon’s text? As is often the case with Immanuel, he makes sure not to waste anything from his source. Thus he borrows and anthologizes all three parts of Ibn Tibbon’s commentary, as follows:

1. Immanuel’s own commentary on Eccl. 1:6 begins with an abridged version of Ibn Tibbon’s commentary on the same verse.⁸
2. Immanuel’s commentary on Gen. 8:21-23 includes most of Ibn Tibbon’s explanation of the same verses, excluding the digression on Gen. 1:11.⁹
3. But the digression on Gen. 1:11 is not left out from Immanuel’s exegetical work. On the contrary, it was used to introduce his own commentary on the same verse.

The digression of Ibn Tibbon and commentary by Immanuel¹⁰ run as follows:

⁷ For the Hebrew text, see J. Robinson, *Samuel Ibn Tibbon’s Commentary on Ecclesiastes* (PhD Diss., Harvard University 2002), par. 176-193.

⁸ Cf. Immanuel’s commentary on Eccl. 1:6, MS HUC 167, 7b-8b, with Ibn Tibbon’s commentary, Robinson, ed., par. 176-178, 180, 187.

⁹ Cf. Immanuel’s commentary on Gen. 8:21-22, D. Goldstein, ed., 172:27-175:17, with Ibn Tibbon, Robinson, ed., par. 180-187, 192f.

¹⁰ The text of Ibn Tibbon is from Robinson, par. 189-191; the text of Immanuel from *Il commento di Emanuele Romano al Capitolo I della Genesi*, F. Michelini Tocci, ed., Rome 1963, 87:22-89:3.

Samuel Ibn Tibbon, Commentary
on Eccl. 1:6

[189] It is possible to say, as was said by the True Sage in Chapter Thirty of Part II,

that ‘earth’ is an equivocal term, referring to all elements in general and to the earthly element [*ba-yesod ha-‘afari*] in particular, and that it is used by [Solomon] to refer to all the elements.

It might be suggested that he used [‘earth’ here] as a name for the earthly element, that is, the ‘land’, which he then used in place of everything because most creatures are created from it or thought to be part of it, that is, the ‘land’. As for inanimate substances, there is no man who would doubt that these are created from or are part of it. Plants are also known and recognized to be created from it and dependent upon it for their growth and nutrition. This was given testimony in the Torah when it said: ‘Let the earth give forth grass’ [Gen. 1:11]. As for the ‘living

Immanuel of Rome, Commentary on Gen. 1:11

‘And God said: let the earth give forth grass’ [Gen. 1:11]:

Know that when he says ‘let the earth give forth grass’ ‘and the earth brought forth [grass]’ and the like,

[earth] is an equivocal term, referring to all the elements in general and to the element earth [*yesod he-‘afar*] in particular, and it is used here to refer to all the elements.

For all created things in the sub-lunar world are composed of the four elements, and when he says ‘let the earth give forth grass’, it is as if he had said: let these things he mentions be created from the four elements.

It might also be suggested that he used [‘earth’] here only as a name for the element earth, that is, the ‘land’, which was used in place of everything because most creatures are created from it or thought to be part of it, that is, the ‘land’. As for inanimate substances, there is no man who would doubt that these are created from or are part of it. Plants are also known and recognized to be created from it and dependent upon it for their growth and nutrition. Thus the Torah said: ‘Let the earth give forth grass’ [Gen. 1:11]. As for the ‘living soul’ [i.e., terrestrial animals],

soul' [i.e., terrestrial animals], there is testimony in the Torah that it too was created from [the element earth] [see Gen. 1:24], and it is also known that its nutrition comes from it and from what derives from it. Although it seems, according to the simple meaning of the words of Torah, that the birds were created from the water [see Gen. 1:20-21], the Sages have already indicated that 'they were created from *reqaq*' [bHull 27b], and *reqaq* is a term that refers to mud, which is a mixture of water and earth. In light of this, one cannot escape the fact that [birds] too are created from the 'earth'. Their place of habitation, moreover, is upon the earth, and their nutrition is gained from that which derives from the earth.

[190] It remains only to consider the status of fish. For they were related in the Torah to the water because their habitation is in the water [see Gen. 1:20-21, 26, 28]. But any individual possessing intelligence knows, by way of intellect, that fins, scales, and bones are not made of water. Notice how large beams are constructed from the ribs of some of the larger fish. Even fools [*peta'im*], who do not sense the fact [that these substances are not made of water], believe that the nutrition [of fish] comes from the earth

there is testimony in the Torah that it too was created from [the element earth] [see Gen. 1:24], and it is also known that its nutrition comes from it and from what derives from it. Although it seems, according to the simple meaning of the words of Torah, that the birds were created from the water [see Gen. 1:20-21], the Sages have already indicated that 'they were created from *reqaq*' [bHull 27b], and *reqaq* is a term that refers to mud, which is a mixture of water and earth. In light of this, one cannot escape the fact that [birds] too are created from the 'earth'. Their place of habitation, moreover, is upon the earth, and their nutrition is gained from that which derives from the earth.

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and what exists upon the earth, as we have mentioned, based upon what is seen by and heard from those who travel by sea. They know from their experience that fish are visible and can be found only close to the shore; they are never far from dry land, as we have mentioned.

This is on account of their need to gain nutrition from whatever things of the earth enter into the sea, either by way of the rivers, which flow into the sea, or as a result of rain floods that descend from the mountains or from other places close to the sea. This is the case regardless of whether their nutrition is itself earth or is something created from earth, such as mineral, plant, or animal. [191] Moreover, that which is found in the bellies of fish cannot possibly come to be from water only. Nor can the food of all fish derive entirely from other fish. This is impossible with respect to nature; and sound experience affirms that, as is the case with respect to terrestrial animals and birds, things that come to be in most species of this genus do not gain nutrition from their own kind. Thus, to conclude: all creatures get their nutrition from the 'earth'. And because the matter underlying any creature and the matter of its source of nutrition is indubitably one with respect to

earth and what exists upon the earth, based upon what is seen by and heard from those who travel by sea. They know from their experience that fish are visible and can be found only close to the shore; they are never far from dry land.

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genus – for the source of nutrition must needs share something with and be like that which it supplies, so that they can become one – it follows clearly that all creatures are created from the ‘earth’ and gain their nutrition from the ‘earth’. This is not the case with respect to the other elements, even water, as we have explained.

But what Solomon has mentioned with respect to the rivers [see Eccl. 1:7] is also related to something else, as we are going to explain.

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Thus scripture said: ‘Let the earth give forth grass’ ‘let the earth bring forth [grass]’, and this is clear. Let us return now to the explanation of the verse ...

Ibn Tibbon on Eccl. 3:7 and Immanuel on Gen. 1:14

The second example is Ibn Tibbon’s commentary on Eccl. 3:7: ‘A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak.’ Like his commentary on Eccl. 1:6, Ibn Tibbon’s explanation of this verse is long and digressive. It begins with several possible explanations of the verse, and ends with a discussion of the ‘work of the beginning’, focusing on the meaning of Gen. 1:14-19 and Gen. 1:26-27: he explains Gen. 1:14-19 in relation to Aristotelian ideas about celestial influence, and Gen. 1:26-27 as relating to the active intellect as a giver of human form.

This digressive commentary, like the previous example, was easy pickings for Immanuel. Once again, he used the initial commentary on Eccl. 3:7 in his own commentary on Ecclesiastes,¹¹ and excerpted the discussions of Gen. 1:14-19 and 1:26-27 into his commentary on Genesis.¹²

¹¹ Cf. Immanuel’s commentary on Eccl. 3:7, MS HUC 167, 25a-26a, with Ibn Tibbon, Robinson, ed., par. 324-336.

¹² Cf. Immanuel on Gen. 1:14-19 and 1:26-27, Tocci, ed., 92:24-94:30, 117:27-118:19, with Ibn Tibbon, Robinson, ed., par. 342-346, 337-338.

The commentary on Gen. 1:14-19 will be sufficient as illustration here. Immanuel begins with a citation from the *Guide of the Perplexed*, then continues with Ibn Tibbon, as in the translated text below. Note that Immanuel begins with the end of Ibn Tibbon's paragraph 342, and ends with the beginning of the same paragraph.

Samuel Ibn Tibbon, Commentary
on Eccl. 3:7

[342] To sum up: the generation of all three genera of things that come to be are in need of 'luminaries' in the 'firmament of the heavens'. Therefore, [Moses] placed [the suspending of the 'luminaries'] between [the creation of minerals and plants and the creation of animals]. The dictum of the Sages concerning the verse 'let there be light' [Gen. 1:3] serves as testimony to the true reality of this, that is, the true reality that the section on the 'luminaries' was designed to draw attention to the intermediaries. They said:

'These are the same luminaries that were created on the first day, but that He did not suspend until the fourth day' [see bHag 12a].

They have revealed with this dictum that the 'luminaries' were created on the first day; on the fourth day, in contrast, they were not created but 'suspended'.

It seems to me that [the Sages] understood this from the following verses: 'Let there be luminaries in the firmament of the heavens' [Gen. 1:14] and 'Let

Immanuel of Rome, Commentary
on Gen. 1:14

'Let there be luminaries in the firmament of heavens' [Gen. 1:14]

...

'These are the same luminaries that were created on the first day, but that He did not suspend until the fourth day' [see bHag 12a].

It seems that they understood that the 'firmament of heavens' mentioned here is not the celestial body but the firmament created on day two.

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them be for luminaries in the firmament of the heavens' [Gen. 1:15]. He did not say only 'Let there be luminaries', as when he said 'Let there be light' [Gen. 1:3] and 'Let there be a firmament' [Gen. 1:6]. For then it would have seemed as if he had meant the following: Let the luminaries be created. But it seems that the 'luminaries' that were created, and were already, were placed in the 'firmament of the heavens', 'to divide the day from the night' [Gen. 1:14] and to be 'signs and seasons and days and years' [Gen. 1:14]. They were in the 'firmament of the heavens' for the sake of [doing] all of these actions, namely, to give light upon the earth and to do all of the other actions that they are known to do by means of giving light upon and ruling over [the earth].

[343] This is the final purpose of this description [given by Moses]. For there is an important difference between saying 'Let there be such and such a thing' and 'Let there be such and such a thing in such and such a place designed to do such and such a thing or things'.

Similarly, when he says: 'God made the two great luminaries' [Gen. 1:16], he seems to add explanation as to how, on the fourth day, God 'made' the 'lumi-

luminaries in the firmament of the heavens' [Gen. 1:15]. He did not say only 'Let there be luminaries', as when he said 'Let there be light' [Gen. 1:3] and 'Let there be a firmament' [Gen. 1:6]. For then it would have seemed as if he had meant the following: Let the luminaries be created. But it seems that the 'luminaries' that were created on the first day, and were already, were placed in the 'firmament of the heavens', 'to divide the day from the night' [Gen. 1:14] and to be 'signs and seasons and days and years' [Gen. 1:14]. They were in the 'firmament of the heavens' for the sake of [doing] all of these actions, namely, to give light upon the earth and to do all of the other actions that they are known to do by means of giving light upon and ruling over [the earth].

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naries' in the 'firmament of the heavens' that had already been created on the first day. That is, [he describes] in what configuration and with which power he had made each of them such that they 'give light upon the earth'. He said that he had made the bigger of the two 'great luminaries' to rule the sublunar world during the day, which is the 'time' during which it gives light upon the earth. That is, its main contribution as ruler occurs at the 'time' when its light can be seen, namely, when it has risen and emitted its rays wherever in relation to that place it is day. The smaller luminary He made to rule over the sublunar world during the 'time' when its light can be seen, wherever in relation to that place it is night, namely, at the time when the light of the sun cannot be seen. The planets, likewise, rule during the night; for it is at that 'time' when they can be seen.

[344] But don't understand from the phrase 'God made the two luminaries' [Gen. 1:16], nor from the statement 'and God fixed them' [Gen. 1:17], that He made them for this [purpose] and that His only aim in making them was that they do these works.

For this is not how it is. Rather, the purpose [of these verses] is to describe the natures that were es-

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When he says: 'God made the two luminaries' [Gen. 1:16], and 'and God fixed them' [Gen. 1:17], this does not mean that they were made for this [purpose] and that His only aim in making them was that they do these things.

For this is not how it is. Rather, the purpose [of these verses] is to describe the natures that were es-

tablished by God within them or the forces that were fixed by God within them so that they could do these 'works' in the 'firmament of the heavens' in order 'to give light upon the earth'.

It seems that this is similar to the suspending [of the 'luminaries'] that was mentioned as having taken place on the fourth day. In this he meant to allude to the fact that their action in the 'firmament of the heavens', and their giving of light 'upon the earth', was not revealed until there were generated things, namely, plants, that had been generated from the elements, through which the action of the sun could be seen. For everyone knows that the ripening of fruit and production of yield occurs as a result of the sun approaching them; namely, that these processes are consequent upon the proximity [of the sun]. The moon also has utility in this respect. As Scripture says: 'And from the precious fruits brought forth from the sun, and from the precious fruits put forth by the moon' [Deut. 33:14]; although in this it indicates that their action is different.

[345] But it should not be asked, not even according to our interpretation, according to which the generation of minerals is mentioned in a verse of the 'work of the beginning', why the genera-

tablished by God within them or the forces that were fixed by God within them so that they could do these 'works' in the 'firmament of the heavens' in order 'to give light upon the earth'.

As for the meaning of the suspending [of the 'luminaries'] that was mentioned as having taken place on the fourth day, in this he meant to allude to the fact that their action in the 'firmament of the heavens', and their giving of light 'upon the earth', was not revealed until there were generated things, namely, plants, that had been generated from the elements, through which the action of the sun could be seen. For everyone knows that the ripening of fruit and production of yield occurs as a result of the sun approaching them; namely, that these processes are consequent upon the proximity [of the sun]. The moon also has utility in this respect. As it is written: 'And from the precious fruits brought forth from the sun, and from the precious fruits put forth by the moon' [Deut. 33:14].

But it should not be asked, not even according to someone who says that the generation of minerals is mentioned in the 'work of the beginning', why the generation of

tion of the ‘luminaries’ was not mentioned after the minerals. For the action of the sun with respect to [the minerals] is not recognized by the multitude; they do not sense in [the minerals] any creation at all. Instead, it seems to them that [the minerals] are part of the element earth and that they have no creation distinct from the generation of the simple element [earth]. It is possible that, on account of this, Scripture was careful not to ‘say’ the creation of [the minerals] explicitly; [their creation] was mentioned on the same day as the creation of plants.

[346] To sum up: because the minerals and plants were mentioned together on one day, whatever the reason for this might have been, it was only fitting for him, according to his purpose to both conceal [a secret] and simultaneously allude to [the same secret], to mention the ‘luminaries’ only on the fourth day. For that thing [namely, plants] that can reveal the [physical] effect of the ‘luminaries’ was created on the third day, and because the effect of the ‘luminaries’ was revealed on the third day, he mentioned the suspending of [the ‘luminaries’], that is, the bringing out of their force, on the day after rather than the day before.

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To sum up: because the minerals and plants were mentioned together on one day, whatever the reason for this might have been, it was only fitting for him, according to his purpose to both conceal [a secret] and simultaneously allude to [the same secret], to mention the ‘luminaries’ only on the fourth day. For that thing [namely, plants] that can reveal the [physical] effect of the ‘luminaries’ was created on the third day, and because the effect of the ‘luminaries’ was revealed on the third day, he mentioned the suspending of [the ‘luminaries’], that is, the bringing out of their force, on the day after rather than the day before.

In this way, the multitude would not sense the intermediaries or be misled into thinking that [the intermediaries themselves] are the actions or that these actions should be attributed to them.

It is not the case that there was any creation proper [on day four] that separated the creation of the plants and the creation of the animals.

[342] To sum up: the generation of all three genera of things that come to be are in need of ‘luminaries’ in the ‘firmament of the heavens’. Therefore, [Moses] placed [the suspending of the ‘luminaries’] between [the creation of minerals and plants and the creation of animals] ...

In this way, the multitude would not sense the intermediaries and attribute to them these actions.

It is not the case that there was any creation proper [on day four] that separated the creation of the plants and the creation of the animals.

To sum up: the generation of all three genera of things that come to be – namely, mineral, plant, and animal – are in need of ‘luminaries’ in the ‘firmament of the heavens’. Therefore, [Moses] placed [the suspending of the ‘luminaries’] between [the creation of minerals and plants and the creation of animals].

Let us return now to the interpretation of the verse.

Ibn Tibbon on Eccl. 1:7 and Immanuel on Gen. 1:20

The final example begins with Ibn Tibbon’s commentary on Eccl. 1:7: ‘All the rivers run into the sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the place from whence the rivers come, thither they return again.’ Here Ibn Tibbon explains the verse in light of the meteorological theory of rivers and evaporation. This leads to a discussion of the ‘work of creation’ in general and, in particular, the contribution of the four elements to the creation of sub-lunar beings. Ibn Tibbon cites and explains several verses from Genesis, including Gen. 1:20.

Immanuel approaches this text using precisely the same method he uses elsewhere. He borrows Ibn Tibbon in his own commentary on Eccl. 1:7,¹³ and excerpts Ibn Tibbon's digressive comments on Genesis into his commentary on the relevant verses in Genesis. Immanuel's commentary on Gen. 1:20, which reproduces two paragraphs from Ibn Tibbon, reads as follows:¹⁴

Samuel Ibn Tibbon, Commentary
on Eccl. 1:7

[204] ...

It was said: 'Let the earth bring forth grass' [Gen. 1:11], 'And the earth brought forth' [Gen. 1:12, 1:24], 'Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature' [Gen. 1:20], 'And the Lord God formed the man [from the dust of the ground]' [Gen. 2:7]. It did not say: 'Let the fire bring forth' or 'let the air bring forth'.

[203] I say, furthermore, that this sage [Solomon] has mentioned the 'abiding' of these two elements, namely, earth and water, in one state, without excess or deficiency, to indicate the unity of the matter of all things that come to be 'under the sun'.

For the other [elements] were not mentioned because the creation of sublunar creatures, 'under the sun', is related to these two [namely, earth and water, rather than air and fire].

Immanuel of Rome, Commen-
tary on Gen. 1:20

'God said: Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature' [Gen. 1:20].

Know that when it is said: 'Let the waters bring forth' [Gen. 1:20], 'And the Lord God formed the man [from the dust of the ground]' [Gen. 2:7], it was not said: 'Let the fire bring forth' or 'let the air bring forth'.

For the creation of sublunar creatures is related to these two [namely, earth and water, rather than air and fire].

¹³ Cf. Immanuel's commentary on Eccl. 1:7, MS HUC 167, 8b-9b, with Ibn Tibbon, ed. Robinson, par. 194-197, 201-208.

¹⁴ The text of Ibn Tibbon is from Robinson, par. 203-204; the text of Immanuel is from Tocci, 112:31-113:22.

The multitude recognize that all composite creatures are created from these two, but do not recognize that they are also created from fire and air, even though there is no creature ‘under the sun’ that does not contain fire and air. That these two elements [earth and water] are the principal elements of sublunar existents has also been maintained by the philosophers, for the following reasons: (1) [earth and water] provide [sublunar existents] with their place of habitation; (2) through [earth and water], all [sublunar existents] have permanence; and (3) the existence of [fire and air] can be proved from [earth and water], for [fire and air] are their contraries.

[204] It was stated explicitly by Aristotle in *Meteorology*, Book Four, that the dry and the moist are the principles of generation with respect to all material bodies that have thickness [*‘obi*], and these two qualities correspond with the elements water and earth. The moist provides a composite existent with a cohesive factor and principle of blending, whereas the dry gives it solidity and keeps it from dissolving. He also said there, in another context, that all homoeomorphous substances, such as gold and silver, are composed of earth

The multitude recognize that all composite creatures are created from these two, but do not recognize that they are also created from fire and air, even though there is no creature under the lunar sphere that does not contain fire and air. That these two elements [earth and water] are the principal elements of sublunar existents has also been maintained by the philosophers, for the following reasons: (1) [earth and water] provide [sublunar existents] with their place of habitation; (2) through [earth and water], all [sublunar existents] have permanence; and (3) the existence of [fire and air] can be proved from [earth and water], for [fire and air] are their contraries.

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and water, as are the homoeomorphous organs in man, such as flesh, bones, veins, and skin, as well as wood, leaves, and bark in plants. To sum up, [earth and water, with the qualities of the moist and the dry,] serve as the matter for composite things subject to generation, whereas [air and fire], namely, the warm and dry and the warm and moist, serve as their agents; they preserve [composite existents] and help and benefit them in a different way; for they are not material [principles].

In similar fashion did the Torah, which was given by God to men, women, and children, relate creation only to [earth and water]. It said: ‘Let the earth bring forth grass’, [Gen. 1:11], ‘And the earth brought forth’ [Gen. 1:12, 1:24], ‘Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature’ [Gen. 1:20], ‘And the Lord God formed the man [from the dust of the ground]’ [Gen. 2:7]. It did not say: ‘Let the fire bring forth’ or ‘let the air bring forth’.

water, as are the homoeomorphous organs in man, such as flesh, bones, veins, and skin, as well as wood, leaves, and bark in plants. To sum up, [earth and water, with the qualities of the moist and the dry,] serve as the matter for composite things subject to generation, whereas [air and fire], namely, the warm and cold, serve as their agents; they preserve [composite existents] and help and benefit them in a different way, which is not material.

Thus the Torah, which was given by God to men, women, and children, related creation only to [earth and water]. It said: ‘And the earth brought forth’ [Gen. 1:12, 1:24], ‘Let the earth bring forth grass’ [Gen. 1:11], ‘Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature’ [Gen. 1:20], ‘And the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground’ [Gen. 2:7], and the like.

Conclusions

Immanuel of Rome may have been an original poet, but as biblical exegete, he was clearly a derivative thinker. In fact, he was the compiler par excellence: his method was to search, collect, and anthologize; to

identify philosophical explications of biblical texts, extract them from their original source, and rearrange them in his own anthology of philosophical exegesis.

Immanuel's commentaries are patchworks of material drawn from other authors. They are based mostly, if not entirely, on unacknowledged secondary references. But the question of his originality can still be posed: In what way did he reshape, modify, even censor his source material? What governed his process of selection? Does the final result, patchwork as it is, still represent his unique philosophical and exegetical vision? The sources identified in this short essay suggest a negative answer: he adds little to the remarks of Ibn Tibbon. But only after a much fuller investigation of Immanuel's sources and use of sources, when the body of work can be considered as a whole, will it be possible to fully understand and appreciate the work of this philosophical exegetical anthologist.

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