Article

Giqatilla's Philosophical Poems on the Hebrew Vowels: Poetry, Philosophy, and Theology in Giqatilla's *Ginnat Egoz* and *Sefer ha-Niqqud*

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Abstract: In the present paper, I will examine Yosef ben Abraham Giqatilla's philosophical poems on the Hebrew vowels that are included in his three early works on "punctuation:" the third section from the larger *Ginnat Egoz* ("The Nut Garden"), the longer version of *Sefer ha-Niqqud* ("The Book of Punctuation"), and a short version of the latter. Scholarship on the chronology of these three texts has been inconclusive. I will argue that a textual comparison of Giqatilla's philosophical poems and an analysis of their paratextual function allow for a solution, and therefore a possible chronology of their composition.

Keywords: Giqatilla; Hebrew punctuation; Jewish poetry; Spanish Kabbalah

1. Introduction

Yoseph ben Abraham Giqatilla (1248–c. 1325) was a prominent figure of the 13th-century Spanish Kabbalah. He devoted himself almost entirely to the investigation of the mysteries of the divine names and to the development of an onomatology—a "science of the divine names."[1] He presupposed that each name of God—from the Tetragrammaton to the several appellatives used in Scripture—pointed to a specific aspect of divinity. Therefore, the existence of God could only be understood by examining the divine names. In particular, Giqatilla distinguished between the "proper names" of God (*shemot*) and His "surnames" (*kinnuyim*), the former being related to upper and lower cosmological elements, as stated in his early works, or to the 10 upper and lower metaphysical entities in the system of emanation, called *sefirot* ("spheres"), as stated in his later works.[2] In any case, Giqatilla always maintained that there is a specific hierarchy in the several "names" of God and therefore that they had to be examined accordingly.

This short paper of mine follows on from my longer work on Giqatilla that was recently published to offer a comprehensive overview of his thought (Dal Bo 2019). My longer work aimed to discuss, in particular, the historiographical assumption that there would be a clear distinction between an "early Giqatilla" and a "later Giqatilla." On that occasion, I was able to argue that the lexical and conceptual differences between the two phases of Giqatilla's thought are quite obviously important and yet should only be considered a part of an overall speculative evolution. In other words, it was my contention to integrate the two perspectives into a comprehensive insight into his thought. As a result, Giqatilla's thought appeared to pass from a "top-down description" of the divine world according to the principles of a "philosophical system" (the so-called "early Giqatilla") to a "bottom-up description" according to the principles of a "theosophical system" (the so-called "late Giqatilla", Dal Bo 2019, pp. 1–96). In this sense, lexical and conceptual differences shall not be considered mutually exclusive, as if the "late Giqatilla" were to be read apart from the "early Giqatilla" (and vice versa). On the contrary, I argued that it was necessary to read Giqatilla's thought as a whole and therefore to rather distinguish between a first and a second phase of the same speculative attitude, despite the obvious differences in terminology and notions. In this sense, these differences would be functional

to allow an evolution from the description of an almost static, if not "alchemical," system of the names of God to a "dynamic" one that presupposes the participation of the believer in the system of emanation. As I mentioned there, I was inspired mainly by Lachter and implicitly by Maier, as they both insisted on the political potentiality of Giqatilla's thought (Lachter 2008; Maier 1987).

On that occasion, I also dealt with two treatises that Giqatilla wrote on Hebrew "punctuation" (*niqqud*), the diacritical system commonly used for marking vowels in Hebrew,[3] and I included them as two *excursa* between the examination of the "early Giqatilla" and the "late Giqatilla". Yet, I was mainly concerned with showing the important specific differences between these texts, leaving out the continuity between them, especially between those written at the time of the composition of *Ginnat Egoz*, as discussed below. I would like to take the opportunity of this publication precisely to investigate more deeply the relationship not so much between the various treatises on Hebrew "punctuation" written by Giqatilla but rather on another neglected aspect of his production: the nature and function of some poems contained in the first two treatises on Hebrew "punctuation."

This short paper aims to offer for the first time a philologically reliable comparison between these three compositions but also to pay attention to the rhetorical variations between them. In doing so, I hope to be able to clarify a specific aspect of the chronology of Giqatilla's works. I am positive that this specific analysis may allow the reader to discern how mystical poetry had progressively become prominent in Giqatilla's long intellectual journey. In this respect, the question of chronology should not be mistaken for a simple erudite question on the written production of a 13th-century Kabbalist but rather be appreciated as the effort to localize Giqatilla's poems within his larger mystical production and therefore, by implication, as the effort to understand the role of poetry in Jewish mysticism.

My starting assumption is that these poems had an important rhetorical-argumentative function. Giqatilla used poetry to complement his speculative thought and in doing so he diverged from the typical indications of Greek Neo-Platonism that typically tended not to appreciate poetry in force of Plato's disapproval of it in the *Republic*. On the contrary, Giqatilla is shown to be influenced by Arabic thought and especially by the figure of Ibn Gabirol. He especially shares with him the assumption to use poetry as a complementary means of exposition. It is, however, a means of expression that Giqatilla will ostensibly leave behind, especially with the publication of the major later works: *Sha'arey Tzedeq* and *Sha'arey Orah*. In the present paper, I will examine Yosef ben Abraham Giqatilla's philosophical poems on the Hebrew vowels—the so-called "punctuation"—that are included in his three early works: the third section from the larger *Ginnat Egoz* ("The Nut Garden"), the longer version of *Sefer ha-Niqqud* ("The Book of Punctuation"), and a short version of the latter. Scholarship on the conceptual, textual, and chronological relationships between these three texts has been inconclusive, mostly due to the strong affinity between these texts, and yet their apparent diversity in the way of treating the nature of the Hebrew vowels.

I will attempt to offer a solution to the question about the possible chronology of these three texts, especially by avoiding a broader, almost exhausting philological confrontation between them, but rather by examining the paratextual material that included in each of them: namely, philosophical poems that have the function to introduce the reader to the philosophical treatment of the Hebrew vowels. These poems are not simply encapsulated into the main text but rather have the main function of introducing the reader to it, and therefore operates "more than a boundary or a sealed border, the paratext is, rather, a threshold" (Genette 1997, pp. 1–2). Giqatilla's poems are discrete literary entities but also play such a paratextual function, exactly because they prepare the reader to learn the quite technical and difficult philosophical content.

By publishing synoptically the philosophical poems, I will try to prove that Giqatilla first authored the third section of larger *Ginnat Egoz*, then made the first abridgement in the longer version of *Sefer ha-Niqqud*, and finally refined the latter text in the conclusive, shorter version of the latter text.

2. The 13th-Century Context and the Interest in Hebrew Vowels

Here, I cannot delve too deeply into describing the context in which Giqatilla wrote his treatises on Hebrew "punctuation" and I will mostly rely on the excellent recent scholarship on the matter: Rachel Orna Wiener's doctoral thesis on the mysteries of vocalization in the Kabbalah of Castilla (Wiener 2008) and the more complex work of Tzahi Weiss that follows a complex interdisciplinary path, combining Talmud, history, philosophy, Kabbalah, and Lacanian psychoanalysis (Weiss 2015). Both these scholars have emphasized that Jewish scholars especially began carefully investigating the secret of Hebrew vowels, "punctuation," and letter from a very specific time in Jewish history: after the development of a proto-modern study of Comparative Semiotics in Castilla following the Islamic domination. It is well known that Islamic society had a great interest in the literary quality of the Quran and was therefore encouraged to study Arabic together with its cognates languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Syriac. In particular, Wiener has investigated the activity of the *'Iyyun* circle: a 13th-century Provencal circle that meditated on combinations of letters and permutations of the divine name, mostly linked to the *Sefer ha-'Iyyun* ("The Book of Contemplation") that was disseminated in many versions.[4] He has emphasized that the theoretical contribution of the *'Iyyun* circle was precisely to show that each vocalization of the divine names reflects a particular cosmic force and thus an aspect of the divine essence, which, however, is also to be associated with the attainment of a special state of meditation.[5] This sentiment still expressed in occasional and unsystematic terms is then transmitted to later thinkers as well. It is not necessary here to reiterate all the points addressed by Wiener. It will be sufficient to say that this speculative investigation of the Hebrew language—its grammar, spelling, and vocalization—was particularly rooted in Castilla and clearly followed on from the development of Comparative Semitic in the Islamic milieu.[6] Therefore, it is hardly surprising that Wiener was able to examine and compare many Castilian authors: the aforementioned *'Iyyun Circle*, Rabbi Ya'qov ben Ya'qov ha-Kohen, Rabbi Ya'aqov ha-Kohen, Rabbi Itzhaq ha-Kohen, the Zohar, Giqatilla himself, Moshe de Leon, and Yosef ha-Bah mi-Sudhan ha-Birah, aka Yosef of Hamadan. Concerning this large constellation of authors and "schools," it clearly emerges that Giqatilla was not unique in offering a philosophical and mystical examination of Hebrew "punctuation."

An examination of these different approaches to Hebrew "punctuation" largely escapes the purpose of the present paper. However, it will be worthwhile to briefly recall the matter of fact that Giqatilla operated within a circle of Kabbalists—whose best-known representative probably was Moshe de Leon, the principal editor of the Zohar but also an author, as recently shown by Avishai Bar-Asher, of several treatises on Hebrew "punctuation" (Bar-Asher 2020). This circumstance has made it possible to argue that Giqatilla's intellectual collaboration with Moshe de Leon was more complex than expected and was stretched to the point that both of them wrote some treatises on the mysteries of the Hebrew alphabet and "punctuation." As in Giqatilla, also in the case of Moshe de Leon, one can appreciate a speculative evolution from the system where the *sefirot* are hardly mentioned or, more correctly, from a system in which the *sefirot* are considered a sort of cosmic powers to a system in which the *sefirot* are parts of a complex system of emanation. Bar-Asher has correctly said that the reason for this evolution is still "a mystery" (Bar-Asher 2020, p. 357). However, this does not mean that it is not possible to try to explain this evolution if not philologically or historically (in the absence of documentation or evidence) at least speculatively, as I have tried to do in my text in the case of Giqatilla. What is particularly important is to note that Moshe de Leon also wrote several treatises on Hebrew "punctuation" before turning to writing his Hebrew-Aramaic theosophic works and editing the Zohar. Bar-Asher has primarily drawn attention to a series of texts that deal with several themes similar to those in Giqatilla himself: speculation on the forms of letters, vowel points, divine names, etc. according to Aristotelian philosophical principles. This clearly is a common ground to Giqatilla's early works on Hebrew "punctuation" as well.

3. Yosef Ben Abraham Giqatilla and His Three Works on Hebrew "Punctuation"

Rabbi Joseph ben Abraham Giqatilla (1248–c. 1325) is considered the most representative figure of a stream of Jewish mysticism devoted in particular to the investigation of the mysteries of the divine names. Despite his fame, information about the life of Giqatilla is sparse. He was born in the Castilian city of Medinaceli. There, he might have been educated in the mystical speculation of Abraham Abulafia (1240–c. 1292). In Medinaceli, he seems to have written most of his works.[7]

The most characteristic of Giqatilla's statements is the absolute individuality of divine names: he believes that any appellative which Scripture attributes to God does not simply represent a linguistic reality among other profane objects but, rather, the very matrix of the universe. Thus, his mystical speculation essentially consists in formulating a 'science of the divine names' and in deciphering the hidden secrets of each—a divine onomatology. Giqatilla never contradicts this fundamental assumption in his speculative itinerary but modulates it according to his different means of investigation: numerology, acrostics and permutations. Both hermeneutical methodology and speculation converge in his belief—reality consists in the articulation of the divine names. Joseph Giqatilla was a prolific writer—particularly active in the 1280s and 1290s. Giqatilla wrote several texts, exclusively in Hebrew: liturgical poems, philosophical speculations on the names of God, a short Talmudic encyclopedia, commentaries on Hebrew "punctuation," theosophical speculations on the names of God, commentaries on Scripture, commentaries on Jewish liturgy, commentaries on some specific commandments, and some other collateral topics. The influence of other sources, such as German Pietism, the philosophical work of Rabbi Jacob ben Sheshet Gerondi (in particular his *Meshiv Devarim Nekohim*) and the "School of Gerona" have to be added to these mainframes. For instance, the notion of "inner point" as a designation for the focus of Scripture, which is inaccessible to the Nations that spin around it—just a circumference that rotates around an "inner point," the Tetragrammaton—is derived by Jacob ben Sheshet Gerondi and populates the theology of Giqatilla's *Ginnat Egoz*.[8] Both Rabbi Jacob ben Sheshet Gerondi and the 'School of Gerona' respectively influenced Giqatilla in interpreting mystically the Hebrew "punctuation," in developing the doctrine of emanation from a metaphysical primordial point and in using the term *hamshakah* ("emanation") to describe the ontological proceedings of the Tetragrammaton. Emanation would then emerge as the act of pouring of the divine effluence pouring—by means of a sort of "divine water"—from the upper world into the lower world.[9] Giqatilla applies this notion of an internal point to both Hebrew "punctuation" and the cosmic-ontological distinction between three worlds. Accordingly, he assumes that Hebrew vowels—especially the ones designated with a single dot—localize the divine essence and its activity with respect to the three worlds: the upper, middle, and inferior world. Giqatilla constantly insists on the symbolic power of these single-dotted vowels, which are a modulation of the same divine reality, frequently described as "point," "simple point," and "internal point." This is a phraseology that Giqatilla derived, again, from Jacob ben Sheshet and the School of Gerona and preludes to his own later notion of "mental point" (*nequdah mahshavit*), which occurs both in *Sha'rey Tzedeq* and *Sha'arey Orah*, with some slight differences (Dal Bo 2019, pp. 87–88). Giqatilla authored at least three main works on the Hebrew vowels in different phases of his life: the third section from *Ginnat Egoz*, the longer version of *Sefer ha-Niqqud*, the shorter version of *Sefer ha-Niqqud*, and a later text called *Perush ha-Niqqud* ("The Commentary on Punctuation"), see also (Wiener 2016). The similarity in title and expression often produced some confusion between these different texts, as reflected in manuscripts, prints, and catalogues.[10] I will discuss them separately for clarity's sake.

3.1. Giqatilla's Ginnat Egoz

Ginnat Egoz is a long work that was unquestionably written in 1273–1274, as reported in several transmitted manuscripts. The text provides a very detailed description of the divine structure of "emanation" (*hamshakhah*) that descends from the upper into the lower world in an increasingly complex chain of divine names. Accordingly, Giqatilla provides

also a long, detailed exposition of the names of God in Scripture on account of a specific hermeneutical methodology that involves three fundamental ways of interpretation: numerology, combination of letters, and acrostics. The text is divided into three parts: a philosophical description of the nature of God based on Maimonides' rationalism (Book I), a cosmological description of emanation flowing into the physical universe (Book II), and a philosophical-theosophical description of the Hebrew vowels (Book III). The third part of *Ginnat Egoz* is known under the title *Sha'ar ha-Niqqud* and is connected to the independent text *Sefer ha-Niqqud.*

3.2. Giqatilla's Sefer ha-Niqqud

Giqatilla was a prolific writer, and the dating of his works is quite challenging. The only certain dates in the history of his works are the following ones: *Ginnat Egoz*, written in 1273–1274; *Perush ha Merkavah*, written in 1286; and *Sharey Orah*, written in 1291. All other dating is only conjectural (Dal Bo 2019, p. 338). In particular, the dating of *Sefer ha-Niqqud* is difficult. Gottlieb argued that this text was a manuscript version before the third Book of *Ginnat Egoz* and is therefore datable between 1270 and 1273, but Blickstein maintained that this reconstruction would be conjectural and insisted on dating this work after the composition of *Ginnat Egoz*—between 1274 and 1275 (Gottlieb 1976, pp. 101–3). Annett Martini was inconclusive on this point and simply assumed that Giqatilla wrote it "at a very early stage of his creative life" (Martini 2011a, p. 57) but also suggests that "Giqatilla most probably composed [*Sefer ha-niqqud*] before the *opus magnum* of his early period, the *Ginnat Egoz*" (Martini 2011b, p. 208). On the contrary, I assume that this text was possibly written either at the time of finishing the third Book of *Ginnat Egoz* or immediately after it and, therefore, the text might have been written between 1273 and 1275. The text is found in a long and a short recension that I treat here as a longer and shorter *Sefer ha-Niqqud.* My understanding of the textual similarities between these texts has persuaded me that the poem published in *Ginnat Egoz* was probably the inspirator of the one published in the longer version of *Perush ha-Niqqud* that was further elaborated into the shorter version. I will discuss this hypothesis below.

3.3. Giqatilla's Perush ha-Niqqud

The dating of *Perush ha-Niqqud* falls between the composition of *Sha'arei Tzedeq* (that it explicitly mentions) and *Sha'arei Orah* (that it does not mention). Therefore, this text has presumably been written between 1286 and 1291, most probably in early 1290.

The dating of *Perush ha-Niqqud* mainly depends on the temporal location of the so-called *sodot*—a series of short treatises that represent a complex of texts, that were presumably written all together with *Sha'arey Tzedeq* or immediately after it or perhaps even written together with *Sha'arey Tzedeq* but eventually discarded for some unknown reasons. The spectrum of composition of these texts is quite broad and lies after the 1280s. If one accepts this view, *Perush haNiqqud* must necessarily have been written after these various works.

Giqatilla wrote this second treatise on Hebrew "punctuation" in the later stage of his speculation. Accordingly, he employs several references to the system of *sefirot* that are pictographically depicted by the placement of Hebrew vowels above, within, or under the line of writing.

4. Giqatilla's Philosophical Poems

Before examining Giqatilla's philosophical poems included in his three works on Hebrew "punctation," it might be useful to briefly consider the role of Jewish philosophical poetry in the Iberian Peninsula in the Middle Ages.

4.1. Hebrew Poetry in Medieval Spain

There are few doubts that Hebrew literature—even during its golden age between the 10th and 12th centuries—was deeply influenced by Arabic literature, as it is still evi-

dent from the rhymed-prose that were delivered quite later, during the 12th to the 15th centuries. In general, contemporary scholarship is usually conclusive about the nature of Jewish poetry in Spain during and after Muslim domination. It is apparent that medieval Jewish poets were particularly dedicated to writing in Hebrew and also to develop the notion of "poetry" as an independent topic of its own—not too dissimilar from what it can be encountered in modern poetry. Several Jewish poets from Spain—Shemuel ha-Nagid,[11] Solomon ibn Gabirol,[12] Moshe ibn Ezra,[13] and Judah ha-Levi[14]—were quite determined to write poetry only in Hebrew. Jewish intellectuals in Medieval Spain were involved in an ongoing rivalry with the Muslim socio-religious environment, its rising importance in the study of an incipient Comparative Linguistics,[15] and its assimilation of Aristotelian philosophy.[16] In this respect, Jewish poets were no exception. They were eager to relaunch the merits of the Hebrew against Arabic. They also wanted to prove "on-field" that Hebrew was as good as Arabic in producing both poetry and speculation.

Religious images, as well as Jewish liturgy, were deeply connected to the art of poetry. Particular attention to this topic has recently been paid by the prominent US-born Jewish poet Peter Cole in his auspicious collection *The Poetry of Kabbalah* (Cole 2012). This important anthology of mystical verses and liturgical hymns allowed us to appreciate how poetry had progressively emerged since early Jewish mysticism of the divine "Palaces"[17] and was progressively disseminated in Al-Andalus, Spain, and Ashkenaz—stretching back to the Galilean Kabbalah. It is indeed poetry that allowed stellar figures—for instance, the prominent Salomon ibn Gabirol—to infuse philosophical notions with religious fervor. Poetry was a perfect way for improving Aristotelian mentality with poetic images. One of the most prominent figures in Jewish religious and philosophical poetry certainly was the prominent Jewish thinker Solomon Ibn Gabirol, whose works, language, and notions deeply inspired Giqatilla as well as many other Jewish and Christian scholars. In particular, Solomon Ibn Gabirol—undoubtedly the first and most influential Jewish philosopher and poet in Spain—intended to both preserve traditional rhetorical genres and innovate Jewish poetry by experimenting in form and style. Ibn Gabirol was courageous enough to combine tradition with innovation in his poetic writings. In particular, he especially relied on paronomasia—the art of juxtaposing two correlated terms—that also influenced the young Giqatilla and his philosophical poems. In truth, Ibn Gabirol was instrumental to setting the poetic and speculative tone for the entire school of Andalusian writers who simultaneously were poets and philosophers and intended to combine Neo-Platonism with rabbinic Judaism.

The use of poetry as a "complement" to "metaphysical" thought required negotiating in a complex way with the principles of Plato's disapproval of poetry and the systematization of poetry according to Aristotelian *Poetics* that was complexly receipted in the Islamic world. On a conceptual level, the influence of Ibn Gabirol on Giqatilla was not particularly strong. I have argued elsewhere that the influence of Ibn Gabirol on Jewish mysticism was mostly indirect and consisted in assimilating his pivotal notion of *ratzon* ("will") as the apex of the Godhead into a lower localization within the system of emanation, see (Dal Bo 2021a). One can easily say that Ibn Gabirol's influence was therefore oblique. In the case of Giqatilla, it probably consisted of instilling the idea that one could search for a "poetical thought"—by combining poetry and speculation. It is particularly significant that, in his later works, especially in *Sha'arey Tzedeq* and *Sha'arey Orah*, Giqatilla makes no longer use of poems to intersperse speculative argumentation. However, this does not mean that he had abandoned the idea of writing in flowery Hebrew, but rather that he no longer felt it necessary to make poetry "have a direct dialogue" with philosophy.

One must be careful not to project his own philosophical expectations—and thus "Western" philosophical ones—onto the Jewish–Arab milieu in Spain. In his survey of the history of poetry in the Arab world, Cantarino has emphasized the role of orality and thus poetry as a fundamental criterion for defining the identity of the Arab people—a characteristic that was not directly acquired also by their "co-resident" Jews but passed on to the Jewish world as a deep cultural appreciation of poetry, without considering it "an al-

ternative" or a "contradiction" to "philosophy." In particular, Cantarino was able to show that Islamic culture excelled in identifying so clearly and self-consciously with "literature." He assumes that Arab writers pursued excellence in the art of poetry as a form of imitation of the Quran—the most perfect literary product as the full realization of the word of God in writing. As such, the Quran represented the perfection of the Arabic literary art but also introduced the subtle paradox that the Quran would not be a "poetical book" but rather the most perfect Revelation of God. In this sense, the Quran could not be "poetical" by definition. Nevertheless, as Cantarino insists, this implicit praise of poetry resulted in the elaboration of the theory of *takhyil* ("the imaginary"): this was a concept that denoted the creative flowering of Islamic literary theory. In other words, this notion presupposed that the poet had one primary goal: not imitating reality in literal terms, but rather encouraging virtuous action exactly by eulogizing goodness (Cantarino 1975).

In her careful investigation of the so-called "poetic syllogism," Tannyss Ludescher has been able to show that this particular device allowed the point of junction between poetry—that was "de-intellectualized" by virtue of *takhyil*—and its application to philosophical speculation (Ludescher 1996). In other terms, "poetic syllogism" was believed to effect on the reader's rational faculties and allow for the voluntary exercise of the human will. In his intriguing study of the development of "poetic syllogism," Tanyss Ludescher suggested that *takhyil* allowed for developing a poetics that was anti-realist and yet resulted into a paradoxical effect—allowing for the abstraction of speculative concepts: "as we have seen, the concept of *takhyil* crystallized a tendency in Arab thought which sought to divorce poetry from objective Truth. I would like to suggest that other factors contributed to this general tendency to sever poetry from Nature and treat it as an artefact that can be manipulated in syllogistic terms" (Ludescher 1996, p. 97). It is exactly within this context that one shall read Giqatilla's poems: not simply as a theoretical divertissement but rather as the effort to elaborate a properly speculative thought that is not alienated from poetry.[18]

4.2. Giqatilla as Both a Kabbalist and a Poet

In this respect, it should not be surprising that Giqatilla wrote philosophical poems. On the contrary, contemporary scholarship usually agrees with the assumption that he presumably began his literary production exactly by writing two poems—possibly redacted before 1273—that precede *Ginnat Egoz*: they are two pieces of poetry consisting of a sixty-nine verse mystical poem titled *Baqqashah* and the mystical poem titled *'Iqerey Emunah* that is very similar in content to the previous one and "saturated with ideas and themes culled from *Ginnat Egoz*" (Blickstein 1983, pp. 35, 151; Cf. Gruenwald 1966).

It appears that the young Giqatilla produced several pieces of poetry and emphasized the opposition between short and long vowels, probably under the influence of Arabic phonology. Scholars in Comparative Semitic Philology have frequently remarked the equivalence in rhyme and meter between Arabic long vowels and Sephardic full vowels in the Hebrew Poetry of Medieval Spain. Such metrical equivalence evidences, as *terminus ante quem*, the loss of the earlier long–short opposition within the full vowels of Hebrew. Giqatilla encapsulated his poems into his first major philosophical work: *Ginnat Egoz.*

Giqatilla's *Ginnat Egoz* is a large and difficult text: the supernal world is described with a very technical philosophical vocabulary that is mostly drawn from Maimonides' seminal *Guide to the Perplexed.* This already complex topic is further complicated by the use of *Sefer Yetzirah* as a book of cosmology, the use of a complex philosophy of language, a doctrine of the divine names (an onomatology), and, in the present case, also a doctrine of the Hebrew vowels. As result, *Ginnat Egoz* is a quite demanding text that requires a large number of competencies in theology, philosophy, cosmology, and linguistics. In this respect, the several poems that are to be found in this text play a specific role: easing the study of this difficult text by introducing and summarizing the content in a more fashionable, possibly more agreeable way. *Ginnat Egoz* is organized in several books, chapters, and sections. Giqatilla typically introduces each chapter and several sections with short poems, mostly a few verses that are organized in hemistichs. These texts often attempt to

be alliterative and use some rhyme to better connect their philosophical content. Albeit of a literary nature, these poems have the paratextual function to educate the reader and, therefore, are phenomenologically similar to the mnemotechnical texts that are often to be found in rabbinic texts.

In the following table, I have synoptically edited these poems as they emerge from the three works on Hebrew "punctuation:" namely, the third book from *Ginnat Egoz*, the longer version of *Sefer ha-Niqqud*, and the shorter version of the letter text. This edition is a fabrication. I cannot emphasize enough that I myself have edited these texts together and that they are scattered in the text, in specific locations. Therefore, these texts should not be considered, strictly speaking, as a whole poetic composition but rather as a series of poetic introductions to each portion from the larger *Ginnat Egoz* and the shorter versions of *Sefer ha-Niqqud*. Given this philological precaution, I have edited these poetic texts but have still signalized the division among them with a blank row. Despite some philological difficulties, I maintain that these several poems can offer an interesting point of view on the relationship between these three tractates on Hebrew "punctuation" and possibly offer a solution to the historiographical enigma of their origin.

4.3. Giqatilla's Philosophical Poems: Synopsis and Translation

For clarity's sake, I have divided each verse into two separate hemistichs, consequently numbered each verse into an "a-verse" and a "b-verse" hemistich, evidenced in italics the most important lexical differences between the three versions, in bold the most important lexical similarities, and with the sign ø the absence of textual material in the respective versions. Lexical correspondences between the *Ginnat Egoz* and the longer version of *Sefer ha-Niqqud* are marked in italics, lexical correspondences between the longer and shorter version of *Sefer ha-Niqqud* are marked in bold, and the lexical correspondences between *Ginnat Egoz* and the shorter version of *Sefer ha-Niqqud* are marked in underlined text (see Table 1):

Table 1. A Synoptic Edition of Gikatilla's Poems on Hebrew "Punctuation".

Line	*Ginnat Egoz*	*Sefer ha-Niqqud* **Short Version**	*Sefer ha-Niqqud* **Long Version**
1a	ידיד נפשי דעה חכמה ובינה	ø	ø
1b	ותוציא אז לאור כל תעלומה.	ø	ø
2a	חקור למצוא יסוד כל היסודות	ø	ø
2b	והבן סוד הויה הקדומה.	ø	ø
3a	ותראה כי יסוד מושכל וחמר	ø	ø
3b	וההרגש נשואים על בלימה	ø	ø
4a	והוא פעל בני שכל להנהיג	ø	ø
4b	בני חמר בהנהגה שלימה.	ø	ø
5a	וצר נגדם דמות נקוד ואות	ø	ø
5b	להנהגת פעולה וחתימה.	ø	ø
6a	ואם שכל ונקוד הם נשמות	ø	ø
6b	יחיד עולם נשמה לנשמה.	ø	ø
7a	בשער היסוד דברי חמודות.	ø	ø
7b	ומצרף הוא לשלש הנקודות.	ø	ø
8a	והן בלבד יסודות התכונות.	ø	ø
8b	והוא בלבד יסוד כל היסודות.	ø	ø
9a	תרצה בני לעלות אל מעלת שכל.	בני תרצה לעלות אל מעלת שכל	תרצה בני לעלות אל מעלת שכל.
9b	סוד מעלת חכמה ללמוד הוי שקוד.	סוד מעלת חכמה ללמוד הוי שקוד	סוד מעלת חכמה ללמוד הוי שקוד.

Table 1. *Cont.*

Line	*Ginnat Egoz*	*Sefer ha-Niqqud* Short Version	*Sefer ha-Niqqud* Long Version
10a	עצים ומאכלת עם אש ומזבח תכין	עצים ומאכלת עם אש ומזבח תכין	עצים ומאכלת עם אש ומזבח תכין
10b	עקוד רגל וידובו תעמוד.	עקוד רגל וידובו תעמוד	ובו תעמוד יד ורגל עקוד.
11a	מקרא ומושכלו יש לך לעיין עם	מקרא ומשכלו יש לך לעיין עם	מקרא ומושכלו יש לך לעיין עם
11b	מלות ואותיות חשבון וסוד נקוד.	מלות ואותיות חשבון וסוד ניקוד	מלות ואותיות חשבון וסוד נקוד.
12a	קמ"ץ וצרי. חקרחקור חל"ם	חקור חולם וגם קמץ וצרי	קמץ וצרי חקרחקור חולם
12b	חקור חר"ק ושר"ק הפלאות	חקור חירק ושורק הפלאות	חקור חירק ושורק הפלאות
13a	תו ראש ותכלית. חקרחקור אלף	חקור אלף ותו ראש ותכלית	ותו ראש ותכלית חקרחקור אלף
13b	צבא אותוחלק לחמשה כל.	וחלק לחמשה כל צבאות	צבא אותוחלק לחמשה כל.
14a	וכוין החמשה מול חמשה	וכוון חמשה מול חמשה	וכוין חמשה מול חמשה
14b	פלאותוהתבונן ותמצא בם	והתבונן ותמצא בם מליאות	פלאות.והתבונן ותמצא בם
15a	קום בהדרך את רכב וצלח	ø	ø
15b	להבין יסוד היסוד דבר שלח.	ø	ø
16a	השם להבין כל בני שכל	ø	ø
16b	עולם בעומדו על ברית מלח	ø	ø
17a	תעמוד לעולם ותהיה.	תעמוד לעולם ותהיה	תעמוד לעולם ותהיה
17b	מוכן לחיים ותחייה.	מוכן לחיים ותחייה	מוכן לחיים ותחייה
18a	העת תכוין בחל"ם	העת תכוין בחולם	העת תכוין בחולם
18b	הוה והיה ויהיה	ויהיה **היה והוה**	ויהיה **היה והוה**
19a	עיין והשתכל סוד קמ"ץ.	קמץ **עיין והסתכל בסוד**	קמץ **עיין והסתכל בסוד**
19b	אולי תהא זוכה היות משקיף.	אולי תהי זוכה היות משקיף	אולי תהי זוכה היות משקיף
20a	לראות בנועם סוד תנועתו	לראות בנועם סוד תנועתו	לראות בנועם סוד תנועתו
20b	כל אות והוא כדור והוא מקיף.	כל אות והוא כדור והוא מקיף	כל אות והוא כדור והוא מקיף
21a	ראה שר"ק דמות גשר.	**קשר מקויים**ראה שורק דמות	**קשר מקויים**ראה שרק דמות
21b	ואמצעי כרין פשר.	**ועליו היסוד מוכן לאשש**	**ועליו היסוד מוכן לאשש**
22a	ויורד את השאול מטה	**והוא סוד ואו בצורת התכונה**	**והוא סוד ואו בצורת התכונה**
22b	ודואה רום כמו נשר.	**ואכן מעלותיו הן כמו שש**	**ואכן מעלותיו הן כמו שש.**
23a	וקושר התכונות אך	ועליו **ראה חירק כעין קרח**	וחשמל **ראה חרק כעין קרח**
23b	לכך נקרא שמו קש"ר	**דמות שכל וסוד הנוגהים**	**דמות שכל וסוד הנוגהים**
24a	חר"ק חקר וראה לפניך		
24b	חקר פלאות רום והגבוהים		
25a	רקח ומרקחת דמות אבקת.		
25b	רחק מאד ממעלת נוגהים		
26a	קרח קרח הוא וטהור הוא.		
26b	אך לא כגלגלים וכאלהים		
27a	בינה יסוד בנין וכל ענין		
27b	וראה יסוד מוסר מראש ענין		
28a	דע כי ההויה אשר קנתה.		
28b	שכל הגלגלים בראש שנין		
29a	כל המצואים בלעדו יחדו.		
29b	כולם מחודשין והם בנין.		

Table 1. *Cont.*

Line	*Ginnat Egoz*	*Sefer ha-Niqqud* Short Version	*Sefer ha-Niqqud* Long Version
30a	ø	והשעה אשר תשכיל דמותו	והשעה אשר תשכיל דמותו
30b	ø	אזי תשכיל דמות רכב אלהים	אזי תשכיל דמות רכב אלהים
31a	צירי״י היה מבין וחוקר. יסוד	סוד צירי היה מבין וחקור	צירי״י היה מבין וחוקר. יסוד
31b	ובו תמצא דמות בנין נגוהים	**ואז תעלה למעלת הגבוהים**	**ואז תעלה למעלת הגבוהים**
32a	וסודיו יסודותיוואם תבין	ואם תבין מעלותיו וסודיו	וסודיו יסודותיוואם תבין
32b	אזי תצלח בך רוח אלהים	אזי תצלח בך רוח אלהים	אזי תצלח בך רוח אלהים
33a	הבן ידיד נפשי בסוד נקוד.	ø	ø
33b	מורה יסוד גלגל והא עגול.	ø	ø
34a	בסגו״ל נקודותיו מכוונות.	ø	ø
34b	על כן דעה כי הוא יסוד גלגול.	ø	ø
35a	והבן תבונות ועל קו התכונות שבה.	ø	ø
35b	דע כי תכנונות בין עולם שב״א.	ø	ø
36a	דעה חכמה ובינה.	ø	דעה חכמה ובינה.
36b	בסוד פתח תכונה.	ø	בסוד פתח תכונה.
37a	ואז תהיה כגנה.	ø	ואז תהיה כגנה.
37b	שתולה על מים.	ø	שתולה על מים.
38a	והתבונן תבונות.	ø	והתבונן תבונות.
38b	בסידרי חביונות.	ø	בסידרי חביונות.
39a	ותראה חזיונות.	ø	ותראה חזיונות.
39b	צבא השמים.	ø	צבא השמים.
40a	דע לך ידידי כי אלהינו.	ø	ø
40b	נוטה שחקים אהלים מתח	ø	ø
41a	פעל שכלים אל רום עולם.	ø	ø
41b	אך התנועה על זבול פתח.	ø	ø
44a	יחיד ירא ולבוש פחד.	ø	ø
44b	לפני ארון מושל בלי כחד.	ø	ø
45a	דע כי אדונינו יסוד הכל.	ø	ø
45b	והו מחוץ לכל נמצא והוא אחד.	ø	ø
1a	My dear soul, know wisdom and intelligence	ø	ø
1b	Thus you'll bring to light all the mysteries.	ø	ø
2a	Investigate to find the foundation of all foundations	ø	ø
2b	And to find the mystery of the primordial Being	ø	ø
3a	You'll see, foundation is conception and matter	ø	ø
3b	You'll feel, [they] are married with nothingness	ø	ø
4a	He makes the sons of intellect to lead	ø	ø

Table 1. *Cont.*

Line	*Ginnat Egoz*	*Sefer ha-Niqqud* Short Version	*Sefer ha-Niqqud* Long Version
4b	The sons of matter in perfect leadership.	ø	ø
5a	Narrow to them the image of dot and letter	ø	ø
5b	To lead action and signifying.	ø	ø
6a	If intellect and dot are souls	ø	ø
6b	A single world soul to soul	ø	ø
7a	In the moment, the foundation is pleasant words	ø	ø
7b	It is attached to three dots	ø	ø
8a	They alone are the fundaments of meaning.	ø	ø
8b	He alone the foundation of all mysteries	ø	ø
9a	If you intend, my son, to ascend to the level of intellect	If you, my son, intending to ascend to the level of intellect	My son, if you intend to ascend to the level of intellect
9b	to study the secret levels of wisdom, be vigilant.	to study the secret levels of wisdom, be vigilant.	to study the secret levels of wisdom, be vigilant.
10a	The altar with fire, wood and knife prepare	The altar with fire, wood and knife prepare	the altar with fire, wood and knife prepare
10b	Sand upon it with bound <u>foot and hand</u>.	Stand upon it with bound hand and foot.	Stand upon it with bound <u>foot and hand</u>.
11a	Contemplate the verse and its conception	Contemplate the verse and its conception	Contemplate the verse and its conception
11b	By the letters, value and secret of punctuation.	By the letters, value and secret of punctuation.	By the letters, value and secret of punctuation.
12a	Explore cholam and *explore* qamatz and tzere	Explore cholam and *explore* qamatz and tzere	Explore cholam and also qamatz and tzere
12b	Explore chiriq and shuruq, the miracles.	Explore chiriq and shuruq, the miracles.	Explore chiriq and shuruq, the miracles.
13a	Explore alef and *explore* taf, beginning and completion,	Explore alef and *explore* taf, beginning and completion,	Explore alef and taf, beginning and completion,
13b	Divide into five the *host of each letter*.	Divide into five the *host of each letter*.	Divide into five all hosts.
14a	Set five opposite five,	Set five opposite five,	Set five opposite five,
14b	Understand, you will find in them *miracles*	Understand, you will find in them *miracles*	Understand, you will find in them fullness
15a	Raise to the way to chariot and prosperity	ø	ø
15b	To understand the fundament, a	ø	ø
16a	The name to understand all those with intellect	ø	ø
16b	The world stands on an eternal covenant	ø	ø

Table 1. *Cont.*

Line	*Ginnat Egoz*	*Sefer ha-Niqqud* Short Version	*Sefer ha-Niqqud* Long Version
17a	You will stand forever and being	You will stand forever and being	You will stand forever and being
17b	Placed towards life and resurrection,	Placed towards life and resurrection,	Placed towards life and resurrection,
18a	The time you'll be placed in cholam,	The time you'll be placed in cholam,	The time you'll be placed in cholam,
18b	Who is, who was and who will be.	**Who was, who is and will be.**	**Who was, who is and who will be.**
19a	Consider and look at the secret of qamatz	**Consider and look** at the secret of qamatz	**Consider and look at** the secret of qamatz
19b	Perhaps you will be worthy to gaze	Perhaps you will be worthy to gaze	Perhaps you will be worthy to gaze
20a	See through the nice secret of its motion	See through the nice secret of its motion	See through the nice secret of its motion
20b	Every letter; and it is round and surrounds.	Every letter; and it is round and surrounds.	Every letter; and it is round and surrounds.
21a	Look at shuruq an image of a bridge,	Look at shuruq an image of **tightened knot**	Look at shuruq an image of **tightened knot**
21b	for the middle is like conciliation.	**whereupon the foundation is set to support.**	**whereupon the foundation is set to support.**
22a	It descends to the sheol below	**It's the secret of waw in form of disposition,**	**It's the secret of waw in form of disposition,**
22b	and it flies high like an eagle.	**for, indeed, its levels are like six.**	**for, indeed, its levels are like six.**
23a	Indeed, it knots together the dispositions.	**Look at chiriq like ice** and the electrum	**Look at chiriq like ice** and upon it are
23b	wherefore it is called by the name 'knot.'	**the image of intellect and the secret of splendors.**	**the image of intellect and the secret of splendors.**
24a	Explore chereq and look before you		
24b	Explore the supreme and highest miracles		
25a	Compose and compound of spices is the image of powder		
25b	Very far away from the levels of splendor		
26a	Ice is ice and pure is.		
26b	But not as spheres and as God		
27a	Intelligence the foundation of edifice and every matter		
27b	And see foundation of morality at the beginning of matter		
28a	Know that the being that has acquired		
28b	The intellect of the spheres at the beginning of years		

Table 1. *Cont.*

Line	*Ginnat Egoz*	*Sefer ha-Niqqud* Short Version	*Sefer ha-Niqqud* Long Version
29a	All the beings without him together		
29b	They all are renewed and are an edifice		
30a	ø	The moment you consider its image	The moment you consider its image
30b	ø	you will consider the image of the chariot of God.	you will consider the image of the chariot of God.
31a	Understand and expose the *foundation* of tzere,	Understand and expose the *foundation* of tzere	Understand and expose the secret of tzere
31b	and you will find in it the image of the edifice of splendors.	**Thus you will ascend to the level of the highest.**	**Thus you will ascend to the level of the highest.**
32a	For if you understand its *foundations* and its secrets,	For if you understand its *foundations* and its secrets,	For if you understand its levels and its secrets,
32b	the spirit of God will prosper within you.	the spirit of God will prosper within you.	the spirit of God will prosper within you.
33a	Understand, my dear soul, the secret of punctuation		ø
33b	Teaching the foundation of sphere and it is round	ø	ø
34a	In *segol*, its punctuation is intended	ø	ø
34b	Therefore, know that it is the foundation of sphere	ø	ø
35a	And understand the intellects and the line of features therein	ø	ø
35b	Know that there are arrangements between the word of sheva	ø	ø
36a	Know wisdom and intelligence.	Know wisdom and intelligence.	ø
36b	Arranged in the secret of patach	Arranged in the secret of patach	ø
37a	And it will be your defense	And it will be your defense	ø
37b	Planted on water.	Planted on water.	ø
38a	And understand the intelligences	And understand the intelligences	ø
38b	In the series of receptacles.	In the series of receptacles.	ø
39a	And see [their] visions	And see [their] visions	ø
39b	Hosts of the skies.	Hosts of the skies.	ø
40a	Know, my friend, that our God	ø	ø
40b	Stretches out the celestial tends	ø	ø

Line	Ginnat Egoz	Sefer ha-Niqqud Short Version	Sefer ha-Niqqud Long Version
41a	Operates the intelligences at the level of the world	ø	ø
41b	So the movement on the abode of patach	ø	ø
44a	A fearful individual and dressed in fear.	ø	ø
44b	In front of a governor's closet without a hitch.	ø	ø
45a	Know that our Lord is the foundation of everything.	ø	ø
45b	And out of all is found and is one.	ø	ø

5. Analysis and Commentary

Before proceeding with a comprehensive analysis of these three texts, I would like to shortly analyze each of them separately.

The third book from *Ginnat Egoz* expectedly offers the more rich and complex textual material concerning the longer and shorter versions of *Sefer ha-Niqqud*. It is possible to divide this material into different sections: (1) a proem to the reader (vv. 1a–6b), (2) a shorter thematic introduction (vv. 7a–8b), (3) a series of minor introductions to each single Hebrew vowel (vv. 9a–39b), (4) a shorter "mid-introduction" to the reader that is inserted between these introductions (vv. 15a–16b), and (5) a coda that recalls the proem in form and style (vv. 40a–45b). In other words, each poetic introduction to each element from Hebrew "punctuation" is encapsulated into a proem (vv. 1a–6b) and a coda (vv. 40a–45b) that play a specific, but unique rhetorical role.

It is not surprising that the proem (vv. 1a–6b), the shorter introduction (vv. 7a–8b), the mid-introduction (vv. 15a–16b), and the coda (vv. 40a–45b) are not extant either in the longer or int the shorter versions of *Sefer ha-Niqqud*. No reason is given, but textual material was probably abridged only for brevity's sake. Interestingly, both Giqatilla's *Sha'arey Tzedeq* and *Sha'arey Orah* are introduced by a dedication to the reader, whom Giqatilla addresses with a stereotypical formula: "my beloved of my soul ... " Indeed, Giqatilla frequently uses this formula to introduce the reader both to works. As Charles Mopsik maintains, this formula is probably modelled on a Biblical expression: "I have given the dearly beloved of my soul" (*natati 'et yedidut naphshi*) (Jer 12:7). Probably due to Giqatilla's scholarly fame and moral authority, this formula might have been used both in Talmudic and liturgical context. On the one hand, this very formula is also employed by David ben Zimra in some Rabbinic responsa.[19] On the other hand, a similar formula—*yedidi nefesh* (literally: "my dear soul")—is also used in the homonymous liturgical poem, commonly attributed to Eleazar ben Moshe Azikri.[20] It is difficult to determine whether Giqatilla was referring to either an actual or fictitious reader. Nevertheless, it is important to note that Giqatilla assumes a particular tone towards this individual who asked for some clarifications about the secrets of God's names. Giqatilla familiarly addresses him in a familiar way but he also assures him that he is going to transmit to him all his knowledge "in black and white," with no hesitation. Such willingness to transmit mystical knowledge is of great importance—as clearly suggested by the imperative verb form: "know that ... " The longer version of *Sefer ha-Niqqud* mostly consists of a series of minor introductions to each single Hebrew vowel (9a–39b). Concerning the material from *Ginnat Egos* and the shorter version of *Sefer ha-Niqqud*, the longer version of *Sefer ha-Niqqud* exhibits these notable differences: (1) the removal of the proem, a shorter thematic introduction, the "mid-

introduction," and the coda, as already anticipated; (2) the abridgement of a larger body of verses from *Ginnat Egoz* (vv. 21a–29b) into shorter, more condensed verses (vv. 21a–23b); and (3) a final summary that is included only in *Ginnat Egoz* but absent in the shorter version of *Sefer ha-Niqqud* (vv. 36a–39b). The shorter version of *Sefer ha-Niqqud* exhibits the same characteristics as the longer version except for the exclusion of a final segment (vv. 36a–39b).

This preliminary analysis of these philosophical poems is important to determine what are the crucial philological features for establishing the relationships between these texts. First of all, the removal of the proem, a shorter thematic introduction, the "mid-introduction", and the coda (vv. 1a–6b, 7a–7b, 15a–16b, and 40a–45b) is a dramatic change that suggests that the larger *Ginnat Egoz* was the archetype for both the longer and shorter version of *Sefer ha-Niqqud.* Yet this major change is still not sufficient to offer detail on the actual relationships between these texts. On the other hand, the removal of this textual material allows us to focus on the more relevant textual changes that take place in the remaining texts: the so-called single introductions to each Hebrew vowel (broadly speaking the material included between vv. 9a–39b). Given the philological proportions of this synoptic edition, I can pass now on a philological and stylistic analysis of these texts. There are three types of differences between the third book from *Ginnat Egoz*, the longer and shorter version of the *Sefer ha-Niqqud*: phraseological, phraseological-rhetorical, and textual. I will discuss them separately for clarity's sake.

5.1. Phraseological Differences

These differences mostly consist of small variations in word order—see for instance "if you, my son, intend to ascent" (תרצה בני) in *Ginnat Egoz* and the longer *Sefer ha-Niqqud* and "my son if you intend to ascent" (בני תרצה) in the shorter *Sefer ha-Niqqud* (v. 9a); the hemistich "The altar with fire, wood and knife prepare" (עצים ומאכלת עם אש ומזבח תכין) in *Ginnat Egoz* and the longer *Sefer ha-Niqqud* and "the altar with fire, wood and knife" (עצים ומאכלת עם אש ומזבח) in the shorter *Sefer ha-Niqqud* (v. 10a). Each of these differences is negligible from a strict semantic point of view but undisputedly proves textual proximity between the third book from *Ginnat Egoz* and the longer version of *Sefer ha-Niqqud*, on the one hand, and the relative independence of the shorter version of *Sefer ha-Niqqud.* Some of these phraseological differences also involve changes in the rhetoric of the text, and therefore shall be discussed separately below.

5.2. Phraseological-Rhetorical Differences

These differences are very similar to the former ones, with the exception that they consist of variations in wording that have a sensible change in the rhetorical pattern of the three texts—see for instance the anaphoric use of "explore cholam and explore qamatz and tzere" (חקור חל״ם חקר קמ״ץ וצרי) in *Ginnat Egoz* and the longer version of *Sefer ha-Niqqud* and their resolution into the unimpressive "explore cholam and also qamatz and tzere" (חקור חולם וגם קמץ וצרי) in the shorter *Sefer ha-Niqqud* (v. 12a); the simplification in wording from "explore alef and explore taf, beginning and completion," (חקור אלף חקורחקור ותכלית ותו ראש) in *Ginnat Egoz* and the longer version of *Sefer ha-Niqqud* to "explore alef and taf, beginning and completion," (חקור אלף ותו ראש ותכלית) in the shorter *Sefer ha-Niqqud* (v. 13a).

5.3. Textual Differences

These differences are particularly relevant and shall be classified in two subtypes: (1) minor differences in wording and (2) larger textual differences. For clarity's sake, I will treat them separately below.

5.3.1. Minor Textual Differences

These differences typically pertain only a single word, and therefore can also depend on some scribal error—see for instance the reading "divide into five the host of each letter" (וחלק לחמשה כל צבא אות) in *Ginnat Egoz* and the longer version of *Sefer ha-Niqqud* in with

respect of the reading "divide into five all hosts" (וחלק לחמשה כל צבאות) in the shorter *Sefer ha-Niqqud* (v. 13b); the reading "understand, you will find in them miracles" (והתבונן ותמצא בם פלאות) in *Ginnat Egoz* and the longer version of *Sefer ha-Niqqud* in with respect of the reading "understand, you will find in them fullness" (והתבונן ותמצא בם מליאות) in the shorter *Sefer ha-Niqqud* (v. 14b); the reading "understand and expose the foundation of tzere" (יסוד צירי"י היה מבין וחוקר) in *Ginnat Egoz* and the longer version of *Sefer ha-Niqqud* with respect of the reading "understand and expose the secret of tzere" (סוד צירי"י היה מבין וחוקר) in the shorter *Sefer ha-Niqqud* (v. 31a); the reading "for if you understand its foundations and its secrets" (ואם תבין יסודותיו וסודיו) in *Ginnat Egoz* and the longer version of *Sefer ha-Niqqud* with respect of the reading "for if you understand its levels and its secrets" (ואם תבין מעלותיו וסודיו) in the shorter *Sefer ha-Niqqud* (v. 32a).

Each of these differences usually pertains to small orthographical details and are fully compatible with scribal errors. Nevertheless, it is philologically relevant that each of these differences gathers the three texts into two groups: *Ginnat Egoz* and the longer version of *Sefer ha-Niqqud,* on the one hand, and the shorter *Sefer ha-Niqqud,* on the other hand. There are only two exceptions to this frame: first, the reading "look at shuruq, an image of a bridge" (ראה שרי"ק דמות גשר) in *Ginnat Egoz* alone with respect of the reading "look at shuruq, an image of a tightened knot" (ראה שורק דמות קשר מקויים) in both longer and shorter version of *Sefer ha-Niqqud* (v. 21a). As anticipated, almost each of these differences in wording could be originated by a scribal error: words like צבא אות("host of letter") vs. צבאות("hosts") (v. 13b), פלאות("miracles") vs. מליאות("fulness") (v. 14b), גשר("bridge") vs. קשר("knot") (v. 21a), and יסוד("fundament") vs. סוד("secret") (v. 31a).

The distribution of these differences in wording is telling. With only one exception, they all suggest that *Ginnat Egoz* and the longer version of *Sefer ha-Niqqud* are closer to each other rather than to the third text (the shorter version of *Sefer ha-Niqqud*).

5.3.2. Larger Textual Differences

The larger textual differences pertain to the central segment of the poem that covers many verses in Ginnat Egoz (vv. 21a–29b) and only a few in both the longer and shorter version from *Sefer ha-Niqqud* (vv. 21a–23b). The longer version in *Ginnat Egoz* (vv. 21a–29b) is different from the notably shorter one in both longer and shorter *Sefer ha-Niqqud* (vv. 21a–23b): the lexical material extant in *Ginnat Egoz* is more or less reduced to one third in both longer and shorter *Sefer ha-Niqqud.*

A closer look suggests that Giqatilla has not simply shortened his previous version from *Ginnat Egoz* but rather condensed it into a shorter text that still uses most of the keywords that had previously employed. Notably, a portion from the longer text in *Ginnat Egoz* (vv. 24a–26b) was built on the alliteration of the root חרי"ק("chereq") (v. 24a) that is permuted in all four possible ways: חקי"ר("explore") (v. 24b), רקי"ח("compose") (v. 25a), רחי"ק("far away") (v. 25b), and קרי"ח("ice") (v. 26a). The longer and shorter text from *Sefer ha-Niqqud* do not exhibit these wordplays but still refer to the term "ice" (קרח) (v. 23a) by oversimplifying the allusions concerning the original text. The term "fundament" (יסוד) in *Ginnat Egoz* (v. 27a) is somehow alluded to in the longer and shorter version of *Sefer ha-Niqqud* with the almost homographic term "secret" (סוד) (v. 22a), while the expression "the levels of splendor" (ממעלת נוגהים) in *Ginnat Egoz* (v. 25b) appear in the shorter and longer version from *Sefer ha-Niqqud* to be broken up into the terms "its levels" (ממעלתיו) (v. 22b) and "splendor" (הנוגהים) (v. 23b). On the contrary, terms like "image" (דמות), "knot" (קשר), and "disposition" (התכונה) occur in all three texts and therefore manifest interesting textual solidarity.

5.4. A Philological Comparison

Note the following textual congruencies between the three text versions:

5.4.1. Lexical Congruences between *Ginnat Egoz* and the Longer *Sefer ha-Niqqud* vs. the Shorter *Sefer ha-Niqqud* (Marked in Italics)

These are the most common ones—see the terms וורגל ... בו (v. 10b), חקר(v. 12a) that is also reinforced by the expression וגםand then חקר(v. 13a), פלאות(v. 14b), and יסודותיו(v. 32a). Occasionally, lexical congruences between *Ginnat Egoz* and the longer *Sefer ha-Niqqud* vs. the shorter *Sefer ha-Niqqud* are quite thin and yet involve notable semantic changes. See, for instance, the expression צבא אות(v. 13b) that is "hypercorrected" only in the shorter *Sefer ha-Niqqud* as צבבאותor the term יסוד(v 31a) "hypercorrected" only in the shorter *Sefer ha-Niqqud* as סוד. In some other cases, there the shorter *Sefer ha-Niqqud* lacks material that is present in the other two texts (vv. 36a–39b).

5.4.2. Lexical Congruences between the Longer and Shorter *Sefer ha-Niqqud* vs. *Ginnat Egoz* (Marked in Bold)

These are not very frequent and mostly involve minor changes in word order. Note, for instance, the sequence היה והוה ויהיה(v. 18b) that occurs as הוה והיה ויהיה, possibly due to a copyist's error, the correction of והשתכל סוד(v. 19a) with עוייןdue to the—עויין והסתכל בסוד euphonic?—passage from the letter סto the letter שbut also from בסודto סוד, the correction of דמות גשר(v. 21a) with קשר מקויים, which is simultaneously a correction of גשרwith קשר(cf. 23b) and the addition of מקוייםand collectively all verses vv. 21a–23b, which show how both the version of *Sefer ha-Niqqud* diverge from *Ginnat Egoz.*

5.4.3. Lexical Congruences between *Ginnat Egoz* and the Shorter *Sefer ha-Niqqud* vs. the Longer *Sefer ha-Niqqud* (in Underlined Text)

This congruence is very rare and only occurs with the expression <u>רגל ויד</u> (v. 10b) that otherwise occurs as רגל וידand plausibly is a copyist's error

5.4.4. Lexical Departures of *Sefer ha-Niqqud* from *Ginnat Egoz*

These are quite obvious and consist in the removal of lexical material (vv. 1a–8b, 15a–16b, 24a–29b, 33a–35b, 40a–45b).

5.4.5. Summary

The frequent lexical congruences between *Ginnat Egoz* and the longer *Sefer ha-Niqqud* vs. the shorter *Sefer ha-Niqqud* (marked in italics) (Section 5.4.1) vis-à-vis the less frequent lexical congruences between *Ginnat Egoz* and the longer *Sefer ha-Niqqud* vs. the shorter *Sefer ha-Niqqud* (marked in italics) and the occasional lexical congruences between *Ginnat Egoz* and the shorter *Sefer ha-Niqqud* vs. the longer *Sefer ha-Niqqud* (in underlined text) suggest that there is no appreciable *direct* connection between *Ginnat Egoz* and the shorter *Sefer ha-Niqqud.* This philological analysis makes it plausible—and yet still not unequivocal—to assume that the shorter version of *Sefer ha-Niqqud* was elaborated from the longer version of *Sefer ha-Niqqud* that was originally extracted from *Ginnat Egoz,* as is clearly shown by the lexical departures from these texts (Section 5.4.4).

This analysis suggests that the passage from *Ginnat Egoz* to the longer and shorter versions from *Sefer ha-Niqqud* clearly shows an apparent change in the versification but also an elaboration on almost the same lexical material. This suggests that Giqatilla's reworking was less radical than one would expect at first and, on the contrary, that he intended to elaborate the longer and shorter versions from *Sefer ha-Niqqud* based on the longer lyrics in *Ginnat Egoz.* Again, the similarity of the lexical material suggests that the third book of *Ginnat Egoz* was the basis for the longer version of *Sefer ha-Niqqud* and that the latter was the basis for the shorter version of *Sefer ha-Niqqud* as well.

6. Conclusions

The phraseological, rhetorical-phraseological, and especially the textual differences point to true textual variants between the three texts. These are particularly notable between the version from *Ginnat Egoz*, on the one hand, and the two versions from the *Sefer ha-Niqqud*, on the other hand. These variants clearly evidence that *Ginnat Egoz* presumably

was the original text from which the two versions from the *Sefer ha-Niqqud* have been elaborated, specifically the longer version of the *Sefer ha-Niqqud* from the *Ginnat Egoz* and the shorter version of the *Sefer ha-Niqqud* from the longer version of the same text. Martini has argued that these differences would only show notable textual differences between these texts and claimed for their textual independence. In my opinion, these textual variants prove exactly the opposite: the version from *Ginnat Egoz* was the source text for both the longer and shorter version of *Sefer ha-Niqqud.* More specifically, some verses from *Ginnat Egoz* appear to be summarized and rephrased in both the longer and shorter version of *Sefer ha-Niqqud.* The derivation of the latter from the former can be appreciated from the fact that Giqatilla extracted some specific keywords from *Ginnat Egoz* (emphasized in bold above), reworked them in a notable different way, and finally encapsulated in two sensible different variants.

Notes

1. On the notion of "onomatology," see (Dal Bo 2019, pp. lix–lxi, lxii–lxx, 9–80, 238–336). For a comprehensive treatment of the name of God and the development of this motif in Jewish thought, see (Miller 2016).

2. The proper meaning of the term *sefirah* (here tentatively rendered as "sphere") is still disputed. Gershom Scholem famously argued that the Hebrew term *sefirah* would be correlated to the Greek term *sfaira* (Scholem 1987, p. 26). However, this etymology is inconclusive (Dan 1998, p. 8). Besides, Jewish mysticism traditionally associates the nature and activity of *sefirot* with several other entities, like "number" (*mispar*), "book" (*sefer*), "sapphire" (*sapir*), etc. Therefore, even a definitive etymology of *sefirah* would not exhaust the complex semantics of this term.

3. The English term *punctuation* designates the use of symbols—full stops, periods, commas, etc.—to divide written words in sentences but is only used here to translate the Hebrew term *niqqud* (literally "dotting," "pointing"). *Niqqud* is a system of diacritical signs that are traditionally used to represent vowels in Hebrew, whose writing system is consonantal, as it also happens in other Semitic languages. On the experience of reading a consonantal language, see the recent (Shimron 2006) and the debated (De Kerckhove 1990).

4. On the so-called 'Iyyun Circle and its literature, see (Scholem 1987) and especially (Verman 1992).

5. (Wiener 2008, p. 50). On similar topics, see also (Dal Bo 2021b).

6. On the development of a primitive Comparative Semitic Philology in the Spanish milieu, see (Maman 2004).

7. For a comprehensive discussion on Giqatilla's life and works, see (Dal Bo 2019, pp. i–lxx). See also (Blickstein 1983) and the more recent (Morlok 2011).

8. See again (Dal Bo 2019, pp. 121–22).

9. For a discussion of Giqatilla's notion of emanation, see (Dal Bo 2011). In particular, the term *hamshakhah* refers to taking drawn water and pouring it into the *mikveh* so that it flows over the ground before entering the pool (Soloveitchik 1978).

10. For a further discussion, see (Dal Bo 2019, pp. 81–98 and 203–14).

11. Samuel ibn Naghrillah (993–1056), better known as Shemuel ha-Nagid, was a Medieval Spanish Talmudic scholar and an influential Hebrew poet. See (Cole 1996).

12. Solomon Ibn Gabirol (1021–1070), also known as Avicebron or Avencebrol in the Latin world, was a prominent Jewish philosopher and poet. See (Cole 2001).

13. Moshe Ibn Ezra (1055–1138) was a Jewish philosopher and poet. See (Brody 1934).

14. Jehudah ben Shemuel ha-Levi (1075–1141) was Jewish philosopher and poet. See (Brody 1974).

15. Arabic linguistics and its interest in cognate languages—Hebrew, Aramaic, and Syriac—played a main role in awakening the study of Hebrew among the Arabic-speaking Jewry from Spain. Notable figures of Jewish scholars in Hebrew are Menachem ben Saruq (910–?), Dunash ben Labrat (920–990), and Abu Zakariyya Yahya ibn Dawūd Hayyūj (Hayyug) (940–1000), known as the founder of Hebrew linguistics. On the impact of Arabic on Hebrew poetry, see, for instance, (Martínez Delgado 2013).

16. Scholarship on the transmission of Aristotelianism into the Semitic and Latin world is very large. See, for instance, (Marenbon 2011).

[17] The so-called "*Heikhalot* literature" is a form of early Jewish mysticism that was mostly concerned with the notion of ascending into heavenly "Palaces" by a complex process of purification. This genre also overlaps with the mysticism of the Chariot (*Merkabah*) and fills the historical segment between post-Talmudic and pre-Kabbalistic literature. Cf. (Schäfer 1992).

[18] Scholarship on Jewish philosophical poetry in Spain and Ibn Gabirol abounds. I will limit here to the important text (Pessin 2013).

[19] David ibn Abi Zimra or David ben Zimra (1479–1589), also known as Radbaz, was a prominent Talmud scholar and one of the most respected figures in the 16th century. See (Morell 2004).

[20] For Mopsik's commentary, see (Mopsik 1994, n. 1, p. 47). On the poetic flair of this expression and its probable connection with Andalusian love poetry, see (Tanenbaum 2002); cf. (Dal Bo 2019, pp. 100–1).

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