To the scholar of today, whose concept of knowledge is becoming ever more specialized, this book may appear presumptuous. It is, indeed, an indication of the changed scholarly outlook, when an author feels apologetic about presenting to the readers a book whose range of subjects may seem too wide for the competence of one man. He may defend himself, however, by recalling the cultural reality of the days of Yashar, when scholars strove for the totality of human knowledge and their goal was all-embracing and encyclopedic. It is not the author who may seem immodest, but his subject, who, following the tradition of the Renaissance, was a *uomo universale*, dabbling in a wide range of pursuits and speculations.

The preoccupation of this book with bibliographical studies is not of the author's choice either, but dictated to him by his subject, in whose writings the problem of books, — whether they were actually written or not, their authorship and the authenticity of the views expressed in them, — is central.

Dealing as this book does with a number of scholarly areas in which I cannot claim expertise, I was fortunate to be living in a scholarly community as Columbia University, where I could turn to expert colleagues for both advice and reassurance. I am grateful and indebted to all of them.

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