



# Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed* in Translation

*A History from the Thirteenth Century to the Twentieth*



Edited by

Josef Stern, James T. Robinson, and Yonatan Shemesh

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# Introduction

JOSEF STERN

The *Guide of the Perplexed* by Moses Maimonides (b. 1138 Cordoba, Andalusia; d. 1204 Fustat, Egypt) is, arguably, the greatest philosophical text in the history of Jewish thought and one of the major philosophical works in all three faiths of the Middle Ages. It was not the first book to be written on Jewish philosophy or theology, but it was the first to give birth to a sustained philosophical tradition among the Jews, and its impact has been felt well beyond the borders of Judaism. Yet, for almost all of its history, the *Guide* has been read, commented upon, and criticized in translation rather than in its original language, Judeo-Arabic—that is, Arabic written in Hebrew characters, the language used by medieval Jews living in Islamic lands, both for their personal and business communications and for most of their literary compositions, including commentaries on the Hebrew Bible and rabbinic literature, legal codes and monographs, philosophy and theology, polemical works, poetics and rhetoric, grammar and lexicography, and medicine and astronomy.<sup>1</sup> It is not as the *Dalālat al-ḥā'irīn*, the *Guide's*

1. The only exceptions were poetry, which was composed in Hebrew, and Yemen where there remained a robust tradition that read the *Guide* in its original Judeo-Arabic until the

original title in Arabic, but as the Hebrew *Moreh ha-nevukhim*, the Latin *Dux neutrorum*, the Old Spanish *Mostrador e enseñador de los turbados*, the French *Le guide des égarés*, and the English *Guide of the Perplexed* that Maimonides' treatise has had its most enduring influence.

This volume of essays, the first of its kind, tells the story of Maimonides' *Guide* through its translations and translators, and through its impact in translation on philosophy from the Middle Ages to the present day.<sup>2</sup> There is an immense and constantly growing scholarly literature on the *Guide*, which focuses on close reading and analysis of the difficult text, its philosophical argument and puzzle-like form; on Maimonides' Greek, Hellenistic, and Islamic philosophical contexts and his relation to earlier rabbinic thinkers; and on his influence on later Jewish, Muslim, and Christian philosophers. There has been almost no discussion of the fact that the text generally available to readers—apart from Maimonides' immediate audience and isolated readers in Arabic-speaking communities such as Yemen—was a translation. On the one hand, this makes our story a reception history, but, on the other, unlike other reception histories, it focuses on the translators' understanding of the book as reflected in their choice of words and syntactic formulations for the translation (including the introduction of paragraph divisions that do not exist in the Arabic original), on the desirability and feasibility of desiderata such as consistency in translation, and on the manner(s) in which the translations might have shaped readers' interpretations in ways not intended by Maimonides himself. It highlights the ways in which the translated text served as an impetus for the development of a philosophical vocabulary within the translating, or target, languages, the influences of earlier translations of the *Guide* on later ones, the influences of translations of other philosophical works on translations of the *Guide*, and on general methodological questions of translation. And if all this is not tricky enough for any text, these issues are especially difficult when dealing with a text like the *Guide* whose author announces that he conceals as much as he reveals, that he includes deliberate contradictions, that he divulges

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twentieth century; for more background, see, e.g., Langermann 1987, 2009; and chapter 9 in this volume.

2. For a bibliographical guide to the translations of the *Guide*, see Dienstag 1988. In the original three-volume edition of his English translation, Friedländer (1881–85, 3:xi–xviii) also included a brief survey of earlier translations, and, in an appendix to his modern Hebrew translation, Schwarz (2002, 2:742–66) surveys previous translations in all languages. I have benefited from Schwarz in composing this introduction, especially for the partial translations of the *Guide* and the translations from earlier translations.

only “chapter headings,” and that he divides and scatters “the totality of what this Treatise contains” among chapters that the reader must “connect one with another.”<sup>3</sup>

In addition to linguistic issues, a history of the *translations* of the *Guide* must also address the stories of the *translators*, their cultures, philosophical backgrounds, and training, their motivations and reasons for undertaking the task of translation, and their own relations to Maimonides and the Maimonidean tradition. Although scholars of the *Guide* all know the names of the well-known translators, such as al-Ḥarizi and Ibn Tibbon, Munk and Friedländer, Qafih and Schwarz, the faces that bear these names are largely unrecognized. Another aim of this volume is to recover and reclaim these figures who played such key roles in the transmission of the *Guide* over the centuries. This makes our volume also a cultural history of the *Guide* through the biographies and intellectual profiles of its translators.

The authors of the individual chapters in this volume hail from disciplines almost as diverse as the number of languages into which the *Guide* has been translated. Some are historians of medieval Jewish philosophy, others of Latin and Arabic philosophy or theology, yet others scholars of Arabic or Hebrew or Spanish literature. We have made no attempt to impose on our contributors one scholarly approach to Maimonides or to the translation of his works, in the belief that different translators may be best studied in different ways. Some essays concentrate on linguistic issues, others attempt to reconstruct the philosophical motivation for the translation or analyze philosophical arguments to reveal deep influences, and yet others lean toward cultural biographies of the translators. Some authors use published editions of the translations; others base their analysis on careful examination and comparison of original manuscripts. But one observation that is aired throughout the volume is that none of the published editions of the various medieval translations is absolutely reliable, that the manuscript tradition is often obscure, and that consequently there is an urgent need for critical editions of the translations (and especially of Ibn Tibbon and al-Ḥarizi) as well as of the original *Guide* itself.

The volume is divided into two main parts. The first traces the history of the translations of the *Guide* in chronological order, from the earliest medieval Hebrew translations through the first medieval Latin translation and first early modern vernacular translation to the nineteenth- and twentieth-century translations—into French, English, and Hebrew. The second part

3. *Guide* I, intro. (Pines 15).

surveys the historical impact of the *Guide* in translation on Latin Scholastic philosophy, on early modern philosophers, and finally on contemporary Anglo-American philosophy; and the impact of its modern translations, especially Pines's English translation, on contemporary scholarship about Scholastic philosophy, early modern philosophy, and medieval Islamic philosophy.

The chapters in this volume cover all the complete major translations of the *Guide*. There were also, however, a number of partial translations, already in the Middle Ages, and a number of "secondhand" translations, especially into modern languages, that were not translations from the Judeo-Arabic original but from either earlier Hebrew translations or earlier modern translations. In tracing our narrative in this introduction, we shall fill in these missing pieces.

The earliest translation of the *Guide* into Hebrew was made already in Maimonides' lifetime by Samuel Ibn Tibbon (ca. 1165–1232).<sup>4</sup> As James Robinson observes in chapter 1 of our history, Samuel was not only Maimonides' translator, the second member of a family dynasty of distinguished translators, but also the first Maimonidean philosopher, that is, the first to carry out and develop Maimonides' exegetical, scientific, and philosophical agenda, and he was also an original philosopher in his own right. His father, Judah, who translated the great philosophical works of Saadia Gaon, Solomon Ibn Gabirol, Bahya Ibn Paquda, and Judah Halevi into Hebrew, had fled the Almohads for Lunel, Provence, a center of rabbinic and philosophical learning that became the exiled home for the Judeo-Arabic culture that had flourished in Andalusia. Almost as soon as word of the *Dalālat al-ḥā'irīn* reached Provence, Samuel was commissioned to translate it. The first version of his translation appeared in 1204 and, in reaction to al-Ḥarizi's

4. Although not a critical edition of Ibn Tibbon's translation, Yehuda Even-Shemuel (Kaufman) (1886–1976) produced a vocalized edition of the translation with his own commentary; see Ibn Tibbon 1959–87, 1981. This edition was produced in stages in separate volumes. Part I 1–49 was published in 1935 (repr. 1959), part I 50–76 in 1938 (repr. 1959), and part II 1–24 in 1959. Parts II 25–48 and III 1–13 were published as one volume posthumously in 1987. The first complete edition of the text, with short notes but without the full commentary, was published in 1945 and republished in 1946 with Ibn Tibbon's *Perush ha-millot ha-zarot*. The revised edition commonly used at present was first published in 1981 and frequently reissued. In addition, over the years there have been multiple editions of Ibn Tibbon, many with some or all of the classic commentaries of Isaac Abarbanel, Asher Crescas, Shem Tov ben Joseph Ibn Shem Tov, and Efodi (Profayt Duran). For details in this note, I am indebted to Yonatan Shemesh. On Ibn Tibbon's family as translators, see Robinson 2005.

rival translation, was revised and published again in 1213, accompanied by a glossary of its Hebrew philosophical terminology, much of which Ibn Tibbon had been forced to invent. It is well known that before undertaking the translation, Ibn Tibbon turned to Maimonides himself for direction, both methodological and substantive, and asked to visit him in Egypt.<sup>5</sup> In a remarkable letter, Maimonides advised Ibn Tibbon not to translate literally and slavishly, correlating each Arabic term with a corresponding Hebrew expression while preserving the Arabic syntax; instead he should translate for sense, sacrificing syntactic and semantic exactness for a translation that would convey the overall meaning in a clear, readable fashion.<sup>6</sup> Samuel did not heed Maimonides' instructions. Following his father's method of close word-for-word translation, he did the very opposite of what Maimonides counseled, producing a literal translation that rivals the original in its difficulty. On a more positive note, Ibn Tibbon was as exacting as he could be (without, as Robinson shows, being slavish) in translating each Arabic technical term by the same Hebrew term consistently, thereby establishing an important bar for future translations. This much of the story is well known. What has not been noticed, and what Robinson wonderfully illustrates, is how Ibn Tibbon also made original and creative use of biblical and rabbinic language in his translation, evoking their rich associations and imagery, and how he borrowed for his translation from Arabic into Hebrew from Saadia Gaon's *Tafsīr*, his seminal translation of the Torah from Hebrew into Arabic. What emerges from Robinson's story is a significant corrective to the received picture, exposing Ibn Tibbon's nonliteralistic as well as literalistic tendencies, thereby opening new avenues for future scholarship on his translation.

Ibn Tibbon's philosophically acute and accurate translation became the authoritative Hebrew edition of the *Guide* for subsequent medieval Jewish philosophers, but its literalism and extreme faithfulness to the Arabic original also made it inaccessible to many. It is most likely for this reason, as Raymond Scheindlin proposes in chapter 2, that Judah al-Ḥarizi—a native Arabic speaker, a master of Hebrew, and a distinguished poet in both languages—was commissioned to produce a second, more readable translation of the *Guide* almost immediately after the appearance of Ibn Tibbon's.

5. Ibn Tibbon's original letter does not survive. For Maimonides' response to that letter, see Marx 1935 and, on it, Stroumsa 1990 and S. Harvey 1992a.

6. It should be noted that Maimonides was asked by scholars in the Provence community of Lunel to translate the *Guide* into Hebrew himself. But for reasons of time he declined. See Maimonides 1988, letter 36, 557–59.

However, al-Ḥarizi, who was living in recently reconquered northern Christian Spain where he had previously translated into Hebrew sections of Maimonides' *Commentary on the Mishnah*, was not a philosopher and certainly not well informed about Aristotelianism, hence not in Ibn Tibbon's philosophical league. Instead, his aim in translating the *Guide* was to achieve a style that would be true to the Hebrew literary tradition; for example, he tried to avoid Arabisms in vocabulary and syntax, and sought out native Hebrew expressions with which to replace Arabic idioms. However, he was far from consistent in applying these principles.<sup>7</sup> One explanation, proposed by Scheindlin, is that for all his criticisms of Ibn Tibbon, al-Ḥarizi did not produce his own translation entirely independently; it may be better appreciated as a revision of Ibn Tibbon. Yet, for all its faults, as later chapters in our history prove, it was al-Ḥarizi's translation that served as the basis for the first Latin and the first vernacular translations of the *Guide*, both of which worked off earlier Hebrew translations rather than the Arabic. It was also the text of the *Guide* known and used by medieval exegetes, talmudists, and kabbalists who were not expert in the technical-philosophical terminology needed for Ibn Tibbon. But more significantly, as Scheindlin demonstrates, al-Ḥarizi's more Hebraic version of the *Guide* reflects his position as a late representative of Judeo-Arabic culture in its golden age, with its commitment to literary values and its ideal of linguistic purism. In contrast to the translation of al-Ḥarizi, that of the Provençal Ibn Tibbon is, in Scheindlin's words, "free of Judeo-Arabic literary ideals and looks forward, instead, to the new Jewish culture of Occitania, Christian Spain, and Italy."

Both Ibn Tibbon's and al-Ḥarizi's translations were motivated by the intention to develop and disseminate Maimonides' philosophy to a thirteenth-century Jewish readership that wanted to learn and carry out the Maimonidean program. Because this new generation outside the Islamicate sphere of influence lacked knowledge of Arabic, the original work was closed to them, hence the need for Hebrew translations. Thus translation was a central element in the propagation of the Maimonidean tradition, and this continued to be its main role throughout the Middle Ages, both for Maimonides' disciples and his critics. Translation freed the text from the walls built around it by a language that was not comprehensible to its new readers.

7. For criticism of both al-Ḥarizi's and Ibn Tibbon's translations, see Falaquera 2001, which also contains the author's own translations of selected passages in the *Guide*. On his criticisms of al-Ḥarizi and Ibn Tibbon, see Shiffman 1994, 1995/96, 1999.

The thirteenth-century Hebrew translations of the *Guide* were also significant because they provided a model and impetus for the translation into Hebrew of many other ancient philosophical and scientific works available until then only in Arabic (which had themselves been translated from Greek or Syriac), as well as the vast philosophical and scientific literature composed in Arabic by the *falāsifa*, or Arabic (Aristotelian) philosophers. And because the Arabic translations (and the Greek texts of which they were translations) or original Arabic texts were sometimes lost over time, some of these Hebrew translations remain at present our only witnesses of the originals in Greek or Arabic.

The second major role that translation played in the Middle Ages, beyond rendering Maimonides' *Guide* accessible to Jewish readers who did not know Arabic, was making it accessible to the wider Christian audience who either did not know Hebrew (or Arabic) or, more precisely, would have been much less influenced by it if it had been available only in Hebrew (or Arabic). This brings us to the Latin translations of the *Guide*.

Since Joseph Perles uncovered the first manuscript of the anonymous Latin *Dux neutrorum* (*DN*) in 1875, its provenance, author, date, and origin have all been a mystery. We know that the translation must have been completed before 1244–45 because its first quotations are found in Albertus Magnus's *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*, book 1, which was composed around then, and we also know that it is based (though perhaps not exclusively) on al-Ḥarizi's translation. But whether the translation was done in Italy, France (either Provence or Paris), Spain, or Catalonia, by whom, for what reason, and under what conditions have been unresolved subjects of scholarly debate.<sup>8</sup> In chapter 3, Caterina Rigo approaches these questions methodically with impressive philological rigor. First, she compares in detail all available manuscripts of al-Ḥarizi on which the Latin translation might have been based. Second, she sets out in detail the reception and distribution history of the al-Ḥarizi and Ibn Tibbon translations in Italy, France, and Spain during the thirteenth century, and she surveys continued use of the Arabic original. Third, she closely, albeit selectively, analyzes the technical-philosophical Latin terminology employed by the translator of *DN*, comparing it to other uses of the same terms in other

8. Dr. Diana Di Segni at the Thomas-Institut of the University of Cologne prepared a critical edition of *DN* I 1–59 (Di Segni 2013) and is currently preparing a critical edition of the complete *Dux neutrorum*, which will hopefully enable us to make significant progress in answering these questions.



works by various translators and using it to reconstruct the translator's philosophical approach to and understanding of the *Guide*. What emerges from this intensive investigation (without divulging Rigo's conclusions) is a solid proposal about the location of the translation, a novel hypothesis about the identity of the translator, and a promising conjecture about the circumstances that prompted the Latin translation. But what we are also given is a rich picture of the medieval Jewish philosophical worlds in Italy, Spain, and France, their distinctive personalities, the ways in which they interacted with each other, and the role that the Latin translation might have played in the thirteenth-century Maimonidean controversies. Even though Rigo's conclusions are cautious and qualified, her contribution opens up a new chapter in the scholarly exploration of the Latin translation.

In addition to the thirteenth-century Latin *Dux neutrorum*, there were three other Latin translations, two earlier and one later. The two earlier translations, both anonymous, are partial: *Liber de parabola* (1223–24) translates only part III, chapters 29–30, 32–49; and *Liber de uno deo benedicto* translates only the introduction and chapter 1 of part II. In 1520, Agostino Giustiniani (1470–1536), an Italian Orientalist and friend of Erasmus, Pico della Mirandola, and Thomas More, published a complete edition of *DN* under the title *Rabi Mossei Aegyptii Dux seu Director dubitantium aut perplexorum*. Although some scholars have mistaken Giustiniani's edition for a new translation, comparison with manuscripts demonstrates that it is simply an uncritical, and often faulty, edition of *DN*.<sup>9</sup> A second complete Latin translation (1629), entitled *Doctor perplexorum*, based on Ibn Tibbon's Hebrew translation, was executed by Johannes Buxtorf II (the Younger; 1599–1664, Basel). Like his more famous father, Buxtorf the Younger was a noted Hebraist; he translated Halevi's *Kuzari* as well as the *Guide*, and authored a number of studies of Isaac Abarbanel. To his translation he added marginal notes, a general index, an index of biblical references, and an introduction. The introduction contains (i) a biography of Maimonides, including many fabulous and legendary tales, drawing on Abraham Zacuto, David Gans, Solomon Ibn Vergas, Gedaliah Ibn Yahia, and Azariah de Rossi; and (ii) an explication of the content of the *Guide*, which includes a severe critique of the quality of Giustiniani's earlier edition of *DN* (which he seems to recognize was based on al-Ḥarizi rather than Ibn Tibbon). The Protestant Buxtorf was especially interested in Maimonides' rational explanation of the Torah and commandments, which avoids, he argues, both talmudism and

9. I am indebted here to Yonatan Shemesh for bringing these details to my attention.

kabbalah, the two schools of Judaism to which he ascribes hostile opposition to the *Guide* and with which he implicitly compares his own rival, the Catholic Church. These two considerations seem to have motivated Buxtorf's new Latin translation: (i) his desire for an accurate version of a text he deeply valued to replace what he thought was the unreadable and error-ridden Giustiniani edition, and (ii) a polemical motive to put forward Maimonides' rationalism as a more palatable form of Judaism for his Protestant audience than talmudism.<sup>10</sup>

Chapter 4 takes up the oldest extant translation of Maimonides' *Guide* into a European vernacular tongue: Pedro de Toledo's fifteenth-century Old Spanish translation, *Mostrador e enseñador de los turbados*. As Luis Manuel Girón Negrón argues, the translation of Maimonides' philosophical classic is evidence of the central place in later medieval Spanish Christian intellectual life occupied by Hebrew and Jewish texts—ranging from the Bible and its exegesis to rabbinic law and homiletics—and by Jewish and converso scholars who were needed to translate and transmit them. Under the patronage of Castilian aristocrats, like Gómez Suárez de Figueroa (ca. 1382–1429), who commissioned Toledo's *Mostrador* (completed in 1432), Jewish authorities like Maimonides became primary sources in the educational system for young Christian aristocrats in fifteenth-century Spain. Through close readings of passages from both Ibn Tibbon's philosophically superior translation and al-Ḥarizi's literary gem, Girón Negrón demonstrates how Toledo eclectically chooses the translation that best suits his purposes at any given moment, adding glosses and periphrastic adaptations for the pedagogical benefit of his Christian sponsor. Here a translation of the *Guide* affords us a window into the cosmopolitan culture of fifteenth-century Spain and the dialogue and intercourse among Jews, Christians, and conversos.

Toledo's *Mostrador* was the first translation of the *Guide* into a vernacular language, but between the sixteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries it was followed by three more, which were either partial or complete translations of Ibn Tibbon's Hebrew translation. The first, in 1583, was an Italian translation in Hebrew characters of Ibn Tibbon, entitled *Erudizione de' confusi* (also known as *Precettore de' confusi*). The translator was Amadeo di Musetto (Yedidya ben Moshe) Recanati (later changed to Rimini) of San

10. Throughout this paragraph, I am much indebted to Dr. Saverio Campanini who kindly shared with me a prepublication draft of his paper "*Perspicue et fideliter conversus: J. Buxtorf the Younger's Translation of the Guide*," delivered at the conference "Medieval and Modern Translations of Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*," INALCO, Paris, March 2016 and to be published in *Yod: Revue des études hébraïques et juives*.

Marino, a Jewish humanist with an excellent command of Hebrew, Italian, and Latin language and literature. Recanati's aims were twofold. First, he wanted to explain in Italian to Jewish students the science and scientific vocabulary in the *Guide* so that they might converse about these subjects with non-Jews. Second, his translation was part of the general movement of "vulgarization," the translation of classical texts, in Hebrew as well as Greek and Latin, into the newborn vulgar Italian language.<sup>11</sup>

The first English translation of the *Guide* was produced by the British missionary James Townley (1774–1883), based on Ibn Tibbon, but only of part III, chapters 25–40, which lay out Maimonides' exposition of reasons for the commandments.<sup>12</sup> In addition, Menahem Mendel Lefin (or Levin) (1749–1826), an early leader of the Jewish Enlightenment (Haskalah), produced a "translation" that is more of a paraphrase of Ibn Tibbon in easy-to-read Mishnaic Hebrew.<sup>13</sup>

What distinguishes the early vernacular translations from the later modern translations is that the former were translations from translations, either from Ibn Tibbon or al-Ḥarizi. The modern translations mark a return to the Judeo-Arabic text as their source—and, as important, they mark the revival of interest in Arabic and Judeo-Arabic language, literature, philosophy, and culture. This is best exemplified by the seminal French translation of the *Guide* by Salomon Munk (1803–67), *Le guide des égarés*, published with detailed notes between 1856 and 1866. As Paul Fenton argues in his intellectual biography of this remarkable figure (chapter 5), Munk turned to philology—and the critical study of Arabic and Hebrew manuscripts that eventually led to his translation—in reaction to Hegel's then dominant history of philosophy that highly depreciated and marginalized Islam and Arabic philosophy and, with it, Judaism and Jewish philosophy. Munk's motivation, Fenton emphasizes, was to achieve a better understanding of

11. See Recanati 1583. Virtually nothing has been written on Recanati and his translation (which survives only in manuscript and was never published), apart from Guetta 2005 and forthcoming work by Michael Gasperoni. For my description, I am much indebted to Dr. Alessandro Guetta who kindly shared with me a prepublication draft of his paper "Erudizione de' confusi: An Italian Translation of Maimonides' *Guide* of the Late Renaissance Aimed at Students," delivered at the conference "Medieval and Modern Translations of Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*," INALCO, Paris, March 2016 and to be published in *Yod: Revue des études hébraïques et juives*.

12. Townley 1827.

13. Lefin 1829. Yonatan Shemesh has brought to my attention that Schwarz (2002) also lists Satanow 1795 as a translation when in fact it is a commentary on Ibn Tibbon's translation; see Dienstag 1987, 223.

medieval Arabic philosophy and Jewish philosophy (which was integral to and inseparable from it) and to acknowledge the centrality of the two in the history of Western thought. Indeed, Munk was perhaps the first to observe that the imperfect knowledge of Arabic philosophy at the time was largely owing to the loss of the original Arabic philosophical works, many of which survived only in medieval Hebrew translations, which themselves were poorly understood. It was this broader interest in all works produced in the Islamic orbit, as well as Munk's own intellectual curiosity and the spirit of the Haskalah, that brought him to Maimonides. However, here too he quickly realized that knowledge of Maimonides and his *Guide* was inadequate, and often mistaken, because scholars relied upon translations, either the Hebrew of Ibn Tibbon or al-Ḥarizi or the Latin, and did not seek out the original Arabic text. This realization led Munk to seek out manuscripts of the Arabic *Guide*—in Oxford and in Egypt—to establish a critical edition and embark on a French translation that would make available to his contemporaries an understanding of the *Guide* based directly on the Arabic original.<sup>14</sup> In short, Munk's underlying motivation was fundamentally to arrive at a better understanding of Arabic philosophy, including Judeo-Arabic philosophy, and, for that reason, he was led to translate Maimonides' *Guide*.

Besides translating directly from the Arabic, a second seminal feature of Munk's translation of the *Guide* is his commentary, in the form of notes, which he published alongside the text. In these notes, Munk critically evaluates his own translation in comparison to his medieval predecessors Ibn Tibbon and al-Ḥarizi, and he assesses his own interpretation of the text in light of Maimonides' medieval commentators. Munk's notes also show the intense degree to which Maimonides engaged not only with the Arabic philosophical tradition but also with the Qur'an and Islamic religion and theology (to which Fenton adds terminology drawn from Sufi mystical works). Throughout his work, as Fenton illustrates, Munk was the first to apply the full repertoire of philology to the study of philosophy written in Arabic, Judeo-Arabic, and Hebrew. And as an ideological or polemical response to Hegel's conception of the history of philosophy, Munk proved the important role of the Arabs in the history of philosophy and the critical role of Hebrew philosophy both as a tool to understand Arabic philosophy and as a rich philosophical resource in itself.

Less than twenty years after Munk's French translation, the first com-

14. Despite his best intentions, Munk did not, however, succeed in producing a critical edition of the *Guide*, which remains a desideratum for future scholarship.

plete English translation of the *Guide* from Arabic appeared (published between 1881 and 1885), by Michael Friedländer (1833–1910). Like Munk’s translation, Friedländer’s was originally published with extensive learned notes and introductions. However, in 1904, knowing his English market, Friedländer published a popular abridged edition that omitted the notes, references to Hebrew and Arabic terms, and introductions. From 1904 until 1963—that is, until the publication of Shlomo Pines’s translation—this “cheap edition” (in Friedländer’s own words) was *the* standard edition of the *Guide* and the point of entry for Anglo-American audiences to Maimonides’ philosophical world. However, Friedländer’s widespread use was not only, as Warren Zev Harvey writes in chapter 6, because his was the only translation available; even after 1963, many have continued to prefer Friedländer’s “accessibility” over Pines’s “accuracy.” As Harvey also shows through comparison of a number of examples from Friedländer, Ibn Tibbon, Munk, and Pines, sometimes it is Friedländer and not the others who provides arguably the most accurate, not just the most accessible, translation. A better description, as Harvey puts it, would be that Friedländer had “little patience for the niceties of metaphysics, and preferred a clear and felicitous translation over a strictly literal if awkward one.” And for the general, nonscholarly audience, the attractiveness of his more concise, smoother translation has proven its mettle over time.

The third modern translation, Shlomo Pines’s English *Guide of the Perplexed*, published in 1963 by the University of Chicago Press, has arguably been the most influential modern translation of the *Guide*.<sup>15</sup> It is also the most controversial. Published in a very elegant edition by an eminent American academic press, at a turning point when English was becoming the lingua franca of the universal academic world, and by a translator who was already acknowledged at the time as one of the preeminent historians of medieval Arabic philosophy and science, Pines’s translation gave Maimonides’ *Guide* a presence in scholarship it never before had enjoyed.<sup>16</sup> The

15. For details on the publication history of the Pines translation, see the appendix to this introduction.

16. Up to 1963 when the translation was published, Pines’s scholarly reputation rested almost entirely on his published scholarship relating to the history of medieval Arabic philosophy and science. His writings on topics in Jewish philosophy and thought were largely limited to reviews or short notices. His only publications on Maimonides were the three-page “Excursus: Notes on Maimonides’ Views concerning Human Will” appended to Pines 1960 and a French essay, “Quelques réflexions sur Maïmonide en guise de préface,” in Moïse

authoritativeness and impact of Pines's translation can be measured not only by its Amazon ratings (fifty years after its publication!)—compared not only to other translations of the *Guide* but also to other medieval philosophical classics—or by its number of citations in the scholarly literature, including that written in modern Hebrew. We also see its impact in the explosion of scholarship on Maimonides and medieval Jewish philosophy after 1963 compared to the previous forty years, and in the unprecedented degree to which the *Guide* has penetrated the academic philosophical world. To be sure, Pines was not alone in triggering this phenomenon. Over the last fifty years there has been a marked increase in the extent to which Arabic and Jewish philosophy has stepped into the philosophical mainstream; witness the anthologies by leading presses devoted specifically to Arabic and Jewish philosophy and the equal treatment of Islamic and Jewish philosophers with Christian philosophers in general medieval histories and anthologies of philosophy. However, Pines's translation has surely been a central force in this “naturalization” process of Maimonides and Jewish philosophy as citizens in the philosophical republic.

The Pines translation has also set various bars that any future translation of the *Guide* must meet. Following Ibn Tibbon rather than Maimonides' own directive to seek overall sense over literal accuracy, Pines rigorously sought to preserve wherever possible the syntax, style, and lexical choices of the Arabic original. As Ralph Lerner describes this aim, the *Guide* “has more of the character of a speech than of a book through the deliberate design of the author. There are sudden shifts of tense, number, even subject. The strangeness is apparent, and the aim in translation has been to retain (or rather, to preserve), this strangeness.”<sup>17</sup> Furthermore, Lerner continues, “the author tells us in his introduction that he has chosen every word with deliberate care. This translation takes that remark at face value”; hence (as a rule) it translates each occurrence of each Arabic technical term by the same English term. And while Pines has been not infrequently criticized for his faithful but sometimes awkward rendition of the syntax of the original, Lerner also writes that “efforts have been made to avoid a slavish imitation of Arabic syntax as this would result in utterly impossible English prose.”

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Maimonide, *Le livre de la connaissance*, translated by V. Nikiprowetzky and A. Zaoui (1961). Remarkably, Pines's *first* sustained essay on Maimonides was the “Translator's Introduction” to his translation! On the significance of this fact, see J. Stern, forthcoming.

17. Ralph Lerner, memorandum to Goetz, August 19, 1960, Archives of the University of Chicago Press, Special Collections of the Regenstein Library of the University of Chicago.

However, “all in all, elegance has been sacrificed to accuracy and tolerable literalness.” In sum, Pines set himself the task to preserve (as much as possible) in his English translation the obstacles and mines Maimonides himself lay in the winding path of his reader. One might say that he attempted not only to translate the text but to preserve through translation the difficult, “disconcerting” *experience* of reading and deciphering it.

This brings us to the controversy over Pines’s translation. As we have seen, Pines was not the first to preface his translation with an introduction or to add notes. Munk and Friedländer preceded him in doing just this. But when we speak of Pines’s “translation,” it is inseparable from his “Translator’s Introduction,” subtitled “The Philosophical Sources of the *Guide of the Perplexed*,” whereas the other translations are known independently of their introductions.<sup>18</sup> As Sarah Stroumsa comments in chapter 7, Pines’s essay is a “peculiar” translator’s introduction: it does not discuss the style of the original, the method or style of translation, manuscripts or other textual sources, rules for choices of words in translation, earlier translations, and so on. As its title states, what we are given is a deeply learned critical exposition and analysis of Maimonides’ philosophical sources and how Maimonides departs from them. Controversially, the introduction focuses almost entirely on Maimonides’ Greek, Hellenistic, and Arabic sources, with only a very brief section at the end on the Jewish authors, in whom Pines says Maimonides had “marked disinterest” and indeed “that he had no use for a specific Jewish philosophic tradition.”<sup>19</sup> But Pines’s discussion of the Arabic sources is also not simply background for the *Guide* (although it remains one of the best introductions to Judeo-Arabic philosophy). Rather the introduction constitutes an interpretation of the *Guide*. By embedding Maimonides in his rich Greek and Arabic context with a depth that no previous scholar had, Pines presents him as a multidimensional figure, a disciple of no one predecessor, al-Fārābī or Ibn Bājjā or Avicenna or Averroes, but a product of them all. And because these figures do not themselves speak in one

18. Pines’s introduction should not be confused with that of Leo Strauss (which in print introduces Pines’s introduction), entitled “How to Begin to Study *The Guide of the Perplexed*.” We do not discuss, or include a chapter on, Strauss’s introduction in this volume, because it is not properly part of the history of the *translations* of the *Guide*, but of its interpretation. For a discussion of Strauss and his introduction in particular, see Lenzner 2002; Tepper 2013; W. Z. Harvey, forthcoming. On the interpretive aspects of Pines’s introduction, see Sarah Stroumsa’s and Kenneth Seeskin’s contributions to this volume; and J. Stern, forthcoming.

19. Pines 1963, cxxxiii.

voice, the introduction thereby poses the question, Whose voice among these alternatives speaks for Maimonides? Pines does not explicitly answer this question, but he definitely hints at answers—in the plural! These hints, and through them the introduction as a whole, have unquestionably shaped how the *Guide* is read today, not the least by demonstrating that it is absolutely necessary to approach and study Maimonides from within his Arabic context.

It is a truism that every translation is an interpretation, but not all translations are equally interpretive. The major controversy over Pines's edition concerns the question whether his translation is an articulation of a very specific interpretation or rather a faithful rendition in English of the Arabic original. There are a number of factors connected to the publication of Pines's translation that have contributed to this controversy. One is surely Leo Strauss's role in commissioning Pines's translation and the well-known fact that Strauss had his own definite, notoriously controversial interpretation of the *Guide* based on a political interpretation of the exoteric/esoteric distinction. Add to that Strauss's own introduction, which orients the reader in one definite direction, and the fact that the Pines of the introduction also shows (at the very least) Straussian leanings. Many have taken all this circumstantial evidence as grounds for challenging the very *accuracy* of Pines's translation. To what degree does Pines's translation reflect an agenda? And, if not Strauss's, some other particular interpretation of Pines's own design?

Rather than furnish one univocal answer, we include two chapters on Pines's translation that take opposing sides on this question. Sarah Stroumsa argues in chapter 7 that while Pines definitely had his own interpretation, which emerges in part in his introduction, he was remarkably successful as a translator in letting Maimonides' text speak for itself, without imposing his own interpretation on the Arabic original. Defending many of the linguistic, syntactic, and lexical decisions for which others have criticized Pines's translation, Stroumsa persuasively argues, through examples, that Pines follows the cadences of the text and its many voices.

Alfred Ivry, on the other hand, argues in chapter 8 that Pines translated in a way that preserves Maimonides' own concealment of his true beliefs. Despite the philosophical positions of the Aristotelian philosophers whom Ivry believes Pines believes Maimonides accepts, Ivry shows, through multiple examples, how Pines consistently presents Maimonides' God in the context of various philosophical issues—providence, determinism and free choice, conjunction, causation and emanation, and creation vs. eternity—as a personal deity even while Maimonides himself argues, with the philos-



ophers, that the deity is entirely without affect and personality. Ivry's explanation is that Pines attempts as best he can to preserve Maimonides' own intention to speak exoterically in one voice expressing the pious views of the community, even while he expects the informed reader to hear him whispering in a different, philosophical voice.

Following classical Maimonidean tradition, we leave it to the reader to decide between these two opposing evaluations of Pines's translation.

The last two translations in our history are both modern translations into Hebrew. The first of these is that of Rabbi Yosef Qafih (1917–2000), which in 1972 was the first new complete Hebrew translation since the Middle Ages. However, as Tzvi Langermann argues in chapter 9, the significance of Qafih's translation goes far beyond this fact. Born in San'a, Yemen, Qafih was the first native speaker of Arabic—since al-Ḥarizi—to translate the *Guide*, and he brought to the task the intuitive feel for the nuances of a language and culture that only a native speaker possesses. Qafih was also heir to a culture in which the study of Maimonides (in Arabic) continued to be practiced as a live religious tradition. He was trained from early childhood to copy manuscripts, he thoroughly mastered the entire corpora of the great Judeo-Arabic heroes Maimonides and Saadya, and, in the Maimonidean spirit, he was also exposed to modern science and scholarship. Thus he brought the sensibilities of a medieval philosopher to the twentieth century and was a living witness to the rich Yemenite Maimonidean tradition. For example, in doing his translation, Qafih utilized not only Munk's edition of the Arabic *Guide* but also three Yemenite manuscripts, and his translation of the *Guide* was part of a larger project to translate anew the whole Maimonidean corpus (apart from the medical works) in light of the Yemenite tradition. As Langermann also demonstrates through the analysis of a number of Qafih's translations, by comparison with both medieval and other modern translations, Qafih speaks in a fresh, authentic voice that often departs from standard academic and traditional rabbinic approaches to the *Guide*.

The last translation in our history, and what some consider the first translation into modern Hebrew, is the *Moreh nevukhim* of Michael Schwarz (1929–2011), professor of Arabic language and literature and of medieval Jewish philosophy at Tel Aviv University. As Aviram Ravitsky explains in chapter 10, Schwarz was apparently motivated to do a new translation—apparently inspired by Pines's translation into English—for two reasons. First, he believed that Ibn Tibbon's medieval Hebrew, for all its importance for scholars of medieval Jewish philosophy, today renders Maimonides'

classic inaccessible to speakers of modern Hebrew, especially students. Second, he believed that Qafih's translation, for all its virtues, was not sensitive to Maimonides' exacting use of Arabic philosophical terminology. Hence, his own translation, which follows Maimonides' original directive to capture sense over faithfulness to the Arabic original, aims to achieve linguistic accessibility for modern Israeli ears and, at the same time, philosophical accuracy. Like Pines, Schwarz highlights the Hebrew words in the original Judeo-Arabic text and, like Munk, offers more extensive notes. For the first time in the history of the translations, these notes include bibliographical references to the secondary scholarly literature on the *Guide*, detailed references to Maimonides' Arabic as well as rabbinic sources for particular passages, references to technical Arabic terminology, and comparisons to previous translations that differ from his own. Nonetheless, echoing other contemporary scholars, Ravitsky expresses his regret that Schwarz did not give more explanation as to why he translated as he did in particular cases.<sup>20</sup> In any case, one can confidently say that Schwarz's edition has proven its success as a popular but academically respected translation by its widespread use in contemporary Israel by both scholars and the public audience.

As we have emphasized, we analyze Munk, Friedländer, Pines, Qafih, and Schwarz at length in our history because each produced an exemplary translation of the entire *Guide of the Perplexed* based on the original Judeo-Arabic text. But since the end of the nineteenth century, there have been an additional eighteen translations, complete or partial. We briefly note these works according to their modern language.

In modern Hebrew there have been three additional translations, one from the Arabic by Aaron Sulieman Elijah Mani; another, really a paraphrase based on Ibn Tibbon, privately published by Joseph Jonah Shohat; and the most recent, the first volume of a new translation by Hillel Gershuni edited with a commentary by Yohai Makbili, which appeared as this volume was going to press.<sup>21</sup>

In Italian, David Jacob Maroni produced a translation of Munk's French

20. One topic yet to be explored in the literature is the different paragraph divisions that translators introduce into Maimonides' originally paragraph-less text. Not only choices of words and sentential syntax reflect and affect one's reading; it is often the organization into paragraphs that articulates the structure of the author's argument, where an argument begins and ends. In particular, comparison of Pines's and Schwarz's different paragraph divisions frequently reveals very different understandings of Maimonides' reasoning, opening an avenue for future research.

21. Mani 1956/57; Shohat 1980; Gershuni 2018.

translation, entitled *La guida degli smarriti*.<sup>22</sup> In more recent years, the late Mauro Zonta, a professor of Jewish philosophy at La Sapienza University (Rome), did a new translation from Judeo-Arabic into Italian, titled *La guida dei perplessi*.<sup>23</sup>

In Spanish there have been no fewer than four translations of the *Guide*. José Suárez Lorenzo published a translation of part I.<sup>24</sup> In 1935 Leon Dujovne, an Argentinean professor of philosophy and literature, journalist, and prolific author and scholar, produced an anthology of Maimonides' writings in Spanish, including selections from the *Guide*, and in 1955, a complete translation of the *Guide* based on Munk's French translation, including selected notes by Munk.<sup>25</sup> In 1983 David Gonzalo Maeso, a professor of Hebrew at the University of Granada, did a complete Spanish translation, *Guía de perplejos*, with introductions and indexes, apparently from the Judeo-Arabic.<sup>26</sup> In 1946 Fernando Valera published selected chapters and, in 1988, a complete translation of the *Guide*, *Guía de descarriados*.<sup>27</sup> Finally, in 1986, Eduard Feliu i Mabres, the noted Catalan translator of Hebrew poetry and of the writings of Moses Nahmanides, produced a selection of Maimonides' writings, including chapters from the *Guide*, in Catalan.<sup>28</sup>

In German there have been six translations, some complete, some partial. In 1838, almost twenty years before Munk, Simon B. Scheyer (d. 1853/54), one of the earliest pioneers of the scholarly study of Maimonides and medieval Jewish philosophy, did the first modern translation of the *Guide* in any modern European language.<sup>29</sup> The 1838 publication was only of part III, although there is indirect evidence that Scheyer, who died prematurely by his own hand, also completed draft translations of parts I and II, which unfortunately are now lost. Although his translation was based on Ibn Tibbon, Scheyer also made use of the Arabic original to correct the medieval Hebrew translation and, like his contemporary Munk, emphasized the importance of employing the Arabic text in order to recover

22. Maroni 1870–76.

23. Zonta 2003, 2005.

24. Lorenzo 1931.

25. Dujovne 1955.

26. Gonzalo Maeso 1983.

27. Valera 1946, 1988.

28. Feliu; Mabres 1986.

29. Scheyer 1838. His translation seems to have been based on two manuscripts, cod. 18 and cod. 221, both described in *Catal. Leiden* (Senguerdius, Gronovius, and Heyman 1716, 410), and later by Steinschneider (1858, 380–82). I am indebted here to Paul Fenton.

the meaning of the *Guide*.<sup>30</sup> In 1850 Scheyer also collaborated with Aryeh Leib (Leon) Schlosberg in the latter's editio princeps of Judah al-Ḥarizi's translation of the *Guide*.<sup>31</sup> Although not much is known of this collaboration, Scheyer contributed detailed annotations to Schlosberg's edition of al-Ḥarizi's translation of part I of the *Guide*, including comparisons to Ibn Tibbon and the Arabic original. He did not remain to collaborate on the second two parts, but that edition is still today the only one in use.<sup>32</sup>

The second German translation, in 1839, was done by Raphael J. Fürstenthal (1781–1885) but only of part I and based on Ibn Tibbon.<sup>33</sup> Scheyer in turn severely criticized Fürstenthal for errors owing to his failure to consult the Arabic original. The third translation, in 1864, was of part II by Max Emmanuel Stern (1811–73), based on the Arabic but in consultation with Munk's French translation.<sup>34</sup> Ironically, these three partial translations—Stern on part II and the two rivals Fürstenthal on part I and Scheyer on part III—found themselves bedfellows between one set of covers, packaged as the first complete German translation of the *Guide*.<sup>35</sup>

The fourth German translation, in 1923–24, was done by Adolph Weiss (1849–1924), based on Ibn Tibbon and of all three parts. Weiss says that he also used Munk's Arabic text and al-Ḥarizi, although Schwarz comments that close examination reveals that he also depended heavily on Munk's French translation.<sup>36</sup> Finally, there have been two more recent partial translations. Alexander Altmann (1906–87), the eminent scholar of Moses Mendelssohn and of medieval Jewish and Arabic philosophy, who taught at Brandeis University from 1959 to 1987, early in his distinguished career published German translations of selected chapters of the *Guide* in consultation with Munk's Arabic text and French translation.<sup>37</sup> Most recently, in 2009 there appeared a German translation, with facing Arabic text, of selected chapters concerned with creation versus eternity of the world. The

30. As Paul Fenton has pointed out to me, Munk says in his preface that Scheyer's edition "is the only one that offers a truly scientific character" (Munk 1:iii). This notwithstanding, he also criticizes him; cf. Munk 1:135n2; 3:56n1.

31. Schlosberg 1851–79.

32. On the forgotten and tragic figure Simon Scheyer, see now Freudenthal 2016b.

33. Fürstenthal 1839.

34. M. E. Stern 1864.

35. The publisher was Louis Lamm (Berlin, 1920). On this curious fate, see Freudenthal 2016b.

36. Weiss 1923–24.

37. Altmann 1935.

translators are Wolfgang von Abel, Ilya Levkovich, and Frederek Musall, and the book is introduced by Frederek Musall and Yossef Schwartz.<sup>38</sup>

Among Eastern European languages, Moritz Klein (1842–1915) translated all three parts of the *Guide* into Hungarian in 1878–91.<sup>39</sup> Jacob Landau published a Yiddish translation of Ibn Tibbon’s medieval Hebrew translation in 1936. And Michael Schneider, a young scholar in Israel today, produced a Russian translation, published in both Jerusalem and Moscow, in 2000.<sup>40</sup>

In addition to the two complete English translations by Friedländer and Pines, there are two translations of selections, one by the noted Israeli Arabist Chaim Rabin (1915–96) in 1952 and one by Lenn E. Goodman, a professor of Islamic and Jewish as well as general philosophy who produced a reader on Maimonides’ philosophy published in 1976 (repr. 1977).<sup>41</sup> As of this writing, Goodman and Phillip Ackerman-Lieberman, both professors at Vanderbilt University, are in the process of doing a new complete English translation of the *Guide*, to be published by Stanford University Press.<sup>42</sup>

As strong evidence of the growing global interest in Maimonides’ *Guide*, we note the Chinese translation in 1998 by Professor Youde Fu of Shandong University. Fu based his translation on Friedländer’s but with critical emendations in light of Pines’s. His translation is now being revised by Dr. Dong Xiuyuan in light of the Arabic text.<sup>43</sup> Finally, in 2011 there appeared a Persian translation based on the Arabic, entitled *Rāhnamā-yi sar-gashtigān*, by Shirin D. Daghighian.<sup>44</sup>

Chapter 11 concludes the first part of the volume with a comparative essay by Steven Harvey, who evaluates the relative strengths and weaknesses of most of our medieval and modern translations using a criterion, mentioned earlier in our narrative, that distinguishes the literalist translations, which emphasize accuracy, from those translations that aim for accessibility and clarity of sense. The criterion in question is the principled and consistent translation of each of Maimonides’ technical-philosophical

38. Abel, Levkovich, and Musall 2009. Thanks to Frank Griffel for bringing this recent translation to our attention.

39. Klein 1878–91.

40. Landau 1936; Schneider 2000.

41. Rabin 1952; Goodman 1977.

42. On the need, if there is one, for a new English translation, see the contributions of Sarah Stroumsa, Alfred Ivry, and Steven Harvey to this volume.

43. Fu 1998.

44. Daghighian 2011.

Arabic terms with the same term in the target language. Is this principle really as important as the literalists insist, or does its constant application lead to confusion and obscurity as the nonliteralists emphasize? On the one hand, through careful analysis of a number of examples across the various translations, Harvey illustrates how controversial still today is the wisdom of this principle of consistent translation. On the other, he himself defends it on the grounds that only strict consistency in translation enables the reader, whatever language he speaks and reads, to ascertain Maimonides' original intentions.

The second part of our volume moves from the history of translations of the *Guide of the Perplexed* to its impact in translation on philosophers beyond the walls of Jewish philosophy. Unlike the thick chronological narrative of the first part, the second part selectively concentrates on four periods in which the impact of the *Guide* has been felt the most: medieval Latin philosophy, early modern philosophy, contemporary Anglo-American philosophy, and medieval Islamic (or Islamicate) philosophy. In discussing "impact," scholars mean different things. When we speak of the impact of the *Guide* on, for example, early modern philosophy, it is ambiguous whether we are speaking of its impact on early modern philosophers (say, Leibniz or Spinoza) or of how the study of Maimonides has impacted scholarship on early modern philosophy. Some essays in this second part focus on the historical impact of Maimonides' *Guide* on the philosophical figures and cultures into whose respective languages it was translated, others on the impact that the *Guide*—through its various translations—has had on scholarship, and yet others on both. And as we turn to contemporary scholarship, the dominant translation of the *Guide*—if only because of the dominant role of the English language in contemporary academic discourse—is Pines's translation.

The earliest impact of the *Guide* on thinkers outside the tradition of Jewish philosophy was on Christian Scholastics, beginning with Albertus Magnus in whose writings we find the earliest quotations from the Latin *Dux neutrorum*. The Latin *Guide* continued to exert a powerful influence, both positively and critically, on a wide range of Christian thinkers in the thirteenth century, including William of Auvergne, Roland of Cremona, Meister Eckhart, and especially Thomas Aquinas. Nonetheless, almost all previous scholarship has concentrated on Maimonides' impact specifically on Aquinas and, even more specifically, on their direct relation signaled by Aquinas's explicit references to "Rabbi Moses" in his mature *Summa theologiae*. In his pioneering essay in chapter 12, Richard Taylor breaks away

from this established way of approaching and evaluating the Maimonides-Aquinas relation. First, Taylor concentrates on Aquinas's earlier, and enormous, *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard* (1252–56)—in which we can see Aquinas working through the articles he then articulates in their final form in the *Summa*. Second, he focuses on how Aquinas read Maimonides, not in isolation, but in the context of the Arabic philosophers, and especially Avicenna. Closely analyzing their detailed philosophical accounts of divine attributes and human knowledge of the nature of God, Taylor shows how Aquinas not only reads Maimonides against the background of Avicenna but, in turn, “Maimonidizes” Avicenna, rendering him a Maimonidean agnostic who denies that humans can have knowledge of God. This, in turn, serves as the counterpoint to Aquinas's defense of his own positive view of the possibility of human knowledge of the divinity. Through this close case study, Taylor offers a more nuanced approach to the study of Maimonides' impact on Scholastic philosophy, which has the potential to significantly reorient future research on this topic.

Turning to early modern philosophy, especially in the seventeenth century, in chapter 13 Steven Nadler begins by showing that Maimonides' writings—the *Mishneh Torah* as well as the *Guide* (typically read in Buxtorf's Latin translation of 1629)—were widely known to different degrees by a broad range of philosophers, including Malebranche, Newton, Bayle, Leibniz, and of course Spinoza. Yet, there is no solid evidence of *distinctively* Maimonidean influence on any of these figures except one. While there are many parallels, for example, between Leibniz's and Maimonides' discussions of the problem of evil and theodicy (about which Leibniz left us notes in his copy of *Doctor perplexorum*), there is no concrete proof that Leibniz either agrees or disagrees with the *Guide* on specific points. The one exception to the rule, as Nadler emphasizes, is Spinoza, who read the *Guide* in Hebrew and deeply engages with Maimonides in all his works. However, until the last quarter of the last century, one would never have known this from the Spinoza scholarship (with a few exceptions, such as Leon Roth, Leo Strauss, and Harry A. Wolfson). Nowadays, the situation is reversed. Many Spinoza scholars not only acknowledge a distinctive Maimonidean influence, and on a wide range of topics from Spinoza's political and moral philosophy and metaphysics to his views of scriptural interpretation and religion; they also hold that one ignores the Maimonidean context of Spinoza's thought only at the risk of bafflement or misunderstanding. Nonetheless, Nadler cautiously concludes, despite Maimonides' increased presence

in contemporary seventeenth-century scholarship and despite the fact that Pines's translation is now the standard, one cannot trace the scholarly change to the impact of any single translation, including Pines's. Rather, the growing importance of Maimonides for Spinoza is a natural, and organic, development in the history of the field.

In chapter 14, Kenneth Seeskin addresses the reasons for both the influence of Pines's 1963 English translation on Anglo-American Maimonides scholars and historians of Jewish philosophy and the resonance of the translation (along with Pines's introduction) with the concerns of contemporary Anglo-American philosophers outside Jewish philosophy proper, such as Hilary Putnam and Saul Kripke. As we mentioned, the sheer number of publications on Maimonides' philosophy after 1963, especially in English, compared to the previous forty years, more than tripled. Part of the explanation, Seeskin suggests, is that the "rigor" of Pines's translation—from its emphasis on consistency in the translation of technical vocabulary to Pines's philosophically learned contextualization of Maimonides' philosophy within Greek, Arabic, and the broader history of philosophy—was especially appealing to the temper of Anglo-American philosophy. Furthermore, Maimonides' attention to philosophical questions of language—for example, his discussion of attribute terms and names of God—has resonated with contemporary concerns with reference and meaning, and Pines's own turn to a skeptical or critical interpretation of Maimonides, already in his introduction, struck a common chord with contemporary trends in Anglo-American epistemology and metaphysics. Finally, Seeskin weighs in on the question of how to interpret the *Guide*—and the controversy over Maimonides' exotericism and esotericism—that was posed in its most forceful form by Leo Strauss, in (among other places) his own introductory essay to the Pines translation. This issue has preoccupied the Anglo-American reception of the *Guide* for the last fifty years, and, as Seeskin notes, Pines's own ambivalence reflected in his translation may indeed best reflect Maimonides' own position.

In chapter 15, Frank Griffel turns to the impact of Maimonides on Arabic and Islamic philosophy. As is well known, Maimonides had relatively little impact on post-twelfth-century Arabic *philosophers* (for a variety of reasons unrelated to Maimonides). The topic of chapter 15, the impact of the study of Maimonides, especially seen through the lens of Pines's translation and introduction, on the study of medieval Arabic philosophy over the last two hundred years, is another question. Griffel first situates Pines within the



context of nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholarship on Arabic philosophy, which, as we saw in discussing Munk, was dominated by the Hegelian tradition of German philology that emphasizes the identification of the classical sources of a text in order to understand it, using works drawn almost exclusively from a fixed list that begins with the Greeks and continues through canonical European figures — excluding Islamic and Jewish philosophers. Although Pines’s earlier work on Islamic atomism broke away from this Eurocentric philological model, Griffel argues that his introduction to the *Guide* marks an unfortunate reversion to it. In particular, Griffel mounts a strong critique against Pines’s introduction for looking back to canonical sources long in the past but ignoring the immediate twelfth-century Arabic philosophical context of the *Guide* and especially the significant impact of Almohad theology, *kalām* (which Griffel argues counted as philosophy in the twelfth century as much as *falsafa*), and al-Ghazālī.

Ironically, this brings our story almost full circle, ending on a note close to its medieval and modern beginnings. Ibn Tibbon’s translation was an attempt to expose what was arguably the greatest product of the Judeo-Arabic philosophical tradition to coming generations outside the Arabic orbit. Munk’s French translation was an attempt to demonstrate the richness and centrality of Arabic-Jewish philosophy to the history of Western philosophy more generally. If Griffel is right, the present state of scholarship, the present terminus of this trajectory, has not yet gone far enough: future scholarship on Maimonides’ *Guide*—its translation, as it were, into the contemporary language of philosophy—must acknowledge not only past paradigms of what counts as philosophy but the full and diverse range of schools and thinkers that were known as philosophy in the twelfth century. Only then will the Hegelian, Eurocentric hold be broken and Maimonides given his full due in his rich Arabic and Judeo-Arabic philosophical context.

Earlier versions of these chapters (with the exception of chapters 3 and 11) were delivered as lectures at the conference “Pines’ Maimonides: The History of the Translation and Interpretation of *The Guide of the Perplexed*,” which was held at the University of Chicago in January 2014 to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of Shlomo Pines’s English translation of the *Guide* by the University of Chicago Press. The conference was organized by the Joyce Z. and Jacob Greenberg Center for Jewish Studies in collaboration with the Shlomo Pines Society of Jerusalem and with

many University of Chicago cosponsors: the Division of the Humanities, the Martin Marty Center for the Advanced Study of Religion, the Franke Institute for the Humanities, the France Chicago Center, the Chicago Center in Beijing, the Norman Wait Harris Fund of the Center for International Studies, the John U. Nef Committee on Social Thought, the Department of Philosophy, the Leo Strauss Center, the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, and the University of Chicago Press. We acknowledge the generosity of all these supporters as well as the moral support of Martha Roth, dean of the Division of the Humanities, and Margaret Mitchell, dean of the Divinity School, at the University of Chicago. We would also like to express our deep gratitude to Nancy Pardee, administrator of the Center for Jewish Studies, for her expert organization and execution of all the intensive work that goes into a successful conference. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the support of the Maimonides Centre for Advanced Studies—Jewish Skepticism of the University of Hamburg where I did some final editing of chapters during my tenure as a Senior Fellow in 2017 and the support of the EURIAS Fellowship Program and of the European Commission (Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions—COFUND Programme—FDP7) during the last stages of production while I was a Marie Curie Senior Fellow at the Israel Institute for Advanced Studies in 2018–19.

In editing and producing this volume of essays, James Robinson and I—and we are sure we speak for all our contributors—especially want to thank Yonatan Shemesh for his selfless and unending labors, which far exceeded anything we foresaw, and for the expert knowledge and devotion that he invested in turning our essays into professional pieces of scholarship. Without his efforts, this volume would not be what it is.

Many thanks also to John Tryneski and Charles Myers, our two acquiring editors at the University of Chicago Press, for first encouraging and then patiently waiting for us to produce this volume. Susan Karani and Marian Rogers, the manuscript editors, have been instrumental in seeing it into press.

Most of our medieval and many of our modern translators were able to produce the fruit of their labor only through the offices of patrons or, as they are known today, grants and subsidies. This volume on translation is no exception. We are very pleased and gratified to acknowledge the support of a major subvention toward publication of this volume from the Estate of David B. Berger, honoring the memory of David B. and Sophia M. Berger of Chicago, Illinois. *Yehi zikhram barukh.*

### Appendix: A Note on the Publication of Pines's Translation of the *Guide*

Possibly for the first time in the history of translations of the *Guide*, we now have access to information concerning the publication and printing of a particular translation. The files on the Shlomo Pines translation of the *Guide of the Perplexed* found in the archives of the University of Chicago Press throw valuable light on the origins of Pines's translation, its aims and methods, the respective roles of Leo Strauss and Shlomo Pines and their relation to each other, and certain details of publication that bear on questions that have been the subject of controversy. In this note, I wish to share with readers some of the information found in these files.<sup>45</sup>

The earliest document in the files, dating from August 20, 1956, is a letter sent from Strauss to Pines, to which Pines responded in a letter of September 10, 1956.<sup>46</sup> Strauss's letter contains Strauss's own translation of the "epistle dedicatory" published at the beginning of the *Guide*, to which Pines refers in his letter. It is clear from this correspondence that the translation was well under way by 1956. When exactly Pines began it we do not know, but the plan may have been hatched during Strauss's visit to the Hebrew University for the academic year 1954–55. From conversations with Uri Pines, Shlomo Pines's son, it also appears that Pines may have begun the translation on his own and earlier, and primarily for financial reasons. For purposes of scholarship, Pines did not "believe in" translations. He thought that a translation could be valuable as an *interpretation* of a text, but he had serious reservations about the value of studying a text in translation rather than in its original language, and it may have been for precisely that reason that he learned as many languages as he needed for his scholarship.<sup>47</sup> In any case, it was Strauss who arranged for the University of Chicago Press to publish the translation, and it was Strauss with whom the press exclusively

45. The archives of the press are now part of the Special Collections of the Regenstein Library of the University of Chicago, and became available to researchers only in the last two or three years. I wish to thank the librarians of Special Collections for their help in making the Pines files available to me.

46. Pines's response to Strauss's letter, found in the Leo Strauss Papers in the Special Collections of the Regenstein Library of the University of Chicago, was published in Kraemer and Stern 1998. At the time, Kraemer and I could not locate Strauss's letter to Pines, because it was in the press archives, which were not yet accessible. Sarah Stroumsa and I are now preparing Strauss's letter for publication.

47. Here I am indebted to conversation with Sarah Stroumsa.

dealt; Strauss, in turn, dealt with Pines.<sup>48</sup> Although Strauss and Pines had been friends since their university days in Berlin and although they shared, at least at that time, a general orientation toward the interpretation of the *Guide*, it is also clear from their correspondence that their “collaboration” was far from tension-free. In the letter to Pines, Strauss confronts him with an “enormous problem” and instructs him to “act from now on according to the suggestions which I am now going to make.” The “enormous problem” was that Pines was “tak[ing] much too literally [Strauss’s] injunction to be literal”; Strauss advises him to “make greater use of Munk in avoiding Arabisms and other unnecessary complexities” and not “to indicate in the text or in notes every little deviation from the Arabic,” which would make the book “absolutely unreadable.” Pines’s response to Strauss is “exoterically deferential but esoterically defiant.”<sup>49</sup> Both from the letter and from examples of translations of particular words where we have written evidence that they disagreed, it is clear that the published translation we possess is Pines’s through and through, not Strauss’s.

How Strauss himself viewed the nature of their joint effort, and how others viewed it, are also not unequivocal from the archival materials. In a letter dated November 27, 1956, Strauss refers to “the translation of *Moreh Nebukhim*, presently being undertaken by Dr. Solomon Pines of the Hebrew University *and me*” (my emphasis), and he speaks of “*our* translation” (my emphasis). In a memorandum dated November 28, 1956, Alexander J. Morin, the managing editor of the press, refers to “Strauss’ Translation of Maimonides,” and in another report of December 12, 1958, William Swanberg, a representative of the press, describes a “new translation of Maimonides’ *Guide for the Perplexed*, being carried out by Professor Leo Strauss.” In all these cases, it is, of course, ambiguous whether “translation” refers to the literal activity or to the whole process of “putting out” the published book. From a more practical, procedural perspective, the exact roles of Pines and Strauss are more precisely and explicitly spelled out in a “preliminary report” from IW (whom I have not been able to identify) to Morin, dated March 6, 1959: “Prospective procedure. (1) Pines, the translator, sends his typed draft to Strauss; (2) Strauss rechecks the translation against the original and makes whatever changes he thinks advisable; (3) the manuscript goes to the editor, whose main task is to make the English as lucid and readable as possible without violating the meaning of the text.” Reflecting

48. For this information, I am indebted to Lerner 2002.

49. Kraemer and Stern 1998, 14.

these roles, Ralph Lerner, in a memorandum of August 19, 1960, refers to Strauss as “the supervisor” and to Pines as “the translator,” and while the “prospective procedure” gives Strauss license to make “whatever changes he thinks advisable,” Lerner also emphasizes that “all changes will have to be made with extreme care and every change, however slight, will have to receive the translator’s explicit approval.” Lerner has assured me (in a personal communication) that this policy was adhered to strictly. Pines held ultimate authority over the translation.

At this point, a word about the “editor” would be appropriate. In June 1959, when the translation was well under way, Ralph Lerner, a recent Chicago PhD, and a former doctoral student of Strauss, was hired by the press, “charged with ‘Englishing’ [Pines’s] translation, meaning by that giving it a rhythm and tone that a native speaker of English might use.”<sup>50</sup> Lerner was not the first to be contacted by the press for this assignment. Moshe Greenberg and Arthur Hyman were approached earlier, but neither was hired, and it is indeed fortunate that Lerner was chosen. Although the original plan seems to have been to send the volume to press by January 1960, intense editorial work continued well into 1961. In a letter from July 17, 1961, which Lerner sent with the final draft of part I, with footnotes, having “gone over it for, I suppose, the fourth time,” he says that “it is hard to say” when to expect the whole manuscript. “I have been working literally day and night on this stuff (with perhaps four days off) since the MS arrived in the latter part of June. I expect to continue doing so, until the whole of it is in your hands . . . I might be finished by the second or third week in August . . . I can only promise that I shall try to requite your patience by industriousness.” We shall describe below some of the obstacles and mines through which Lerner had to negotiate his way—again, without presuming to make any changes without Pines’s approval—but it is clear that without his extraordinary effort, care, and wisdom, the translation would not be what it is.

The archives do not contain a contract between the press and Strauss or Pines. However, in a letter dated November 27, 1956, from Strauss to William H. Cannon, vice president for development, Strauss writes: “I am already committed to the University of Chicago Press for the publication of the translation of Moreh Nebukhim.” The impetus for this letter was an inquiry from Solomon Grayzel of the Jewish Publication Society “expressing interest in publishing the translation in one of their series which has the

50. Lerner 2002, 1.

Hebrew on facing pages.” In response, Strauss suggested that the press write that it was “considering publishing a comparative text,” which it would then do itself, but if it did not, it would “be willing to discuss licensing arrangements.” He added that since the press was still in the process of raising funds for the translation, it should ask the Jewish Publication Society for financial help. Although no Hebrew-English facing-page edition of the *Guide* has yet been published, plans are now under way to issue a facing-page edition of the Arabic-English texts. (Qafih’s translation was issued in a facing-column Judeo-Arabic-Hebrew edition by the Israeli publisher Mossad ha-Rav Kook, but it is now out of print.)

Finally, I should add that as late as December 12, 1958, it was still being discussed in the aforementioned report whether the translation would be published by the University of Chicago Press or in one of the series of the Bollingen Foundation (which had already underwritten the cost of publication). Since the Bollingen Foundation seems to have been open to either possibility, it was apparently ultimately decided that the translation would be published by Chicago with the support of the Bollingen Foundation.

The translation was originally issued in one hardcover volume, later in two volumes in paperback. It was designed by Andor Braun, a distinguished book designer who worked with the Bollingen Foundation on many of their publications. Roger Shugg, director of the press, spared neither money nor effort to produce “a volume whose appearance and dignity will be in keeping with the elevation of the text itself,” as Lerner put it in a memorandum dated August 19, 1960, to John Goetz, production manager of the press. Evidence of this is the large number of documents in the archives on production aspects of the publication. At the same time, Lerner cautions later, in a Maimonidean spirit, that “it is important not to be seduced by the beauty of [the designer’s] work so as to forget the major criterion by which this book shall be judged—is it a good and accurate translation?”

As Lerner wrote in the memorandum of August 19, 1960, “Mr. Shugg is fully cognizant of the magnitude of this project. . . . He also is aware of the fact that a project of this sort is never undertaken lightly. It is unlikely that anyone will attempt another English translation of the *Guide* for at least a century. What the Press will be producing, then, will be the standard translation of the greatest work of medieval Jewish philosophy, a work which has been, and will be, used by students of philosophy, the history of religion, and Judaism, as well as by Orientalists.”

As I mentioned above in the introduction to this volume, Pines decided to translate in the more literalistic style of Samuel Ibn Tibbon rather than

follow Maimonides' own directive to seek overall sense over literal accuracy. He rigorously sought to preserve the syntax, style, and lexical choices of the Arabic original. In particular, Lerner writes that Maimonides "tells us in his introduction that he has chosen every word with deliberate care. This translation takes that remark at face value" (ibid.). Hence, although Pines does not succeed in adhering to this stricture perfectly, as a rule he translates each occurrence of each Arabic technical term by the same English term, and, as an aid to the reader, he provides a glossary at the end of the translation (pp. 639–41) that lists the English translation of every technical-philosophical Arabic term. Furthermore, because the *Guide* is primarily written in Arabic but with Hebrew words, sentences, and phrases scattered through the text—whose presence or absence "has a particular significance in this work" (ibid.)—Lerner writes that the translation is "the first to indicate to the reader precisely which words are Hebrew; italic type will be used solely for this purpose" (ibid.).<sup>51</sup> And while Pines has been not infrequently criticized for his faithful but sometimes awkward rendition of the syntax of the original, Lerner also writes that "efforts have been made to avoid a slavish imitation of Arabic syntax as this would result in utterly impossible English prose." However, "all in all, elegance has been sacrificed to accuracy and tolerable literalness" (ibid.).

A very good example of Pines's own intention to be as faithful to the original as possible—an intention that he was not at the end of the publishing day able to achieve as he originally desired and for which, ironically, he has been subsequently criticized—concerns the use of brackets enclosing words interpolated into the translation to render the Arabic original readable in English. According to Lerner, Pines's original manuscript "as a whole showed [his] meticulous concern to denote for English readers every word he had supplied to fill out the sense of Maimonides' Arabic sentences. His pages were a forest of square brackets, and his translation was literal to an extreme. Where Friedlander had indulged in unpardonable license and paraphrase, Pines in his draft had created an obstacle course worthy of a commando training camp."<sup>52</sup> Most of these brackets were removed. On the

51. To be more accurate, it was the first *English* translation to distinguish the Hebrew from the Judeo-Arabic graphically. Munk's French translation also marked the difference, using italics for this purpose, and the Munk-Joel Arabic text uses a slightly different font.

52. Lerner 2002, 3. In a letter from an unidentified "IW" to A. J. Morin, March 6, 1959, the author notes that the original draft contained ten to fifteen sets of brackets per page—"which will be removed."

other hand, where there were substantive additions, Lerner was emphatic that “if the text has something in brackets, it must remain in brackets, even though it appears inelegant. E.g. the title ‘Epistle Dedicatory’ at the very beginning of the work” (memorandum of October 31, 1960)—which is not found in the Arabic original. I would add that we may now understand why certain English words—words that some find to be objectionable additions from the point of view of the Arabic original—are interpolated in the *published* text without being *currently* marked as such, for which, as I have said, Pines has been not infrequently criticized. If we keep this history in mind, it is likely that Pines originally did bracket these words, and, in the course of editing, the brackets were simply dropped. Similar care applied to Pines’s use of italics for Hebrew words, “whatever conventional usage may say to the contrary. E.g., the word ‘Lord’ in the motto beginning each part or the Hebrew words that open many of the chapters in the first part” (ibid.). However, as Lerner added in his own hand, “The word ‘Chapter’ in each chapter heading must be restored as it is part of Maimonides’ text. It can be in all caps or . . . what have you but not in italics, as the Arabic word is used” (ibid.).

Over the years, rumors have circulated that Pines claimed to have written a “commentary” to accompany his translation. After his death, efforts were made to locate such a manuscript, but none was found. As a result it has been supposed that Pines incorporated the (or some of the) contents of the lost “commentary” into his “Translator’s Introduction.” None of these speculations seems to be right. Pines’s draft of the translation contained roughly 4,000 footnotes—“the size of a small volume”—which fell into three groups: (1) scriptural references, (2) references to the Talmud, Aristotle, and Islamic authors, and (3) variant readings of the Arabic manuscripts or difficult-to-translate Arabic words (memorandum of August 19, 1960). In a letter dated April 19, 1961, from Lerner to Carrol G. Bowen, the assistant director of the press, Lerner writes that Pines agreed to reduce that number by half. However, Lerner adds elsewhere: “It seemed to me at the time that both Pines and Strauss took it for granted that many of the ambiguities in Maimonides’ text and in Pines’s interpretation would be addressed by Pines in his footnotes. It is regrettable that the learned translator did not take readers into his confidence and let them see some of the considerations that had entered into his rendition and that set it apart from the readings of Samuel Ibn Tibbon and Munk. Here would be precious matter for future generations of students. But as it turned out, the notes, emerging as he la-



bored at his translation, gave little evidence of a sustained consistent effort on his part to address interpretive problems in that particular format.”<sup>53</sup> Although Lerner goes on to say that Pines was then obliged to “decide which, if any, of the [notes’] concerns he might address in the introduction,”<sup>54</sup> it seems that their original content contained little stuff of a commentary or of an interpretive nature. The number of footnotes was radically cut, but what was omitted was not interpretive, and, by the same token, the interpretive parts of the introduction were not the snippets of notes. Although we do know that Pines wrote his introduction last in the order of production, we know little more about how it came to take its present shape.

53. Lerner 2002, 3.

54. Lerner 2002, 3.

# **PART I**

## The History of Translations of the *Guide*



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# 1

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*Moreh ha-nevukhim*  
The First Hebrew Translation of  
the *Guide of the Perplexed*

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JAMES T. ROBINSON

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The Hebrew translation of Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed* is the best-documented translation we have from the Jewish Middle Ages. Documents survive relating to the first request made of Samuel Ibn Tibbon to translate it from Arabic into Hebrew in the 1190s. Two letters are extant from a larger correspondence between Ibn Tibbon and Maimonides regarding the proper method of translation and the contradictions in Maimonides' treatment of providence. A first version of the translation was completed in 1204 and a revised version—revised in response to al-Ḥarizi's rival translation—in 1213. The 1213 version circulated with Ibn Tibbon's *Perush ha-millot hazarot* along with Ibn Tibbon's marginal annotations and, beginning from the later thirteenth century, commentaries, glosses, and other reference tools.<sup>1</sup>

We have all of this—a substantial amount of data—along with impressive scholarship on the translation itself and its reception. This includes the linguistic studies by Moshe Goshen-Gottstein,<sup>2</sup> Zev Harvey's article

1. See Fraenkel 2007, 53–146, for a full discussion of the evidence.

2. Goshen-Gottstein 2006, which includes also a full bibliography of his articles.

and Carlos Fraenkel's monograph on the marginal notes,<sup>3</sup> the articles by Steven Harvey and Sarah Stroumsa on the letter from Maimonides to Ibn Tibbon on translation,<sup>4</sup> and Yair Shiffman's work comparing Ibn Tibbon's rendering with that of his two rival translators, Judah al-Ḥarizi and Shem Tov Falaquera.<sup>5</sup> And yet, despite the documentary evidence and despite the excellent scholarship on it, we are in many ways only at the beginning of research on Ibn Tibbon's translation and its methods. There is, for instance, still no reliable edition of the Hebrew translation that sorts out and makes sense of the variations in the some 130 manuscripts that survive; this means that any research is by nature provisional.<sup>6</sup> Nor has the translation been explored from literary and cultural perspectives, focusing on the language used, the rules governing language use, and the implication of choosing one term over another.

The goal of this chapter is to take a few steps forward in focusing on the literary and cultural dimensions of Ibn Tibbon's translation of the *Guide*, with emphasis on his use of biblical and rabbinic language in the translation, the possible sources of and influences on his translation, the translation's literalistic and nonliteralistic tendencies, the mechanical process that often applied in his transferring of a word from one linguistic-cultural context to another, and the impact of his translation choice on reception. Following a few remarks about Ibn Tibbon and his life and writings in general, the chapter will explore examples that fit into these categories: the use of biblical language mediated by Saadia Gaon's *Tafsīr*, that is, his translation of the Bible from Hebrew into Arabic; the original use of biblical language unrelated to Saadia's *Tafsīr* and often with exegetical significance; the use of rabbinic language and its repercussions; the literalistic and nonliteralistic tendencies of the translation, focusing on technical and nontechnical terms and on the rendering of proper names; and, finally, one of my favorite examples from Ibn Tibbon's later commentary on Qohelet, which shows

3. W. Z. Harvey 1997a; Fraenkel 2007.

4. S. Harvey 1992a; Stroumsa 1990.

5. See, e.g., Shiffman 1999.

6. For a preliminary effort at a critical edition of the Hebrew translation, see Goshen-Gottstein 1979. For discussion of the surviving manuscripts, see Fraenkel 2007, 228–87; Robinson 2009. It should be noted that an edition of the Hebrew translation would require close comparison with the Judeo-Arabic manuscripts as well; the edition of Munk, and following him those of Joel and Qafih, are based on only a few manuscripts used uncritically and corrected according to classical Arabic.

Ibn Tibbon at work as a translator, giving a clear description of how he translates a term by calque.

One final introductory note: throughout I rely on the earliest dated manuscripts of the Hebrew *Guide*: 1273 and 1283.<sup>7</sup> Both are of Italian provenance and represent, as far as we can tell, a version of the revised translation of 1213.

### Samuel Ibn Tibbon: Translator, Exegete, Philosopher, Maimonidean Enthusiast

Samuel Ibn Tibbon was born around 1165 in Lunel, which was a small but very active rabbinic center in southern France.<sup>8</sup> At the time Lunel was home to the most important yeshivah in the region. Under the direction of Rabbi Meshullam ben Jacob, his sons, and successors, it attracted many of the brightest Jewish students and scholars in Europe. Rabbi Abraham ben David (Rabad) and Rabbi Zerahyah ha-Levi (Razah), for example, both studied in Lunel, where they knew each other and began their famous legal disputations. It was in Lunel, moreover, and in the surrounding regions, that kabbalah emerged, and a Hebrew tradition of philosophy, based on a corpus of texts translated from Arabic and Judeo-Arabic into Hebrew, began to develop, grow, and expand its influence.<sup>9</sup>

Lunel's emergence as the center of Jewish philosophy and translation was due in large measure to Samuel's father, Judah Ibn Tibbon. A refugee from the Almohad persecutions in Islamic Spain, Judah settled in Lunel in the 1150s, where he established himself as a physician, merchant, and, under the patronage of Meshullam and others, translator of Judeo-Arabic works into Hebrew. Over the course of twenty-five years, Judah produced Hebrew translations of several works of grammar, lexicography, philosophy, theology, and apologetics, including Jonah Ibn Janah's *Sefer ha-shorashim* and

7. The manuscript dated 1273 is London, British Library, Add. 14763 (Margoliouth 904; IMHM 4930); that dated 1283, London, British Library, Harley 7586A (Margoliouth 906; IMHM 4876).

8. The following provides a very brief description of Ibn Tibbon's life and writings. For fuller background, see Robinson 2005, 2007a, 2007b, 2007/8.

9. For historical, cultural, and literary background, see especially Twersky 1962, 1968; Gordon 1974; Talmage 1975; Saperstein 1980; Septimus 1982; Scholem 1987; Chazan 1989, 2004; Ta-Shma 1992; Freudenthal 1993, 1995; Sendor 1994; Zonta 1996; Schirrmann 1997; Halbertal 2000; G. Stern 2009.

*Sefer ha-riqmah*, Saadia Gaon's *Book of Beliefs and Opinions*, Solomon Ibn Gabirol's *Choice of Pearls and Improvement of the Moral Qualities*, Bahya Ibn Paquda's *Duties of the Heart*, and Judah Halevi's *Kuzari*. By rendering these works into Hebrew, Judah laid the foundations of a Hebrew philosophical library. He also created a technical scientific terminology that would continue to serve translators and original authors throughout the Middle Ages and into the modern period.<sup>10</sup>

On account of his translation work, Judah Ibn Tibbon earned the title "father of translators." But while in Lunel, he fathered not only a corpus of Hebrew translations but a dynasty of Hebrew translators, which began with his son Samuel, whom he tried to make in his own image, after his likeness. Using local resources, but also bringing in tutors and books from abroad, Judah made every effort to educate his son according to the traditions of Islamic Spain. Samuel was instructed in Hebrew and Aramaic, Bible and Talmud, as well as Arabic, medicine, philosophy, and science. Through a variety of literary exercises described by his father in his famous ethical will—such as copying manuscripts and criticizing poems and epistles—Samuel was also introduced to the poetic and rhetorical traditions of Andalusia. But perhaps the most important aspect of his education was the weekly reading of the Bible together with Saadia Gaon's Arabic translation, in order to sharpen his language skills and improve his translation technique. It seems that Judah's emphasis on translation, more than any of his other efforts, would influence his son and direct his future projects and investigations.<sup>11</sup>

Judah's son Samuel (henceforth referred to simply as Ibn Tibbon) began to work as a translator in his own right only after his father's death. His first project, however, the translation of Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*, would be sufficient to provide him with a lifetime of inspiration. The project of translating the *Guide* into Hebrew began in the 1190s and continued, in one way or another, throughout his lifetime.<sup>12</sup> He completed a first edition in 1204, a revised version with glossary (*Perush ha-millot ha-zarot*) in 1213, and seems to have worked on it later as well, adding marginal glosses, additional explications, and study tools, including a short treatise entitled "The Reason for the Table, Showbread, Menorah, and Sweet Savor," which attempted to identify the reason for a commandment that Maimonides

10. For bibliography on Judah Ibn Tibbon, see Robinson 2005.

11. For background on Samuel Ibn Tibbon's education and early training, see especially Judah's "Ethical Will" in Abrahams 1926; relevant sections are discussed in Robinson 2005, 2008.

12. For the development of the translation project, see especially Fraenkel 2007, 53–102.

could not provide.<sup>13</sup> Ibn Tibbon also translated other works by Maimonides, including his commentary on the Mishnah, Avot; the preface to his commentary on the Mishnah, Avot (“Eight Chapters”); the “Letter on Resurrection”; the “Letter to Yemen”; a letter from Maimonides on translation; and possibly the preface to the commentary on the Mishnah, Sanhedrin, Chapter 10 (“Heleq”).<sup>14</sup> He also produced the first Hebrew versions of Aristotle and Averroes, translating the *Meteorology* in 1210 and, sometime later, three treatises on conjunction with the active intellect by Averroes and Averroes’ son ‘Abdallah.<sup>15</sup> Other translations attributed to him, such as that of ‘Ali ibn Riḍwān’s commentary on Galen’s *Ars parva*, are, in my opinion, not his work.<sup>16</sup>

According to a manuscript colophon, the 1204 translation of the *Guide* was completed not in Lunel but in Arles. If this report is to be relied upon, then it would seem to mark the beginning of a period of extended travel in Ibn Tibbon’s life. He was in Barcelona and Toledo before 1210, and visited Alexandria twice, returning in 1210 and 1213.<sup>17</sup> It seems that by 1211, moreover, he had already established his primary domicile in Marseille,<sup>18</sup> where he would later teach his most famous pupil, Jacob Anatoli, and where he seems to have died, in 1232.<sup>19</sup> These later years in Ibn Tibbon’s life, after 1213 in particular, were devoted more to exegesis and philosophy than to translation: it was then that he produced his two most important original works, his commentary on Ecclesiastes and *Ma’amar yiqqawu ha-mayim*.<sup>20</sup> He also began, and perhaps partially completed, an esoteric explanation of

13. For Ibn Tibbon’s glosses on the translation of the *Guide*, see Frankel 2007. For “The Reason for the Table, Showbread, Menorah, and Sweet Savor,” see Robinson 2007a, 301–5.

14. On Ibn Tibbon’s translations, see Robinson 2005, 2008.

15. The *Meteorology* translation has been edited and translated by Fontaine (Ibn Tibbon 1995); the “Three Treatises” were edited and translated by Hercz (Ibn Tibbon 1869).

16. This is the opinion I arrived at many years ago based on my analysis of the terminology of the translation. For an argument against my opinion and in favor of attributing this work to Ibn Tibbon, see Freudenthal 2016a.

17. See Robinson 2007.

18. For Ibn Tibbon’s residence in Marseille, see especially the letter of Asher ben Gershom, written to the sages of France during the Maimonidean controversy of the 1230s; Asher explains there that the greatest of sages would stop at Ibn Tibbon’s house in Marseille on their way to the Holy Land, in order to consult his copy of the *Guide*. The reference is presumably to the famous Aliyah of 1211. For the letter, see the edition of Shatzmiller (1997, 79).

19. For his relation to Anatoli, see especially Gordon 1974, and more recently Robinson 2005.

20. For *Ma’amar yiqqawu ha-mayim*, see most recently Kneller-Rowe 2011.



Genesis, entitled *Ner ha-ḥofeś*;<sup>21</sup> and planned, but apparently never began, a commentary on the internal meanings of the book of Proverbs.<sup>22</sup>

These later writings of philosophy and philosophical exegesis were instrumental in spreading the influence of Maimonides in Hebrew and creating the foundation for a Maimonidean tradition. They earned him a special place in the writings of later authors in Provence, Italy, the Byzantine world, and elsewhere, where he is cited as a philosophical-exegetical authority second only to the Master himself. The foundation of everything, however, was the translation of the *Guide*. In fact, one can argue that it was this translation—even more than the Judeo-Arabic original—that created the language of philosophy and philosophical exegesis in Judaism. It is to this—the most important translation in the history of medieval Jewish thought—that we now turn our attention, focusing on literary and cultural elements of Ibn Tibbon's work.

### Biblical Language in Ibn Tibbon's Translation and Saadia's Tafsīr

One of the most influential texts in Jewish history is Saadia Gaon's translation of the Torah into Arabic.<sup>23</sup> He translated other books of the Bible as well as part of a larger commentary project.<sup>24</sup> The Tafsīr—as the Torah translation is popularly termed—quickly became the standard rabbinic translation in Islamic lands. It influenced most later biblical translations, not only rabbinic but also Karaite, Samaritan, and even Christian, at least from the thirteenth century forward.<sup>25</sup> It is the translation that the Andalusī Jews grew up with, and its influence can be felt throughout the Spanish tradition, including in the work of Maimonides himself.

Saadia's Tafsīr also had a secondary influence in an indirect way: it served as an Arabic-Hebrew lexicon of sorts for the translators from Arabic into Hebrew in Christian Europe. Evidence of this is found in Judah Ibn Tibbon's ethical will written to his son, in which he exhorts his son Samuel to read the weekly Bible portion with the Arabic translation in order to train himself in translation. Judah says:

21. For references to *Ner ha-ḥofeś* found in Ibn Tibbon's works, and speculation about its fate, see Ravitzky 1977, 16–17.

22. See Ibn Tibbon 2007, par. 625.

23. I work from the Tafsīr published by Derenbourg (Saadia 1893).

24. For Isaiah, Psalms, Job, Proverbs, Daniel, and Esther, see Saadia 1993b, 1966, 1972, 1993a, 1994, 2015.

25. See Vollandt 2015; Zewi 2015.

Read every week the Torah section in Arabic. This will improve your Arabic vocabulary and will be of advantage in translating, if you should feel inclined to translate.<sup>26</sup>

There is evidence also from Ibn Tibbon junior, from Samuel Ibn Tibbon, that he heeded his father's advice. He indicates in his *Perush ha-millot hazarot* that he had consulted Saadia for the translation of one term: *rasm*. He explains there as follows:

Having explained the meaning of these five words [the five predicables], I will add the explanation of two additional terms, namely, *geder*, "definition," and *hoq*, "description". . . . As for the term *hoq*, I do not remember having seen this term used in this way by any [previous translator], but I have seen that Rabbenu Saadia translated the biblical term *hoq*, as in the phrase *hoq u-mishpat*, "a statute and an ordinance" [see, e.g., Exod 15:25], as *rasm*; he similarly translated *huqqay* as *rusūmī* [see, e.g., Ps 50:16]. Because of this, I have translated the Arabic term *rasm* into Hebrew as *hoq*.<sup>27</sup>

What happens when we look at the translation itself? We find much more, including dozens of translations in Ibn Tibbon's Arabic-to-Hebrew translation of the *Guide* that correspond with Saadia's Hebrew-to-Arabic translation of the Bible. This includes some of the most distinctive words in the text, such as the translation of *ḥā'ir* and *mutaḥayyir* as *navokh* or *hilla* as *taḥbulah*.<sup>28</sup> It also includes some of the more poetic, biblicizing translations found in Ibn Tibbon's text. On the other hand, Ibn Tibbon's mechanical use of Saadia led to some awkward conclusions. I will give one example of a poetic, biblicizing translation and one example showing an awkward result.

#### Example 1: *Melekheth Maḥshevet*

There are of course many technical terms in the *Guide of the Perplexed*—from science and philosophy, *kalām* and *tafsīr* literature, law and history. Generally, Ibn Tibbon is careful to render them literally, word for word.

26. See Abrahams 1926, 66 (translation modified).

27. The entry appears in the manuscripts, not in the printed edition of Even-Shemuel. For discussion, see Robinson 2008, 262–63.

28. See, e.g., Exod 14:3, where Saadia translates *nevukhim* as *mutaḥayyirūn*, and Prov 1:5, where Saadia translates *taḥbulot* as *hiyyal*.

In one case, however, he uses a biblical locution to render nonliterally the term for “the technical arts.” He translates *al-ṣanā’i’ al-miḥniyya* as *melekheth maḥshevet*. Here is the text from *Guide* III 2, cited from Pines’s translation (417–18) with key words underlined:

He states that he saw four living creatures and that every living creature among them had four faces, four wings, and two hands. As a whole, the form of each creature was that of a man; as he says: “they had the likeness of a man” [Ezek 1:5]. He also states that their two hands were likewise the hands of a man, it being known that a man’s hands are indubitably formed as they are in order to be engaged in the technical arts [Pines translates: “the arts of craftsmanship”; the Arabic is *al-ṣanā’i’ al-miḥniyya*; Ibn Tibbon translates: *melekheth maḥshevet*].

In his Hebrew version, Ibn Tibbon translates *al-ṣanā’i’ al-miḥniyya* (the technical arts)—what Pines translates as “the arts of craftsmanship”—using the biblical locution *melekheth maḥshevet*, a translation that strikes the reader as a truly elegant, even poetic rendering, perhaps a sign that Ibn Tibbon was no less refined and adept in using classical Hebrew than his poetic rival al-Ḥarizi. The only problem is that this choice was not made by Ibn Tibbon himself; it comes from Saadia’s *Tafsīr*, where Saadia translates *melekheth maḥshevet* at Exodus 35:33 as *ṣanā’i’ al-miḥan*. In other words, the correspondence between the two terms was already established by Saadia; Ibn Tibbon is simply following the translation provided by his predecessor. He used Saadia’s translation of the Bible as a translation lexicon, an inspiration for his own rendering and a solution to the many difficult and challenging problems he faced.

#### Example 2: The Uselessness of the Gems in the Breastplate?

While the use of Saadia as an Arabic-to-Hebrew lexicon could lead to some elegant, poetic, biblicizing renderings of Maimonides’ *Guide*, such as *melekheth maḥshevet*, the mechanical, uncritical use of Saadia’s *Tafsīr* could result in awkward translations as well. An example is the rendering of gem names in *Guide* III 12. The text of the *Guide*, in Pines’s translation (446–47), reads as follows:

You ought to consider the circumstances in which we are placed with regard to [what is necessary] being found. For the more a thing is neces-

sary for a living being, the more often it may be found and the cheaper it is. On the other hand, the less necessary it is, the less often it is found and it is very expensive. Thus, for instance, the necessary for man is air, water, and food, but air is the most necessary, for nobody can be without it for a moment without perishing. As for water, one can remain without it for a day or two. Accordingly air is indubitably easier to find and cheaper than water. Water is more necessary than food, for certain people remain, if they drink and do not eat, for four or five days without food. Accordingly, in every city you find water more frequently and at a cheaper price than food. Things are similar with regard to foodstuffs; those that are most necessary are easier to find at a given place and cheaper than the unnecessary. Regarding musk [*al-musk*; Ibn Tibbon's Hebrew: *ha-musq*], amber [*al-'anbar*; Ibn Tibbon's Hebrew: *ha-'anbar*], rubies [*al-yāqūt*; Ibn Tibbon's Hebrew: *ha-odem*], and emeralds [*al-zumurrud*; Ibn Tibbon's Hebrew: *ha-bareqet*], I do not think that anyone of sound intellect can believe that man has strong need for them unless it be for medical treatment; and even in such cases, they and other similar things can be replaced by numerous herbs and earths.

The Arabic terms for these substances that Maimonides identifies as unnecessary luxury items and of no real importance are *al-musk*, *al-'anbar*, *al-yāqūt*, and *al-zumurrud*. How does Ibn Tibbon translate them? The first two he simply transcribes: *musk* as *musq* and *'anbar* as *'anbar*. The second two are more interesting. Good dutiful son that he was, he knew from his study of Saadia's Tafsīr that Saadia had used *yāqūt* to translate *odem* at Exodus 28:17 and 39:10; and *zumurrud* to translate *bareqet* in the same verses.<sup>29</sup> So what Ibn Tibbon did was simply follow Saadia's rendering and reverse the process: *yāqūt* in the *Guide* he translated as *odem* and *zumurrud* as *bareqet*. Simple.

There is only one problem with this translation. What is the biblical context from which Ibn Tibbon took these terms? It is the description of the breastplate and ephod at Exodus 28:17 and 39:10. Samuel's mechanical use of Saadia, in other words, gives a strange flavor to Maimonides' remark. In the Hebrew translation it is now the gems of the biblical breastplate that Maimonides has singled out as examples of useless and unnecessary luxuries, things with no value for living our lives as humans; at best, he says, they have medical utility. This may be true, it may not. But it seems that a

29. See Saadia 1893 ad loc.

different example would have been more appropriate and less problematic for Ibn Tibbon's traditional rabbinic reading audience in southern France.

### The Original Use of Biblical Language Independent of Saadia's Tafsīr

Ibn Tibbon did not always follow Saadia in his rendering of the *Guide*. Partly this was because Saadia's Tafsīr is not a complete lexicon; there are many Arabic terms in the *Guide* not found in Saadia's translation. Partly this was because Ibn Tibbon had his own ideas about how to translate a term, and in fact there are many translations in the *Guide* that use biblical language in an original way, not mediated through Saadia. My favorite example is the term *mashal metuqqan*, a nonliteral rendering of the Arabic *mathal muḥkam*. Here is the background.

In the preface to the *Guide*, Maimonides describes the biblical *mashal* as follows, cited here according to Pines's translation (11–12) with key terms underlined.

The Sage has said: "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in settings [*maskiyyot*] of silver" [Prov 25:11]. Hear now an elucidation of the thought that he has set forth. The term *maskiyyot* denotes filigree tracteries; I mean to say tracteries in which there are apertures with very small eyelets, like the handiwork of silversmiths. They are so called because a glance penetrates through them; for in the Aramaic translation of the Bible the Hebrew term *wa-yashqef*—meaning, he glanced—is translated *wa-istekhe*. The Sage accordingly said that a saying uttered with a view to two meanings is like an apple of gold overlaid with silver filigree work having very small holes. Now see how marvelous this dictum describes the well-constructed parable [*al-mathal al-muḥkam*; in Ibn Tibbon's Hebrew: *ha-mashal ha-metuqqan*]. For he says that in a saying that has two meanings, he means an external and an internal one, the external meaning ought to be as beautiful as silver, while its internal meaning ought to be more beautiful than the external one, the former being in comparison to the latter as gold is to silver. Its external meaning also ought to contain in it something that indicates to someone considering it what is to be found in its internal meaning.

The Arabic term used by Maimonides, *muḥkam*, is, among other things, a technical term in Qur'anic exegesis. Obscure or doubtful or ambiguous words or passages are called *mutashābihāt*, while clear, unambiguous terms

or passages are called *muḥkamāt*.<sup>30</sup> This is why Pines translates *muḥkam* in another chapter of the *Guide* (II 30) as “unambiguous.”<sup>31</sup> In the preface, however, Pines seems to follow Ibn Tibbon’s translation of *mathal muḥkam* as *mashal metuqqan* (well-constructed parable), which, at least for Ibn Tibbon, connects the Arabic not with Qur’an or Qur’anic exegesis but with Qohelet 12:9, where it is said of Qohelet that he *izzen we-ḥiqqer, tiqqen meshalim harbeh*.<sup>32</sup>

This, then, is the biblical background of Ibn Tibbon’s nonliteral translation of *mathal muḥkam*, which I believe Pines follows in his translation of the term in the preface to the *Guide*. This translation is, however, more complicated than it may at first seem, for translating *mathal muḥkam* in relation to *tiqqen meshalim harbeh* creates a doubling affect. The many *meshalim metuqqanim* of Solomon—which Ibn Tibbon identifies in Proverbs, Song of Songs, and Qohelet—are defined by Ibn Tibbon in relation to Maimonides’ definition of *mashal* in the preface to the *Guide*: they have external meaning, internal meaning, and there is something in the external meaning that points to the internal meaning; in other words, they are allegories that decode themselves. On the other hand, by using the language of Qohelet to translate the *Guide*, Maimonides’ original definition of *mashal* is shown to be purely and completely traditional. The Bible, as it were, already describes the *mashal metuqqan* in Qohelet. Maimonides, when read in Hebrew translation, is shown to be continuing the tradition of the Bible and nothing more.

The implication of this example should be clear: Ibn Tibbon uses an original, blicicizing translation of a technical term in the *Guide* that both reads Qohelet into the *Guide* and reads Maimonides’ conception of literary artifice into Qohelet. The translation has exegetical repercussions in both directions.

### The Use of Rabbinic Language in the Translation

Contrary to the linguistic ideology of al-Ḥarizi, Ibn Tibbon has no problem drawing freely from postbiblical Hebrew and from Aramaic, and he has no reservations about coining new terms and creating new forms.<sup>33</sup> As with his

30. For background in the Islamic exegetical tradition, see, in general, Kinberg 2001.

31. Pines 355.

32. For Ibn Tibbon’s reading of the verse, see Ibn Tibbon 2007, par. 751.

33. For background on linguistic ideology, see Halkin 1963; Septimus 1994.

use of biblical locutions, Ibn Tibbon's use of rabbinic language is sometimes mediated through other sources, mainly his father, Judah. Whether through his father or independent, however, his use of rabbinic language often shows an extraordinary ability to hit upon just the right corresponding terminology. One simple example is *yaḥtalim*, "to have a venereal dream," which Ibn Tibbon translates in *Guide* III 8 with the rabbinic term *ro'eh et ha-qeri*. Another good example is the translation of *ḥijāb* in *Guide* III 9 as *meḥiṣah* and *masakh*, thus connecting the veils that separate man from God with the screens in the tabernacle and synagogue.

Choosing to use rabbinic language, however, is not value free; as with biblical terminology, rabbinic terms carry with them a great deal of baggage. The best example of this, at least my favorite example in all of the translation literature, is the rendering of the Arabic term for "logic," *mantīq*, as *higgayon*. Here is the background.

*Higgayon* is, of course—I mean the term itself and related terms—biblical. Joshua 1:8 is one good example: *we-hagita bo yomam wa-laylah*. It is also one of the superscriptions in Psalms, where *higgayon* may mean a musical instrument or tune or something else. In rabbinic literature it takes on other meanings, though in one famous passage no one is sure quite what its sense is. The passage is Eliezer ha-Gadol's deathbed exhortation to his students in Berakhot 28b, which reads as follows:

When Eliezer became sick, his disciples came to ask about the way of life that will lead to life in the world to come. His response: "Honor your friends, keep your children from *higgayon*, keep them at the feet of sages, and when you pray, know before whom you pray."

All of this is very good advice indeed, except for one problem: What on earth does he mean by *higgayon*? Modern scholars of rabbinic literature have suggested that *higgayon* here, in Berakhot 28b, may refer to rhetoric, and thus Eliezer is expressing a rabbinic suspicion of the contemporary rhetorical schools in Palestine. The Ashkenazi tradition, in contrast, from Rashi forward, reads it another way. Relating the rabbinic *higgayon* in Berakhot 28b to *we-hagita bo yomam wa-laylah* in Joshua, they understood it as referring to the reading of Scripture independent of tradition. What Eliezer was exhorting his students to avoid, in other words, was the independent study of the Bible, for the Bible, they maintained, should always be read through rabbinic tradition; anything else is dangerous.<sup>34</sup> What is most important for

34. See the discussion of this in Talmage 1987.

our purposes is a third reading, which developed in the Islamic world, that associated *higgayon* in Berakhot 28b with “logic,” *manṭiq*, and this is the translation Ibn Tibbon used in the *Guide*.

This background gives us a clear genealogy of this translation term. It becomes more complicated when we consider the implications of the translation going forward. If *higgayon* means *manṭiq*, then Eliezer the Great’s deathbed exhortation takes on a new meaning entirely: “Honor your friends,” he says. “Know before whom you pray” and “Keep your children from studying logic”!

Now we move to Ibn Tibbon and those who followed him. Ibn Tibbon, when translating the *Guide*, was aware of this possible outcome, which he gives some voice to in his apologetic definition of *higgayon* in *Perush ha-millot ha-zarot*. It reads as follows:

**Higgayon:** Some commentators have explained [the rabbinic phrase] “keep your children from *higgayon*” [Berakhot 28b] as referring to the science called *manṭiq* in Arabic. The Christians call it “dialectic” [referring to the discipline as a whole] with the name of one of its parts. I have followed the commentators [with respect to this terminology] and call [logic] the “art of *higgayon*.” But in my view it would have been better had they called [logic] the “art of speech” [*melekheth ha-davar/dibbur/dibber*] following their opinion according to which they define man as “living and speaking.” Indeed, in my opinion, [logic] ought to be called the “art of reason” [*melekheth ha-sekhel*].<sup>35</sup>

Though Ibn Tibbon did follow convention and translate *manṭiq* as *higgayon* in the *Guide*, he consistently translates other uses of *nuṭq* with terms relating to *davar*. For example, the definition of human being, *ḥayawān nāṭiq*, is not *ḥay hogeh* for Ibn Tibbon, but *ḥay medabber*. Later figures, however, confronted the problem more directly. For example, Ibn Tibbon’s son-in-law Jacob Anatoli, in the preface to his Hebrew translation of Averroes’ *Middle Commentary on Aristotle’s “Organon,”* takes the opportunity to defend the study of logic in Judaism against the apparent rabbinic proscription. With a clever close reading of the rabbinic source, he concludes that the emphasis in Rabbi Eliezer’s exhortation is “your sons” instead of “logic”; it is only “*your sons*” that should be kept from logic. Adults, in contrast, can—and indeed should—study logic, which will help them access the inner meaning

35. See Ibn Tibbon 1981, 43–44; and the discussion of this passage in Robinson 2008, 263–64.



of Scripture and defend Judaism against Christian polemicists. His defense of logic reads as follows:

Since I, Jacob, the son of Abba Mari ben Samson ben Anatolio of blessed memory, saw how numerous are the wicked fools who presume against us in an argumentative and dialectic way, I became zealous at them, and there was aroused in me the desire to translate this science [i.e., logic] as far as lay in my power. . . . I was pressed by my brothers and friends, my companions and intimates, the scholarly and educated men of Narbonne and Bèziers, who were eager to approach this subject, and out of affection for them I shall incline my shoulder and assume this added burden. If someone should object that our rabbis prohibited this science, inasmuch as they said: “Keep your sons from logic [*higgayon*]” [Berakhot 28b], our reply is that the person making the objection should listen to his own words. The rabbis said “keep your sons,” not “keep yourselves,” for this science and the sciences that follow it should be prohibited to the young for two reasons. One is that they exercise a great attraction on man, and should a youth receive his first instruction in them, he would never desire to study the Torah, since the study of the Torah is not speculative like the study of the sciences. The second reason is that if a person’s early instruction were not in the Torah, he would for a long time remain without religion and without the true God. . . . A youth must first be instructed in the Torah so that he acquires the correct belief in God and is trained in virtue. . . . Afterwards every philosopher should search and extract the hidden meaning of the words of the Torah. Then he will understand fear of the Lord, and discover knowledge of God.<sup>36</sup>

To sum up this example, the translation choice here, using a rabbinic term to translate a technical-philosophical term in Arabic, had far-reaching implications when read in light of a rabbinic text using the same term. The translation of *manṭiq* as *higgayon* had the result of prohibiting the very subject the translators hoped to make available to the Hebrew-speaking, traditional, Talmud-centered Jews of Christian Europe.

### Literalistic and Nonliteralistic Tendencies in the Translation

Samuel Ibn Tibbon—along with his father, Judah Ibn Tibbon, his son Moses Ibn Tibbon, and his son-in-law Jacob Anatoli—is considered a par-

36. See Anatoli 1969, 1–2.

agon of literalistic translation. His translation method is contrasted with Judah al-Ḥarizi's, which is sometimes periphrastic and aims at elegance and readability more than word-for-word fidelity. The way that Maimonides himself contrasts the two existing traditions of translation in his own time sums up the perceived differences well. In his famous letter to Ibn Tibbon on translation, Maimonides encourages Ibn Tibbon to follow the method of Ḥunayn ibn Ishāq, who rendered texts into Arabic meaning by meaning, and to avoid the method of Ibn al-Biṭrīq, who translated word for word.<sup>37</sup> Ibn Tibbon generally followed precisely the method excoriated by the Master.

My research on Ibn Tibbon has not led me to change this popular characterization of his translation method. The Hebrew translation, as we have it, does indeed follow the Arabic original more or less word for word. One can put them in columns side by side and follow one after the other with relative ease. Yet still, it is not always hyperliteral, at least not in the way the fourteenth-century translations into Hebrew, for example, were hyperliteral. Ibn Tibbon often uses biblical and rabbinic terms, as we have seen, which lends a classicizing literary quality to the text. And there are many cases in which he translates one Arabic term with two or more in Hebrew, two or more Arabic terms with one in Hebrew, and where he varies his translation choices throughout. Sometimes this variation introduces obscurity into the Hebrew text when there is no obscurity in the Arabic original; at other times it lends color. I will give one example illustrating each: the increasing of obscurity and the adding of color.

#### Example 1: Introducing Obscurity into an Already-Obscure Text

One of the goals of literalistic translation is to have a consistent one-to-one correspondence between terms in the original text and the target. One can see this in the Karaite translations of the Bible, for instance, which generally mimic the Hebrew in word order and one-to-one correspondence, in contrast to Saadia's translation, which is much freer, frequently changes the order of words, varies word usage, cuts out words, and adds others.<sup>38</sup> Ibn Tibbon's translation, though strongly literalistic, is far from adhering consistently to the ideal of one-to-one correspondence. A few examples can illustrate this tendency: *haśśagah*, a well-known technical term in Hebrew for "grasping intellectually or perceiving intellectually," is used not only for

37. See Maimonides 1988, 2:530–33.

38. For a comparison of Saadia and the Karaites, see Polliack 1997.

the Arabic term for “intellectual grasp,” *idrāk*, but also for *laḥaqa*—“to be affected or afflicted by something”; it is used to translate other terms as well. The Hebrew *gemul* is used for *jazāʾ*, *thawāb*, and *mukāfāh*—three traditional Islamic terms for “otherworldly recompense,” but also for *ʿiwaḍ*, a precise technical term drawn from Islamic *kalām* relating to compensation for unjust suffering, mainly for animals.<sup>39</sup> Translating all of these terms with a single Hebrew term eliminates the nuance found in Arabic. Another good example is *perush*, which translates in the *Guide* at least four different terms: *bayān*, *sharḥ*, *tafsīr*, and also *taʿwīl*. For the first three this seems fine, since they are more or less synonyms, but *taʿwīl* is something different entirely. And, in fact, it is because of this ambiguity that the very common Hebrew term *perush* makes it into Ibn Tibbon’s *Perush ha-millot ha-zarot* as a “foreign” or “unusual” term meaning “nonliteral, figurative exegesis.”<sup>40</sup> There are many other terms that serve double duty throughout the translation.

The best example, however, at least my favorite example, is the notoriously ambiguous term *ʿinyan*, which translates at least twelve different Arabic words in the *Guide*: *maʿnan*, *amr*, *fann*, *ḥāl*, *ḥāla*, *gharaḍ*, *qiṣṣa*, *khabr*, *ḥadīth*, *bāb*, *qaḍīyya*, and *taqdīr*. The innocent Hebrew reader, of course, does not know that every *ʿinyan* in the Hebrew translation may correspond to a different Arabic term in the original. In these cases, Ibn Tibbon would have done well to strive harder to achieve the literalistic ideal.

### Example 2: The Problem with Names

An example of nonliteral translation leading to a more elegant, even colorful text in Hebrew is Ibn Tibbon’s rendering of names. As anyone who has read an Arabic text knows, *Zayd* and *ʿAmr* are the standard names used for logical, general, universal examples; and Maimonides, who had read many a text in Arabic, uses precisely these two names throughout the *Guide* when introducing a hypothetical example. When there are more than two names he adds more names to the list. Thus in *Guide* III 18, for example, he has *Zayd*, *ʿAmr*, *Khālīd*, and *Bakr*.<sup>41</sup> This is the Arabic tradition, and the Hebrew tradition is very similar. The standard names used for general, hypothetical examples in rabbinic texts are *Reuben* and *Shimon*.

39. For background on compensation (*ʿiwaḍ*) in Islamic and Jewish *kalām*, see Heemskerk 2000, 157–89; Lasker 2008, 203–16.

40. See Ibn Tibbon 1981, 77.

41. See Pines 475.

Ibn Tibbon, of course, knew both these traditions, which is why he generally substitutes one for the other: he translates Zayd and ‘Amr as Reuben and Shimon, or when there are more than two names, as in *Guide* III 18, as Reuben, Shimon, Levi, and Yehudah.<sup>42</sup> This is what he usually does throughout the translation, but not always. At *Guide* III 13, for example, Ibn Tibbon translates Zayd and ‘Amr not as Reuben and Shimon but as Reuben and Hanokh. Why? Let’s look at the text more fully, citing Pines’s translation (449–50):

I shall return to the subject of this chapter, namely, to the discussion of final end. I say then: Aristotle has made it clear that in natural things the agent, the form, and the final end are one and the same thing; I mean to say that they are one and the same thing in species. For, to take an example, the form of Zayd [in Ibn Tibbon’s Hebrew: Reuben] is the agent producing the form of the individual ‘Amr [Pines for some reason translates ‘Amr consistently as ‘Umar; in Ibn Tibbon’s Hebrew: Hanokh], who is his son; the thing it does is to give to ‘Amr’s [again, Pines translates as ‘Umar’s; in Ibn Tibbon’s Hebrew: Hanokh’s] matter a form pertaining to its species, the final end of ‘Amr [Pines: ‘Umar; Ibn Tibbon: Hanokh] consisting in his having a human form.

Why did Ibn Tibbon here change the natural, obvious translation of Zayd and ‘Amr as Reuben and Shimon? Why isn’t he consistent throughout his translation of the *Guide*? For some reason it would make no sense to translate ‘Amr as Shimon here. Why? Let us consider the example: Zayd gave form to his son ‘Amr. Shimon is not Reuben’s son in the biblical text, Hanokh is, as indicated at Genesis 46:9. Thus we see that even here, in this seemingly simple, insignificant point of translation, Ibn Tibbon translates nonliterally to cohere with the biblical text; he translates in a way that would make sense to the biblical readers for whom he is translating.

As a final note, it is worth adding that Ibn Tibbon was not the only one who struggled with the translation of Zayd and ‘Amr in *Guide* III 13. Al-Ḥarizi translated them as Reuben and Shimon; Salomon Munk and Michael Friedländer simply as Zayd and ‘Amr; Chaim Rabin as John and Jack;

42. There are five examples in part III of the *Guide*: at *Guide* III 17, Zayd and ‘Amr are translated as Reuben and Shimon, and Zayd as Reuben; at *Guide* III 18, Zayd, ‘Amr, Khālid, and Bakr are translated as Reuben, Shimon, Levi, and Yehudah; at *Guide* III 24, Zayd is translated as Reuben; *Guide* III 13 is the only place where Zayd and ‘Amr are translated as Reuben and Hanokh.

Shlomo Pines as Zayd and, for some unknown reason, ‘Umar; Yosef Qafih, like Ibn Tibbon, uses Reuben and Hanokh; while Michael Schwarz, in his new modern Hebrew translation, chose Shimon and Nemu’el (see 1 Chron 4:24). And lest one think it was only the translators of the *Guide* who struggled obsessively with the translation of names, the four Hebrew translations of al-Fārābī’s *Isagoge* also vary when rendering Zayd, ‘Amr, and also Khālid, even in a straightforward, universal, seemingly neutral, philosophical context. The four different translations have Zayd, ‘Amr, and Khalid; Reuben, Shimon, and Levi; Gad, Asher, and Dan; and my favorite: Zavdi, ‘Amri, and Zimri.<sup>43</sup> Even personal names, even names used in the abstract world of logical argument, can pose a challenge to the best of translators.

### Translation by Calque

The last example I will discuss is the best description of translation by calque that I have seen in a medieval text. Ibn Tibbon describes how he began with an Arabic technical term, went back to its basic ordinary meaning, found a Hebrew word that corresponds with the ordinary meaning, and then extended its semantic range to include the technical meaning in Arabic. The text is in the preface to Ibn Tibbon’s commentary on Qohelet. I will cite it in extenso and then end with a few comments about it.<sup>44</sup>

Having mentioned the inductive syllogism, I shall explain what I mean by “induction,” when I use it here and elsewhere. I say: it seems to me that the philosophers borrowed the Arabic word, which I replace with the Hebrew *hippús*, from the language of the multitude, who use it to express a notion that resembles what the philosophers intend when they use it. The notion for which the multitude use this word, namely, *istiqrā’*, is as follows. They say: “I have examined [*istaqraytu*] a certain land,” that is, I have traveled through all of it, seeing the character [*‘inyan*] of each of its villages and cities. The philosophers then borrowed [this same term] to represent the examination [*ḥaqirah*] of a single universal by knowing the intention [*‘inyan*] of each of its parts and species. They called such an action *istiqrā’*, derived a verb from it, and constructed

43. The four Hebrew translations of al-Farabi’s *Isagoge* are found in the following manuscripts: Munich 307 (IMHM 1657), fols. 117b–23a; Paris 917 (IMHM 30335), 101a–8b; Paris 917 (IMHM 30335), 176a–83b; Paris 898 (IMHM 26854), 1b–10a.

44. Cited from Ibn Tibbon 2007, par. 31. And see the discussion in Robinson 2008, 265–67.

whatever [grammatical forms] they desired. They said: “I have examined all of the particulars that are subsumed under a certain universal,” that is, I have used the speculative method to pass through all of them, knowing in this way the intention [*inyan*] of each of them. I did not find a single word in our language closer to this meaning than *hippus*, even though the Arabic word [*istiqrā'*], unlike the Hebrew *hippus*, implies not only the examination of a notion but knowledge of the notion examined.

This remarkable text gives us a glimpse into the workshop of a master translator. It is significant for other reasons as well. First of all, it calls to mind al-Fārābī's description of translation at the end of book 2 of his *Book of Letters*, where he explains that one way to translate philosophy into a language that does not have it is to use the ordinary language of that language and then add philosophical meanings.<sup>45</sup> Secondly, this report of Ibn Tibbon helps to establish the precise moment a technical term entered the Hebrew language. While Ibn Tibbon himself had previously used a very awkward locution to translate *istiqrā'* in *Guide* III 12—*limnot aḥat aḥat*, “to count one by one”—and while other early translators had used the term *haqirah*, subsequent translators, with few exceptions, accepted and employed this newly formed term to describe the logical process of induction.<sup>46</sup> Most importantly, what this and related passages allow us to see is a very sensitive reader who has command of the different languages and literatures he is working with, yet whose loyalty is always split, constantly in tension, between the competing demands of the Arabic-speaking world that made Maimonides' *Guide* possible and the biblical and rabbinic literatures that hold the key to spreading Maimonides' philosophical-theological-exegetical opus throughout the European Jewish world.

## Conclusion

There has been much excellent research done on Ibn Tibbon's *Guide* translation, as there has been on other translations in the Middle Ages. We now know so much about what was translated and when, who the translators were, who their patrons were, and whom they translated for.<sup>47</sup> A solid foundation has been established in the linguistic sphere by Moshe Goshen-

45. See al-Fārābī 1968, 157–61; see also 1981.

46. See Robinson 2008, 265–66n75.

47. See now the table given in Zonta 2011.

Gottstein in his work on Arabized Hebrew and translation Hebrew, and in the philosophical sphere by Zev Harvey, Carlos Fraenkel, and others.<sup>48</sup> As I said at the outset, until there is a reliable edition of the Hebrew translation, with all its variation, any and all research at this point is provisional. What we can do, nevertheless, is map out the categories of research worth investigating in this and other medieval translations. What I have discussed in this chapter are important categories and sources that one ought to keep in mind: the use of biblical and rabbinic language; the way biblical language is mediated through Saadia; the influence of Samuel's father, Judah, and other translators and exegetes; the literalistic tendencies of the translation; the translation of names; and the methods of translation. Saadia's *Tafsir*, I think, will be especially fruitful in this respect, for studying Ibn Tibbon as well as the other translations from the period. I suspect that Ibn Janah's Arabic lexicon of the Bible will be equally important in this respect. So, to reiterate what I stated at the outset, despite the excellent research on Ibn Tibbon's translation of the *Guide* and other medieval translations, or perhaps because of it, there is still much work to be done. The present chapter, along with the others in this volume, is yet another step forward in a field that remains very much in its infancy.

48. See the citations above, nn. 2–4.

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# Al-Ḥarizi's Translation of *the Guide of the Perplexed* in Its Cultural Moment

RAYMOND P. SCHEINDLIN

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When Judah al-Ḥarizi first saw Samuel Ibn Tibbon's translation of the *Guide*, completed in 1204, he must have clucked to himself about the un-Hebraic character of the work and its clumsy diction. He was probably not completely surprised, since he undoubtedly knew the work of the translator's father, Judah Ibn Tibbon, and must have assumed that, as the Arabic proverb goes, the branch would follow the root; but he would have seen that the son had written in a style that was even more rigidly Arabized than that of his father.<sup>1</sup> He could well have said to himself that this was a job that still needed to be done.

I wish to begin by thanking Yonatan Shemesh, one of the editors of this volume, for his contributions to this essay, which went far beyond the routine work of an academic editor. Besides raising a number of questions bearing on its contents, he took the pains to compare my quotations from the Schlosberg edition of al-Ḥarizi's translation with the manuscript. This research enabled him to point out that when Schlosberg encountered lacunae in the manuscript, he silently filled them in with text from Ibn Tibbon's translation, thereby contaminating al-Ḥarizi's work. This discovery, in turn, made it necessary for me to change some of my examples. He also provided additional examples tending to show al-Ḥarizi's dependence on Ibn Tibbon. I am grateful to him for thereby strengthening my essay.

1. This is Steinschneider's (1893, 376) observation on Ibn Tibbon's followers.



When Samuel Ibn Tibbon first saw al-Ḥarizi's translation of the *Guide*, completed sometime before 1213, he must have choked with rage upon seeing that al-Ḥarizi had encroached on his territory. Ibn Tibbon was viewed as the authorized translator; he had corresponded with and had received guidance from Maimonides himself. Yet al-Ḥarizi had gone out of his way, in his introduction, to criticize Ibn Tibbon's translation as barely intelligible. It can only have added to Ibn Tibbon's anger that al-Ḥarizi had made two helpful improvements on the *Guide*—a glossary of unusual Hebrew words and a chapter-by-chapter summary of the book's contents—that had the potential to make the new version of the *Guide* more accessible. He may have taken comfort in observing that al-Ḥarizi's glossary was quite inadequate; in any case, Ibn Tibbon went to work to compile a glossary of his own, and to make it a masterpiece.

The existence of two translations, the second completed within nine years of the first, and the two so different from each other, presents an interesting situation that has received only cursory treatment. Ibn Tibbon's translation of the *Guide* is considered canonical; al-Ḥarizi's translation is generally discussed only as a footnote to that of Ibn Tibbon and is always compared with it unfavorably. Not being a specialist in philosophy, I happily concede to the consensus that al-Ḥarizi's translation is philosophically less reliable than that of Ibn Tibbon. The purpose of this essay is to examine al-Ḥarizi's translation as a literary object in its own right. Comparisons with Ibn Tibbon's translation are unavoidable, but I would like to understand al-Ḥarizi's work as a phenomenon in the history of Hebrew writing and as representative of a particular moment in the history of Jewish culture.

### Al-Ḥarizi's Career

Al-Ḥarizi was born in Spain, undoubtedly in the Arabic-speaking part of it, perhaps in Toledo, in 1165. His life falls into two parts: from 1165 to about 1215, he lived in Spain and Occitania; from about 1215 until his death in 1225, he lived in the Muslim East, traveling from Alexandria via Palestine to Syria and Iraq. He settled in Syria and died in Aleppo.<sup>2</sup>

2. The most important biographical and bibliographical studies are Steinschneider 1893, 428–32; al-Ḥarizi 1899, v–l; Schirmann 1997, 145–216; Sadan 1995/96. Sadan focuses on al-Ḥarizi's career in the East. The approximate date of al-Ḥarizi's departure for the East is derived from his statement that when he was in Jerusalem, the Temple had been destroyed 1,148 years earlier (al-Ḥarizi 1951/52, 247; 2010, 263), allowing a year for him to get from western Europe via Alexandria and Cairo to Palestine. It is entirely possible that al-Ḥarizi

The latter part of al-Ḥarizi's life is better documented than the former because he recorded his travels in the East in a short first-person work, in Arabic rhymed prose, called *Kitāb al-durar*.<sup>3</sup> This account corresponds in the main with the travels ascribed to the protagonist in his great Hebrew *maqāma* collection, the *Taḥkemoni*. From this latter period, too, we are extraordinarily lucky to have an entry on him from a biographical dictionary by a Muslim scholar, Ibn al-Shaʿār al-Mawṣilī (1197–1256), who was al-Ḥarizi's contemporary and who obtained his information from someone who had actually met al-Ḥarizi in Aleppo in 1220. From this account, we know that al-Ḥarizi was tall, gray-haired, beardless, and eccentric in manner; and that he spoke Arabic with a Maghribi accent, as we would expect. From the same source, we know that al-Ḥarizi made a living in Iraq by writing Arabic panegyrics for Muslim patrons—he was thus the only Hebrew poet known to have written a significant body of poetry in Arabic—and that he had a vicious way of denouncing people whom he had once praised. This last observation neatly confirms from life an aspect of his personality that we recognize from his works, in his appraisals of individuals and communities that he encountered in the East. But al-Mawṣilī's account provides hardly any useful information on the first part of al-Ḥarizi's life.

Al-Ḥarizi composed or completed his masterpiece, the *Taḥkemoni*, in the East. This work is a collection of fifty *maqāmāt* in rhymed Hebrew prose, the fiftieth being a collection of poems from all periods of his life. The headings to some of these poems provide details that are relevant to the translation of the *Guide*. The *Taḥkemoni* is the work upon which al-Ḥarizi's enormous stature in the history of Hebrew literature rests.

Unfortunately, the earlier part of al-Ḥarizi's life—the part that is most relevant to his translation of the *Guide*—is poorly documented. But we do have some clues. In the long version of the chapter on the protagonist's travels in the *Taḥkemoni*,<sup>4</sup> he describes a European itinerary that could have been his own—from Muslim territory to Toledo, Calatayud, Lérida, and

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returned from Occitania to Spain before setting out for the East. Perhaps that is the meaning of his comment “It will be a memorial to me when I remove my home from them and return to my intimates,” in the preface to al-Ḥarizi 1807, 1a; but another comment in that preface, “for I left the place from which the sun shines [i.e., the East] and came to the farthest end of the earth,” cannot mean that he returned to Europe from Iraq and Syria, now that it is certain that he died in Aleppo.

3. Al-Ḥarizi 2009.

4. This is chap. 46 in al-Ḥarizi 1951/52 and most editions of the work. The short version was published by Yahalom as chap. 39 in al-Ḥarizi 2010.

Barcelona in Spain, and then Narbonne, Beaucaire, and Marseille in Occitania. This list is incomplete, for it omits Lunel, and al-Ḥarizi was certainly there.<sup>5</sup> The only other sources for his life and works in this period are the introductions to his individual works and the headings of some of the poems collected in chapter 50 of the *Tahkemoni*. Unfortunately, not all of his works have introductions, and those that have them do not usually provide the kind of data that we would like to have.

During this first period, al-Ḥarizi produced many translations. In Spain, he made the most virtuosic of his translations, his Hebrew version of the Arabic *maqāmāt* of al-Ḥariri,<sup>6</sup> which he says provided the impulse to create the *Tahkemoni*. Also in Spain, he translated Maimonides' *Treatise on Resurrection* for one Meir ben Sheshet.<sup>7</sup>

In Occitania, he produced a number of translations for patrons from Lunel. For Jonathan of Lunel, al-Ḥarizi translated Maimonides' commentary on seder Zera'im of the Mishnah; according to the introduction, he did the work in Marseille, apparently in 1194–97.<sup>8</sup> At some point, he translated the introduction to Maimonides' translation of chapter 10 of Sanhedrin, but we do not know the circumstances of that translation.<sup>9</sup> For a person or persons whom he refers to as the sages of Lunel, he translated *Maqālat al-ḥadīqa fī al-majāz wa-al-ḥaqīqa*, by Moses Ibn Ezra,<sup>10</sup> and, for Ezra ben

5. He says so in the introduction to *Musere ha-filosofim*.

6. In the introduction to the *Tahkemoni* (al-Ḥarizi 1951/52, 15; 2010, 78), al-Ḥarizi says that he was asked to translate the work by some dignitaries of Spain. Conjectures as to the date range from 1205 to 1216. Schirmann (1930, 85) proposes 1210–15 without offering his reasoning.

7. The work was published in al-Ḥarizi 1989, 129–50. The patron's name is given in al-Ḥarizi's introduction (135). See also Steinschneider 1893, 431; Baneth 1939/40.

8. Al-Ḥarizi (1951/52, 406–7; 2010, 553) says that he received the commission in Lunel and sent the completed work to Jonathan, presumably from Marseille, where he says, in his introduction to the work, that he actually did the translating (Steinschneider 1893, 923). Only the introduction and the first five tractates of Zera'im (to Terumot) are extant.

9. Al-Ḥarizi's version of the introduction to Sanhedrin, chap. 10, except for the Thirteen Principles, was published in al-Ḥarizi 1887, but that al-Ḥarizi was the translator emerged only later (Steinschneider 1893, 925; Holzer 1901, 20). The portion dealing with the Thirteen Principles was published in al-Ḥarizi 1956/57.

10. The Hebrew title is *Sefer 'arugat ha-bošem*. Only selections have been published, in al-Ḥarizi 1842/43. The identity of the translator seems definitely established by Abramson (1975/76). Abramson asserts that al-Ḥarizi translated this before Maimonides' commentary on the Mishnah, but he does not cite clear evidence. That it was done for the sages of Lunel is evident from al-Ḥarizi's preface, which was published in Idel 1975/76. Yahalom (al-Ḥarizi 2010, 553) infers from the language of the preface that al-Ḥarizi translated the work on his own initiative and gave it to the sages of Lunel, which seems unlikely. Idel (1975/76) demonstrates that the translator produced not selections (as implied by Dukes's publication

Judah ben Nathaniel of Beaucaire, a work known in Hebrew as *Iggeret hamusar ha-kelalit*, by 'Alī Ibn Riḍwān.<sup>11</sup> Surprisingly, al-Ḥarizi also translated the letter that Maimonides sent to Samuel Ibn Tibbon in 1199 containing answers to Ibn Tibbon's questions about problems that had arisen over the course of Ibn Tibbon's work on the translation of the *Guide*.<sup>12</sup> Apparently, just before leaving Occitania, and therefore probably after translating the *Guide*, al-Ḥarizi translated *Ādāb al-falāsifa*, by Ḥunayn ibn Iṣḥāq, again for "the sages of Lunel."<sup>13</sup> As for al-Ḥarizi's other translations—Pseudo-Galen, *Sefer ha-nefesh*;<sup>14</sup> anonymous, *Sefer ha-goralot* (dated 1203);<sup>15</sup> medical treatises by Sheshet Benveniste,<sup>16</sup> and three others—we have no useful information about where they were done or who his patrons were.

Which brings us to his translation of the *Guide*. In his preface to the translation, al-Ḥarizi says that he did the work for "the nobles and sages of Provence."<sup>17</sup> In the *Taḥkemoni*, he says that he did it in Spain for a certain Joseph.<sup>18</sup> Maimonides' son, known as Abraham Maimuni, claims that the work was done for the tosafists Joseph and Meir of Clisson, whom al-Ḥarizi met in Jerusalem.<sup>19</sup> Combining the Joseph of the *Taḥkemoni* with the testimony of Maimuni, Yahalom states categorically that the translation was

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[see al-Ḥarizi 1842/43]) but the entire work, and Fenton (1997, 47–56) showed that only parts of part 1 are extant.

11. Steinschneider 1893, 354–55; the information about the patron apparently is found only in the editio princeps, Riva de Trento, 1559. For a full discussion, see Langermann 2011. I am grateful to Professor Langermann for calling my attention to this article.

12. But there is no certainty that he did this in Provence. The identification of al-Ḥarizi as the translator of the Oxford manuscript of this letter was made by Sonne (1938/39) and followed by Baneth (1951/52).

13. In al-Ḥarizi 1896, Loewenthal dates this translation to 1216–18 because that is approximately when al-Ḥarizi went to the East, and al-Ḥarizi says in the preface that he is leaving Provence. But the wording suggests that al-Ḥarizi was about to go not east but west, to Spain. Also puzzling is al-Ḥarizi's remark in the preface that he reached Provence (Lunel?) by traveling from east to west; this must be what led Kaminka (see al-Ḥarizi 1899) to conjecture that al-Ḥarizi returned from the East.

14. Published in al-Ḥarizi 1852. See Steinschneider 1893, 273.

15. The date is found in a manuscript of the work cited by Fleischer, in Schirmann 1997, 151n20; there is a dedicatory poem to this work in al-Ḥarizi 1951/52, 397; 2010, 541.

16. Neubauer 1886–1906, document 2142.30.

17. Al-Ḥarizi 1:2. This view seemed "obviously correct" to Fleischer, in Schirmann 1997, 148–49n8. In al-Ḥarizi's preface, there is no indication of where in Provence the work was done, but Conforte (1845/46, 12a), writing in about 1683, says that, according to the preface in a manuscript that he saw, the translation was done in Marseille.

18. Al-Ḥarizi 1951/52, 402; 2010, 547.

19. A. Maimonides 1953, 53; al-Ḥarizi mentions meeting these brothers in al-Ḥarizi 1951/52, 349; 2010, 452.

done for the tosfist Joseph of Clisson.<sup>20</sup> But if indeed the translation was done for a Joseph in Toledo, a likelier candidate than the Clisson brothers would be Joseph ben Israel in Toledo, a friend of Ibn Tibbon's who is known to have had a strong interest in philosophy and who commissioned a translation from the latter.<sup>21</sup> Perhaps al-Ḥarizi's own testimony, even if he contradicts himself, should outweigh that of Maimuni. But we would do well to remember that al-Ḥarizi dedicated the *Tahkemoni* to at least four—and maybe five—patrons. Perhaps he did something similar with the translation of the *Guide*.

The earliest possible date for the translation is 1204, when Ibn Tibbon completed his own translation. The latest possible date is 1213, when Ibn Tibbon's glossary to the *Guide*, with its vigorous denunciation of al-Ḥarizi's translation, appeared.

### Why a Second Translation? Why al-Ḥarizi as Translator?

But why was a new translation needed? In the preface to his translation of the *Guide*, al-Ḥarizi explains that he had been asked by the sages of Provence to translate the book into simple, clear words; for though “a wise and learned man translated it before me, that translator intentionally worded the book so as to render it esoteric and recondite.”<sup>22</sup> Al-Ḥarizi was not the only one at the time to remark on the difficulty of Ibn Tibbon's style. When Rabbi Meir Abulafia wanted to quote a passage from Ibn Tibbon's translation of Maimonides' *Treatise on Resurrection* (completed between 1203 and 1205), he felt obliged to paraphrase it, saying, “The translator [Ibn Tibbon] translated from Arabic to Hebrew in a very difficult style. Nevertheless, I will copy that part of his wording that seems clear to me while changing other parts to clarify, to the best of my ability, the thought that the author intended to convey.”<sup>23</sup> The difficulty of Ibn Tibbon's translations con-

20. Al-Ḥarizi 2010, 547; 2009, 12; 2002, 56, 210. Because Maimuni says that the translation was done in Jerusalem, Yahalom arbitrarily strikes these words as spurious. Nor does Yahalom provide evidence that Joseph was ever in Spain.

21. He commissioned a translation from Ibn Tibbon of *Sefer otot ha-shamayim*; see Septimus 1982, 29–30 and 133n32, referring to Dinur 1972; Steinschneider 1893, 132–33. In his introduction, Ibn Tibbon says that this Joseph had asked him for translations of all of Aristotle's works on natural sciences, and when Ibn Tibbon refused, he reduced his request to this one book.

22. Al-Ḥarizi 1:2.

23. Septimus 1982, 52–53, quoting Meir Abulafia, *Hiddushe ha-Ramah*, Sanhedrin 159, col. b. The translation is my own.

sisted not in his use of rare words or overly refined diction but in his diligent and principled adherence to Maimonides' Arabic syntax and word usage. By imitating Maimonides' Arabic so exactly, Ibn Tibbon turned the clear Arabic of the *Guide* into an obscure Hebrew text in which the reader of that time had to puzzle out every phrase. Ibn Tibbon's style had not yet become customary in philosophical writing and familiar to readers, as it later would.

Al-Ḥarizi had already cited the difficulty of Ibn Tibbon's Hebrew in explaining the origin of his own translation of the *Treatise on Resurrection*. He relates that when Ibn Tibbon's translation appeared in Spain, it was found to be so obscure that an unnamed dignitary had commissioned a certain Joseph ben Joel to translate the Hebrew back into Arabic, and al-Ḥarizi's new translation is based on this secondary Arabic text. As if al-Ḥarizi wanted to assure the reader that he was not slandering Ibn Tibbon's work merely in order to promote his own, he added, as a supporting document, a Hebrew translation of the preface to Joseph ben Joel's Arabic retranslation, which included a similar appraisal of Ibn Tibbon's work.<sup>24</sup>

A hint of Maimonides' own dissatisfaction with the language of Ibn Tibbon's translation of the *Guide* may be observed in his 1199 letter to him. Here, Maimonides famously explained the principles of translation in accordance with the rule that has frequently been repeated by writers on the subject before and since: a translator must not translate word for word but must grasp the whole idea expressed by the author's words and state it afresh in the target language. Maimonides' letter was a reply to one written by Ibn Tibbon containing questions about the text and the meaning of passages in the first two parts of the *Guide*, which Samuel had already drafted and circulated.<sup>25</sup> It does not seem that Maimonides had actually read Ibn Tibbon's work, but he would surely have been able to infer Ibn Tibbon's method from the questions and proposed translations included in his letter.

Why, at this point in the project, would Maimonides have felt it desirable to read Ibn Tibbon a lesson about the proper balance between words and ideas in translating? It seems reasonable to infer that Maimonides either was disappointed with the bit of the draft translation included in Ibn Tibbon's letter or foresaw that he would be when it eventually reached him. The praise that Maimonides lavishes on Ibn Tibbon in his letter does not contradict this interpretation, for the epistolary conventions of the age dictated that a letter open with lavish eulogy. Moreover, there was nothing

24. In al-Ḥarizi 1989; the prefaces appear on pp. 135–36.

25. Sonne 1938/39.

for Maimonides to gain by directly attacking a work that had been commissioned by his supporters in Provence at some expense,<sup>26</sup> and that was already two-thirds drafted and in circulation. But he did criticize the translation by implication and with the certainty that the sophisticated talmudic scholars with whom Ibn Tibbon could be expected to share the letter would immediately understand that he meant to advocate an approach to translation that was diametrically opposed to Ibn Tibbon's method, no matter what praises the criticism came wrapped in.<sup>27</sup>

The sages of Provence had possibly already come to this conclusion. In a letter that Maimonides sent them around the same time as his letter to Ibn Tibbon, he mentions that he has finally sent them the third part of the *Guide*, and he declines their request that he himself translate the work.<sup>28</sup> With two-thirds of the *Guide* translated by Ibn Tibbon, it sounds very much as if the sponsors were still hoping to get a copy of the *Guide* written in the clear and unforced rabbinic Hebrew of the *Mishneh Torah*. But Maimonides declined, on grounds of the pressure of his affairs and especially his poor health.<sup>29</sup>

In turning to al-Ḥarizi in the hope of getting an intelligible translation of the *Guide*, the sages of Provence resorted to an experienced translator who had already given satisfaction in translating two works of Maimonides and who wrote in a Hebrew that did not slavishly imitate the usages of Arabic. He also had a reputation as a Hebrew poet, for Ibn Tibbon refers to him as such. As for his command of the source language, al-Ḥarizi was not only a native speaker of Arabic but also must have had advanced training in the Arabic literary tradition. This can be inferred from his later career as an Arabic poet writing for Muslim patrons. In seeking such work, he would have been in competition with men who had been engaged all their lives with classical Arabic poetry and lore.

26. The sensitivity of Jonathan ha-Kohen of Lunel to the cost of the project is reflected in a comment in his letter to Maimonides, known as his "second letter"; see Jonathan ha-Kohen 1896; the passage is quoted in Maimonides 1988, 2:512.

27. The extant portions of the letter appear as document 35 in Maimonides 1988, 2:511–54; the passages referred to here are on pp. 532–33. In the introduction to his own translation of the *Guide*, Qafih suggests that Maimonides may have hinted at his dissatisfaction with the translation to the sages of Lunel, but Shailat (Maimonides 1988, 513) reads Maimonides' letter as a full endorsement of Ibn Tibbon's work.

28. Maimonides 1988, document 36.

29. This reconstruction of the events was proposed by Sonne (1938/39, 151–52). Sonne allows for the possibility that the request for a translation by Maimonides himself may have had only part III in view.

The choice of al-Ḥarizi for a second try at translating the *Guide* would have seemed particularly appropriate if, as I think is likely, al-Ḥarizi had already translated Moses Ibn Ezra's *Maqālat al-ḥadiqa fī al-majāz wa-al-ḥaqīqa*.<sup>30</sup> This is, in part, a philosophical work that makes use of earlier philosophical texts, particularly Ibn Gabirol's *Fountain of Life*. Its first half is a study of anthropomorphic expressions in the Bible similar in form and spirit to the so-called lexicographical chapters of the *Guide* (I 1–49).<sup>31</sup> Though we cannot date them, al-Ḥarizi wrote other works that display an interest in philosophical themes. The first chapter of the *Tahkemoni*, probably written late in his life, shows the clear influence of Ibn Gabirol's great philosophical poem *Keter malkhut*. Al-Ḥarizi also composed two cycles of philosophical—or, at least, theological—poems, one in Hebrew and one in Arabic, showing the influence of Moses Ibn Ezra's long philosophical poem “In the Name of God, Who Spoke.”<sup>32</sup> Al-Ḥarizi's detractors proclaim that al-Ḥarizi was ignorant of philosophy, but these examples show that he was not ignorant of the philosophical themes that had been prevalent until the twelfth century. He was probably not au courant with Aristotelianism, but this deficiency may not have been so obvious in a world where Aristotle had not yet been completely internalized.

Al-Ḥarizi's affiliations show him to have been in the Maimonidean camp. That he supported Maimonides in the controversy instigated by the Toledan rabbi Meir ha-Levi Abulafia (ca. 1202) can be inferred from the fact that he translated Maimonides' *Treatise on Resurrection* and that he did it for Meir ben Sheshet, a man who defended Maimonides against Abulafia and whom al-Ḥarizi lauded in the *Tahkemoni*.<sup>33</sup> While still in Spain, al-Ḥarizi sent Maimonides a laudatory poem.<sup>34</sup> Several short poems in the *Tahkemoni* bear on al-Ḥarizi's partisanship for Maimonides. Two, in chapter 50 of the *Tahkemoni*, are lampooning epigrams directed at men who had attacked

30. This seems a reasonable assumption because most of his translating career was before he translated the *Guide* and because only a few years thereafter al-Ḥarizi left for the Arabic-speaking East, where he would no longer have gotten translating commissions.

31. M. Z. Cohen 2003, 201–3.

32. On the two cycles of philosophical poems, see Fleischer, in Schirmann 1997, 173–74; Fleischer 1997/98; al-Ḥarizi 2009, 52–89. The Arabic poems were translated by Fenton, in al-Ḥarizi 2009, 58\*–70\*. The poem by Moses Ibn Ezra is “Be-shem el asher amar,” in Ibn Ezra 1934/35–1951/52, 1:237–44.

33. The controversy as to whether al-Ḥarizi was the translator seems to have been definitively resolved by Halkin, in al-Ḥarizi 1989, 131–34.

34. Mentioned by Fleischer in Schirmann 1997, 158n43; as far as I know, this poem has not been published.



“the composition [*hibbur*] of our master Moses.”<sup>35</sup> In the heading of a third poem, al-Ḥarizi says that he sent the poem from Spain to its dedicatee, Moses, who was probably Maimonides, since the same poem appears at the head of al-Ḥarizi’s translation of the *Treatise on Resurrection*.<sup>36</sup> In another poem in chapter 50 of the *Tahkemoni*, al-Ḥarizi, lamenting the death of a Toledan dignitary, mentions Maimonides in extravagantly laudatory terms.<sup>37</sup> Detailed and lengthy praise of Maimonides’ *Mishneh Torah* and of his son Abraham appears in the *Tahkemoni* and in his *Kitāb al-durar*.<sup>38</sup> A poem in chapter 50 of the *Tahkemoni* was addressed to Maimonides’ former disciple and the dedicatee of the *Guide*, Joseph ben Judah, whom al-Ḥarizi met in Aleppo.<sup>39</sup> These sources date from his Eastern period and therefore do not bear directly on the choice of al-Ḥarizi as translator of the *Guide*, but they do confirm his continuing loyalty to Maimonides and his house.

As a master of Hebrew and Arabic, an experienced translator, a well-rounded intellectual who had previous experience dealing with philosophical topics, and as a pro-Maimonidean during the first phase of the Maimonides controversy in Europe, al-Ḥarizi must have seemed like the ideal choice to provide a replacement for the turgid work of Ibn Tibbon.

## Reception

The first attack on “the poet al-Ḥarizi,” as Ibn Tibbon refers to him, came from Ibn Tibbon himself, on the very first page of the introduction to his glossary. He seems to want to create the impression that he himself had entertained the idea of compiling a glossary when completing his own translation nine years earlier. He composed his glossary only after seeing that al-Ḥarizi had appended one to his translation, as well as a chapter-by-

35. The Hebrew word *hibbur* in connection with Maimonides usually refers to his *Mishneh Torah*, a work that Abulafia and others had criticized. The epigrams are found in al-Ḥarizi 1951/52, 388–89; 2010, 532. The heading of the second epigram does not explicitly mention Maimonides but is included again in the elaborate praise of Abraham Maimuni and of Maimonides’ *Mishneh Torah* in al-Ḥarizi 1951/52, 348; 2010, 436, 452.

36. Al-Ḥarizi 1951/52, 389; 2010, 532, poem 12, cited as dedicated to Maimonides by Fleischer, in Schirmann 1997, 157n43. Yahalom (al-Ḥarizi 2010), however, points out that in his “Penine ha-meliṣot,” al-Ḥarizi says that the poem was meant not for Maimonides but for “Makhir,” which Yahalom believes is a scribal error for Meir [ben Sheshet], the patron of the translation.

37. Al-Ḥarizi 1951/52, 404; 2010, 549.

38. Al-Ḥarizi 1951/52, 348–49; 2010, 435; 2009, 102.

39. Al-Ḥarizi 1951/52, 398; 2010, 542. See also S. M. Stern 1969.

chapter summary, both of which he deprecates with a full blast of medieval invective.<sup>40</sup> Ibn Tibbon regularly refers to these appendixes not by their titles, but as (respectively) “The Chapter of Nonsense” and “The Chapter of Blasphemy.” Further on in the introduction to the glossary, Ibn Tibbon returns to the attack, making the following points:<sup>41</sup>

1. In translating, al-Ḥarizi added words and rearranged them, as if trying to interpret a matter that he did not really understand himself—whereas Ibn Tibbon, fearing to distort Maimonides’ esoteric meaning, did not feel worthy of altering anything.
2. In making an explanatory translation, al-Ḥarizi transgressed Maimonides’ adjuration<sup>42</sup> not to reveal the esoteric meaning of the *Guide*; fortunately, he was saved from this transgression by his ignorance, which led him to obscure Maimonides’ meaning instead of revealing it.
3. Al-Ḥarizi’s reputation as a master of both Hebrew and Arabic, which Ibn Tibbon happily concedes, qualifies him to translate only texts whose meaning is obvious, such as poetry, works dealing with language, and chronicles. He is ignorant of philosophy.

Amusingly, Ibn Tibbon claims that his criticism does not arise from personal hatred or jealousy but only out of a concern to warn readers away from al-Ḥarizi’s work. What Ibn Tibbon does not do is cite a long list of passages in which al-Ḥarizi leads the reader astray; as far I can determine, he mentions only two specific points, neither of which is in itself particularly important to the interpretation of the book as a whole.<sup>43</sup>

Another early attack from a powerful source may have been that of Abraham Maimuni, who states in his *Milḥamot ha-Shem*, written in Hebrew around 1235, that al-Ḥarizi’s translation was full of errors and distortions.<sup>44</sup>

40. Ibn Tibbon 1981, 11–12.

41. Ibn Tibbon 1981, 13–17.

42. *Guide* I, intro. (Munk-Joel 10).

43. Ibn Tibbon (1981, 14) says that al-Ḥarizi’s summary of *Guide* 1:5 contains an incorrect explanation of Maimonides’ reason for devoting a chapter to the nonanthropomorphic meanings of the Hebrew word *ish*. But al-Ḥarizi’s explanation is a reasonable one that is echoed in some of Maimonides’ commentators. Ibn Tibbon (1981, 16) accuses al-Ḥarizi of incorrectly taking a talmudic word as Arabic. It is no longer possible to determine how al-Ḥarizi interpreted the word, because of a gap in the unique manuscript of his translation.

44. A. Maimonides 1953, 53n23. Margalot relegated the damning passage about al-Ḥarizi’s translation to a footnote because it does not appear in the three manuscripts that

A strongly worded condemnation of al-Ḥarizi's translation then appears in a letter, dated 1290, that was appended to *Minḥat qena'ot*.<sup>45</sup> The writer states that only a person who reads the work in the original language will avoid falling into error; error cannot be avoided by one who reads the book in translation, especially the "second" (i.e., al-Ḥarizi's) translation. For while the "first" translation contains some mistakes, the author was a wise man and would have corrected his errors had he had time to do so; but the "second" translation has so many errors that it cannot be corrected, and in many places actually gives the opposite meaning from the one intended. It is the kind of book that one should not even keep in the house. Both Heinrich Graetz and Moritz Steinschneider attribute this letter to Shem Tov Falaquera (1225–95).<sup>46</sup>

The letter's tone is consistent with the most detailed medieval critique of al-Ḥarizi's translation, which is, indeed, the work of Shem Tov Falaquera in the second appendix of his celebrated *Moreh ha-moreh*.<sup>47</sup> Falaquera makes no bones about calling al-Ḥarizi a *peti* (fool)<sup>48</sup> or casting aspersions on his Arabic.<sup>49</sup> But his critique of the translations of the *Guide* is organized not around al-Ḥarizi's translation but around Ibn Tibbon's. Only twice does he build an entry on al-Ḥarizi's errors;<sup>50</sup> otherwise, he cites al-Ḥarizi merely as a secondary target alongside Ibn Tibbon. The extent of Falaquera's animus against al-Ḥarizi's work is such that in attacking translations of passages by Ibn Tibbon, he never points out when al-Ḥarizi's translation is in agreement with his own interpretation. He criticizes forty-six passages in Ibn Tibbon's

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he used and because he believed that it was not Maimuni's style to attack an admirer of his father (A. Maimonides 1953, 7). But if the passage was not in the original work, it is hard to see why it would have been added. Steinschneider (1893, 432) doubted whether Maimuni had ever seen al-Ḥarizi's translation.

45. Abba Mari ben Moses of Lunel 1838, 182–85. The work is a compilation of letters, made by Abba Mari ben Moses of Lunel, connected with the Maimonides controversy of 1300–1306.

46. Graetz 1863, 474; Steinschneider 1893, 432. On the attribution to Falaquera, see Lemler 2012, 30–37.

47. Falaquera (2001) cites al-Ḥarizi by name on pp. 348, 349, 350, 354 (twice), 355, 357, 363, and 364. On pp. 341–42, he criticizes two passages in al-Ḥarizi's translation without naming him; see below, n. 50.

48. Falaquera 2001, 363.

49. Falaquera 2001, 349; though, to be sure, he includes Ibn Tibbon in this cheap shot.

50. Remarkably, these are the first two entries in the appendix. Perhaps Falaquera was working from an earlier version of Ibn Tibbon's translation in which the words in question were translated as reported by Falaquera; in that case, they were carried over by al-Ḥarizi into his own translation. For al-Ḥarizi's possible use of Ibn Tibbon, see below.

translations; in nineteen of these, al-Ḥarizi's interpretation agrees with that of Falaquera (even if al-Ḥarizi does not always use exactly the same words as Falaquera to express that interpretation), but only once does Falaquera give al-Ḥarizi credit for being right. Had Falaquera pointed out the other eighteen places, he would have made al-Ḥarizi look a lot better. Presumably, he did not want to give ammunition to al-Ḥarizi's defenders, if there were any; and as for his not bringing up mistakes in al-Ḥarizi's translation systematically, as he did with Ibn Tibbon's translation, he must have thought al-Ḥarizi's translation too insignificant or too little known to merit a systematic critique. That would be consistent with the comments of the writer of the letter in *Minḥat gena'ot*.<sup>51</sup>

These negative judgments of thirteenth-century scholars<sup>52</sup> have essentially been repeated by nearly everyone who has addressed the subject.<sup>53</sup> Nearly everyone takes potshots at al-Ḥarizi's translation, and little notice has been paid to Steinschneider's observation that al-Ḥarizi often gives the sense of individual passages more exactly than Ibn Tibbon, even when the latter worked from a better text.<sup>54</sup> Other modern scholars have been less categorical in their criticism. Much as I would like to defend al-Ḥarizi, and though Falaquera's criticisms of both translations are often captious, I do not deny that al-Ḥarizi's translation contains numerous embarrassing

51. Complicating any evaluation of Falaquera's work—or, for that matter, of the two translations themselves—is the fact that some of the translations that he calls wrong reflect a different *Vorlage*. Some others are merely quibbles or hard cases, about which reasonable readers might disagree.

52. Steinschneider (1893, 432) mentions a list of corrections to al-Ḥarizi's translation in a work attributed to Joseph Ibn Giqatilla but does not identify the work, beyond giving 1574 as its date of publication.

53. The critique has been carried on by moderns such as Shiffman (1995/96, 263), who says that al-Ḥarizi is more paraphrastic, Ibn Tibbon more literal and exact, "because he was closer to the source"; Schwarz, in the survey of translations of the *Guide* appended to his own Hebrew translation (Schwarz 2002, 2:746), characterizes al-Ḥarizi as inexact and praises Ibn Tibbon for consistent translation of terminology; Baneth (1951/52) compares Ibn Tibbon and al-Ḥarizi in thirty-one passages commented on by Maimonides in his letter to Ibn Tibbon and, of course, comes out as quite critical of al-Ḥarizi. Particularly scathing is Qafih, who claims, in the introduction to his Hebrew translation of the *Guide* (Qafih 1:18), that al-Ḥarizi knew nothing about philosophy or even about halakhah. Fraenkel's judgment is more generous to al-Ḥarizi, at least to his intentions, when he points out the paradox that Ibn Tibbon and al-Ḥarizi appear to change positions, with al-Ḥarizi, the poet, who stood accused of knowing nothing but languages, concentrating on transmitting the ideas of his source text; and Ibn Tibbon, the philosopher, for whom the content should have been paramount, limiting his work to transmitting the mere words (Fraenkel 2007, 159).

54. Steinschneider 1893, 431.

mistakes, especially (but not only) when it comes to philosophical matters. Furthermore, Carlos Fraenkel has made a strong case that above and beyond his technical accuracy in the translation of individual passages, Ibn Tibbon attempted to penetrate the mind of Maimonides in a way that al-Ḥarizi did not.<sup>55</sup> Perhaps everyone is right to say that Ibn Tibbon's translation deserved to prevail.

### Toward an Evaluation of al-Ḥarizi's Performance

So how did al-Ḥarizi actually perform? I propose to shift the discussion from the accuracy of al-Ḥarizi's translation to his method as a translator. This can partially be done by studying his translation on its own, but comparison with the translation of Ibn Tibbon often helps to make al-Ḥarizi's method stand out more clearly. Here are some practices that characterize al-Ḥarizi's work.<sup>56</sup>

The most consistent principle governing al-Ḥarizi's translation is the avoidance of Arabisms, even such Arabisms as Hebrew writers whose native language was Arabic had long been accustomed to using. In the realm of vocabulary, al-Ḥarizi's translation frequently avoids Arabisms that were commonly used by Hebrew writers of his cultural sphere, such as the automatic use of *kevar* for *qad*, *sham* for *thamma*, *we-im* for *wa-in*, and *we-* for *fa-*. Al-Ḥarizi often inserts *asher* or *she-* to link a relative clause to a main clause rather than using the asyndetic form of the relative clause that is one of the hallmarks of Arabized Hebrew. Al-Ḥarizi also strives for a more Hebraic use of prepositions than do most Hebrew writers of the age. He is versatile in finding real Hebrew equivalents for Arabic words and idioms that Ibn Tibbon reproduces mechanically.

Al-Ḥarizi follows some regular procedures for Hebraizing Arabic syntax. He generally reorganizes sentences to avoid partitive *mem* constructions, whereas Ibn Tibbon translates them as they stand. Unlike Ibn Tibbon, he avoids using substantivized participles, which are often confusing in Hebrew. He employs a variety of techniques for treating the *maṣdar* in accordance with Hebrew usage. Where Ibn Tibbon often uses an infini-

55. Fraenkel 2007, 158.

56. The Arabic original is cited from Munk-Joel (1930/31); Ibn Tibbon's translation is cited from Even-Shemuel's edition (1981); al-Ḥarizi's translation is cited from Schlosberg's edition (1851–79). No comparison of the work of the two translators' language can be definitive in default of critical editions.

tive absolute to imitate the *mašdar*—a practice that can result in clumsy strings of words in the construct and in sentences that are puzzling in their abstraction—al-Ḥarizi, when he does not simply paraphrase, prefers the more idiomatic infinitive construct. Often, rather than follow Ibn Tibbon's practice of representing a *mašdar* by creating a new word ending in *-ut*, al-Ḥarizi paraphrases.

Other than avoiding Arabisms, al-Ḥarizi makes use of a number of procedures that tend to intensify the Hebraic character of the translation. He translates Arabic names into their Hebrew equivalents, rendering *Abū Naṣr* as *Avi Yesha'*, *mu'tazila* as *nivdalim*, and so on, while Ibn Tibbon retains the Arabic names. He often Hebraizes Arabic idioms by ingeniously making use of classical expressions or elegant phrases of his own invention. Here are six examples:

**Example 1**<sup>57</sup>

Maimonides: *ghazīra*  
 al-Ḥarizi: *lo' yissaferu me-rov*  
 Ibn Tibbon: *merubbim*

**Example 2**<sup>58</sup>

Maimonides: *al-'ālam bi-asrihi*  
 al-Ḥarizi: *ha-'olam u-melo'o*  
 Ibn Tibbon: *ha-'olam kulo*

**Example 3**<sup>59</sup>

Maimonides: *qad yaqta'u bihim al-mawt*  
 al-Ḥarizi: *yafrid ha-mawet benam u-ven heḥṣam*  
 Ibn Tibbon: *efshar she-yafsiq ba-hem ha-mawet*

**Example 4**<sup>60</sup>

Maimonides: *al-šura al-šinā'iyya*  
 al-Ḥarizi: *šurat melekhet maḥshevet*  
 Ibn Tibbon: *šurah melakhit*

57. Munk-Joel 49, line 18; al-Ḥarizi 1:33; Ibn Tibbon 63.

58. Munk-Joel 49, line 26; al-Ḥarizi 1:33; Ibn Tibbon 63.

59. Munk-Joel 50, line 27; al-Ḥarizi 1:34; Ibn Tibbon 64.

60. Munk-Joel 14, line 18; al-Ḥarizi 1:10; Ibn Tibbon 19.

**Example 5**<sup>61</sup>Maimonides: *hattā yastanhiḍ awwalan awwalan*al-Ḥarizi: *'ad she-yitnahel le'it̄to ṣaw la-ṣaw*Ibn Tibbon: *'ad she-ya'ale rishon rishon***Example 6**<sup>62</sup>Maimonides: *li-yaḡsida al-mu'ālif lahu wa-yahruba min al-mukhālif*al-Ḥarizi: *lasum megamato le-mah she-hu' mimino we-livroaḥ me-  
hefko*Ibn Tibbon: *lekhawwen el ha-ṭov lo we-ha-murgal we-livroaḥ min  
ha-ra' lo u-mah she-hu' ke-negdo*

Al-Ḥarizi strives to achieve clarity by translating in accordance with the appropriate contextual meaning of an Arabic word instead of insisting on what was considered to be its fundamental meaning. He sometimes adds a particle or a word to make explicit something that was elided in the original. He often translates one word with two, possibly to help the reader to zero in on the intended meaning—a procedure that had been recommended by Maimonides himself in his letter to Ibn Tibbon, both by precept and example.<sup>63</sup> He also rearranges the order of the elements in a sentence for the sake of clarity.

### Partial Retraction of the Above and a Conjecture

But al-Ḥarizi's translation is not entirely devoid of Arabisms.<sup>64</sup> Some of these were inherited features of Hebrew as it was written by his predecessors in the Judeo-Arabic world, as pointed out earlier; there are fewer of them in al-Ḥarizi's translation than in Ibn Tibbon's, but they have not been eliminated. Al-Ḥarizi does occasionally use *kevar* for *qad*, *sham* for *thamma*, *we-im* for *wa-in*, and *we-* for *fa-*. He does not always remember to add *asher*

61. Munk-Joel 19, line 24; al-Ḥarizi 1:14; Ibn Tibbon 26.

62. Munk-Joel 38, line 7; al-Ḥarizi 1:26; Ibn Tibbon 49.

63. Baneth 1951/52, 172. Goshen-Gottstein mentions this phenomenon in al-Ḥarizi 1956/57, 187. It was noted in connection with Ḥunayn ibn Isḡāq's translations by Franz Rosenthal. Rosenthal (1946) thinks that this practice is not merely a feature of Arabic style but was adopted for the sake of accuracy. Baneth (1951/52) also explains a doublet in translation as intended to add clarity.

64. As noted by Baneth (1951/52, 187, 189).

or *she-* to link a relative clause to a main clause. Like most writers of his age, he regularly uses *zakhar* in the sense of “to mention,” or “to say,” like *dhakara* in Arabic.

Other Arabisms reflect exactly the kind of slavish reproduction of Maimonides' Arabic that we associate with Ibn Tibbon. Al-Ḥarizi usually places the singular demonstrative pronoun before the noun.<sup>65</sup> Like Ibn Tibbon, he often uses prepositions in the Arabic manner, especially *le-* before a noun or infinitive to mean “on account of.” Like Ibn Tibbon, al-Ḥarizi relies on constructions using the partitive *mem* that are not normal in biblical or rabbinic Hebrew. He occasionally writes a *ḥāl* clause in the Arabic manner. Calques of various Arabic idioms are found quite often in al-Ḥarizi's translation. (Astoundingly, al-Ḥarizi regularly introduces biblical quotations with *we-omro*, a *mašdar*-like construction, instead of using such traditional expressions as *she-ne'emar* and *ka-katuv*.)

Although al-Ḥarizi's translation is not as densely packed with Arabisms as that of Ibn Tibbon, those that remain are a puzzle, since he was famous for his virtuosic Hebrew style, and since his translation of the *maqāmāt* of al-Ḥariri and his original writings were essentially in the same kind of Hebrew as that which had been used by poets of the preceding three centuries—biblical Hebrew dotted with some standard Arabisms and some rabbinic terminology. In fact, al-Ḥarizi's translation of the *Guide* gives the impression of not being as free of Arabisms as are his other translations. But I have not been able to overcome the methodological impediments to confirming this impression statistically.<sup>66</sup>

What prevented al-Ḥarizi from purifying his language in his translation of the *Guide*? Was he inhibited from taking complete freedom by the authority already enjoyed by Ibn Tibbon? By his own feelings of inadequacy in dealing with philosophical material? Did he work too quickly and not take the trouble to revise his translation? A possibility that needs to be considered is that al-Ḥarizi did not work completely independently of Ibn Tibbon. Perhaps, as he worked, he kept before him not only Maimonides'

65. For this usage as a hallmark of Arabized Hebrew, see Goshen-Gottstein 1946/47.

66. The main problems are (1) the absence of critical editions; (2) the frequently subjective nature of the decision to classify a particular occurrence of a given construction or vocabulary usage as an Arabism; (3) the fact that however many words are chosen as the length of the sample on which to base the statistics, in texts dealing with religion a large percentage of the words are merely Hebrew quotations, so that the number of Arabisms necessarily comes out lower than it would in a purely scientific text with no Hebrew quotations.



original Arabic but Ibn Tibbon's translation as well, sometimes translating directly from the Arabic and other times simply revising Ibn Tibbon's work. Here are some passages to compare:

**Example 1**<sup>67</sup>

Maimonides:

*qad 'alimta qawlatahum al-jāmi'ata li-anwā'i al-ta'wīlāti kullihā al-muta'allaqati bi-hādhihi al-fann*

al-Ḥarizi:

*hinne yada'ta imratam ha-kolelet le-mine ha-sevarot kullam ha-teluyot be-zeh ha-'inyan*

Ibn Tibbon:

*kevar yada'ta imratam ha-kolelet le-mine ha-perushim kullam ha-teluyim be-zeh ha-'inyan*

**Example 2**<sup>68</sup>

Maimonides:

*wa-ajnās al-kayfiyati arba'atun kamā 'alimta wa-anā umaththilu laka mathalan 'alā ṭarīq al-ṣifati min kulli jinsin minhā li-yubayyana laka imtinā'u wujūdi hādha al-naḥwi min al-ṣifāti lillāhi ta'ālā*

al-Ḥarizi:

*u-mine ha-ekhut arba'ah kemo she-yada'ta we-hinnenī mamshil lekha mashal 'al derekh ha-to'ar mi-kol min me-hem lema'an yitba'er lekha meni'ut elleh ha-te'arim me-ha-bore' yit'alleh*

Ibn Tibbon:

*we-suge ha-ekhut arba'ah kemo she-yada'ta wa-ani emshol lekha mashal 'al derekh ha-to'ar mi-kol sug me-hem she-yitba'er lekha himmana' meṣi'ut zeh ha-min min ha-te'arim le-eloah yit'alleh*

**Example 3**<sup>69</sup>

Maimonides:

*fa-yakūnu talkhīšu mā fī hādha al-faṣli annahu ta'ālā wāḥidun min jamī'i al-jihāti lā takthīra fīhi wa-lā ma'nā zā'ida 'alā al-dhāti wa-anna al-ṣifāti al-mukhtalifata al-ma'āni al-muta'addidata al-mawjūdata fī al-kutubi al-madlūla bihā 'alayhi ta'ālā hiya min*

67. Munk-Joel 37, lines 19–20; al-Ḥarizi 1:26; Ibn Tibbon 48.

68. Munk-Joel 78, lines 9–12; al-Ḥarizi 1:50; Ibn Tibbon 98.

69. Munk-Joel 80, lines 23–29; al-Ḥarizi 1:51; Ibn Tibbon 101.

*jihati kathrati af'ālihi lā min ajli kathratin fī dhātihi wa-ba'ḍuhā lil-dalālati 'alā kamālihi bi-ḥasabi mā naẓunnuhu kamālan kamā bayyannā wa-amma hal yumkinu an takūna al-dhātu al-wāḥidatu al-basīṭatu allati lā takthīra fīhā taf'alu af'ālan mukhtalifatan fa-sa-yubayyanu dhālika bi-mathālātin*

al-Ḥarizi:

*we-yitbarer mi-zeh ha-pereq ki ha-bore' yit'aleh hu' eḥad mi-kol ṣad en bo ribbuy we-lo' inyan nosaf'al 'aṣmo we-khi ha-te'arim hamithalefim be'inylenehem ha-merubbim ha-meṣu'im ba-sefarim asher ba'u lehorot'alaw . . .<sup>70</sup> lehorot'al shelemuto kefi mah she-naḥshevehu shelemut kemo she-be'arnu we-ulam im tish'al hayittakhen lihyot ha-eṣem ha-eḥad ha-pashuṭ she-en bo ribbuy po'el pe'alim mishtannim 'od yitba'er zeh be-dimyonim u-meshalim*

Ibn Tibbon:

*we-yihyeh be'ur mah she-be-zeh ha-pereq she-hu' yit'aleh eḥad mi-kol ha-ṣedadim en ribbuy bo we-lo' inyan musaf'al ha-eṣem we-sheha-te'arim ḥaluqe ha'inyanim ha-rabbim hanimṣa'im ba-sefarim hamorim'alaw yit'aleh hem mi-ṣad ribbuy pe'ulotaw lo' mi-pene ribbuy be-aṣmo u-qeṣatam lehorot'al shelemuto kefi mah she-naḥshevehu shelemut kemo she-be'arnu we-omnam im efshar she-yihyeh ha-eṣem ha-eḥad ha-pashuṭ asher en ribbuy bo 'oseh ma'asim mithallefim hinneh yitba'er zeh bi-meshalim*

#### Example 4<sup>71</sup>

Maimonides:

*Tarīqun rābi'un qālū al-'ālamu kulluhu murakkabun min jawharin wa-'araḍin walā yanfakku jawharun min al-jawāhira'an 'araḍin aw a'rāḍa wal-a'rāḍu kulluha ḥādithatun fa-yalzamu an yakūna al-jawharu al-ḥāmīlu lahā ḥādithatun li-anna kulla muqārinin lil-ḥawādītha walā yanfakku 'anhā fa-huwa ḥādithun fa-al-'ālamu bijumlatihi ḥādithun fa-in qāla qā'ilun la'alla al-jawhara ghayra ḥādithin wal-a'rāḍu hiya al-ḥādīthatu al-muta'āqibatu 'alayhi shay'an ba'da shay'in ilā lā nihāyata*

70. The lacuna is due to an error of homoioteleuton in the manuscript, pointed out by Yonatan Shemesh, to whom I again extend my gratitude.

71. Munk-Joel 152, lines 2–7; al-Ḥarizi 1:93; Ibn Tibbon 189. This example was provided by Yonatan Shemesh.

al-Ḥarizi:

*Derekh revi'i ameru ki ha-'olam kullo murkav me-'ešem u-miqreh we-lo yimmalet 'ešem min ha-'aşamim [mi-]miqre o mi-miqrim we-ha-miqrim kullam mithaddeshim we-yithayyev she-yihye ha-'ešem ha-nose' otam mithaddesh ki kol ha-daveq 'im ha-hiddushim we-lo yimmalet hu' mithaddesh im ken ha-'olam bikhlalo mithaddesh we-im yomar ha-omer ulay ha-'ešem eno mithaddesh we-ha-miqrim hem ha-mithaddeshim be-vi'at zeh tekhef zeh sur zeh 'ad le-en takhlit we-yithayyev mi-zeh le-divrehem she-yihyu hiddushim beli takhlit*

Ibn Tibbon:

*Derekh revi'i ameru ha-'olam kullo murkav me-'ešem u-miqreh we-lo yimmalet 'ešem min ha-'aşamim mi-miqre o miqrim we-ha-miqrim kullam meḥuddashim we-yithayyev she-yihye ha-'ešem ha-nose' lahem meḥuddash ki kol meḥubbar la-meḥuddashim we-lo' yimmalet mehem hu' meḥuddash im ken ha-'olam bikhlalo meḥuddash we-im yomar omer ulay ha-'ešem bilti meḥuddash we-ha-miqrim hem ha-mithaddeshim ha-ba'im 'alaw zeh aḥar sur zeh el lo takhlit ameru im ken yithayyev she-yihyu meḥuddashim en takhlit lahem*

In these passages, the formulation is suspiciously similar, except that certain words and grammatical patterns in which Ibn Tibbon mimics the Arabic are replaced in al-Ḥarizi's text by more Hebraic expressions along the lines that I outlined earlier. It is as if al-Ḥarizi, at times, copied Ibn Tibbon's translation, Hebraizing words and phrases as he went but not actually recasting the sentence, as one would do if one were working directly from the Arabic.

The possibility that al-Ḥarizi did not translate independently but merely reworked Ibn Tibbon's translation was raised by Isaiah Sonne.<sup>72</sup> As a result of his work with Maimonides' letter to Ibn Tibbon, Sonne came to believe that the Hebrew translation of this text is the work of Ibn Tibbon as it had been revised by al-Ḥarizi in order to serve as an appendix to his translation of the *Guide*. He appears to have extended this conclusion to al-Ḥarizi's translation of the *Guide* itself, suggesting that the sages of Lunel commissioned al-Ḥarizi not to translate the *Guide* from scratch but merely to revise Ibn Tibbon's translation. Sonne did not present this view as a certain conclusion but called for further study of the relationship between the two

72. Sonne 1938/39, 152.

translations.<sup>73</sup> Like him, I am not claiming certainty, but in any case there seems to be ample evidence that al-Ḥarizi made extensive use of Ibn Tibbon's translation; this might explain why al-Ḥarizi's translation of the *Guide* seems to be so different in style from his other translations.

## Two Cultures

It remains to consider the cultural background of the two translators and the differing outlooks that underlie two such different projects. Al-Ḥarizi was a product of Judeo-Arabic culture, which was still alive in the Spain in which he was formed, though it was changing under the impact of Christian-Romance culture and was foreseeably in decline. Al-Ḥarizi not only learned the Arabic language as a youth; he also absorbed the values of the Judeo-Arabic golden age and considered himself an heir to the great Hebrew poets. In the world to which he looked back, language and style were valued in themselves. The ideal intellectual was an *adīb*, a cultured man, who was at home in both languages, had a hand in poetry, knew the Bible, had a grasp of rabbinic texts, could write Hebrew in accordance with the ideal of *ṣaḥot* (grammatical and lexical accuracy in accordance with the norms of biblical Hebrew as it was understood and used by the poets of the golden age), and was well informed about the kinds of things that a cultured Muslim knew. An *adīb* did not necessarily have professional knowledge of medicine, diplomacy, business, religious lore, or philosophy, though he would have a smattering of knowledge in all these areas; his mastery was of the literary tradition and of the language. Such a person could earn a living by writing poetry, formal correspondence, and official documents. Conversely, a doctor, diplomat, businessman, rabbi, or philosopher might have a taste for poetry and might from time to time try his hand at writing verses.

Ibn Tibbon was a Provençal, despite his family origins in al-Andalus. His father had trained him in Arabic and ensured that he received a first-class education in Judaica, philosophy, and science. It is reasonable to speculate that he grew up in a circle of Andalusian expatriates, among whom he absorbed the language and attitudes of the immigrant generation, but he

73. Qafih (1:18ff.) refers to Sonne's conjecture without crediting him by name, and goes on to speculate that al-Ḥarizi did a combination of independent translation and revision. The question has been raised by others; see the chapter by Caterina Rigo in this volume, nn. 20–22. From a communication between her and Yonatan Shemesh, one of the editors of this volume, I learned that the point was anticipated by David Kaufmann in 1910.

used the skills acquired thus in the service of a community that had different intellectual ideals—one in which literary skills had less prestige and in which intellectual life was more focused on the rabbinic tradition. Philosophical and scientific materials had begun to reach these communities in the twelfth century, especially in the wake of the Almohad conquest of southern al-Andalus that had brought to Provence such Andalusi intellectuals as his father, Abraham Ibn Ezra, and Joseph Qimḥi. Such men were able to make careers disseminating their knowledge of Hebrew grammar and lexicography, Bible studies, scientific material, and philosophy by writing original books and commentaries in the Andalusi tradition and by translating Arabic books into Hebrew.

But the Arabic intellectual and social infrastructure that generated literary productivity in al-Andalus was not present in Provence to drive Provençal Jewry to the kind of literary production that had flourished in al-Andalus and that was beginning to take root in Egypt and points east. The social type of the *adīb*, along with his typical form of expression, non-liturgical poetry, developed only fitfully in Occitania. Nor did the nascent Provençal vernacular literature stimulate the Jews to parallel literary creativity in Hebrew, as had Arabic poetry in tenth-century Spain. The Arabic literary model was imported to Occitania along with philosophy and science; but unlike those disciplines, it did not strike deep roots. There were some Hebrew poets in Provence—the first major poet, Isaac ha-Seniri (= from Mont Ventoux), was active in the first quarter of the thirteenth century—but there was not the craze for secular poetry that had overtaken Jewish Spain in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries.

The difference between the translations of Ibn Tibbon and al-Ḥarizi reflects the different attitudes of their two communities toward scholarship and language in general. Ibn Tibbon's father, Judah Ibn Tibbon, though a product of al-Andalus and capable of writing beautiful Hebrew (as shown by his ethical will), adopted a drily functional attitude toward the language. In the preface to *Ḥovot ha-levavot*, his translation of *Al-hidāya ilā farā'id al-qulūb*, by Baḥya Ibn Paquda, Judah expresses his admiration for Arabic to the point of declaring that it is superior to Hebrew.<sup>74</sup> Even if this encomium to Arabic has in view only the language's superiority for scientific and philosophical purposes, such a declaration would be unimaginable in the writings of al-Ḥarizi, who, in the introduction and first chapter of the *Taḥkemoni*, vigorously asserts the superiority of Hebrew. His attitude is the

74. Sela 2003, 141–43.

full-blown expression of the ideal view of the Hebrew language adumbrated in the introduction to Saadia Gaon's *Agron* and implicit in the whole history of golden age Hebrew literature.<sup>75</sup>

Samuel Ibn Tibbon, determined to convey Maimonides' meaning in a form as close to Maimonides' words as humanly possible, was ruthless in using Hebrew in a purely functional manner. For al-Ḥarizi, this was not a respectable approach. His guiding principle was *ṣahot*. Though he did not pursue this principle with consistency, he made this essentially conservative attitude his guide in the act of translation; it stood in contrast to the more innovative approach adopted by Ibn Tibbon and his successors.<sup>76</sup> In philosophy, too, we have seen that al-Ḥarizi represents the older Judeo-Arabic tradition, for there is no evidence that he was himself touched by the new Aristotelianism; in the philosophical errors in the translation to the *Guide*, his detractors found much evidence to this effect. All of the philosophical material in the *Tahkemoni*, his religious poems in Hebrew and Arabic, and his most important translation projects other than the *Guide* were, as we have seen, of the good old-fashioned Neoplatonic type that had provided the theoretical background of so much golden age writing.

It is not surprising, then, that this Judeo-Arabic conservative never abandoned the golden age ideal of the *adīb* but carried it with him wherever he went. We have no concrete information on why he left Spain, but it is natural to conjecture that he went to Provence because he could observe the decline of golden age culture in Spain and the shifts in literary sensibility that had overtaken Hebrew writing there. Perhaps it was becoming harder to earn a living in Spain as an *adīb*, while Provence at least afforded a scholar of this type the opportunity to make a living as a middleman for Judeo-Arabic culture. He went there thinking that he would live on translations, and he did so for a time. But he probably never felt at home in a world where, other than as a translator, there was no natural place for a Judeo-Arabic man of letters. So he went east, to places where Arabic culture was

75. The differing attitudes of Ibn Tibbon and al-Ḥarizi about the powers of the Hebrew language are well set out in Halkin 1963.

76. Sela (2003, 141–43) explains Abraham Ibn Ezra's adherence to biblical Hebrew in creating scientific terminology as an expression of the belief, shared by many of his contemporaries, that the ancient Israelites had the sciences but that these sciences were lost to the Jews through exile. This principle may or may not explain the stylistic choices of Ibn Ezra, but it would not explain the case of al-Ḥarizi, whereas the explanation for al-Ḥarizi's style propounded in this essay would also explain the case of Ibn Ezra. For another perspective on the contrast between al-Ḥarizi and Ibn Tibbon, see Drory 2000, 227–32.

not threatened. There, despite his bitter complaints about the ineptness of Hebrew writers and the stinginess of the grandees, he found no fewer than four patrons to whom he could dedicate the *Tahkemoni*. And even if his Hebrew did not find the reception that he had hoped for, at least his Arabic was in demand in a world that knew how to value it. So it came about that this champion of the Hebrew language in all its biblical purity ended his days as an Arabic poet, writing panegyrics for Muslim grandees.

It may be my fancy, but I cannot help reading the third chapter of the *Tahkemoni* as a literary mirror of the peculiar cultural moment that is represented by al-Ḥarizi's career. The narrator attends a party—presumably in Iraq—where cultured people are discussing literature. Among them is an old man who is fat, ugly, and uncouth, and who is too busy grabbing food from every side and stuffing himself to take part in the conversation. The narrator and the others are disgusted at his crude manners. At last the presumed parasite stops eating and, addressing the group, asks what they had been talking about. They reply that they had been discussing the great Hebrew poets of Spain such as Samuel the Nagid and Judah Halevi. “Fools!” he exclaims. “None of you knows what you are speaking about. This is my subject, and here is the truth.” He then launches into a discourse that displays not only his erudition and literary judgment but also his eloquence in the delivery, astonishing all present. Having completed his discourse, he vanishes, leaving them dazed at the contradiction between his literary skill and his uncouth manners. The narrator realizes that the old man is his friend, the versatile and witty Ḥever ha-Qeni, whom he has encountered before and will encounter in the following chapters of the *Tahkemoni*.

It appears that in the old man, al-Ḥarizi has presented a comical portrait of himself as an unappreciated outsider in Iraq, a master of the Hebrew literary tradition trying to survive in a world that admires it but does not really know it. Here is the beginning of the old man's speech: “The poets you have been speaking of and whose significance you have been examining—I was summoned to their wars, and I am just now returned from the battle. My heart is the scroll of their affairs, and I am the record book of their poems. Lend your ears to me.” He is not merely an admirer of the great poets of Spain, not a mere observer like the Iraqi Jews, but is himself one of the Andalusī literati, a refugee from their world. His words “I am just now returned from the battle” echo the words of a survivor of a biblical battle who returns to bear witness to the defeat of Israel's troops by the Philistines and the loss of the ark of the covenant (1 Sam 4:16). Thus the speaker in the *Tahkemoni* represents himself as the last one standing after the dissolution of Judeo-

Arabic culture in Spain, a poignant image of a creature rendered grotesque by cultural dislocation.

Al-Ḥarizi made his translation of Maimonides' *Guide* in this conservative spirit; in its attempt to turn Maimonides' Arabic into idiomatic Hebrew, it is as much a product of the Judeo-Arabic world as the *Guide* itself. Though Ibn Tibbon's translation adheres slavishly to Maimonides' Arabic, it is a free translation in the larger sense: it is free of Judeo-Arabic literary ideals and looks forward, instead, to the new Jewish culture of Occitania, Christian Spain, and Italy.





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# *Dux neutrorum* and the Jewish Tradition of the *Guide of the Perplexed*

CATERINA RIGO

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### Introduction

From the pioneering study of Joseph Perles in 1875, who uncovered one manuscript (Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS Clm 7936b) containing *Dux neutrorum*, the complete thirteenth-century Latin translation of the *Guide of the Perplexed*, until the current work of Diana Di Segni, who is preparing a critical edition of the text,<sup>1</sup> many studies have been devoted to this important translation.<sup>2</sup>

I am very grateful to my student Gadi Weber and to my colleagues and friends Haggai Ben-Shammai, Ariela Di Castro, Zev Harvey, Moshe Idel, and Menahem Kister for reading this essay. I am also very grateful to Diana Di Segni for sending me her PhD dissertation and a paper partially based on it. I would also like to thank Josef Stern for encouraging me to publish this essay in this volume. Special thanks are also due to Yonatan Shemesh, who supervised the final editorial stages of this essay.

1. See Di Segni 2013, 2014, 2016. Di Segni (2013) prepared a critical edition of *DN I* 1–59 [1–60]. This edition includes a critical apparatus for variants of the Latin manuscripts, and notes referring to Maimonides' sources. It does not include a critical apparatus that systematically compares the Latin and the Hebrew texts of al-Ḥarizi's version. For those chapters Di Segni edited, I use her edition and note in parentheses the location of citations in Giustiniani's edition (1520). For the remaining chapters, I use the version in Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Ottob. lat. 644, also noting in parentheses the location of citations in Giustiniani. My enumeration of chapters follows that in *DN*. Standard chapter numbers of the *Guide* are noted in square brackets where there is a discrepancy.

2. See especially Kluxen 1955, 1966, 1986, 2002, 2004; Freudenthal 1988a, 1988b; Hasselhoff 2001, 2002, 2004, 2005; Rubio 2006. Mercedes Rubio edited *DN I* 33 [I 34], II

*Dux neutrorum* (henceforth *DN*)—which was preceded by two partial translations of the *Guide*, *Liber de parabola*<sup>3</sup> and *Liber de uno deo benedicto*<sup>4</sup>—is an anonymous translation based on the Hebrew translation of Judah al-Ḥarizi.<sup>5</sup> According to scholars, the translator of *DN* at times corrected his translation on the basis of the Arabic original or on the basis of the Hebrew translation by Samuel Ibn Tibbon.<sup>6</sup> Di Segni has shown that, especially in the lexicographical chapters, the translator sometimes omits portions of the text and sometimes mentions in notes the difficulty of finding Latin equivalents for Hebrew terms that Maimonides explains.<sup>7</sup> The translator also attaches to *DN* a Latin translation of Maimonides' list of 613 commandments (based on the abridged Hebrew version found in the *Mishneh Torah*) under the title *Liber praeceptorum*.<sup>8</sup>

The terminus ante quem for the composition of *DN* is ca. 1244–45, because the earliest quotations from the text are apparently those found in Albertus Magnus's *Commentary on the Sentences*, book 1, which was completed in Paris around that time.<sup>9</sup> A number of theories have been proposed

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1–2 [II, *prologus*–1] and II 17 [II 18]. For an exhaustive survey of the research on *DN*, see Di Segni 2013, viii–xxii. On the influence of *DN* on Albertus Magnus, the first Latin Scholastic to use Maimonides extensively in his own work and apparently the first to quote from *DN*, see Rigo 2001.

3. On *Liber de parabola* (1223–24), which includes a Latin version of *Guide* III 29–30 and 32–49, see Kluxen 1955, 41–46; Hasselhoff 2001, 261–62; Di Segni 2013, x–xi. According to Kluxen (who identifies its recipient as Cardinal Romanus) and Di Segni, it was composed in Rome.

4. This partial, anonymous, and undated translation of *Guide* II, intro. and chap. 1 was edited by Kluxen (1966, 167–82). On this translation, see Kluxen 1955, 36–41; Rigo 2001, 30n4; Hasselhoff 2001, 262–64; Di Segni 2013, xi.

5. The first to notice this was Perles (1875, 12).

6. Wolfson (1959, 690) and W. Z. Harvey (1988, 62–63n10, 66n20, 73n35) are of the opinion that the translation was corrected according to the Arabic. Rubio (2006, 273–78) and Di Segni (2013, xciii, ci–cxi) supply examples in which the translation deviates from al-Ḥarizi; they believe that the translation was corrected on the basis of either the Arabic or Ibn Tibbon. On this topic, see also Perles 1875, 14–15.

7. Di Segni 2013, lxxviii–lxxvi. Kluxen (1955, 34) already addressed this issue briefly. On the omission of verses and midrashic sources, see Perles 1875, 21–22.

8. For the identification of this text, see Hasselhoff 2004, 67–68; see also Kluxen 1955, 26–29. Di Segni (2014, 243–62) published a critical edition of *Liber praeceptorum* and demonstrated that this translation was the work of the translator of *DN*.

9. See Rigo 2001, 31–32. In the first version of *De resurrectione* and in the first redaction of *De IV coaequaevis*, both of which were composed between the end of the 1230s and 1241, Albertus Magnus was still unfamiliar with *DN*, and instead quoted only from the partial Latin translation, *Liber de uno deo benedicto*. In the corrections to *De resurrectione* (ca. 1249), however, and in the second redaction of *De IV coaequaevis* (ca. 1246), he was already acquainted with *DN* and quoted from it. But these quotations are later than those found in *Commentary on the Sentences*, book 1. See Rigo 2001, 32–34. Regarding the corrections in

as to the location and historical context of the translation: southern Italy (in the court of Frederick II, in the context of collaborations between Jews and Christians),<sup>10</sup> France<sup>11</sup> generally (in the context of the Maimonidean controversy),<sup>12</sup> Paris specifically (as the work of either convert Nicholas Donin or Thibaud de Sézanne),<sup>13</sup> or Spain (and specifically Toledo, in the

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*De resurrectione* and the second redaction of *De IV coaequaevis*, see Rigo 2005. A short time later in Paris, Alexander de Hales used *DN* in his *Summa theologiae*. See Guttmann 1902, 41–45; Kaufmann 1910, 167; Kluxen 1955, 33; Di Segni 2013, xix.

10. On this thesis, see Steinschneider 1863, 31n2; 1864, 65; Perles 1875, 21; Steinschneider 1893, 423, 432–34; Sermoneta 1969, 37–42; Freudenthal 1988a, 116, 120–29; 1988b; Bobichon 2008, 159; Sirat 2011a, 18.

11. Di Segni (2013, xvi, n28; 2014, 231n8) ascribes the thesis that *DN* was produced in France to me as well (on the basis of Rigo 2001, 31–35, in which I discuss the reception of *Liber de uno deo benedicto* and *DN* in Albertus Magnus's work, not the location of *DN*'s translation). I did not, however, make this claim. Rather, I determined that the first quotation from *DN* in all of Albertus Magnus's writings appears in *Commentary on the Sentences*, book 1, which was written in Paris, and not in *De IV coaequaevis*, as had been thought until then. I came to the former conclusion because in an earlier redaction of *De IV coaequaevis* that I discovered, Albertus Magnus, who apparently composed this version while he was still teaching at convents in Germany (see Rigo 2005, 358–69), is familiar with only *Liber de uno deo [benedicto]* (see above, n. 9). Indeed, the first quotations from *DN* by Albertus Magnus appear in writings that he definitely composed in Paris (i.e., *Commentary on the Sentences*, book 1, *Commentary on the Sentences*, book 3, second redaction of *De IV coaequaevis*, and *Commentary on the Sentences*, book 2). Accordingly, the dating of *Liber de uno benedicto* should probably be earlier than that of *DN*, because Albertus Magnus was familiar with it between the end of the 1230s and 1241, several years before he was exposed to *DN* (ca. 1244–45).

12. On this thesis, see Kluxen 1955, 32–35; Schwartz 1996a, 394; 1996b, 16–19. Kluxen based his theory on al-Ḥarīzī's location when he executed his translation (i.e., Provence; on this topic, see below, in the section “The Tradition of the *Guide* among Jewish Thinkers”) and on the location of the earliest texts that quote from *DN* among Latin Scholastics (i.e., Paris). He also connected the translation to the wider context of the Maimonidean controversy of the 1230s. As will be noted below, it does appear that *DN* is closely connected to the controversy surrounding the *Book of Knowledge* (*Sefer ha-madda'*) and the *Guide*.

13. See Hasselhoff 2004, 123–26; 2005, 396. According to Hasselhoff, Nicholas Donin (who in his view was, like Thibaud de Sézanne, either a Dominican or associated with the order) was a Maimonidean; for a similar view, see Schwartz 2015, 99. On this point, see recently Capelli 2017, 172. Hasselhoff explains that the motivation for the translation of *DN* was “to provide a new image of a non-Jewish Jew, i.e. a Jew who—from a Christian point of view—was not a ‘Halakhic man’ but a philosopher in the Aristotelian tradition” (2005, 396). Even though the claim that a convert could be the translator of *DN* is in itself possible, Hasselhoff's argument is not convincing because the translator of *DN* does not contrast the Talmud to Maimonides in his translation; on the contrary, he preserves the close connection between Maimonides the halakhic authority and Maimonides the philosopher (e.g., by preserving in his translation of *DN* Maimonides' references to his own halakhic works; see, e.g., *prologus*; I 70 [71]). Moreover, the translator's attitude toward the talmudic sages is respectful (e.g., in the use of expressions such as “sapientes de Talmud”), and occasional omissions of quotations in the translation are not restricted to halakhic literature. One can

course of collaborations between Jews and Christians).<sup>14</sup> Based on a few words in vernacular language that she identified in the manuscript tradition of *DN*—words that could be either vernacular Italian or Spanish—Di Segni has ruled out France and argued that the translation was done in either Italy or Spain. Furthermore, to explain why vernacular words are found, she argues that *DN* is the product of a two-step collaboration between a Jew and a Christian: first a Jew orally transmitted a translation of the Hebrew text into the vernacular, which a Christian then translated into Latin at the second, written stage.<sup>15</sup>

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In this essay, it is my intention to situate *DN* within the Jewish tradition. An examination of the Hebrew manuscript tradition of the al-Ḥarizi trans-

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also find the omission of biblical verses and other sources. Additionally, as we note below (n. 251), it seems that the translator of *DN* was sensitive to the subject of “heresy”; he omits or changes passages from the *Guide* that Christian readers could find problematic. It is difficult to reconcile these facts with the image of Nicholas Donin. On Donin, see Capelli 2017. Furthermore, Maimonides’ profile in *DN* is frequently not that of “a philosopher in the Aristotelian tradition.” On this topic, see below, in the section “The Technical-Philosophical Terminology of *DN*’s Translator.” Hasselhoff (2004, 126–27) bases part of his claim on the French provenance of the Latin manuscripts of *DN* and on the presence in Paris of the two oldest manuscripts. In my opinion, given the centrality of the University of Paris (as opposed to other locations), it is difficult to conclude that the text was produced in Paris simply because manuscripts are located there. Other translations and Scholastic texts that had not been translated or composed in Paris enjoyed rapid and wide distribution the moment they reached the University of Paris. With regard to Thibaud de Sézanne, Hasselhoff (2004, 124; 2005, 396) attributes to him the translation of the *Extractiones de Talmud*. Recently, Fidora (2015) has ruled out Thibaud’s authorship and showed that, at least in its second version, this translation depends on Donin’s thirty-five articles against the Talmud.

14. See Kaufmann 1910, 171; Rubio 2006, 272. Kaufmann refers to the collaboration of Christians and Jews in Toledo. In addition to accepting Kaufmann’s thesis that *DN* was composed in Spain, Rubio mentions (on the basis of Millás Vallicrosa 1942, 16–17) two lists of books that refer to R. Moyses: the first, of Don Sancho of Aragon, Archbishop of Toledo (1266–75), which includes a book entitled *Libro rabi Moyses cuius principium est dixit Moyses egipcius*, and the second, of Don Gonzalo García Gudiel (dated 1273, when he was still bishop of Cuenca), which includes a book entitled *Rabi Moysen*. However, the title of this work in the second list is closer to the title of *Liber de uno deo benedicto* than it is to that of *DN*. This list (Millás Vallicrosa 1942, 17–18) also contains some commentaries of Albertus Magnus on Aristotle, which of course were not composed in Spain. Thus it is difficult to draw conclusions on the basis of this list about the provenance of the book called *Rabi Moysen*. On the other hand, the beginning of the book included in the list of Don Sancho of Aragon does match that of *DN*. On this point, see below, n. 252.

15. Di Segni 2013, cxii–cxxxiii; 2016. With regard to Spain, she gives examples of translations, predating this period and done in Toledo, in which a vernacular language was used

lation, which has never been undertaken before, has the potential to indicate which version of that translation was available to the translator (or to one of the translators) of *DN*. And a detailed examination of its reception among Jewish thinkers, which I can only outline in this essay, will be helpful both to place *DN* geographically and to illuminate the historical contexts in which it was composed. This is particularly true in light of the fact that it has been accepted since Perles that the translator (or one of the translators) of *DN* was Jewish. Moreover, a close study of the technical-philosophical terminology of the translation, its sources, and the translator's own approach to Maimonides' text can teach us something about the educational background of the anonymous translator and help us identify this individual and his cultural world. At the conclusion of the essay, on the basis of these data, I will put forth a new hypothesis about the identity of *DN*'s translator.

### The Textual Tradition of the al-Ḥarizi Translation and the Placement of *DN* in This Tradition

In his translation of the *Guide*, Judah al-Ḥarizi states that he undertook his translation at the request of “some of the nobles and scholars of Provence.”<sup>16</sup> In al-Ḥarizi's *Tahkemoni*, on the other hand, he states that he did the translation of the *Guide* in Spain for a certain “Yosef” to whom he sent it together

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in an intermediate stage of the translation. As I will show below, the existence of an intermediate stage, which holds for other translations, does not seem to have occurred with *DN*. It is also difficult to conclude that there was an intermediate stage of oral translation simply because there exist words in the vernacular; many Jewish scholars used vernacular words in their translations as well as in their original compositions. At times, such as with scholars who were immigrants or transients, they even include words from more than one vernacular language. If the translator was in fact Jewish, it would be natural for him to use vernacular words on occasion. Furthermore, in distinguishing among vernacular words, the distinction between “France” and “Spain” does not always apply because the movements of Jews from Catalonia (and even Castile) to Provence (and even to northern France) are documented throughout the thirteenth century. The Jewish scholars who migrated would sometimes adopt the local language, and sometimes they would not. Di Segni (2013, cxvi, cxxiv–cxxv, cxxxvi; 2016, 34, 43) bases a part of her claim on a few marginal glosses that attribute the translation and explanation of particular expressions in the text to a Jew. She identifies this Jew with the “assistant” of the Christian translator. In my opinion, there is not enough textual evidence that these marginalia are contemporaneous with the translation; they could have been written after *DN* was finished and delivered to Christians who may have requested explanations. It is also important to note that a Christian translator is nowhere mentioned and that the Jew is nowhere referred to as an “assistant” of a Christian translator.

16. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS héb. 682, fol. 1v (Schlosberg, 1:2).

with poems.<sup>17</sup> The translation of the *Guide* is one of many works that al-Ḥarizi graced with more than one dedication. He appended to the translation an introduction, which opens with a poem and two “gates” (*she’arim*). In the first gate al-Ḥarizi offers “an interpretation of every foreign word,” and in the second he outlines “the meaning of each part and chapter.”<sup>18</sup> As he states in his introduction, he produced his translation after that of Samuel Ibn Tibbon.<sup>19</sup> He bases his own translation on the Arabic original<sup>20</sup> and on the earlier version<sup>21</sup> of Ibn Tibbon’s translation,<sup>22</sup> which was completed in 1204.<sup>23</sup>

Al-Ḥarizi’s translation has survived only in the manuscripts that follow, of which only one contains the complete text, MS A.<sup>24</sup>

17. *Tahkemoni* 50:52 (al-Ḥarizi 2010, 547). On the difficulty of reconciling the two dedications, see my forthcoming article in Hebrew (henceforth Rigo, in preparation) on the textual tradition of the al-Ḥarizi translation. Steinschneider (1893, 428) already called into question the reliability of the dedications, pointing out that al-Ḥarizi himself states that he had dedicated the *Tahkemoni* to various people. Yahalom (2009, 12) and Yahalom and Katsumata (2010, 12–13), based on the testimony of Avraham ben ha-Rambam’s *Milhamot ha-Shem* (although the particular text is not reliable), identify Yosef with the tosafist Yosef of Clisson (on which, see Urbach 1980, 318–19) and conclude that Yosef and his brother were the ones who commissioned the translation. This claim is doubtful. Al-Ḥarizi, *Tahkemoni* 39 (al-Ḥarizi 2010, 436, line 80; second version, 452, lines 79–81), claims that he met Yosef ben Barukh and his brother Me’ir in Jerusalem. According to Asher ben Gershom’s “Epistle to the rabbis of northern France” (Shatzmiller 1997, 79), the tosafists were familiar with the Ibn Tibbon translation.

18. The translator of *DN* did not translate al-Ḥarizi’s introduction and two “gates.” In this essay, for the introduction and “gates,” we use Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS héb. 682 unless otherwise noted. For the second gate we will also refer to the version in Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. ebr. 264.

19. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS héb. 682, fol. 1v (Schlosberg, 1:2).

20. At the INALCO conference “Medieval and Early Modern Translations of Maimonides’ *Guide of the Perplexed*” (Paris, March 14, 2016), Joseph Yahalom suggested the possibility that the al-Ḥarizi translation was not based on the Arabic original but rather only on the Ibn Tibbon translation. This theory was already raised by Sonne (1938/39), to which Baneth (1939/40) responded by demonstrating that al-Ḥarizi used the Arabic original. For a clear example, see below, n. 145. See also Raymond Scheindlin’s contribution to this volume.

21. See Sonne 1938/39, 152–53; Langermann 1997, 56; Fraenkel 2007, 114; Bobichon 2008, 158–59. David Kaufmann suggested already in 1910 that al-Ḥarizi used both the Arabic original and Ibn Tibbon’s translation; see Kaufmann 1910, 164.

22. This is a common phenomenon among translators—and not just in Hebrew—when creating a second translation of a work.

23. Ibn Tibbon revised his translation until about 1213. See Fraenkel 2007, 108–24.

24. For a detailed description of the contents of the manuscripts, especially **F**, **H**, and **G**, see Rigo, in preparation. In this essay we do not address the textual tradition of al-Ḥarizi’s introduction and two “gates,” apart from MSS **A** and **G**, since these texts were not included in *DN*. Here it will suffice to note that al-Ḥarizi’s second “gate” appears in several manuscripts

- A** Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS héb. 682, fols. 1v–219r, 13th cent., Sephardic square script, F 11560<sup>25</sup>

This manuscript contains the complete text of the translation, including al-Ḥarizi's introduction and two "gates." According to the testimony of the colophon of Qalonimos ben Yequiel ha-Levi ha-Ṣarfati (whose handwriting matches neither of the two copyists'), the manuscript was in Rome in 1230.<sup>26</sup> Aryeh Leib (Leon) Schlosberg's edition,<sup>27</sup> based on this manuscript, was published in London in 1851 (part I), 1876 (part II), and 1879 (part III). Simon B. Scheyer<sup>28</sup> of Frankfurt am Main annotated part I but did not complete the work before his death. His notes contain some comparisons to the Arabic original and to Ibn Tibbon's translation. Salomon Munk added notes to parts II and III. More than a century ago, David Kaufmann noted problems with Schlosberg's edition.<sup>29</sup>

Comparison of many passages throughout the text reveals frequent mistakes and omissions. Moreover, the text was corrected at times according to the Ibn Tibbon translation, and there are individual words or sentences that appear in the margins of MS A (some of them in a different handwriting) that were inserted into the text. In many instances, these corrections and additions were not even noted by the editor. In the twentieth century, Mosheh Tabah transcribed part I of the manuscript (until the end of chapter 50 [= al-Ḥarizi, chapter 49]).<sup>30</sup>

An additional manuscript, **B**, which was copied from MS A,<sup>31</sup> contains a large portion of the translation.

- B** Cincinnati, Hebrew Union College, MS 703, fols. 1r–150v, Paris 1875–77, Ashkenazi script, F 35535

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that contain Ibn Tibbon's translation. I am very grateful to Malachi Beit-Arié for his advice on dating MSS D, E, and F.

25. A detailed codicological, paleographic, and content description of this manuscript is found in Bobichon 2008, 156–60.

26. See Bobichon 2008, 158–59.

27. See Bobichon 2008, 158, 160.

28. On Simon B. Scheyer, see Kohler 2012, 49–55; Freudenthal 2016b.

29. Kaufmann 1910, 165–66.

30. See Holon, Eli Zeituni, MS 39, F 53692.

31. See the description of this manuscript in the catalogue of the Institute of Micro-filmed Hebrew Manuscripts of the National Library of Israel in Jerusalem.



This manuscript contains part II (completed in Paris, January 5, 1875 [fol. 71v]) and part III (completed in Paris, July 9, 1877 [fol. 150v]). Salomon Munk probably used this manuscript for his annotations to parts II and III of Schlosberg's edition.

The remaining manuscripts are very fragmentary.

- C Jerusalem, National Library of Israel Arc., MS ARC. 4\* 792 04 D23, Leopold Zunz Archive, fols. 1r–5v, 14th cent., Sephardic semicursive script

This manuscript contains the following chapters (according to al-Ḥarizi's enumeration): fol. 1r–v: part I, chapter 73 [partial]; fols. 2r–4v: part II, chapter 7 [partial]–chapter 12 [partial]; fol. 5r–v: part I, chapter 72 [partial].

- D Cambridge, Westminster College, MS G. F. Talmudica II 71, 1 folio [Cairo Genizah],<sup>32</sup> 14th cent., Sephardic semicursive script, F 12578

This manuscript contains only short fragments of the text: fol. 1r: part I, chapter 17 [beginning missing], chapter 18 [beginning and end only]; fol. 1v: chapter 18 [partial], chapter 19 [beginning missing], chapter 20 [end missing].

- E St. Petersburg, Russian National Library, MS Evr. I 528, fols. 6r–17v, 15th cent., Sephardic semicursive script, F 51029<sup>33</sup>

This manuscript contains the following chapters (according to al-Ḥarizi's enumeration): fol. 6r–v: part I, chapter 41 [first few lines missing]–chapter 45 [beginning only]; fol. 7r–v: part II, chapter 12 [beginning missing]–chapter 13 [beginning only]; fols. 8r–9v: part I, chapter 59 [end only]–chapter 62 [only the first few lines]; fol. 10r–v: part II, chapter 46 [beginning and end missing]; fols. 11r–16v:

32. This is text no. 37 in the manuscript in the list of the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts.

33. This manuscript contains several paleographic units and was written by many scribes. We address here only the portion that contains al-Ḥarizi's translation. According to the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts, fols. 7r–18v contain a translation of the *Guide* by Moses Ibn Tibbon. Fraenkel (2007, 100n214) concluded that these folios of the manuscript are the al-Ḥarizi translation. An examination of the manuscript reveals that the passages from the al-Ḥarizi translation already appear on fol. 6.

part I, chapter 50 [second half only]–chapter 57 [beginning only]; fol. 17r–v: part III, chapter 14 [end only]–chapter 16 [beginning only].

In addition to these manuscripts, there are two manuscripts that contain individual chapters from the al-Ḥarizi translation, with corrections on the basis of the Arabic original and Ibn Tibbon's translation.

- F** Cedarhurst New York, M. R. Lehmann Collection, MS MA 13, fols. 1r–5v, second half of the 14th cent., Sephardic semicursive script, F 72897

This manuscript contains the following chapters, according to the chapter division in the Arabic original and Ibn Tibbon translation:<sup>34</sup> fol. 1r: part II, chapter 32 [= al-Ḥarizi, chapter 33; partial]; fol. 1v: continuation of part II, chapter 32 [= al-Ḥarizi, chapter 33] and beginning of chapter 33 [= al-Ḥarizi, chapter 34]; fols. 2r–5v: part II, chapter 37 [= al-Ḥarizi, chapter 38; opening words missing]–chapter 40 [= al-Ḥarizi, chapter 41; partial]. In this manuscript, words or passages are sometimes quoted from the Judeo-Arabic original: in the outer margins of fols. 3r–4r, next to chapter 38 (= al-Ḥarizi, chapter 39), almost the entirety of chapter 38 appears in Judeo-Arabic; in the outer margins of fol. 2r, next to chapter 37 (= al-Ḥarizi, chapter 38), and in fols. 3r, 4r, and 5v, there are individual words or sentences from the Judeo-Arabic original.

In addition to references to the Judeo-Arabic original in the margins, a comparison of the entire text in the manuscript with the version in MS A suggests that this version was corrected on the basis of the Judeo-Arabic original, but not systematically or in every part; portions of the text contain no corrections. In certain places the corrected version matches Ibn Tibbon.

- H** New York, JTS, MS 2293 (Acc. 2985), fols. 48[49]r–70[71]r, second half of the 14th cent.–early 15th cent., Oriental semicursive script, F 28546

This manuscript contains the following chapters, according to

34. On the topic of the chapter numbering in the Arabic original and Ibn Tibbon's translation, see Jospe 1988; Sirat 2011b, 32–33.

the chapter division in the Ibn Tibbon translation:<sup>35</sup> part II, chapter 29 [= al-Ḥarizi, chapter 30; last sentence]–chapter 45 [= al-Ḥarizi, chapter 46; partial].

This version was corrected on the basis of the Judeo-Arabic original only on specific points. In certain places, the corrected version matches Ibn Tibbon. The text in this manuscript is very close to that of MS F, but F presents more corrections. There are some mistakes and omissions in MS H.

In addition to these manuscripts, one manuscript contains the entire text of the *Guide*, based on a combination of the al-Ḥarizi and Ibn Tibbon translations. This manuscript is listed in the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts of the National Library in Jerusalem and in the catalogue of the Hebrew manuscript collections of the Vatican Library as containing the Ibn Tibbon translation.<sup>36</sup>

- G** Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. ebr. 264, fols. 1r–196r, 14th cent., Sephardic semicursive script, F 321

This manuscript contains the following: fols. 1r–6r: al-Ḥarizi's summary of the chapters (= MS A, gate 2); fols. 6v–196r: the entire text of the *Guide*. The division into chapters follows the Ibn Tibbon translation in the first part and the al-Ḥarizi translation in the second. (The chapter enumeration is identical in the two translations of the third part.)

A comparison of many sections throughout the text indicates that sometimes the base text is Ibn Tibbon (for instance, in the “Epistle Dedicatory”), corrected on the basis of al-Ḥarizi, but often the base text is al-Ḥarizi, corrected on the basis of Ibn Tibbon. The version of the Ibn Tibbon translation preserved in this manuscript reflects remnants of Ibn Tibbon's first version. In most cases this manuscript contains a very good version of the al-Ḥarizi translation, and is close to that used by Jewish thinkers active in Toledo. For those chap-

35. According to the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts, the manuscript contains only the Ibn Tibbon translation. This is true for the other chapters transmitted in this manuscript.

36. The catalogue of the Hebrew manuscripts in the Vatican Library notes that the manuscript contains the Ibn Tibbon translation with textual variants from the printed version of the Ibn Tibbon translation. See Richler 2008, 195. According to this catalogue, the manuscript was copied in either Spain or Morocco.

ters based on al-Ḥarizi, this manuscript, which has until now been treated in the scholarly literature as representative of Ibn Tibbon, is extremely important.

An examination of the manuscripts of the al-Ḥarizi translation in this brief survey of the textual tradition shows that all of the medieval manuscripts—except for **H**—were written in a Sephardic script, even though MS **A** was found in Rome already in 1230. Moreover, the manuscript tradition testifies to the fact that while the al-Ḥarizi translation enjoyed its own distribution, it coexisted with parallel traditions in which the translation was corrected according to the Arabic original and/or Ibn Tibbon's translation.

The al-Ḥarizi translation is thus contained in only a small number of medieval manuscripts, and for significant portions of the text there is only one representative: MS **A**. Therefore, it is not always possible to establish whether that version faithfully conveys al-Ḥarizi's translation or if there were errors in the transmission of the manuscript. Moreover, a comparison of all the partial manuscripts and many chapters in MS **G** with MS **A** indicates that the version in MS **A** at times represents a corrupted (and sometimes extremely corrupted) text. This point is, of course, relevant not only for the text of the al-Ḥarizi translation itself but also for the version of al-Ḥarizi used by the translator of *DN*. MS **A** belongs to a branch of the translation's textual tradition in which corruptions and omissions occurred at a very early stage. MSS **C** and **E** also belong to this branch (even though MS **C**, which belongs to a different family, at times contains a version that is far superior to that of MS **A**). In contrast, the manuscripts of the al-Ḥarizi translation that were available to the antigraph of MSS **F** and **H**, the scribe of MS **G**, and the translator of *DN* contain a far superior version of the translation and belong to a different branch (and even to different families) of the tradition in which there were fewer corruptions. Concerning MS **D**, it is difficult to tell to which branch of the tradition it belongs, given the very little text contained in it. *DN*, which is not dependent on MS **A** or any other extant Hebrew manuscript, when interpreted literally is invaluable indirect testimony to the version of the al-Ḥarizi translation its translator used, especially for those passages that are preserved only in MS **A**. The division of the textual tradition of the al-Ḥarizi translation into branches and families at a very early stage suggests that the al-Ḥarizi translation enjoyed a relatively wide distribution soon after its completion.

It is doubtful that the translator of *DN* consulted the Arabic original, and if there are corrections, they are on the basis of Ibn Tibbon's translation

and only on specific points. This raises the question whether the translator himself corrected the text or whether he used a manuscript of the al-Ḥarizi translation that was already corrected.<sup>37</sup>

### The Tradition of the *Guide* among Jewish Thinkers Active in Provence, Italy, and Spain during the Period of *DN*'s Translation, and the Place of *DN* in This Tradition

In the decades soon after its completion, Ibn Tibbon's translation enjoyed great fame and wide distribution in Provence.<sup>38</sup> To give a few examples, it is the translation used in the biblical commentaries of David Qimḥi,<sup>39</sup> in Asher ben Gershom's epistle to the rabbis of northern France,<sup>40</sup> in the writings of Moses Ibn Tibbon, in the anonymous tract *Ruah ḥen*,<sup>41</sup> and, later, in the writings of Levi ben Avraham (throughout *Levyat ḥen*)<sup>42</sup> and Josef Ibn Kaspi (in his two commentaries on the *Guide*). It is interesting to note that Ibn Tibbon's influence can also be detected among the first kabbalists in Provence, such as Asher ben David,<sup>43</sup> and among rabbinic scholars who

37. For a reconstruction of the textual tradition of the al-Ḥarizi translation, based on comparison of MS A with all partial Hebrew manuscripts and with many chapters of MS G and *DN*, see Rigo, in preparation. The examples of corrections mentioned by scholars on the basis of Schlosberg's edition (see above, n. 6) that are not dependent on the technical terminology of the translator of *DN* are either corruptions in MS A or already testified in the manuscript tradition of al-Ḥarizi's translation. Many other examples show that there are only very few places in which *DN* apparently testifies to corrections (all of which match the Ibn Tibbon translation) that are not corruptions in MS A or testified in the extant Hebrew manuscripts.

38. Al-Ḥarizi's second "gate" is found in some of the manuscripts containing the Ibn Tibbon translation. Our survey does not address the reception of this text, which was known in Provence, Italy, and Spain.

39. On David Qimḥi's friendship with Ibn Tibbon, see Talmage 1975, 72, 120; Fraenkel 2007, 132, 135.

40. See Asher ben Gershom, "Epistle to the rabbis of northern France" (Shatzmiller 1997, 79), who refers to Ibn Tibbon as "the translator" of the *Guide*.

41. This work was written between 1210 and 1272, probably in Provence. It may have been completed already in the first half of the thirteenth century. See Elior 2016, 22–24.

42. Levi ben Avraham maintained a friendship with Moses Ibn Tibbon. On this topic, see Kreisel 2007, xvii; 2010, 28–32.

43. In his *Sefer ha-yihud*, Asher ben David (1996, 143–44) quotes from Samuel Ibn Tibbon's *Shulḥan we-lehem ha-panim*, in which Ibn Tibbon refers to *Guide* III 45. On Asher ben David's treatment of Maimonides, see Dauber 2009, 75–88. Despite Dauber's statements (p. 80; and see also p. 70), there is no concrete evidence that Asher ben David used the al-Ḥarizi translation. On the circle of scholars in Narbonne who combined philosophy with kabbalah, see Ben-Shalom 2014, 588–603.

were active later, such as Menaḥem ha-Me'iri<sup>44</sup> and Abba Mari of Lunel in his *Minḥat qena'ot*. Alongside use of the Ibn Tibbon translation, there is also documented use of the Arabic original of the *Guide*: Levi ben Avraham reports that Moses Ibn Tibbon made isolated corrections to the translation based on the Arabic original, and Ibn Kaspi used the Arabic original in his glosses on the *Guide*.<sup>45</sup>

Despite the fact, mentioned earlier, that al-Ḥarizi writes in his translator's introduction that he translated the *Guide* at the request of "some of the nobles and scholars of Provence," and even though Samuel Ibn Tibbon clearly had a copy of al-Ḥarizi's translation when he composed his own *Perush ha-millot ha-zarot* (*Glossary of Foreign Words*) because he refers to it,<sup>46</sup> there is no evidence of extensive distribution of the al-Ḥarizi translation in Provence. It very much stands to reason that Ibn Tibbon's status in this region, the harsh criticism that the al-Ḥarizi translation received in *Perush ha-millot ha-zarot*, and the influence of Ibn Tibbon's original tracts contributed to this phenomenon.

In Italy, we witness a situation similar to that found in Provence: thirteenth-century Maimonidean thinkers all make use of the Ibn Tibbon translation. Jacob Anatoli (who came to Naples from Provence around the year 1231), in *Malmd ha-talmidim*, refers to his study of the *Guide* with his father-in-law, Samuel Ibn Tibbon, and uses the Ibn Tibbon translation in his sermons.<sup>47</sup> Other thinkers active in this period (but later than *DN*) also used Ibn Tibbon's translation: Anatolio ben Jacob Anatoli,<sup>48</sup> Moses ben Solomon of Salerno (who was also greatly influenced by Ibn Tibbon's original works),<sup>49</sup>

44. On the deep connection between the Me'iri and the Maimonidean tradition, particularly Samuel Ibn Tibbon and Jacob Anatoli, see Halbertal 2000.

45. See Fraenkel 2007, 97–102. However, we do not know if Ibn Kaspi's Arabic glosses were composed in Provence.

46. Fraenkel notes that *Perush ha-millot ha-zarot* was composed over a very long period of time. It is not certain that Ibn Tibbon mentioned al-Ḥarizi in the first redaction of this work. See Fraenkel 2007, 108–24.

47. Gadi Weber, currently writing a dissertation at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem on *Malmd ha-talmidim*, is reconstructing the chronology of the *Malmd*.

48. In his commentary on the *Guide*, Moses of Salerno refers seven times to Anatolio, the son of Jacob Anatoli, and notes that he was his teacher. Some of these references refer directly to the text of Ibn Tibbon's translation. On the other hand, Moses of Salerno apparently did not know Jacob Anatoli personally, and all of the citations are based on *Malmd ha-talmidim*, which is quoted explicitly seventeen times.

49. Perles (1875, 8) already mentioned that Moses of Salerno used the Ibn Tibbon translation. A thorough examination of the entire text confirms Perles's statement. Moses of Salerno, who was active after the reign of Frederick II, refers twice in his commentary to

and Isaiah ben Moses of Salerno.<sup>50</sup> The same state of affairs is in effect at the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth centuries, as we can see from the use of the Ibn Tibbon translation in the works of Immanuel of Rome—who, it is interesting to note, is influenced by al-Ḥarizi’s poetry in his *Mahberot* but prefers to use Ibn Tibbon’s translation of the *Guide* in his biblical exegesis—and Judah Romano.

The situation was more complicated among scholars who arrived in Italy from Spain or who were connected, to one or another degree, to the Spanish context. Judah ben Solomon ha-Kohen, who left Toledo for northern Italy (Lombardy and Tuscany) around 1245 and in Italy translated his encyclopedic work *Midrash ha-hokhmah* from Arabic into Hebrew,<sup>51</sup> never quotes verbatim from the *Guide*.<sup>52</sup> However, it stands to reason that he read the *Guide* in its Judeo-Arabic original,<sup>53</sup> just as he read other philosophical texts in their original language.<sup>54</sup> The terminology in those passages in which the influence of Maimonides can be felt—for instance, use of the term *shem shutaf* for “equivocal term”—appears to substantiate this supposition inasmuch as it demonstrates terminological independence from

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a first “version,” which apparently was not an actual commentary but rather a collection of notes. The extant version, which was copied by his son Isaiah, includes a commentary on the first two parts of the *Guide*. It is doubtful that Moses of Salerno composed a commentary on the third part, even though he expressed the desire to do so. (His commentary includes six references, using the future tense, to chapters in the third part.) According to a note found in one manuscript, Moses of Salerno did not have enough time to conclude his commentary before he died (1279). With regard to the influence of Ibn Tibbon, the commentary includes eight explicit references to Ibn Tibbon’s *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* and nineteen references to his *Ma’amar yiqawwu ha-mayim*, in addition to the use of *Perush ha-millot ha-zarot* and of some of Ibn Tibbon’s glosses on his translation. At times, Moses of Salerno places Ibn Tibbon on almost the same level as Maimonides.

50. Isaiah ben Moses helped establish the Maimonidean tradition in the city of Salerno: (1) he copied part of Maimonides’ *Mishneh Torah* in Salerno in 1266 (see Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, MS Cod. Parm. 2750, F 13600); (2) he copied Ibn Tibbon’s translations of the *Guide* and the *Treatise on Resurrection* (see Cambridge, University Library, MS Add. 657, F 16987); and (3) he copied his father’s extant commentary on the *Guide* (cf. n. 49), adding a note to its introduction.

51. See Sirat 1978, 40–43; Fontaine 2000, 191–92. According to Fontaine, the lost Arabic text of the book was probably written in the 1230s.

52. On Judah ha-Kohen’s ambivalent attitude toward Maimonides, see Sirat (1978, 43–45), who notes that he identifies the *Guide* as the text that caused him to study the works of the philosophers, although he never quotes it. On this last point, see also Fontaine 2000, 194.

53. This is not obvious: there are thinkers active in Toledo (e.g., Isaac Ibn Latif) who knew Arabic quite well and nonetheless used the Hebrew translations rather than the Arabic original.

54. On the sources of *Midrash ha-hokhmah*, see especially Fontaine 2000.

the two translations. During the period following the translation of *DN*, the commentary on the *Guide* by Zerahyah ben Isaac ben Shealtiel Hen of Barcelona, who came to Rome in the mid-1270s, uses the Ibn Tibbon translation as its base text. However, the version of the *Guide* that Zerahyah uses does not reflect the Italian tradition of the text. This raises the possibility that he brought a Spanish copy with him from Spain.<sup>55</sup>

Like most other Italian thinkers active at that time, Hillel of Verona generally uses Ibn Tibbon's translation. Accordingly, he identifies Ibn Tibbon as "the translator" of the *Guide* in his *Perush le-k"h ha-haqdamot* (*Commentary on the Twenty-Five Premises*, i.e., the philosophers' premises in the introduction to part II of the *Guide*). But in his tract entitled *Tagmule ha-nefesh* (*The Rewards of the Soul*; henceforth *Rewards*), which he completed in his old age around the year 1291, he sometimes uses the al-Ḥarizi translation alongside Ibn Tibbon, or he combines the two.<sup>56</sup> It is possible that Hillel of Verona was exposed to the al-Ḥarizi translation already in his youth when, according to his own testimony, he resided in Barcelona for three years in the *beit ha-midrash* (school) of Jonah Gerondi—a point to which we will return in the last part of this essay.<sup>57</sup>

55. It also appears that at times he uses the al-Ḥarizi translation in his commentary; see Rigo, in preparation.

56. For examples, see Hillel of Verona 1981, 55, 161–62, and Sermoneta's comments *ad loc.*

57. Hillel of Verona refers to his time in Spain three times in his writings: (1) first letter to Maestro Gaio (*Ḥemdah genuzah*, fol. 20r); (2) *Perush le-k"h ha-haqdamot* (Hillel of Verona 1874a, 39v); (3) *Tagmule ha-nefesh* (Hillel of Verona 1981, 134). According to his testimonies, he lived for three years in Barcelona "in his youth" and studied in the school of Jonah Gerondi before Jonah left Barcelona for Toledo. Nonetheless, Sermoneta (1962, 1:6–17) questions whether Hillel actually spent time in Spain. On the other hand, Zev Harvey (1983, 536–37) and, following Harvey, Jospe (1987, 91) and Fraenkel (2007, 88), who refer to the testimony in the *Rewards*, favor the idea that Hillel did in fact sojourn in Spain. In the first letter to Maestro Gaio, Hillel also notes that Jonah Gerondi, who was a student of Solomon of Montpellier and played an important role in the campaign against Maimonides in the 1230s, radically changed his attitude toward Maimonides after the Maimonidean controversy. Regarding this testimony by Hillel about Jonah Gerondi's "repentance," Baer (1961–66, 1:401–2) rejects it as evidence (without addressing the question of Hillel's time in Spain), while Shrock (1948, 48–59) holds a middle position. As opposed to Baer, Septimus (1982, 150–51n44) and Ta-Shma (1988, 167) note that there is a kernel of truth in Hillel's testimony about Jonah Gerondi's "repentance" and sharp change of attitude toward Maimonides after the controversy. Recently, Leicht (2013, 580, 584), who analyzes the first letter to Maestro Gaio from a literary perspective, appears to question Hillel's reliability, whereas Schwartz (2009, 10; 2015, 109–10; 2016, 492) appears to accept that Hillel spent time in Spain with Jonah Gerondi. According to my own research, independent sources confirm Hillel's testimony concerning his sojourn in Spain and, for the most part, his testimony about Jonah



Abraham Abulafia, originally from Saragossa, who apparently first studied the *Guide* in Italy, uses Ibn Tibbon's translation, but he is also familiar with that of al-Ḥarizi.<sup>58</sup>

Thus, even though the oldest manuscript of the al-Ḥarizi translation (written in Sephardic script, MS A) was already found in Rome in 1230, the Ibn Tibbon translation was the primary translation used by Jewish thinkers active in Italy in the thirteenth century. One also witnesses the centrality of this translation among Spanish thinkers active in Italy and among Italian

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Gerondi (see Rigo, in preparation). Most scholars who address the question whether Hillel spent time in Spain specify the years as 1259/60–1262/63, apart from Schwartz (2015, 110; 2016, 492n32) who justifiably antedates Hillel's sojourn in Spain to the 1240s or early 1250s, in accordance with his dating of Jonah Gerondi's departure from Barcelona. I believe that it is possible to arrive at dates for Hillel's time in Spain with some precision. According to Jewish sources from Toledo, Jonah Gerondi took the place of Me'ir ha-Levi Abulafia (Ramah) as rabbi of Toledo when Ramah died in 1244. Hillel notes that he studied in Barcelona for three years before Jonah Gerondi left for Toledo and that he was present when he departed. Based on these sources, we can establish that Hillel was in Barcelona around the years 1241/42–44. Hillel was also in Montpellier (as we know from the first letter to Maestro Gaio; *Ḥemdah genuzah*, fol. 20r) and in Narbonne (as we know from a different letter to Maestro Gaio published in Richler 1988/89, 451–52), but he does not state explicitly when. In the years 1255–56, he was one of three rabbinic judges in a trial in Marseille involving two representatives of one of the most famous Jewish families of the time: the Ibn Tibbon family. (On this trial, see Loeb 1886, 1887/88; Sermoneta 1962, 1:4; Schreiber 1967, 65–85, no. 11; Kreisel 2010, 11.) Hillel is mentioned by Abraham Abulafia in 1285–86 (see n. 58) as “a philosopher and expert physician” with whom he studied philosophy in the city of Capua (probably in the 1260s). Hillel completed the first version of his major work, the *Rewards*, in Forlì in 1291, toward the end of his life, but it is possible that revision continued after 1291. The date 1291 appears—although in corrupted form—already in Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS hebr. 120, which, as Sermoneta states in his introduction to his edition, contains an earlier version of the text. This manuscript is also the only extant witness that contains the three “additions” or *quaestiones* (*mevuqqashim*) that Hillel added to the *Rewards* (see Sermoneta 1981, xv). The precise date for his death is unknown, but it is generally accepted to be around 1295; see Sermoneta 1962, 1:2, 39. On Hillel of Verona, see also below, in the section “A Hypothesis for the Identification of DN's Translator.”

58. Moshe Idel notes several times in his studies that Abulafia primarily uses Ibn Tibbon's translation, even though he was familiar with that of al-Ḥarizi (who is mentioned by name in the commentary on the *Guide* entitled *Ḥayye ha-nefesh*; see A. Abulafia 2001, 80). On the evidence of an autobiographical passage in *Ošar 'eden ganuz* (1285–86), Idel mentions that, before Abulafia's journey to Barcelona in 1270 and his turn to the study of kabbalah, he studied philosophy and the *Guide* with Hillel of Verona in Capua. (Idel dates the meeting with Hillel to 1263.) Abulafia wrote *Sitre Torah*, one of his three commentaries on the *Guide*, in Capua in 1280, using the Ibn Tibbon translation as his base text (although the chapter numbering in part I is identical to that of al-Ḥarizi and the first edition of Ibn Tibbon's translation; see Jospe 1988, 388). On all the above, see Idel 1990, 57–60; 2004, 211; forthcoming.

thinkers with a connection to Spain. However, with this last group of thinkers there is also documented use of al-Ḥarizi,<sup>59</sup> and apparently some use of the Arabic original (for example, by Judah ha-Kohen).

Before turning to Spain, we should come back to Jacob Anatoli and Moses of Salerno. Anatoli was of course in contact with the translator and philosopher Michael Scotus during the rule of Frederick II, and Moses was in contact with Christian scholars, including Nicolaus of Giovinazzo (“the Christian scholar”). Moses also mentions *DN* twenty-five times in his commentary on the *Guide*, which is the earliest evidence currently available for the use of *DN* in Hebrew texts by Jewish thinkers.<sup>60</sup> As we mentioned earlier, the scholarly literature has also connected Frederick II’s court with the composition of *DN*.

Despite the fact that Jacob Anatoli’s *Malmad ha-talmidim* quotes Michael Scotus several times and Frederick II once concerning views of Maimonides in the *Guide*,<sup>61</sup> from these quotations it does not appear that either Michael Scotus or Frederick had direct access—independently of

59. An additional example is the kabbalist Menaḥem Recanati, who, at least in some of his references to Maimonides, uses Spanish sources based on the al-Ḥarizi translation. As Idel (1998b, 81–110) notes, Recanati is closely connected to the Spanish tradition.

60. Perles (1875, 8–12) already noted most of the quotations (eighteen out of twenty-five) from *DN* in Moses of Salerno’s commentary on the *Guide*. He also connects the translation of *DN* with the environment of Moses of Salerno and Nicolaus of Giovinazzo (p. 21), but this claim seems wrong. In his commentary, Moses mentions Nicolaus of Giovinazzo twenty-one times, but only some quotations overlap with the quotations from *DN*. In one of the quotations, he connects Nicolaus of Giovinazzo directly with the Latin translation, but there seems to be a corruption in the text of the commentary copied by his son Isaiah. This testimony also contradicts other quotations according to which Nicolaus of Giovinazzo consulted the text of *DN* but did not actually translate it. On the quotations of Nicolaus of Giovinazzo, see Rigo 1999, 106–46. It should also be noted that some of Moses’s references to *DN* are imprecise, which is difficult to explain if *DN* was the result of collaboration between Moses and Nicolaus of Giovinazzo. Moses also would not have needed to consult the Latin translation if he had been one of its translators. On the other hand, it would be possible to explain these imprecisions if Moses had been assisted in his comparison with the Latin translation by another individual—which seems to be the case, based on a few quotations from the translation according to which it was Nicolaus who had compared the Latin translation. If so, then when he wrote his commentary on the *Guide*, at least the extant version, he could no longer use the text of *DN* or ask Nicolaus of Giovinazzo about his version. Indeed, from some quotations of Nicolaus of Giovinazzo, it can be established that the connection with the Christian scholar predated the composition of the commentary, at least in its extant version.

61. On the quotations from Michael Scotus and Frederick II in *Malmad ha-talmidim*, see Sirat 1989, 181–91; Pepi 2004, 25–27.

Anatoli—to the complete text.<sup>62</sup> It is also reasonable to think that if *DN* had been executed in Frederick’s court, then the anonymous translator would have used the Arabic original of the text, just as Michael Scotus and other translators active in Frederick’s court had used Arabic texts for their translations of other works and just as Judah ha-Kohen used the Arabic original of the *Guide*. Otherwise, the anonymous translator would have used the Ibn Tibbon translation, from which Anatoli quotes verbatim and which enjoyed wide distribution among Jewish scholars active in Italy during the period immediately after the translation of *DN*. By contrast, Nicolaus of Giovinazzo, “the Christian scholar,”<sup>63</sup> already had direct access to *DN*; when Moses of Salerno was in contact with him, the Latin translation of the *Guide* was already complete, and “the Christian scholar” had a copy of it.<sup>64</sup> Indeed, from references to Nicolaus of Giovinazzo in Moses’s commentary on the *Guide*, it seems that it was “the Christian scholar” himself who had examined the Latin translation. Furthermore, Moses’s commentary includes more than 230 vernacular words,<sup>65</sup> some of which are based on *DN*. Thus the influence of *DN* is evident not only in the twenty-five references to the Latin translation but also in the vernacular words that Moses used.

In contrast to the situation in Provence and Italy, in Spain we find wide-

62. Burnett (1994, 118n4) and Hasselhoff (2004, 37) mention the quotation of “Rabbi Moyses” that appears in Michael Scotus’s *Liber quatuor distinctionum* (part of the *Introductorius*) and point out that the Maimonidean ideas in the passage were conveyed to him orally. On this quotation, see also Wheeler 2012, 1–6, 45, 66.

63. It is likely that Nicolaus of Giovinazzo was a faculty member at the *studium* in Naples, which was transferred to Salerno in the years 1252–58 by order of King Conrad IV of Hohenstaufen. We know only a few names of faculty members at the *studium* in Naples, among them Petrus of Hibernia (whom we know through his own extant writings and through the biographers of Thomas Aquinas, who mention him as one of Aquinas’s two teachers before he joined the Dominican order). Petrus of Hibernia is also mentioned twice by Moses of Salerno in his writings. When he wrote his commentary on the *Guide* (the extant version), Moses was no longer in contact with Nicolaus of Giovinazzo. It stands to reason that he had been in contact with him and other Christian scholars (like Petrus of Hibernia) when the *studium* of Naples was in Salerno. In this context, it is worth stating that all of the political or ecclesiastical personalities whom Moses mentions directly in his writings (Frederick II is mentioned only on the basis of *Malmad ha-talmidim*), such as Margrave Bertholdus de Hohenburg and the archbishop Matthaues de Porta, are connected with the city of Salerno, where his son was also active. See Rigo 1999.

64. *DN* was already available in Italy by the 1250s.

65. These words and those that appear in the glossary published by Sermoneta (1969) overlap only partially: some terms that appear in the commentary do not appear in the glossary, and some terms in the glossary do not appear in the commentary.

spread use of the al-Ḥarizi translation and references to it,<sup>66</sup> substantiating al-Ḥarizi's own testimony in the *Taḥkemoni* that he translated the *Guide* in Spain (and if in Spain, then probably in his native city of Toledo). This raises the question whether Ibn Tibbon was exposed to al-Ḥarizi's translation in Provence or whether he obtained a copy of it when he traveled to Barcelona and Toledo (before 1210).<sup>67</sup> In the years surrounding the translation of *DN*, we find the kabbalists Ezra ben Solomon,<sup>68</sup> Azri'el ben Solomon,<sup>69</sup> and Jacob ben Sheshet (both in *Sha'ar ha-emunah we-ha-biṭṭaḥon* and in *Meshiv devarim nekhoḥim*, which was written in 1240)<sup>70</sup> in the Catalonian city of Gerona all using the al-Ḥarizi translation. Similarly, the poet and kabbalist Meshullam ben Solomon de Piera mentions the al-Ḥarizi translation in one of his poems,<sup>71</sup> and in another poem refers more generally to "the translators."<sup>72</sup> Nahmanides also usually uses the al-Ḥarizi translation, though it is possible that he sometimes consults the Arabic original of the *Guide*, especially concerning subjects of great importance to him, such as "the Holy Tongue" (that is, Hebrew) or the reasons for the commandments.<sup>73</sup> In Barcelona, during the controversy over the writings of Maimonides in the 1230s, Samuel ben Abraham Saporta uses the Ibn Tibbon translation in his epistle to the rabbis of northern France.<sup>74</sup> Abraham Ibn Ḥasday also knew

66. My survey of the *Guide*'s reception in Spain stops at the years around the production of *DN*. For the second half of the thirteenth century, see Rigo, in preparation.

67. On the dating of Ibn Tibbon's journey, see Robinson 2007b, 5, 19, 109.

68. See, e.g., *Iggeret le-R. Avraham* (Ezra ben Solomon 1998, 26, 28); *Perush le-Shir ha-shirim* (Ezra ben Solomon 1964, 494).

69. See Scholem 1987, 419–21. On the use of al-Ḥarizi by the Gerona kabbalists, see Gottlieb 1976, 520; Scholem 1987, 419–22; 1998, 28n82; Dauber 2009, 70; Yahalom and Katsumata 2010, 12n2.

70. On Jacob ben Sheshet's use of al-Ḥarizi, see Vajda 1962, 40; Vajda and Gottlieb 1968, 14–15; Gottlieb 1976, 520.

71. De Piera 1885, *shir* 10, p. 3.

72. De Piera 1938, *shir* 40, p. 90.

73. Jospe (1987, 68–79) is of the opinion that Nahmanides uses the al-Ḥarizi translation and the Arabic original. In his commentary on the Torah, Nahmanides quotes only once from the Ibn Tibbon translation (Jospe 1987, 78), and this quotation is one that Nahmanides added after his emigration to the Holy Land. See Jacobs 2012, 114–15. According to Jacobs, Nahmanides was not familiar with the Ibn Tibbon translation when he was in Catalonia. The works of Nahmanides that Jospe and Jacobs address are later than *DN*, but Nahmanides quotes from the *Guide* already in the epistles of the Maimonidean controversy in the 1230s. In these epistles, he uses the al-Ḥarizi translation; see, e.g., Nahmanides 1963, 1:349.

74. For his use of the translation of Ibn Tibbon, who is referred to as "the translator" (*ha-ma'atiq*), see, e.g., *Qevuṣat mikhtavim*, 101–3. See also Fraenkel 2007, 92.

this translation, as can be seen from the introduction to his translation of al-Ghazālī's *Mozne šedeq*, where he bases himself on Ibn Tibbon's introduction to his translation of the *Guide*.

Moving on to Castile, the Arabic original of the *Guide* could be found in Toledo already before Maimonides' death in 1204.<sup>75</sup> Thus in Toledo, during the controversy surrounding Maimonides' writings in the 1230s, we find Judah Alfakhar in his epistolary exchange with David Qimḥi referring to Maimonides' text, that is, to the original Arabic, and to Ibn Tibbon's translation.<sup>76</sup> In Burgos, Josef ben Todros ha-Levi was familiar with the Arabic original and with both translations.<sup>77</sup> As for original works written during this period in Toledo, the evidence is somewhat mixed. Isaac Ibn Latif, in his *Sha'ar ha-shamayim* (1238), prefers the al-Ḥarizi translation but also makes use of Ibn Tibbon.<sup>78</sup> One finds systematic use of the Ibn Tibbon translation (as a base text) in an anonymous commentary on the *Guide* (preserved in Talmud Torah Library of Livorno, MS 40), which might have been written in Toledo around the time of the controversy of the 1230s. But this text also contains references to al-Ḥarizi's translation.<sup>79</sup> In his *Derashot 'al ha-Torah*, apparently written in Toledo after 1244, Jonah Gerondi (or his school)<sup>80</sup> uses the Arabic original, but it is possible that he used the translations as well.<sup>81</sup>

In sum, during this period in Castile we witness greater use of Ibn Tibbon's translation than we saw in Catalonia. The widespread use in Catalonia

75. According to the testimony of Me'ir ha-Levi Abulafia. See Septimus 1982, 18, 55.

76. *Qoveš teshuvot ha-Rambam*, 3:3r.

77. *Qevuṣat mikhtavim*, 20. On Josef ben Todros ha-Levi's stance during the controversy of the 1230s, see Septimus 1982, especially 94–96.

78. On his use of the two translations, see Esudri 2008, 1:297–302. Contrary to Esudri's suggestion, it seems that Ibn Latif did not use the Arabic original; see Rigo, in preparation.

79. On this commentary, see Langermann 1997; Fraenkel 2007, 89, 255–62, 279–80. On its sources, see Fraenkel (2007, 255–56), who claims that the commentary is very early and possibly written while Ibn Tibbon was still alive. (The author notes that he had seen Ibn Tibbon's own manuscript.) Based on certain passages in the commentary, I believe it should be dated to the period of the Maimonidean controversy of the 1230s, and located in Toledo, since it includes a quotation (apparently oral) from Alfakhar, which Langermann and Fraenkel have already addressed. It is possible that the author of the commentary saw a copy by Ibn Tibbon when the latter visited Toledo.

80. According to Ta-Shma (1988, 188–91), the sermons should be ascribed to Jonah Gerondi or his school. Ta-Shma believed that they were composed during the years 1240–50.

81. Most of the quotations are not verbatim. But in terms of terminology, they are clearly related to the Arabic text, even if they also indicate use of the translations; see Rigo, in preparation.

during this period of al-Ḥarizi's translation instead of Ibn Tibbon's probably stemmed from opposition to Ibn Tibbon himself—opposition expressed most strongly by Jacob ben Sheshet in his *Meshiv devarim nekhohim*, where he attacks numerous positions of Ibn Tibbon in *Ma'amar yiqqawu ha-mayim*.<sup>82</sup> First and foremost is Ibn Tibbon's position supporting the eternity of the universe (according to Aristotelian doctrine), a view that Jacob ben Sheshet also attacks in *Sha'ar ha-shamayim* (1243–46), though without mentioning Ibn Tibbon by name.<sup>83</sup> Nahmanides, in the Maimonidean controversy of the 1230s, also seems to gesture at Ibn Tibbon and his associates when he refers to “those who occupy themselves with the *Guide of the Perplexed*, in all their factions,” and criticizes the public dissemination of the *Guide* in Provence as contrary to Maimonides' own intentions and in violation of his oath at the beginning of the *Guide*.<sup>84</sup> It is also possible that he is hinting at *Ma'amar yiqqawu ha-mayim* when he speaks of the nascent spread in Spain of “flattering writings [cf. Ps 12:4] that steal hearts [cf. 2 Sam 15:6] and flatter thoughts.”<sup>85</sup> During the same period, Meshullam de Piera not only offers harsh criticism of the *Guide* but also criticizes Maimonides' supporters in Provence, by whom he seems to mean Ibn Tibbon and his associates.<sup>86</sup> Of course, criticism of Ibn Tibbon appears in the epistle of Solomon of Montpellier (who is treated with respect in Nahmanides' epistles and Meshullam de Piera's poetry) to the rabbis of northern France,<sup>87</sup> which was aimed against the disclosure of Maimonides' secrets and the use of allegorical exegesis.<sup>88</sup>

It is also interesting to note that in the introduction to his translation, al-Ḥarizi himself addresses Ibn Tibbon's approach to the secrets of the *Guide*.

82. See Vajda 1962, 11–113; Vajda and Gottlieb 1968, 16–17; Scholem 1987, 377–79; Kneller-Rowe 2011, 1:171–81. According to Vajda, it was in reaction to Ibn Tibbon that Ezra ben Solomon of Gerona included in his commentary on Song of Songs a commentary on Genesis 1 juxtaposed to verses from Psalm 104. See Vajda 1969, 292; Kneller-Rowe 2011, 1:91–92. Still, Ezra of Gerona had a positive attitude toward Ibn Tibbon. See Scholem 1987, 377–78.

83. *Oṣar neḥmad*, 3:164.

84. Nahmanides 1963, 1:349.

85. Nahmanides 1963, 1:332.

86. Cf. De Piera 1938, *shir* 40 and *shir* 44, pp. 90–91, 104.

87. The epistle was copied by his student David ben Saul. In *Ma'amar yiqqawu ha-mayim*, Ibn Tibbon himself had criticized the anthropomorphism of David ben Saul. Cf. Carlos Fraenkel's important discovery on this topic: Fraenkel 2004; 2007, 145–46.

88. *Qevuṣat mikhtavim*, 52. See Silver 1965, 157–58; Septimus 1982, 99; Ravitzky 1991, 152; Fraenkel 2007, 140–41. In this epistle, Solomon of Montpellier refers to al-Ḥarizi as “the translator.”

He writes that Ibn Tibbon “meant in [his translation] to conceal [the *Guide*] with his words, and to increase its depth.”<sup>89</sup> In contrast, al-Ḥarizi describes himself as one who does not reveal the secrets of the *Guide*: “I did not intend to reveal any secret among the secrets of the book, nor to interpret any meaning from among its meanings.”<sup>90</sup> Similarly, in the second “gate” appended to his translation, he declares: “And our Master Moses [Maimonides] mentioned in the introduction of his book the matter of the secrets of the Torah (*sitre Torah*) and how one who studies them needs to familiarize himself with them, and he also mentioned in his introduction the covenant and oath, for he adjured every reader of this book not to reveal anything about it to others and not to interpret any meaning among its meanings.”<sup>91</sup> Furthermore, unlike Ibn Tibbon, who believed in the eternity of the world, al-Ḥarizi could come across to his readers as one for whom Maimonides is a champion of the doctrine of creation and also as one who champions the doctrine himself. At the beginning of the second “gate,” he writes: “Know that the intention of this book and its purpose is to explain all the obscure matters (*sefeqot*) of the Torah and the Prophets and to believe that the world is created and that the creator is one and has no body.”<sup>92</sup> This position is also made clear in this “gate” through al-Ḥarizi’s explanation of the meaning of certain chapters. For instance, in the explanation of *Guide* II 18 [= 19 in his translation], he writes: “He will speak about Aristotle, who reproaches us for believing in the creation of the world.”<sup>93</sup> In the translation, al-Ḥarizi also frequently uses the word *bore* (creator) even where *bāri*, its cognate in the Arabic original, does not appear.<sup>94</sup>

It is important to consider the attitudes toward Ibn Tibbon of Castilian writers in comparison to those of Catalanian ones. Me’ir ha-Levi Abulafia (Ramah) had good relations with him.<sup>95</sup> In the controversy of the 1230s,

89. MS A, fol. 1v (Schlosberg, 1:2). As Scheyer has already noted (see Schlosberg, 1:2n2), Ibn Tibbon reacted to this in his *Glossary of Foreign Words*.

90. MS A, fol. 1v (Schlosberg, 1:2).

91. MS G, fol. 1r; MS A, fol. 4r (Schlosberg, 1:vi).

92. MS G, fol. 1r; MS A, fol. 4r (Schlosberg, 1:vi). See also the entry for “heresy or heretic” (*kefirah o kofer*) in the first “gate,” where al-Ḥarizi defines a “heretic” as “one who does not believe that this world has a creator” (MS A, fol. 2v; Schlosberg, 1:v). This entry appears in the margin of MS A in a different hand, but it appears in the main part of the text in Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS Cod. hebr. 401, fol. 289r-v.

93. MS G, fol. 4r; MS A, fol. 9r (Schlosberg, 3:98). In the manuscripts that contain the second “gate” (including A and G), the numbering of the chapters in the second part is identical to that in the Ibn Tibbon translation.

94. On the term *bāri* in the *Guide*, see Nuriel 1964, 377–87.

95. See Septimus 1982, 29–30.

Josef ben Todros ha-Levi in Burgos distinguished between the “spirit” of Maimonides and that of the translators, objecting to the popularization of the *Guide* that resulted from its Hebrew translations,<sup>96</sup> yet his attitude toward Ibn Tibbon was still less critical than his attitude toward al-Ḥarizi, who, in his opinion, altered Maimonides’ intended meaning and failed to understand the wisdom of the book.<sup>97</sup> In Toledo, Alfakhar’s criticism was directed primarily at the *Guide* itself, which, in his opinion, should never have been written. Ibn Tibbon, who “became ‘a spiritual obstacle and stumbling block’ [1 Sam 25:31] to the men of your country [Provence],” was, as its translator, only a secondary target.<sup>98</sup> The author of the anonymous Livorno commentary (Talmud Torah Library, MS 40) refers to Ibn Tibbon in a more positive light than he does to al-Ḥarizi, and quotes *Ma’amar yiqqawu ha-mayim* a few times without criticism.<sup>99</sup> Finally, in *Sha’ar ha-shamayim*, Isaac Ibn Latif both criticizes Ibn Tibbon’s opinions in *Ma’amar yiqqawu ha-mayim* supporting the eternity of the universe (but without mentioning him by name) and, in the very same passage, dubs him “a great scholar . . . in the other sciences.”<sup>100</sup> Ibn Latif also makes use of Ibn Tibbon’s other works, including the *Glossary of Foreign Words*.<sup>101</sup>

In light of our reception history of the al-Ḥarizi translation among Jewish thinkers in different communities during this time period, it seems apt to connect *DN* with Spain or a Spanish translator. To determine the location of the translation, we need to address one additional important detail. *DN* opens with the well-known words “Dixit Rabi Moyses *Aegyptius*.” If one checks Hebrew texts written in the geographical sphere of Provence, Italy, and Spain during the period surrounding *DN* that associate the epithet “Egyptian” or the name “Egypt” with Maimonides or that connect Maimonides with the East or with Egypt, it appears that the intention was not to indicate the objective biographical fact that Maimonides lived much of

96. See Ravitzky 1991, 152.

97. *Qevusat mikhtavim*, 20–21.

98. *Qoveṣ teshuvot ha-Rambam*, 3:3r. In his epistles, Alfakhar does not mention al-Ḥarizi’s name explicitly, even though it is quite reasonable to suppose that he was familiar with his translation. It seems that he gives special focus to Ibn Tibbon because the addressee of the epistles, David Qimḥi, was friends with Ibn Tibbon until the latter’s death, as Qimḥi himself indicates in a letter to Alfakhar.

99. On the quotations from *Ma’amar yiqqawu ha-mayim* in this text, see Fraenkel 2007, 256.

100. *Sha’ar ha-shamayim*, I 5 (Ibn Latif 2016, 2:26). On the quoted passage, see Esudri 2008, 1:134.

101. On the use of Ibn Tibbon’s works, see Esudri 2008, 1:130–35, 299–301.



his life in Egypt. It was also certainly not an allusion to the idea that Maimonides was a “second Moses.” The earliest known Jewish sources that associate Maimonides with Egypt appear to be written by Spanish thinkers who, writing in polemical contexts against Maimonides’ works, contrast “Jerusalem,” that is, the rabbinic tradition, with “Egypt,” which represents philosophy and the sciences. The first instance of this use—already in the controversy over the *Mishneh Torah* (ca. 1200)—comes from the pen of Me’ir ha-Levi Abulafia in Toledo. In his polemic against Maimonides’ conception of resurrection, he alters Exodus 1:19, “Because the Hebrew [women] are not as the Egyptian women; for they are lively,” to read sarcastically, “Because the Hebrew [*corpses*] are not as the Egyptian *corpses*; for they are lively.”<sup>102</sup> In the controversy of the 1230s, Judah Alfakhar, in his epistolary exchange with David Qimḥi, contrasts Jerusalem as tradition with Egypt as philosophy and the sciences, the latter standing in turn for Maimonides. He depicts Maimonides as the champion of a naturalistic approach that makes a futile attempt to reconcile Torah and tradition, represented by the Hebrew women, Ephraim, and Zion, with Greek wisdom, represented by the Egyptian women, Aram, and Egypt.<sup>103</sup> Likewise, David Qimḥi, in the same correspondence with Judah Alfakhar, notes that Solomon of Montpellier betrayed “Moses of Egypt” to the Christians, imputing that his books include heresies.<sup>104</sup> In a text that is admittedly positive about Maimonides, Nahmanides’ epistle to the rabbis of northern France refers to Maimonides as “the East,” recalling his activities in Egypt against the Karaites.<sup>105</sup> These textual witnesses, even the positive ones, seem to contest Maimonides’ own self-image when he presents himself as Moshe ben Maimon “the Sefaradi”—for example, in the introduction to the *Commentary on the Mishnah* and the introduction to the *Mishneh Torah*.<sup>106</sup> In contrast to this association of Maimonides with the East and Egypt, Nahmanides labels

102. See M. Abulafia 2002, 12. On Ramah’s role in the Maimonidean controversies, see Septimus 1982.

103. *Qoveš teshuvot ha-Rambam*, 3:2r–3r.

104. *Qoveš teshuvot ha-Rambam*, 3:4v.

105. Nahmanides 1963, 1:341. But cf. Nahmanides’ epistle to the communities of Aragon, Navarre, and Castile in which he draws an analogy between the biblical Moses and Maimonides (Nahmanides 1963, 1:331).

106. Maimonides’ self-presentation is more complex in his epistles. Haggai Ben-Shammai has pointed out that Spanish thinkers involved in the polemics against Maimonides’ writings may associate him with Egypt also because Maimonides often stresses his Spanish origin and continues to see his native country as “our place.” On this point, especially on the use of this expression in the *Commentary on the Mishnah*, see Blau 2007.

Spanish Jews as “the residents of Jerusalem in Spain” in his epistle to the communities of Aragon, Navarre, and Castile.<sup>107</sup> And in his epistle to the rabbis of northern France, he depicts the Spanish Jews as “the captivity of Jerusalem that is in Sefarad” (based on Obad 1:20), a common epithet for Spanish Jewry.<sup>108</sup> Based on these texts, it seems that in the years around the composition of *DN*, epithets close to “Aegyptius” in Jewish sources either appear among Spanish thinkers or are used to characterize things said by Sefaradim.<sup>109</sup> The usage of the translator of *DN* appears to be closer to that of Nahmanides in his epistles, connecting Maimonides with the East and Egypt. And throughout the translation, the translator displays a positive attitude toward Maimonides.<sup>110</sup> Moreover, the use of this epithet in *DN* suggests that it was already a commonplace in Spain and in the speech of Spanish scholars by the time the translator did his work.<sup>111</sup>

To summarize, the textual data concerning the tradition of the al-Ḥarizi translation appear to indicate that the translation of *DN* was done in Spain or by a Spanish translator. Moreover, the contextual facts about its reception by Jewish thinkers and the explanation of the epithet “Moyses Aegyptius” indicate that it might be possible to connect the translation even more specifically to Catalonia or a Catalanian translator.

### **The Technical-Philosophical Terminology of *DN*’s Translator, and the Translator’s Approach to the *Guide*: A Few Examples**

In order to identify the translator (or one of the translators) of *DN*, it is important that we systematically analyze the terminology used by *DN*’s translator in general, his technical-philosophical terminology in particular, his possible sources, and his approach to the text of the *Guide*. For this purpose, I shall give a few examples to illustrate the importance of this kind of analysis.

In many cases, the translator seems to be making a special effort to find a Latin equivalent that preserves the first meaning of the Hebrew word as

107. Nahmanides 1963, 1:331.

108. Nahmanides 1963, 1:339.

109. Nahmanides refers to Solomon of Montpellier as “the Barcelonan.”

110. This is true despite the fact that he appears to diverge from some of Maimonides’ positions.

111. Throughout the thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth century, after the production of *DN*, similar epithets continued to be common in Spain, especially among converts to Christianity. On this epithet, see also below, n. 252.

well as its technical-philosophical meaning. In translating these words, the translator is fairly consistent throughout the translation. Even though these words are for the most part found in other Latin translations, they do not appear with the same frequency as they do in *DN*. For example, the following words are common in *DN*: *aggregatio* (for *ḥibbur*, with the meaning of *liber, tractatus*),<sup>112</sup> *stramentum* (for *ḥaṣṣa'ah*, in the sense of *praemissa, antecedens*), and *depurare* (for *levarer*, with the meaning of *declarare, exponere, or examinare*<sup>113</sup>—a meaning that I have not found for *depurare* in other Latin texts). In this vein, the translator usually translates literally the widely used Hebrew expressions by means of which al-Ḥarizi altered the meaning of the Arabic original. This phenomenon is particularly noticeable in expressions such as *oculis meis, in oculis meis* (with the meaning of *secundum opinionem meam*) or *ascendere super cor, in cor* (with the meaning of *putare*, which also appears in *DN*).<sup>114</sup>

Before I address the technical-philosophical terminology, it should be noted that it appears that the translator was a *talmid ḥakham*, a learned rabbinic scholar, because he recognizes the mishnaic, talmudic, and midrashic sources of several passages that Maimonides quotes. The treatment of halakhic and midrashic literature in *DN* is significant and deserves a separate study.

The analysis of technical-philosophical terminology, the treatment of Maimonides' primary sources, and the attempt to identify the sources of the translator's terminology are, in my opinion, important factors for determining the translator's general educational background and particularly his philosophical education. For this purpose, I will supply a limited number of examples in the fields of astronomy and psychology.

Examination of terminology in the mathematical sciences, and especially astronomy, is very important for two reasons: (1) the known translations of philosophical and scientific texts<sup>115</sup> done by Christians assisted

112. Forms of the verb *aggregare* also appear in *DN*.

113. In contrast to the use of the words *aggregatio/aggregare* and *stramentum*, the use of *depurare* for *levarer* is not always consistent in the translation. *Depurare* appears in *DN* mainly with the meanings of *declarare, exponere, or examinare*. This use of *depurare* seems influenced by the meanings of the root *b.r.r.* in halakhic sources: "to clean," "to clear," and then "to explain."

114. On the expression *ascendere super cor, in cor*, see already Perles 1875, 12.

115. As for translations of nonscientific texts, we should mention the (only partially extant) translation into Castilian of *Salterio* (Ps 1–70), which was made directly from the Hebrew text (and not from the *Vulgata*) apparently by Hermannus Alemannus, who was already active in Toledo during the years when *DN* was produced. On this translation and

by Jews during this period—translations from Arabic to either Latin or Castilian—are astronomical texts; (2) Jewish scholars, such as Jacob Anatoli and Judah ben Solomon ha-Kohen, both connected to the court of Frederick II, worked in the mathematical sciences in general and in astronomy in particular (Judah ha-Kohen) and also translated astronomical texts (both Anatoli and Judah ha-Kohen, in his *Midrash ha-ḥokhmah*). Moreover, this examination can also reveal important information about Jewish-Christian collaborations in Toledo as well as southern Italy, since Michael Scotus was assisted by a Jew in the translation of *De motibus caelorum* in Toledo and Judah ben Moses ha-Kohen (Mosca el Menor) assisted several Christians in the translation of astronomical texts.

The technical-philosophical terms in the field of astronomy, such as *stellae fixae*, *planeta*, (*circulus*) *aequinotialis*, *deferens*, *sphaera circundans*, *epicyclus*, *eccentricus*, *egredi/egressio*, *declinatio*, *elongatio*, *chorda*, *retrogradatio*, *obscuratio*, *eclipsis*, *computatio* (II 10 [9]; II 12 [11]; II 25 [24]), suggest acquaintance with astronomical texts in Latin, such as the Latin translation of the *Almagest* and the Latin translation of al-Farghānī's *Kitāb fī al-ḥarakāt al-samāwiyya wa-jawāmi'* *'ilm al-nujūm*, which was executed by John of Spain (under the title *Differentiae scientiae astrorum*), or with Latin treatises based on them.<sup>116</sup> Nonetheless, in the general field of mathematical science

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the identification of the translator as Hermannus Alemannus, see Diego Lobejón 1993, 27–41. The translator of *DN* also translated the biblical verses directly from the Hebrew and not from the *Vulgata*. See Di Segni 2013, lxxxviii–xci. Nonetheless, it is difficult to imagine Hermannus Alemannus as one of the translators of *DN* for several reasons: (1) All of his translations of scientific texts are based on the Arabic, so it is safe to assume that if he had been one of the translators of *DN*, he would also have used the Arabic original of this text, which was available in Toledo. Also, as we have seen, there was more extensive use in Toledo during this period of the Ibn Tibbon translation compared to that of al-Ḥarizi. While it would have made sense to use the Hebrew text for the *Salterio*, there is no rationale for using a Hebrew version of the *Guide* (especially the nonliteral translation of al-Ḥarizi) if one can work off the Arabic original. (2) Most of Hermannus Alemannus's translations are not anonymous, whereas it appears that the translator of *DN* intentionally left his translation anonymous. (3) As we shall see, the influence of Averroes on the translator of *DN* is questionable, and in any event limited, unlike the significant influence of Averroes on Hermannus Alemannus. (4) The terminology of the translator of *DN* is different from that of Hermannus Alemannus. On the scientific translations of Hermannus Alemannus, see Pérez González 1992; Akasoy and Fidora 2002; Hasse 2010. Pérez González (p. 283) called into question whether or not Hermannus Alemannus could have been the translator of the *Salterio*.

116. All the terms mentioned, with the exception of *chorda*, *eccentricus*, and *epicyclus*, appear in the translation of al-Farghānī that was made by John of Spain (al-Farghānī 1943), and only partially overlap with the terminology in the translation of al-Farghānī by Gerardus of Cremona. The word *chorda* appears in the translation of the *Almagestum* made by Gerardus of Cremona. For *epicyclus* and *eccentricus*, John of Spain and Gerardus use other terms,

(*scientiae disciplinales/scientiae mathematicae*), *DN* poses several challenges for a translator working intensively and in depth with astronomical materials (or with translations of astronomical texts), as the following examples demonstrate.

1. The translator consistently uses the term *arithmetica* (*arismetica*) for geometry (corresponding to the Hebrew *tishboret* in both the al-Ḥarizi and Ibn Tibbon translations,<sup>117</sup> a term that already appears in Abraham bar Ḥiyya) and the word *geometria* for arithmetic (corresponding to al-Ḥarizi's [*ḥokmat*] *ha-minyanim*), as the following passages illustrate:

I 33 [34], Di Segni 2013, 93, lines 57–58 (Giustiniani 1520, fol. 13r):  
*Omnia vero antecedentia accepta de scientia*<sup>118</sup> *geometriae* (*teva' ha-minyanim*) *et de potentiis figurarum arismeticae* (*ha-tishboret*)

I 33 [34], 97, line 144 (fol. 13r): *non est sicut arismetica* (*ḥokhmat ha-tishboret*)

I 52 [53], 151, line 50 (fol. 19v): *et scit arismetica* (*ha-tishboret*)

This “confusion” (which apparently stems from the derivation of the word *tishboret* from the word *shever/shevarim*<sup>119</sup> or from the similarity between the words *geometria* and *gimaṭriyyah*) can also be found in the original writings of Jewish thinkers, but it does not correspond to the terminology of, for example, Michael Scotus (who distinguishes clearly between *arismetica* and *geometria* in the context of the quadrivium)<sup>120</sup> or Judah ben Solomon

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but the terms *epicyclus* and *eccentricus* were already quite common in Latin translations and original texts before the translation of *DN*. They appear even in astronomical texts that were written shortly before the translation and were based, among other things, on the *Almagestum* and on al-Farghānī (see, e.g., *De sphaera mundi* by Johannes de Sacrobosco, in which most of the terms we have mentioned appear). Abraham bar Ḥiyya is the first Jewish thinker known to have made use of al-Farghānī; see his *Sefer šurat ha-areš*, which had a tangible impact on Jewish thinkers in Spain in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In this work, all of the terms we have mentioned appear in Hebrew. But apparently there was no early Latin translation of this work that the translator of *DN* could have used.

117. See Scheyer's note in the edition of al-Ḥarizi's translation (Schlosberg, 1:33–34).

118. The word *scientia* here is a free translation on the part of the translator of *DN*; it does not correspond to al-Ḥarizi, Ibn Tibbon, or the Arabic original.

119. Cf. Anatoli 1866, fol. 37r.

120. For one example, see *Liber introductorius* (Scotus 1978, 201, lines 10–19).

ha-Kohen.<sup>121</sup> In general, such terminology is not appropriate for a scholar or translator who works professionally with mathematical and astronomical materials.

2. Throughout the translation, the translator renders *tekhunah* or *ḥokhmat ha-tekhunah* with the words *scientia firmamenti* (which is closer to the Hebrew terms *ḥokhmat ha-kokhavim*, *ḥokhmat ha-raqia'*, and *ḥokhmat ha-shamayim*) instead of the technical term *astronomia* or *astrologia*. These latter two Latin terms or their Hebrew technical equivalents, *tekhunah/ḥokhmat ha-tekhunah*, are generally accepted during this period by Michael Scotus (for example, in the *Introductorius*), Jacob Anatoli,<sup>122</sup> Judah ben Solomon ha-Kohen (in *Midrash ha-ḥokhmah*), Isaac Ibn Latif (in *Sha'ar ha-shamayim*), and Judah ben Moses ha-Kohen, who assisted several Christians who translated astronomical works into Latin and Castilian in Toledo around the time that *DN* was translated.<sup>123</sup>

During the period around the translation of *DN*, this terminology is closer to that of the Jewish Catalanian writers, such as the poet, translator, and philosopher Abraham Ibn Ḥasday of Barcelona (who uses the term *ḥokhmat ha-kokhavim* in his translation of al-Ghazālī's *Mozne šedeq*) and the kabbalist Jacob ben Sheshet of Gerona (who uses the same term in *Meshiv devarim nekhohim*). Abraham bar Ḥiyya had already used these terms.<sup>124</sup> It

121. On geometry, see *Midrash ha-ḥokhmah*, Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS Vat. ebr. 338, fol. 2v.

122. Anatoli uses the word *tekhunah* not only in his translations of astronomical works but also in *Malmad ha-talmidim* (e.g., fol. 62v) and in his introduction to his translation of Averroes' *Middle Commentary on Prophyry's "Isagoge" and Aristotle's "Categories"* (Anatoli 1969).

123. In the years either before or immediately after the translation of *DN*, Judah ben Moses ha-Kohen translated, together with Guillelmus Anglicus, Azarquiel's *Tratado de la açafeha* into Latin (completed in 1231) and, together with Garci Pérez, the *Lapidario* (ascribed to Abolays) from Arabic into Castilian (completed in 1250), and probably the *Lapidario (El libro de las fazes)* also from Arabic into Castilian. In the first text, the word *astronomus* appears (see Millás Vallicrosa 1942, 182); in the introduction of the second, the words *la arte de astronomia/ astronomia* (see Alfonso X 1981, 19) and, in the third, the words *arte de astronomia* (see Alfonso X 1981, 179). On Judah ben Moses ha-Kohen, who was also active later and assisted several Christians with their translations, see Gil 1985, 60–68; N. Roth 1990; Vicente García 2002.

124. Later in the thirteenth century, the Catalanian philosopher Isaac Albalag uses the words *ḥokhmat ha-kokhavim* in his *Tiqqun ha-de'ot*, and the Castilian philosopher Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera uses both *ḥokhmat ha-kokhavim* (e.g., in *Reshit ḥokhmah* and *De'ot ha-filosofim*) and *ḥokhmat ha-tekhunah* (e.g., in *Moreh ha-moreh*). *Ḥokhmat ha-kokhavim* was the common term for astronomy among Spanish scholars in the twelfth century (e.g., in Abraham bar Ḥiyya's *Sefer surat ha-areš*).

is also possible that the translator's decision to use the term *scientia firmamenti* instead of *astronomia* or *astrologia* is connected to his conception of *Ma'aseh Bereshit* (Account of the Beginning) and *Ma'aseh Merkavah* (Account of the Chariot), which we will address below, and to his understanding of the *firmamentum* as an integral part of *Ma'aseh Bereshit* and *Ma'aseh Merkavah*.

3. It is not certain that the translator was familiar with all the Muslim astronomers quoted by Maimonides in the *Guide*. A significant example is Abū Muḥammad Jābir Ibn Aflaḥ. The translator refers to this twelfth-century astronomer in this way:

II 10 [9], MS Ottob. Lat. 644, fol. 104v (Giustiniani 1520, fol. 44r): *de hac autem materia quemdam librum notum<sup>125</sup> composuit Maurus quidam, cuius nomen Evenafla de civitate Hysphalensi, et ego vidi filium eius<sup>126</sup>*

The word *quidam* (a certain) is the translator's addition and the word *Maurus* (Moor) is based on an addition in al-Ḥarizi's translation. It is difficult to imagine that Michael Scotus would have used this phrasing, since Ibn Aflaḥ is also quoted in al-Biṭrūjī's *Kitāb fī al-hay'a*, which Michael Scotus translated in Toledo under the title *De motibus caelorum* in 1217 with the assistance of a Jew (*cum Abuteo levite*),<sup>127</sup> and Ibn Aflaḥ is presented there differently.<sup>128</sup> Similarly, Judah ben Solomon ha-Kohen uses al-Biṭrūjī in *Midrash ha-ḥokmah*.<sup>129</sup> Again, it is difficult to imagine that translators of astronomical texts (such as Jacob Anatoli) or translator assistants (such as Judah ben Moses ha-Kohen) would refer to Ibn Aflaḥ in this way.

In the field of psychology, *DN's* terminology suggests, first of all, that the translator was familiar with Latin translations of medical works. This does not locate him in a particular geographic region, since all of the medical treatises mentioned below (and consequently their medical terminology)

125. *notum*] *om* Giustiniani. The parallel Hebrew word (*yadua'*) is also missing in MS A, fol. 94r (Schlosberg, 2:15), but does appear in MS C, fol. 3v; MS G, fol. 83r.

126. The Hebrew words that correspond to *et ego vidi filium eius* are missing in MS A, but appear in MS C (fol. 3v): *we-ra'iti beno*. MS G (fol. 83r) here adopts the text from the Ibn Tibbon translation.

127. Al-Biṭrūjī 1952, chap. 18, p. 150.

128. Cf. al-Biṭrūjī 1952, chap. 1, p. 71: *et Abu Mahomet Jeber Aven Aflah ispalensis*; chap. 15, p. 126: *Abu Mahomet Jeber Aven Afla*.

129. See MS Vat. ebr. 338, fol. 256r. On the influence of al-Biṭrūjī on Judah ha-Kohen, see Sirat 1978, 42, 46; Langermann 2000a.

were well known in Spain, in the University of Montpellier, and in southern Italy—for instance, in the *schola medica salernitana* and among the Latin scholars associated with Frederick II. But it does reflect the educational background of the translator.

The following passage demonstrates familiarity with medical texts in Latin:

I 71 [72], MS Ottob. lat. 644, fol. 72v (Giustiniani 1520, fol. 31v): *Istae quatuor virtutes, quae inveniuntur in omni corpore nutritibili, scilicet appetitiva, retentiva, digestiva, expulsiva*

Here the translator prefers to translate the word *mosheket* as *appetitiva* and not *attractiva*, even though he also uses the term *virtus attractiva*<sup>130</sup> a few lines later. It is possible that this choice stems from his familiarity with medical writings in Latin, such as the translation of Isaac Israeli's *De febribus*<sup>131</sup> or Constantinus Africanus's *Pantegni*,<sup>132</sup> both of which contain the same terms: *appetitiva, retentiva, digestiva, expulsiva*.<sup>133</sup> Exposure to medical writings in Latin is also evidenced by terms whose translation alters the wording of the al-Ḥarizi translation by adapting it to Latin medical-technical terminology—for example, the nonliteral translations of *tekhunot middot ha-guf*<sup>134</sup> as *complexio corporis* and *tekhunot mezeg* as *complexio naturalis* (I 33 [34]). These nonliteral translations show that the translator knew medical texts; the terms *complexio corporis* and *complexio naturalis* indicate familiarity with the translations of Galen and Avicenna's *Canon*, respectively.

The terminology of the following passage further illustrates the translator's familiarity with medical texts:

I 71 [72], MS Ottob. lat. 644, fol. 73r (Giustiniani 1520, fol. 31v): *et ex hoc oriuntur infirmitates, sicut scabies et pruritus<sup>135</sup> et vulnera magna (nega'im gedolim), sicut in lepra et ulcus corrodens carnem*

130. *virtus attractiva*] *virtus affectiva* MS Ottob. lat. 644.

131. *De febribus*, I 1 (Israeli 1515a, fol. 203v).

132. *Pantegni*, IV 18 (Constantinus 1515, fol. 17v).

133. Avicenna's *Canon* has different terminology.

134. The word *guf* (body) is an interesting addition on the part of al-Ḥarizi to Maimonides' text.

135. In al-Ḥarizi's translation there appears also *we-ha-ṭehorim* (and the hemorrhoids), which the translator of *DN* omits, apparently intentionally, for the reason that hemorrhoids are unrelated to the diseases *scabies et pruritus*, mentioned just earlier in the text. Al-Ḥarizi had used *ṭehorim* erroneously as a translation for *ṭhawālil* (warts).



The terminology illustrates the translator's exposure to Latin terms for afflictions and diseases (*scabies, pruritus, lepra*), medical terms (*ulcus corrodens*, where al-Ḥarizi had supplied *ha-nega' ha-okhel*), and technical Latin terms (*vulnera magna*, which already appear in Hippocrates and Galen), suggesting that he had read medical texts in Latin, such as books 4 and 5 of Avicenna's *Canon*, which had already been translated into Latin by Gerard of Cremona.

In the field of the inner or internal senses of the soul, particularly the "imagination" or the "imaginative faculty," we should note first of all that for the word *khayāl* (e.g., in I 35 [36]; I 50 [51]; I 72 [73]), al-Ḥarizi uses words derived from the root *ḥ.sh.v.* (to think), such as *maḥshavah/maḥshevet*. In the chapters on prophecy (II 33 [32]–48), for the most part he translates *al-quwwa al-mutakhayyila* as *maḥshavit/koah maḥshavit* (II 33 [32]; II 37 [36]; II 38 [37]) or as *koah ḥoshevet* (II 37 [36]). Throughout the translation, although less frequently, he sometimes opts to use the word *ra'yon* instead of words derived from the root *ḥ.sh.v.* to translate *khayāl* (e.g., in I 70 [71]; I 72 [73]; I 75 [76]), *takhayyul* (e.g., in I 46 [47]), and *dhihn* (e.g., in I 32 [33]; II 39 [38]). In this context, it should also be noted that al-Ḥarizi uses the word *maḥshavah* to translate other philosophical terms and concepts, including *ra'y* (I 1), *khāṭir* (I 2), *dhihn* (I 5), *fikra* (I 26; II 37 [36]), and *taṣawwur* (I 45 [46]). For "imagination," he occasionally uses the word *dimyon/dimmayon*<sup>136</sup> for *mutakhayyil* (e.g., in I 48 [49]), as well as the adjectival form *dimyoni* (with gender and number changes) for *khayālī* (e.g., in I 3).<sup>137</sup>

The translator of *DN* uses the terms *imaginatio* (or *virtus imaginativa*), *cogitatio*, and *cogitatio assimilativa*<sup>138</sup> for words derived from the root *ḥ.sh.v.* and for *ra'yon*, without clearly distinguishing between them. Nonetheless, he tends to translate *ra'yon* with *imaginatio* or *imaginativa/virtus imaginativa* more often than with *cogitatio*.<sup>139</sup> It also appears that the idea of *cogitatio assimilativa*, as distinct from *cogitatio intelligibilis* (I 67 [68]), that occurs only in part I of the *Guide* (e.g., in I 32 [33]; I 45 [46]; I 48 [49]; I 67 [68]; I 72 [73]; I 73 [74]) is equivalent to *imaginatio* and is used by the translator in contexts

136. Al-Ḥarizi uses this term in other contexts as well. Here we address only that which is connected to imagination.

137. For the most part he uses the word *maḥshavi* (e.g., in I 5), but the word *mahbil* (Schlosberg: *mavhil*) also appears (e.g., in I 50 [51]).

138. The words *imaginatio* and *cogitatio* appear also in *Liber praeceptorum*.

139. Still, the translator does sometimes translate *ra'ayon* as *cogitatio* (e.g., in I 72 [73]; II 13 [12]) or as *cogitatio assimilativa* (I 32 [33]); in the latter example, *dhihn* appears in the Arabic original.

where the active, creative role of the imagination stands out.<sup>140</sup> Finally, the translator of *DN* translates *dimmayon/dimyion* as *similitudo* (e.g., in I 48 [49]; II 31 [30])<sup>141</sup> and *dimyoni* in multiple ways, including *similis rei* (I 3).

Despite the terminological distinction between *cogitatio* and *imaginatio*, it seems that in part I of *DN*, the translator has trouble making up his mind which of the two terms to use, and for the most part views *cogitatio* as a synonym for *imaginatio*, or identifies it as an internal faculty or sense very close to it. His ambivalence is particularly prominent, for instance, in I 72 [73], where Maimonides discusses the imagination. In these passages, the translator's uncertainty also stems from al-Ḥarizi's use of different Hebrew terms for *al-khayāl* (or for words derived from the root *kh.y.l.*):

MS Ottob. lat. 644, fol. 82r–v (Giustiniani 1520, fol. 35r):

*Iam feci te scire quod cogitatio virtutis imaginativae (maḥshevet ha-ra'yon) invenitur in pluribus rebus vivarum vel animalium. Vivum enim quod est perfectum, scilicet habens cor, probatur in essentia illius virtutis imaginativae (ha-ra'yon).*

*sicut si imaginator imagnetur (kemo she-yahshov ha-ḥoshev) corpus humanum cum capite equi et habeat alas et similia istis et istud vocatur cogitatio (ha-maḥshav) falsa cui nullo modo convenit essentia rei et talis cogitator (ha-maḥshav)<sup>142</sup> nullo modo potest recedere a materia in apprehensione sua*

*quaedam sunt quae cum probantur in cogitatione (be-maḥshevet ha-ra'yon) non apprehenduntur ullo modo*

Later in the chapter, the translator uses the word *cogitatio* exclusively (as a translation of *maḥshavah*).<sup>143</sup> In part II of *DN*, one finds less dithering in

140. Cf. I 48 [49], MS Ottob. lat. 644, fol. 37v (Giustiniani 1520, fol. 17v): *secundum operationem virtutis cogitativae assimilativae (koaḥ ha-ra'yon ha-meṣayyeret)*. Usually the verb *assimilare/assimilari* appears in *DN* as a translation for verbs from the roots *d.m.h.* and *m.sh.l.* It seems that with *cogitatio assimilativa* the translator wishes to emphasize the creative power of the imagination.

141. The term *similitudo* occurs in *DN* as the translation of several terms, including *mashal* (e.g., in *prologus*; I 52 [53]; II 47).

142. *DN*'s translator reads the Hebrew word *maḥshav* (*imaginatio* or *cogitatio*) as *meḥashev* (*cogitator*).

143. It is interesting to note that in MS Ottob. lat. 644, fol. 82v, the words *vel ymaginatio* are written above one occurrence of the word *cogitatio*.

the translation of discussions devoted specifically to imagination (though one still finds it in general discussions—for instance, in II 31 [30]). And in the chapters on prophecy, the translator consistently uses the terms *imaginativa/virtus imaginativa* for *maḥshavit/koah maḥshavit/koah ḥoshevet/ra'yon*. This is also the case in part III—for example, in III 16 [15], where we have *potentia imaginativa/virtus imaginativa* (for *koah maḥshav/koah maḥshavit*) and *imaginabile* (for *maḥshav*), even though the term *cogitatio* continues to appear (mainly as a translation of *maḥshavah*) in these contexts where Maimonides does not devote discussion specifically to imagination.

In part II of *DN*, the translator is ambivalent over the translation of another internal sense: the prophet's faculty of divination (II 39 [38]).<sup>144</sup> Al-Ḥarizi translates *quwwat al-shu'ūr* as *koah ha-hergesh we-ha-shi'ur*.<sup>145</sup> The Latin translator uses different translations throughout the chapter: *potentia sentiendi rationes et mensurandi eas*, *aestimatio et praedicta potentia sentiendi*, and, finally, *virtus aestimativa*,<sup>146</sup> all the while understanding that, despite al-Ḥarizi's double translation, Maimonides is speaking of only one faculty.

It seems that the translator's attempt to distinguish between *cogitatio*<sup>147</sup> and *imaginatio* (at least in a terminological sense), certain meanings of the word *similitudo* (in the context of imagination), the active role apparently ascribed to *cogitatio assimilativa*, the use of the terms *aestimatio* and *virtus aestimativa* (but not, for instance, the term *existimatio*),<sup>148</sup> and the consistent use of *imaginativa/virtus imaginativa* for the prophet's imaginative faculty in the chapters on prophecy all indicate familiarity with Avicenna's *De anima seu sextus de naturalibus*.<sup>149</sup> Averroes' influence on the translator with regard to these subjects seems doubtful or, in any event, very limited compared to that of Avicenna. Similarly, in passages that address the intellect (e.g., in I 67 [68]; I 71 [72]), one can detect the degree to which

144. MS A is frequently corrupt in this chapter.

145. Al-Ḥarizi's double translation suggests his ambivalence in choosing between the two meanings of the Arabic verb *sha'ara*.

146. See MS Ottob. lat. 644, fol. 157r (Giustiniani 1520, fol. 65r). In Giustiniani's edition, the words *virtutem divinandi aestimativam* also appear. In this chapter, Maimonides also speaks twice about intuition (*ḥads*), but al-Ḥarizi translates *ḥads* as *maḥshavah* while the translator of *DN* uses the words *imaginatio* and *consideratio*.

147. As we shall see below, it is possible that the translator was also influenced by the Latin translation of *De elementis*. With regard to *cogitatio*, he may have combined Avicenna's idea with that of Isaac Israeli.

148. Elsewhere *DN* also translates words from the root *sh. 'r.* with words derived from the verb *aestimare*.

149. Cf. especially *Liber de anima*, pt. 4, chaps. 1–3 (Avicenna latinus 1968, 1–54).

Avicenna's (or more precisely, Avicenna latinus's) terminology has been internalized, and this Avicennian influence may explain why the translator usually employs the terms *intelligentia agens* for the Active Intellect (instead of Averroes' *intellectus agens*) and *intelligentiae separatae*. It is also possible that because of the influence of Avicenna latinus (this time *De philosophia prima sive scientia divina*),<sup>150</sup> the translator ascribes (contra Maimonides' own view) a kind of "imaginary representation" to the intelligent souls of the celestial spheres, and translates the words *ṣiyyur* or *leṣayyer* with the words *imaginatio* and *imaginare/imaginari* (a phenomenon paralleled by the use of *imaginare/imaginari* to translate the fifth form of *ṣ.w.r.* in Avicenna latinus),<sup>151</sup> as the following passages show:<sup>152</sup>

II 5 [4], MS Ottob. lat. 644, fol. 99r (Giustiniani 1520, fol. 42r): *Cum autem motus iste circulans fuerit secundum **imaginationem** alicuius rei per quam sic movetur, non erit illud **imaginari** nisi cum intellectu; ergo caelum habet intellectum.*

II 6 [5], fol. 101r (fols. 42v–43r): *Ostensum est ergo tibi quia quod dixit Aristoteles quod caelum est apprehendens et **imaginans** secundum intellectum.*

II 11 [10], fol. 106r (fol. 44v): *et hoc est **imaginatio** intellectus et amor et concupiscentia **imaginatae** rei, sicut praediximus*

In order to evaluate the precise extent of Avicenna latinus's influence<sup>153</sup> on the translator of *DN*, it will be necessary to map all of the technical-philosophical terminology of the translation, since his influence is not limited to the field of psychology (in the broad sense of the word). *DN* contains many rare technical-philosophical terms already found in Avicenna latinus, including terms in mathematics (e.g., the use of the term *disciplinales* for the mathematical sciences),<sup>154</sup> metaphysics (e.g., *meṣi'ut*,

150. Cf. *Liber de philosophia prima*, tract 9, chap. 2 (Avicenna latinus 1980, 449, 454–55, 460–61).

151. We find the same problem in reverse in al-Ḥarizi's translation; for example, in II 38 [37], he translates *khayālāt* with the word *ṣiyyurim*, which *DN* then translates as *phantasiae*, which is Maimonides' intended meaning.

152. These examples can be multiplied from all three chapters.

153. In addition to the influence of Avicenna's medical terminology and concepts in the *Canon*.

154. Cf. *Liber de philosophia prima*, tract. 7, chap. 2 (Avicenna latinus 1980, 361–63).

“existence,”<sup>155</sup> translated as *inventio* in I 45 [46]; I 48 [49]; I 56 [57]),<sup>156</sup> and logic (e.g., the translation of *shemot mesuppaqim/be-sippuq*, “amphibolous terms,” as both *ambigua* in *prologus*; I 27 [28]; I 55 [56] and as *quasi aequivoce* in I 3).<sup>157</sup>

The translator’s approach to the text of the *Guide* can be described as tentative at times, which tells us something about his intellectual background and points to ways in which *DN* is more of an interpretation than most Latin translations of this period. Here are three examples that, significantly, recur throughout the translation.

As Mercedes Rubio has noted, the translator of *DN* usually uses the word *creator* instead of *deus*,<sup>158</sup> and this preference holds even when he is translating *el* or *eloah*. But this choice is not exclusive or exhaustive, since the word *deus* also appears throughout *DN*. Indeed, the translator is simply continuing in the steps of al-Ḥarizi, who, as mentioned earlier, frequently uses the word *bore* even when the Arabic original does not have the word *bāri*. This significant choice, while not systematic, can also tell us something about the Latin translator’s own opinion in the question of the creation vs. eternity of the universe—a controversial issue among Jewish scholars who sought to interpret the *Guide*.

A second example is the translation of the word *shefaʿ* (and, in at least one case, of *daʿat*), al-Ḥarizi’s (and Ibn Tibbon’s) translation of *fayḍ*, by not only *largitas* (largesse, abundance) but also *splendor* (brilliance)—as if the words *zohar*, *or*, or *ziw* appeared in al-Ḥarizi’s Hebrew text.<sup>159</sup> The word *splendor*, as a translation of the word *shefaʿ*, appears where Maimonides

155. Despite Avicenna’s influence, *DN* does not always distinguish between essence and existence.

156. The forms *invenire/inveniri* with this meaning are very common both in *De anima* and in *De philosophia prima*. With regard to *inventio*, cf. *Liber de philosophia prima*, tract. 7, chap. 3 (Avicenna latinus 1980, 372).

157. See *De motu et de consimilibus*, chap. 2 (Avicenna latinus 2006, 183–84). In this text, both *ambiguum* and *quasi aequivoca/quasi aequivoce* are used for *mushtarak*. See Avicenna latinus 2006, 175n7. The logical terminology of *DN* also attests to the influence of Latin translations of logical texts, such as the Latin *Categoriae* (in *editio composita*) and possibly the works of Boethius.

158. Rubio, addressing the use of the word *creator* instead of *deus* in II 1–2 [II, *prologus*–1], notes that this change makes sense only if the translator was a Jew, “because a Christian translator would not have been reluctant to write the name of God” (Rubio 2006, 278).

159. Occasionally the two words co-occur in the translation. See, e.g., II 3 [2]: *secundum largitatem splendoris spiritualis*; II 12 [11]: *splendoris et largitatis*.

speaks of “intellectual overflow” or “divine intellectual overflow,”<sup>160</sup> which spills over onto either (i) only the human intellect, (ii) the human intellect and imaginative faculty, or (iii) only the imaginative faculty, corresponding to the three categories (i) philosophers, (ii) prophets, and (iii) statesmen, magicians, dreamers, etc.

I 39 [40], Di Segni 2013, 113, lines 8–10 (Giustiniani 1520, fol. 15r):  
*Dicitur etiam de **splendore** spiritualis intellectus qui dabatur prophetis, cum quo prophetabant*

I 45 [46], 125, lines 83–84 (fol. 16r–v): *vel instrumentum sermonis<sup>161</sup> ad significandum **splendorem** intellectus<sup>162</sup> qui effunditur ab eo super prophetas*

II 38 [37], MS Ottob. lat. 644, fol. 155v (Giustiniani 1520, fol. 64v):  
*Necesse est ut percipias<sup>163</sup> intellectum tuum in natura essentiae huius **splendoris** spiritualis, qui pervenit ad nos, per quem intelligimus in quo pars nostra excellit alios. . . . Post ista scito quod iste **splendor** intellectus qui effunditur*

*Splendor* also appears in passages that address the influence of the *intellectus adeptus* on the individual, the relationship between the actualized intellect of the individual and the Active Intellect, or the action of a separate intellect:

I 71 [72], MS Ottob. lat. 644, fol. 74v (Giustiniani 1520, fol. 32v): *Scias autem quod decens erat ut assimilaremus comparisonem creatoris ad mundum comparationi intellectus adepti ad hominem, qui non est virtus in corpore sed est abstractus a corpore abstractione vera, et effundit de **splendore** virtutis suae super ipsum.*

160. Only rarely does the translator use the word *largitas* in the context of intellectual overflow—as it is used in the translation of Maimonides’ definition of prophecy (II 37 [36])—with the sense of intellectual overflow from God via the Active Intellect onto the human intellect and then onto the imaginative faculty.

161. Interestingly, here *DN* translates the Hebrew *dibbur* with the Latin *sermo*, a term that also appears in passages on prophecy in Isaac Israeli’s *De elementis*.

162. *DN* alters the Hebrew text here, translating *da’at* (equivalent to *śekhel*, “intellect”) by *splendorem intellectus*.

163. *percipias*] *erudias* Giustiniani. On *percipere*, see below, n. 243.

II 5 [4], fol. 100r (fol. 42v): *Similiter dicemus quod dator formae est forma abstracta et dator intellectus est intellectus et ipse est intelligentia agens, ita quod sit comparatio intelligentiae agentis ad ultima elementa et ex eis composita sicut comparatio cuiuslibet intelligentiae abstractae, quae est adunata in caelo, ad ipsum caelum et comparatio intellectus in actu, qui est in nobis et est ex **splendore** intelligentiae agentis, cum quo etiam apprehendimus ipsam intelligentiam agentem, est sicut comparatio intelligentiae cuiuslibet caeli, quae est in eo et est ex **splendore** intelligentiae abstractae.*

II 13 [12], fol. 109v (fol. 46r): *et idcirco nominant<sup>164</sup> semper actionem separati in **splendore** per viam similitudinis fontem aquae ex quo undique largitas effunditur*

*Splendor* appears only infrequently<sup>165</sup> in contexts about emanation.<sup>166</sup> In these contexts, for the most part the translator translates *shefa'* by *largitas*, “largesse, abundance,” which apparently indicates the “breadth” of the emanation, or the “breadth of the goodness” of the emanator (e.g., in II 5 [4]; II 12 [11]; II 13 [12]).

Images of light (in the contexts of creation and prophecy) also appear during the same period among the kabbalists of Gerona, who use them to depict the emanation of *sefirot*, revelations to prophets, and, at times, the action of Wisdom (*hokhmah*) in creation.<sup>167</sup> It is reasonable to assume that the translator of *DN* was exposed to and familiar with these conceptions and images, but his use of the term *splendor* seems closer to Neoplatonic terminology generally and to Isaac Israeli’s *De elementis* (*Book of Elements*) in particular. It should also be noted that the Gerona kabbalists do not use images of light to depict the light of the intellect that overflows onto the human intellect or the rational soul,<sup>168</sup> whereas both the translator of *DN*

164. *nominant*] *nominat* MS Ottob. lat. 644. Al-Ḥarizi: *mekhannim*.

165. The word *splendor* appears in the context of emanation only in a few instances; e.g., in I 57 [58]: *splendor largitans*; I 68 [69].

166. The translator also uses the words *emanare/manare* or *emanatio*, e.g., in I 56 [57]; II 13 [12]; II 20 [19].

167. Images of light also appear around this time in Jacob ben Sheshet’s *Meshiv devarim nekhohim*, chap. 9 (Jacob ben Sheshet 1968), where the light of creation represents the system of *sefirot* (pp. 113–29) and light is the cause of prophecy (pp. 125, 127–29). On Jacob ben Sheshet’s concept of creation, see Vajda 1962, 56–91; Gottlieb 1976, 18–28, 59–63, 71–77, 83–88. Judah ha-Kohen’s *Midrash ha-hokhmah* also describes emanation with images of light.

168. Unlike Abraham Abulafia at a slightly later time.

and Isaac Israeli use the light image in that context. Indeed, it appears that the translator brings Maimonides closer to Isaac Israeli, giving the *Guide* an additional Neoplatonic hue (beyond the Neoplatonic element built into the very concept of overflow). He also uses the same terminology found in the Latin translation of Israeli's *De elementis*, a text where we already find the distinction between *largitas* and *splendor*.<sup>169</sup> The word *splendor* appears in this text to refer to the action of the universal intellect (*intelligentia*) on the human soul and specifically on the prophet's soul.<sup>170</sup> The universal intellect, which operates following the creator,<sup>171</sup> emanates spiritual forms onto the soul of the prophet,<sup>172</sup> whose meaning the prophet alone is capable of understanding because his soul is spiritual, pure, and *luminosa*, unlike that of other human beings. In the following passages discussing the prophet and the influence of the universal intellect on his rational soul, Israeli describes the action of the intellect using images of light (*splendor*):

*Si ergo fuerit cogitatio illius hominis spiritualis, pura, luminosa, paucarum corticum et tenebrarum, supra quam intelligentia iam influit splendorem ex lumine suo, fecit ipsam scire proprietates suas et figuras suas et sermones spirituales. . . . Intelligentia quidem non sequitur hac sua operatione nisi vestigia creatoris gloriosi et assimilatur operationi eius. . . . Et est eorum aliquis in quo existit singularis anima rationalis et irradiat ipsam intelligentia cum hoc splendore et lumine suo*<sup>173</sup>

The third example is the consistent translation of the word *elohi* (divine) by the word *spiritualis* throughout *DN*.<sup>174</sup> When Maimonides identifies *Ma'aseh Merkavah* (Account of the Chariot) with metaphysics (e.g., in

169. Words derived from *aggregare* (in the senses of *componere*) occur in this translation as they do in *DN*.

170. Israeli sees the prophet as an intermediary between the "creator" and "creatures," serving as an important link connecting the spiritual and material worlds.

171. For the full discussion, see *De elementis* (Israeli 1515b, fols. 8v–9v). We find *largitas/largus* in the same passage: *Creator namque gloriosus et summus, cum mundum creare voluit et facere, ut sapientia appareret et quod in ipsa erat, exiret de potentia ad actum, creavit mundum ingeniose et novit ipsum. . . . Immo non fecit illud nisi bonitate et largitate sua. Et postquam largus fuit cum hoc* (fol. 9r).

172. Israeli also describes the transformation of spiritual forms from spiritual to material states in the internal senses of the prophet. See Altmann and Stern 1958, 133–45, 185–93.

173. Israeli 1515b, fol. 9r. About a decade before the making of *DN*, Abraham Ibn Hasday in Barcelona translated the *Book of Elements* from Arabic into Hebrew for David Qimhi.

174. The word *spiritualis* is also used by Israeli in the context of prophecy; see the passages quoted above.



*prologus*; III 3 [2]) or when he discusses the limitations of the human intellect in understanding metaphysics and the reasons why an individual should not commence inquiry with the study of metaphysics (I 30 [31]–33 [34]), the translator uses the words *sapientia/scientia spiritualis* and not the words *scientia divina* or *metaphysica*, even though he uses the word *Metaphysica* to refer to Aristotle’s book (e.g., in I 56 [57]; I 68 [69]; I 70 [71]; II 20 [19]). One reason may be that the translator of *DN*—like the Gerona kabbalists<sup>175</sup> and some contemporaneous Spanish scholars, such as Judah ben Solomon ha-Kohen—wishes to avoid the identification of *Ma’aseh Merkavah* with Aristotelian metaphysics. Judah ha-Kohen’s *Midrash ha-ḥokhmah* emphasizes the limitations of Aristotelian metaphysics to enable apprehension of the spiritual upper world, emphasizing instead the divine/spiritual wisdom found in prophetically revealed Scripture.<sup>176</sup> He also emphasizes the limitations of the human intellect to apprehend the essence of the intermediate world of the celestial spheres, which is also revealed to prophets.<sup>177</sup> The translator of *DN* may share this view, and therefore prefers to employ the term *scientia firmamenti* in the translation and not use the terms *astronomia* or *astrologia* (incidentally, contrary to Judah ha-Kohen himself, who uses the word *tekhunah*). The translator of *DN* systematically translates the word *elohi* as *spiritualis* (whose Hebrew parallel, *ruḥani*, is very common in Neoplatonic texts such as Isaac Israeli’s and those of contemporary Spanish scholars, including Isaac Ibn Latif and Judah ha-Kohen),<sup>178</sup> and apparently<sup>179</sup> includes the human soul, defined as *forma spiritualis* (I 1), within the “spiritual world.” If so, it should be noted that the translator of *DN* significantly changes the text of *Guide* I 1—where Maimonides defines the human soul not as a “divine” or “spiritual” form but as a “specific” form—perhaps to adapt it to his own view.

At times it even seems as if the translator intends to express his own opinion about Maimonides’ biblical exegesis. For example, in *Guide* I 15, Maimonides interprets “the angels of God ascending and descending” (Gen 28:12)

175. For the kabbalists’ conceptions of *Ma’aseh Bereshit* and *Ma’aseh Merkavah* compared to that of Maimonides, see Idel 1990.

176. Judah ha-Kohen, *Midrash ha-ḥokhmah*, MS Vat. ebr. 338, fols. 4v–5v, 7v–8r.

177. Judah ha-Kohen, *Midrash ha-ḥokhmah*, fol. 5r.

178. Consequently, one finds terms such as *voluntas spiritualis*, *intellectus spiritualis*, *angeli spirituales*, *res spirituales*, and *lex spiritualis*.

179. See I 1, Di Segni 2013, 26, lines 25–26 (Giustiniani 1520, fol. 5r): *quae est forma spiritualis* (al-Ḥarizi: *ha-praṭit*). However, we cannot rule out a corruption in the text: *forma spiritualis* instead of *forma specialis*.

in the “ladder of Jacob” as prophets.<sup>180</sup> He writes: “**It is clear that what I say here of Him conforms to the parable propounded. For the angels of God are the prophets**” (which al-Ḥarizi translates with similar terms).<sup>181</sup> *DN*, however, translates as follows:

I 15, Di Segni 2013, 53, lines 5–9 (Giustiniani 1520, fol. 8r): *Et non est dubium quod isti fuerunt prophetae quia post ascensum in acquirendo gradus scalae . . . erit descensus, cum eo quod didicerit propheta per spiritum sanctum, ut regat et doceat habitatores terrae.*

It is well known that Maimonides offers contradictory interpretations of the “ladder of Jacob”;<sup>182</sup> his interpretation here contradicts that found in II 11 [10], where he gives the verse a naturalistic explanation, identifying the “angels” not with the prophets but with the four elements or the four causes of the motion of the celestial sphere. The wording in *DN* (“There is no doubt that these were the prophets”) here suggests that the translator endorses the interpretation of “angels” as “prophets.”<sup>183</sup>

At times the translator of *DN* also adds notes, an unknown phenomenon among Latin translators during this period, including both those who are independently active and those who collaborate with Jewish scholars. In one note at the end of *Guide* II 30 [29], which has already been noted by scholars,<sup>184</sup> he comments:

II 30 [29], MS Ottob. lat. 644, fol. 143v; Di Segni 2013, lxxvii (Giustiniani, fol. 59v): *Dixit translator:*<sup>185</sup> *necessarium est nobis in hoc loco*

180. In the translation of this chapter, *DN* focuses exclusively on the ladder of Jacob. See Kluxen 1955, 34; Di Segni 2013, xxv, lxxi.

181. *Guide* I 15 (Pines 41).

182. See Klein-Braslavy 1987a; Diamond 2002, 49–130.

183. In this context, one might ask whether the translator of *DN* was also aware of Ibn Tibbon’s interpretation of the “ladder of Jacob.” In *Ma’amar yiqqawu ha-mayim*, chap. 11 (Ibn Tibbon 1837, 54–55; 2011, 2:485–87), Ibn Tibbon identifies the ascending angels with philosophers rising on the ladder of the sciences, and the descending angels with the separate intellects (first and foremost, the Active Intellect), which enlighten the human intellect. See Altmann 1967, 20–22; Ravitzky 2006, 53–56; Robinson 2007a, 295; Kneller-Rowe 2011, 1:263–73. Ibn Tibbon’s interpretation was subsequently criticized by the kabbalist Jacob ben Sheshet in chap. 27 of *Meshiv devarim nekhohim*. See Jacob ben Sheshet 1968, 180–81.

184. Perles (1875, 22–23) and Di Segni (2013, lxxvii; 2016, 35n42) infer from this that the translator was a Jew. Cf. also Kluxen 1955, 35.

185. The parallel Hebrew phrase for *Dixit translator*—*amar ha-ma’atiq*—is extremely common among Jewish translators.

*modis omnibus praemittere propositionem quandam, a qua non possumus deviare, quae est ista: omnia nomina aequivoca quae inveniuntur in lingua Hebraica, tam dicta quam dicenda, indigent expositione lata et profunda et depurata<sup>186</sup> per viam linguae Hebraicae. Nec omnes magistri linguae istius sunt apprehensores veritatis huius rationis praeter singulares et electos quos excitavit intellectus suus ad quaerendum gradum altum, quoniam per scientiam istarum rationum intelligunt archana multa communia operi de Beresit et operi de Mercava et verbis prophetarum omnium. Ista est clavis scientiae huius libri. Visum est autem mihi quod si vellem exponere modicum sensum meum super quolibet verbo communi in loco in quo ponitur fieret prolixitas magna,<sup>187</sup> et fortassis prolixitas<sup>188</sup> verborum meorum confunderet rationes capituli, cum vellem exponere verba illa, et confunderet verba alia quae sunt adinvicem colligata sicut flamma ignis cum pruna<sup>189</sup> per potentiam sapientis compositoris libri. Similiter etiam plures istarum rationum sunt prohibita ne ostendantur populo, et vocantur secreta et archana legis. Et idcirco etiam non fui ausus ad hoc extendere manum,<sup>190</sup> sed sufficit nobis dicere quae est via per quam ingrediendum est ad archana ista. Qui vero fuerit intelligens quaeret eam, donec ingrediatur per eam.*

The location of this note at the end of this chapter seems significant, and it would be difficult to explain but for the fact that Maimonides at that point makes two comments about the secrets of *Ma'aseh Bereshit* and *Ma'aseh Merkavah* and their connection to equivocal terms. Although Maimonides has already discussed these topics several times in the *Guide*, the reason that the translator places this note exactly at the end of this chapter ap-

186. On *depurare*, see above, n. 113.

187. *magna*] *magis + vel magna* above the line MS Ottob. lat. 644.

188. *prolixitas*] *om* MS Ottob. lat. 644.

189. *pruna*] *prima* MS Ottob. lat. 644. Di Segni (2013, lxxviii, 157; 2016, 35n42) notes that here the translator uses a metaphor found in *Sefer yeširah* I 6. However, during this period (as opposed to the last third of the thirteenth century) there is no evidence of use or at least not extensive use of *Sefer yeširah* in Italy, as there is in Provence among kabbalists. In Spain we find it quoted or interpreted by kabbalists, philosophers, and scholars influenced by both philosophy and kabbalah, such as Isaac Ibn Latif. The poet, translator, and philosopher Abraham Ibn Ḥasday mentions Isaac Israeli's commentary on *Sefer yeširah*—the first of Israeli's works he mentions—in the introduction to his translation of Israeli's *Book of Elements*. Later, the philosopher Isaac Albalag quotes from *Sefer yeširah* in his *Tiqqun ha-de'ot*. The tradition of *Sefer yeširah* in Spain began even earlier, if one takes into account its use already by the philosopher-poets Solomon Ibn Gabirol and Judah Halevi.

190. The translator's use of the expression *extendere manum* seems to be influenced by Hebrew expressions such as *lišloaḥ yad*.

pears to be directly related to the fact that Maimonides interprets a part of *Parashat Bereshit* (specifically, verses in Gen 1–4) in the following chapter (II 31 [30]); hence, the translator tells us that he considers himself obligated to write his “unavoidable” (*a qua non possumus deviare*) note in this exact place (*necessarium est nobis in hoc loco*).<sup>191</sup> The content of the note can be understood only in light of the esoteric tradition that begins with the *Guide* itself and continues with Ibn Tibbon<sup>192</sup> and al-Harizi (in their respective approaches to Maimonides’ text) and the polemical epistles of the Maimonidean controversy in the 1230s. The translator of *DN* finds a deep connection between *Ma’aseh Bereshit*, *Ma’aseh Merkavah*, and the prophetic dicta. For him, understanding their shared (*communia*) “secrets” (*archana/secretata et archana legis; sitre Torah/sodot*) requires understanding equivocal terms (*nomina aequivoca*) in the Hebrew language (*quae inveniuntur in lingua Hebraica*). However, the translator refrains from interpreting these terms because they demand a wide and deep explanation (*indigent expositione lata et profunda*), because his own prolixity would break the continuity of Maimonides’ argumentation (*rationes capituli*) and wording, and also for esoteric reasons (*plures istarum rationum sunt prohibita ne ostendantur populo*). With the words *Nec omnes magistri linguae istius sunt apprehensores veritatis huius rationis praeter singulares et electos quos excitavit intellectus suus ad quaerendum gradum altum*, in which the translator refers to Jews, he does not appear to be referring only to a few solitary individuals—“the remnant whom the Lord calls” (Joel 3:5, cited in *Guide* I 34 [*DN* I 33])—whose intellectual development leads them to seek the highest level of knowledge (*praeter singulares et electos quos excitavit intellectus suus ad quaerendum gradum altum*). The sentence also appears to contain a polemical nuance: not all Jewish scholars<sup>193</sup> grasp the true meaning of equivocal terms (*Nec omnes magistri linguae istius sunt apprehensores veritatis huius rationis*), and the deep connection between the *sitre Torah* common to *Ma’aseh Bereshit*, *Ma’aseh Merkavah*, and prophetic dicta can be understood only through the correct interpretation of their equivocal terms. Since the meaning of equivocal terms is also the key to understanding the *Guide* itself (*Ista est clavis scientiae huius libri*), these people in effect do not understand Maimon-

191. Of course Maimonides addresses these issues in several places in the *Guide* where the translator of *DN* does not find it necessary to add a note.

192. See especially Ravitzky 1991, 142–81; 2006, 81–106; Fraenkel 2007, 139–46, 162–84.

193. It is important to emphasize that the translator does not refer here to the masses but rather to the elite (*magistri linguae istius*).

ides' treatise—unlike the translator of *DN*. This raises the question, Is the translator attacking Samuel Ibn Tibbon?<sup>194</sup> In *Ma'amar yiqqawu ha-mayim*, Ibn Tibbon interprets passages from *opus de Beresit*, *opus de Mercava*, and *verba prophetarum* (to use the words of *DN*'s translator), taking Genesis 1:9 as his point of departure. Throughout *Meshiv devarim nekhoḥim*, the kabbalist Jacob ben Sheshet addresses and criticizes Ibn Tibbon's interpretations of *Ma'aseh Bereshit*, *Ma'aseh Merkavah*, and prophetic dicta, and even though he does not adopt the interpretations of Maimonides, he makes a clear distinction between Maimonides and Ibn Tibbon. The translator of *DN* likewise distinguishes clearly between Maimonides, “the wise author of the book” (*sapiens compositor libri*), and “the teachers of this language” (*magistri linguae istius*), that is, Hebrew. It is therefore reasonable to suggest that he was familiar with these texts, which further explains why he places his note here and not elsewhere.

The translator's note about the significance and centrality of equivocal terms is important both for situating the translator in the environment in which he worked and for understanding the translation (or, better, the “concealment” in the translation) of other portions of the book. Like the Gerona kabbalists, the translator does not seem to identify the concealed, profound, and true content of *Ma'aseh Bereshit*, *Ma'aseh Merkavah*, and the prophetic dicta with Aristotelian physics and metaphysics. But unlike the kabbalists of Gerona who fail to emphasize the importance of understanding equivocal terms,<sup>195</sup> the translator sees their correct and true understanding as the very tool necessary to understand the *sitre Torah* and the *Guide* itself. For this reason, the translator should not be identified as one of the Gerona kabbalists active in this period.

The translator's note is also important for understanding other parts of *DN*. As we mentioned in the introduction, the translator at times abridges the lexicographical chapters in his translation. Similarly, he does not translate the portion of II 31 [30] in which Maimonides interprets *bara*, *'aśah*,

194. If the translator is indeed contending with Ibn Tibbon here, it is interesting to note that a variety of Jewish thinkers, including both Ibn Tibbon's admirers (such as Moses of Salerno) and his critics (such as Jacob ben Sheshet), believed that he was rather prolix in his book *Ma'amar yiqqawu ha-mayim*. It was such *prolixitas* that the translator of *DN* wishes to avoid.

195. Unlike Abraham Abulafia at a slightly later time; see, e.g., *Ḥayye ha-nefesh* (A. Abulafia 2001, 10, 44) and various discussions in *Oṣar 'eden ganuz*. On Abulafia and esotericism, including the “secrets” of the *Guide*, see Idel 1998a; 2004, 212–19; forthcoming. On the approach of the Gerona kabbalists to *Ma'aseh Bereshit* and *Ma'aseh Merkavah* compared to that of Maimonides in the *Guide*, see Gottlieb 1976, 59–87; Idel 1990.

and *qanah*.<sup>196</sup> In light of his comment about equivocal terms, we should not rule out the possibility that the stated (and real) difficulties in the translation of the lexicographical portions of the text from Hebrew to Latin—difficulties that stem from etymological-linguistic differences between word roots in the two languages and their respective vocabularies—are accompanied by the translator’s desire to conceal and disguise at least some of these passages. Again, his reason is that, on his view, the equivocal terms have a profound meaning through which it is possible to understand the close connection between *Ma’aseh Bereshit*, *Ma’aseh Merkavah*, and the prophetic dicta. This is a meaning that only a few individuals can apprehend. It is also a meaning that cannot be conveyed through a concise translation, and it would be inappropriate to convey it with a long, added explanation. Moreover, from his note it seems that the translator has a special conception of the Hebrew language (*lingua Hebraica*), which may also bear on the difficulty in translating certain nouns or terms (*nomina*) in the lexicographical sections. Finally, it is possible that the debate over allegorical interpretation, a topic that first emerges in the polemical writings of the Maimonidean controversy in the 1230s (and returns in the polemic against the study of philosophy at the end of the thirteenth and beginning of the fourteenth centuries), can also throw light on the translator’s difficulties in translating certain interpretations that Maimonides gives for nouns and terms in the lexicographical sections; here, too, it is possible that the translator sometimes wishes to conceal<sup>197</sup> Maimonides’ allegorical and naturalistic interpretation.<sup>198</sup>

196. On Maimonides’ interpretation of these terms, see Klein-Braslavy 1986b; 1987b, 81–90, 96–99.

197. Like *DN*’s omission of translations for Maimonides’ interpretations of the words *bara*, *’asah*, and *qanah* in II 31 [30].

198. The translator explicitly expresses his preference for a literal interpretation of Genesis (*littera*), an attitude that brings him closer to Solomon of Montpellier and his associates than to the allegorical exegesis of Maimonides or Ibn Tibbon and his followers. See I 2, Di Segni 2013, 30, lines 67–69 (Giustiniani 1520, fol. 6r): *Subtracta sunt hic quaedam quae erant in originali, quia non conveniebant litterae quam nos habemus in Genesi*. On this passage, see Kluxen 1954, 34; Di Segni 2013, lxx. Another example can be found in I 6, where Maimonides explains the words *ish* and *ishah*, a chapter that appears in Giustiniani’s edition as chapter I 7 while I 7 appears as I 6. Di Segni (2013, xlii, xlix) notes that this chapter is not included in most manuscripts of *DN* and was added later by the translator. Apart from the difficulty of translating the words *ish* and *ishah* into Latin—there is no linguistic connection between the corresponding terms *homo* and *mulier*—one wonders whether the translator wished to conceal this chapter because of its philosophical interpretation and because these words are closely connected to *Ma’aseh Bereshit*. In I 6, Maimonides writes that the first meanings of *ish* and *ishah* are “male” and “female.” However, Jewish scholars who heeded Maimonides’ advice to connect the *Guide*’s dispersed chapters have tended to

### A Hypothesis for the Identification of *DN*'s Translator

Given what we have seen thus far, *DN* cannot be easily situated in any of the familiar contexts of Latin translations of philosophical-scientific texts during this period in southern Italy or Toledo—that is, contexts in which Christians either were assisted by Jewish scholars or collaborated with them.

Second, the technical-philosophical terminology of *DN* appears to be influenced more by the terminology of twelfth-century Latin translations (like those of Avicenna and Isaac Israeli) and even of earlier Latin texts than it is by the terminology of thirteenth-century translations.

Third, in light of the translator's ambivalence<sup>199</sup> in deciding on translations of technical-philosophical terms, it is an open question what previous experience he had in the art of translation. Indeed, in the field of psychology in general and in the field of the internal senses in particular, one finds that the technical-philosophical terminology becomes increasingly precise over the course of the translation, giving the impression that *DN* is in some respects "a work in progress."

Fourth, the approach of *DN*, as a translation, to the text of the *Guide* is sometimes quite "free"<sup>200</sup> or loose (and at times tendentious), as one sees

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connect this chapter with I 17 (see Klein-Braslavsky 1986a, 198–99; 1987b, 31–32, 82–90). In I 17, Maimonides tells us that "the principles of the existents subject to generation and corruption are three"—matter, form, and particularized privation—and he identifies matter with the "female" and form with the "male." He also writes in this chapter that it is necessary to conceal from the multitude not only metaphysics but also a large portion of physics or natural science. Therefore, the *Guide* continues, the rabbis taught that "the Account of the Beginning (*Ma'aseh Bereshit*) ought not be taught in the presence of two men," and the ancient philosophers including Plato (in the *Timaeus*) also "concealed what they said," leading them to refer to matter as the "female" and form as the "male." Significantly, in the Maimonidean controversy beginning at the end of the thirteenth and the beginning of the fourteenth centuries, the examples cited to contest philosophical exegesis include the association of male and female with form and matter. Finally, in the translation of I 17 in *DN*, the translator changes the text significantly when Maimonides compares the need of the "people adhering to Law" for concealment and the ancient philosophers' desire to conceal. Referring to the philosophers and scholars of other nations, he translates (I 17, Di Segni 2013, 38, lines 6–8 [Giustiniani 1520, fol. 7r]): *sed etiam philosophis et sapientibus aliarum gentium qui credunt antiquitatem mundi* ("who believed in the eternity of the world"; al-Ḥarizi: *'al pi qadmut ha-'olam*; Pines 43: "in ancient times"). *Ipsi enim occultabant verba sua, cum loquebantur de antiquitate mundi* ("when they spoke about the eternity of the world"; al-Ḥarizi: *ba-hathalot*; Pines 43: "about the first principles").

199. We have illustrated the translator's ambivalence with terms concerning the internal senses, but it is also discernible in other philosophical terms throughout the text. See also Di Segni 2013, lxvii, lxxviii–lxxxv.

200. Di Segni (2013, lxvii) observes that *DN* "resembles more a paraphrase than a literal translation." On the translator's omissions and interventions, see Di Segni, pp. lxviii–lxxviii.

in its choice of terms, omission of portions of the text, addition of notes or glosses, and in the translator's own evaluation of parts of the text that are incorporated into the translation. In these respects, *DN* is different from most contemporary Latin translations of philosophical and scientific texts that are usually literal, and more like texts in the Jewish commentary tradition of this period. Hence, it is among members of this tradition that I propose we should look for the translator of *DN*.

Within this group, the freedom that the translator of *DN* allows himself with Maimonides' text is reminiscent of the style of Abraham Ibn Ḥasday of Barcelona in, for example, his translations of *Sefer ha-tapuah*, *Mozne šedeq*, and *Ben ha-melekh we-ha-nazir*, and, in certain respects, even his translation of *Sefer ha-yesodot*, which, like *DN*, is not always a literal translation when compared to the independent Latin translation by Gerard of Cremona.<sup>201</sup> Both the translator of *DN* and Ibn Ḥasday also share a tendency toward Neoplatonism that emerges with certain topics and terms in *DN*. Although Ibn Ḥasday identified with the Maimonideans in the controversy of the 1230s<sup>202</sup> and developed close connections with Provence in general and David Qimḥi in particular (for whom he translated *Sefer ha-yesodot*), the texts he translated and the concepts reflected in these translations bring him closer to Neoplatonism<sup>203</sup> than to Maimonides—much like the translator of *DN*. Moreover, as we mentioned in the introduction, the translator appends to *DN* a Hebrew translation of Maimonides' enumeration of the 613 commandments according to the version in the *Mishneh Torah*; Ibn Ḥasday is said to have translated Maimonides' *Sefer ha-mišwot* a few years earlier.<sup>204</sup> Despite these parallels, it is difficult to identify Ibn Ḥasday as the translator of *DN* for two reasons. First, Ibn Ḥasday uses the Ibn Tibbon translation in the introduction to his translation of *Mozne šedeq*. And second, all of his known translations are from Arabic to Hebrew.<sup>205</sup> It is possible, however,

201. For numerous examples, see the critical apparatus in the Hebrew edition of the *Book of Elements* (Israeli 1900).

202. On the positions of Ibn Ḥasday and his brother during the controversy, see Silver 1965, 174–75; Septimus 1982, 70–72. On the divided state of the community in Barcelona during the controversy, see also Septimus 1973, 1979; Klein 2006, 120–41.

203. On Ibn Ḥasday's Neoplatonism, see Altmann and Stern 1958, 95–105, 114–17.

204. Ibn Ḥasday's translation of *Sefer ha-mišwot* is not extant, but it is mentioned by Moses Ibn Tibbon in the introduction to his translation. After *DN*, Catalanian scholars continued to be interested in Maimonides' enumeration of the commandments; see, for example, Nahmanides' *Haššagot* to *Sefer ha-mišwot*. In general, the Gerona kabbalists and Jonah Gerondi were concerned with the interpretation of the commandments.

205. It is also not certain that Ibn Ḥasday was still alive when *DN* was produced. The precise date for his death is unknown, but it is generally accepted to be around 1240–41.



that the translator of *DN* lived near Ibn Ḥasday (that is, in Barcelona) and was familiar with at least some of his translations.

As we mentioned earlier, during the years when *DN* was produced (prior to 1244–45), the young Hillel of Verona—who knew Latin quite well—resided in Barcelona for three years (ca. 1241/42–44) where he studied in the school of Jonah Gerondi before Jonah left Barcelona for Toledo. We also know for certain that Hillel did translations from Latin to Hebrew later in life, though we know of no verifiable translations from Hebrew to Latin. Nonetheless, in 2001 Marc Geoffroy and Carlos Steel<sup>206</sup> stressed the connections between Hillel’s *Rewards* and *Tractatus Averoyis de perfectione naturali secundum mentem philosophi*,<sup>207</sup> an anonymous Hebrew-to-Latin translation, ultimately based on Ibn Tibbon’s Hebrew translation of “Three Treatises” by Averroes and his son<sup>208</sup> on the topic of conjunction with the Active Intellect.<sup>209</sup> As Geoffroy and Steel show, the “translator” of this tract does not always translate the Hebrew text literally. Sometimes he paraphrases, omits portions, or modifies the text. For instance, the translator adds to the Hebrew text of the “Three Treatises” material based on al-Fārābī (who was also one of Hillel’s sources for the *Rewards*) and incorporates non-Averroistic elements into the text.<sup>210</sup> In one of these additions—in which he loosely translates into Latin portions of *Hathalot ha-nimṣa’ot*, Moses Ibn Tibbon’s Hebrew translation of al-Fārābī’s treatise *Al-siyāsa al-madaniyya* (*The Political Regime*)—there appears the image of light (*quod nominatur dhaat, et de secundis intelligit quod dedit suum zohar*),<sup>211</sup> with transcription of the Hebrew words *dhaat* (= *da’at*) and *zohar*. We find similar transcriptions incorporated into *DN*. The same image of light (*zohar/splendor*) that is found in *DN* specifically in contexts referring to intellectual overflow occurs in a similar context in this translation. In general, the “free” or loose approach to the text in this “translation” is very reminiscent of the translator’s approach to Maimonides’ text in certain portions of

206. Geoffroy and Steel 2001, 17–18, 25–27, 126.

207. Until Geoffroy and Steel’s edition, this text was known only in Italian editions dating from the Renaissance under the title *De animae beatitudine*. They also note that Hillel did not use the Latin translation of *De animae beatitudine* in the *Rewards*, but rather reworked the “Three Treatises” himself. See also Schwartz 2016, 499.

208. See *Sheloshet ha-ma’amarim* (Averroes and ‘Abd Allah Ibn Rushd 1869, 2000).

209. On Ibn Tibbon’s translation of the “Three Treatises,” which he appended to his *Commentary on Ecclesiastes*, see Robinson 2007b, 9, 44.

210. See Geoffroy and Steel 2001, 15–24.

211. See Averroes 2001, 189, lines 563–64. The translator changes al-Fārābī’s text by using the word *zohar* (the Hebrew equivalent of *splendor*), which does not appear in Moses Ibn Tibbon’s Hebrew version. See above, n. 162.

DN.<sup>212</sup> All this evidence would suggest that there is a connection between the translator of *DN* and the translator of *Tractatus Averoyis*, which raises the question whether Hillel was involved in both translations.

It is interesting to note that *DN* is also similar in its terminology, method, and concepts to another Latin text, the translation of *Liber de pomo*, which is attributed to Manfred, son of Frederick II, and based on Abraham Ibn Ḥasday's Hebrew translation of *Sefer ha-tapuah*. Images of light (*illuminare, lumen, illuminatio, lux*, and also *splendor*) appear in the *prologus* of this translation. The analysis of these similarities requires further research that I hope to do in another study in order to see whether the translator of *DN* and the translator of *De pomo* might be connected.

Nonetheless we cannot be absolutely certain that Hillel of Verona is the translator of *DN*. His extant independent works belong to a much later period, and his main work, *Tagmule ha-nefesh (Rewards)*, was completed around the year 1291, toward the end of his life.<sup>213</sup> The many years of separation make it very difficult to compare ideas and sources in his later works to those in *DN* and to the translator's approach to the text. It seems likely that over the years Hillel grew intellectually and developed his views.<sup>214</sup> Even so, if we compare his later compositions to the broad strokes with which

212. There is also a linguistic similarity between the two translations; e.g., *ymaginaturo in intellectu isto* (p. 171, lines 358–59). Cf. above, n. 162; and below, nn. 226, 229. See also Hillel of Verona 1981, 45, lines 305–7, where Hillel claims that Christians translated from his book. If Hillel was involved in the translation of *Tractatus Averoyis* then he preferred to conceal from his Jewish readers that he himself had been involved in producing a translation for a Christian public. In this context, it should be noted that at times the Latin terms in the translation of *Tractatus Averoyis* are influenced by Hebrew terminology and phraseology. See, e.g., Averroes 2001, 181, lines 473–76: *Et nunc autem volumus claudere sermonem nostrum et cum hoc non stantes tibi in brevibus referre verbis ut in ultimum ordinem principiorum velut ponit Avennasar; multum namque est acceptabilis mihi. Et est quidem radix una.*

213. Though in the *Rewards*, and particularly in its second half, it does seem that Hillel uses texts he wrote earlier in his life.

214. It is certain that the influence of Scholastic sources on Hillel grew over time. Most important was the impact of the writings of Thomas Aquinas, which, based on chronology, he could not have known in Spain. While in Spain he might have already been exposed to Dominicus Gundissalinus's *De anima*. The *Rewards* also suggests familiarity with Latin translations of different works by Averroes, such as *De substantia orbis* and the *Long Commentary on "De anima"* (see Sermoneta's notes to his edition). Hillel may not have known these texts in Spain, though he was apparently exposed to certain Averroistic ideas already then. The translator of *DN* also does not demonstrate an extensive background in the topic of the intellect, as can be seen in his terms for the material intellect in the translation. So if Hillel is the translator, then his extensive study of this topic occurred only later; in Spain, the intellect (as analyzed primarily by Avicenna) had only begun to interest him. Like other Italian scholars, Hillel read Aristotle's works in Latin translations; it is possible that he was familiar with some of these translations already before his stay in Spain.

we have sketched *DN*'s translator, we can identify a number of significant points of intersection:

1. Hillel uses the Ibn Tibbon translation of the *Guide* in his *Perush le-k"h ha-haqdamot (Commentary on the Twenty-Five Premises)*, unlike the translator of *DN*. Nonetheless, in his main extant composition, the *Rewards*, he sometimes combines the Ibn Tibbon and al-Ḥarizi translations, unlike other Italian scholars active during this period. This raises the question, Was Hillel exposed to, and did he use, the al-Ḥarizi translation during his three years in Spain and then, when he returned to Italy, shift to the Ibn Tibbon translation then in vogue among Italian scholars?<sup>215</sup> Indeed, it is possible that such a change of attitude toward the Ibn Tibbon translation occurred already when Hillel resided in Montpellier,<sup>216</sup> Narbonne, and Marseille. In the *Rewards*, he uses Ibn Tibbon's translation for more "scientific" topics, and prefers al-Ḥarizi (sometimes in combination with Ibn Tibbon) when discussing topics like emanation and prophecy, which, as we have seen, were important for the translator of *DN*.
2. In one passage of the *Rewards*, the version of the al-Ḥarizi translation that Hillel uses presents a significant variant that is not in the version used by the translator of *DN*.<sup>217</sup> This fact would seem to count against the identification of *DN*'s translator with Hillel. That said, if Hillel was indeed the translator of *DN*, it is possible that in Italy he was no longer in possession of the manuscript he had used in Spain when he did the translation. In addition, we know that when he was in Italy, he sometimes used multiple and different "versions" of other texts. This may well have been the case with his use of the al-Ḥarizi translation in the *Rewards*.
3. The translator of *DN* did not use the Arabic original, and it is doubtful that he even consulted it on specific points. Hillel knew Latin

215. We find a similar shift with Nahmanides, who for the most part uses al-Ḥarizi while he is living in Gerona but then switches to the Ibn Tibbon translation when he reaches the Holy Land (see above, n. 73).

216. This assumes that Hillel resided in Montpellier after he left Spain. In the first letter to Maestro Gaio (*Ḥemdah genuzah*, fol. 20r), Hillel writes that he lived in Barcelona for three years with Jonah Gerondi. Only later does he mention his time in Montpellier. There is, however, no way to know with certainty whether this literary order reflects the chronological order of his sojourns in Spain and Montpellier. For chronology, see above, n. 57.

217. On this textual variant, see Rigo, in preparation.

very well, but apparently he did not have full mastery of Arabic, even though pieces of evidence suggest that he may have acquired some knowledge of the language in Spain. In any event, it is unlikely that his command of Arabic was anything like that of Catalonian scholars, such as Nahmanides or Jonah Gerondi and his school. If Hillel is the translator, his use of al-Ḥarizi instead of Ibn Tibbon as the base text<sup>218</sup> would probably have been a conscious decision, explicable in light of the Maimonidean controversy in the 1230s. Jonah Gerondi was the student of Solomon of Montpellier, who relied on al-Ḥarizi and harshly criticized Ibn Tibbon,<sup>219</sup> and he was also closely connected to Nahmanides<sup>220</sup> and Meshullam de Piera, who used al-Ḥarizi's translation and apparently criticized Ibn Tibbon and his followers. It is therefore possible that, on returning to Barcelona after the controversy (ca. 1235), Jonah and his school preferred al-Ḥarizi's translation to that of Ibn Tibbon. From a philosophical perspective, the al-Ḥarizi translation offers a version of the *Guide* that is more "moderate," which makes it preferable for a translation into Latin.

4. As we have seen, the translator of *DN* is ambivalent at times in selecting technical-philosophical terminology, which gives its reader the sense that it is not a truly "professional" translation. This fact suggests that the translator did not have much experience as a translator. If Hillel was the translator of *DN*, this impression is understandable. He would have been young—maybe very young—at the time, and probably did not have very much experience in the field.
5. Hillel was a talmudist, physician, philosopher, and translator, though primarily of medical texts. His original work does not demonstrate any particular focus on topics in astronomy (beyond the cosmological topics found in the Aristotelian corpus and commentaries),<sup>221</sup> while his major treatise, the *Rewards*, focuses on subjects connected with the doctrine of the soul. Despite the many years separating

218. This does not exclude the possibility of local text corrections on the basis of Ibn Tibbon.

219. See *Qevuṣat mikhtavim*, 52.

220. See also Nahmanides' epistles from the Maimonidean controversy of the 1230s, in which he complains about Maimonides' admirers in Béziers on matters directly connected to the lineage of his relative Jonah Gerondi: Nahmanides 1963, 1:353–64. See Shrock 1948, 19–20; Silver 1965, 173.

221. If Hillel was the translator of *DN*, then Averroes' influence on him, on topics such as the soul of the celestial spheres, also grew as he aged.

the translation and his own original compositions toward the end of his life, Hillel matches several features we have observed in the profile of *DN*'s translator. Hillel writes in the *Rewards* that already in Spain he had studied "natural science" in the broad sense of the term,<sup>222</sup> which includes both physics and medicine (like the Latin words *physicus* and *physica*). It is therefore possible that already in Spain he was acquainted with medical texts in Latin whose terminology apparently influenced the translation of *DN*. Indeed, these are medical texts that we know the mature Hillel knew very well, including Latin translations of Galen's writings, Avicenna's *Canon*, Constantinus Africanus's *Pantegni*, and Isaac Israeli's medical works. In the *Rewards*, he also uses Israeli's *Sefer ha-yesodot* (though in Hebrew translation) and Avicenna latinus,<sup>223</sup> whose terminology and ideas seem to have influenced the translation of *DN*. It stands to reason that Hillel was exposed to these texts already in Spain, since one does not find quotes from Avicenna's *De anima* or *De philosophia prima* in the writings of contemporary Italian Jewish thinkers such as Moses of Salerno, Immanuel of Rome, and Judah Romano. Nor does one find extensive use of Israeli's *Sefer ha-yesodot* in their writings as one does in Hillel's *Rewards*. It is also very likely that already in Spain he began to take an interest in topics connected to the doctrine of the soul, beyond the medical approach to the faculties of the soul.<sup>224</sup>

6. Hillel and *DN*'s translator use similar terminology. For example, many of the vernacular words that occur in the *Rewards*, such as *equivocazion*, *similitudini* (as a translation of *dimyonot*), *shtiomativo/shtemativo*, *cogitativo/cojjitativo*,<sup>225</sup> and others,<sup>226</sup> match the Latin terms in *DN*. Hillel's language in the *Rewards* also includes many Hebrew expressions and phrases reminiscent of *DN*'s terminology—

222. Hillel of Verona 1981, 134, lines 536–37.

223. See Sermoneta's notes in his edition.

224. Here it should be noted that Jonah Gerondi himself dedicates several (sometimes very extensive) discussions in his *Commentary on Proverbs* and *Sermons on the Torah* to the doctrine of the soul. One can discern in these discussions a familiarity with medical texts, Neoplatonic sources, and the *Guide*.

225. These terms occur in the *Rewards* in discussions of the intellect, and are therefore connected to *cogitatio intelligibilis* in *DN*.

226. See the list of vernacular words in Sermoneta's edition (Hillel of Verona 1981, 251–53). Most of the terms that we have mentioned also appear in *Tractatus Averoy's de perfectione naturali*; see Averroes 2001, 139, line 58; 185, lines 524, 529; 189, line 587; 191, lines 590, 598.

for example, the term *mitdammeḥ el*,<sup>227</sup> which recalls the verb forms *assimilare/i*,<sup>228</sup> used frequently in *DN*.<sup>229</sup>

7. Images of light in connection with intellectual overflow, expressed by the term *splendor* in *DN*, also appear in the *Rewards*.<sup>230</sup>
8. In his *Commentary on the Twenty-Five Premises*, Hillel does not mention Maimonides' statements explaining the twenty-sixth premise that time and motion are eternal, from which there follows the Aristotelian thesis of the eternity of the universe, nor does he interpret the premise itself. Hillel's silence is consistent with the stance taken by *DN* on the question of creation vs. eternity, reflected in its use of the word *creator* even when its Hebrew equivalent does not appear in al-Ḥarizi.
9. Hillel uses the word *elohi* (*divinus*) in various contexts, whereas *DN*'s translator prefers to use the word *spiritualis*. Nonetheless, in the *Rewards*, the word *ruḥani*—the equivalent of the word *spiritualis*—appears with the meaning of a spiritual substance in contexts about the human soul and with the meaning of spiritual substances in contexts referring to the separate intellects.<sup>231</sup> In the first of the three “additions” or *quaestiones* (*mevuqqashim*) that Hillel attached to the *Rewards*, he uses this term in a passage concerning metaphysical notions.<sup>232</sup> Furthermore, the idea that the human soul is a spiritual (*ruḥani* or *ṣuri* in Hillel's terminology) substance, which emanates from the supernal world and will be rewarded or punished spiritually, is one of the central concepts in the *Rewards*. The conception of the human soul as a spiritual substance is also consistent with the view apparently expressed by *DN*'s translator.<sup>233</sup>
10. The translator of *DN* uses the terms *scientia/sapientia spiritualis* to

227. Hillel of Verona 1981, 90, line 212.

228. These terms also appear with this meaning in Israeli's *De elementis* and in Avicenna latinus.

229. Cf. Averroes 2001, 187, line 561.

230. See, e.g., Hillel of Verona 1981, 55, lines 16–17. These images may also be connected to the terms *qinyan mefo'ar*, *shefa' mefo'ar*, and *tiferet*, which appear in the *Rewards* in contexts concerning the human soul, particularly the rational soul (1, line 2; 50, line 377; 55, line 9). However, images of light appear in this work also in contexts concerning emanation, and mainly referring to the human soul (see, e.g., 3, lines 42–43; 19, line 109; 21, lines 130–33; 53, lines 420–22).

231. Cf. Hillel of Verona 1981, 71, line 177.

232. Hillel of Verona 1874b, fol. 47r.

233. See above, n. 179.

refer generally to the subject matter of divine science or metaphysics, but the term *Metaphysica* to refer exclusively to Aristotle's book by that name; hence it appears that he wishes to avoid identifying the two. Hillel, however, once uses the words *ha-ḥokhmah ha-elohit* (*scientia/sapientia divina*) when talking about Aristotle's metaphysics in particular.<sup>234</sup> Nonetheless, in the second "addition" or *quaestio* that Hillel attached to the *Rewards*, it appears that he does not identify *ha-ḥokhmah ha-elohit* with the metaphysics of Aristotle: he comments that Adam was a master of "divine sciences, that is, knowledge of God, may He be blessed, and of the orders of creation."<sup>235</sup>

11. With respect to the connections between *Ma'aseh Bereshit*, *Ma'aseh Merkavah*, their secrets, the esoteric approach, and the centrality of equivocal terms, the translator's note in II 30 [29] and the opinions of Hillel are similar in several respects. In an epistolary correspondence with Zerahyah ben Isaac, Hillel claims, contra Zerahyah, that by "the secrets of *Ma'aseh Bereshit*" Maimonides was not referring to natural science but rather to "other more elevated subjects."<sup>236</sup> As we just mentioned, Hillel also believed that Adam was a master of "divine sciences, that is, knowledge of God . . . and the orders of creation." This view appears to correspond to that of the translator of *DN*, who connects the profound and true content of *Ma'aseh Bereshit* with *Ma'aseh Merkavah*. This might also explain Hillel's emphasis on parts II and III of the *Guide* and the book's secrets in his first letter to Maestro Gaio.<sup>237</sup> On the subject of esotericism, in his introduction to the *Commentary on the Twenty-Five Premises*, Hillel distinguishes between the interpretation of the text of each premise and the interpretation of the intention of each premise, and states that he will

234. See *Perush le-k"h ha-haqdamot*, 16 (Hillel of Verona 1874a, fol. 37r).

235. *Mevuqqash sheni* (Hillel of Verona 1874b, fol. 51v; 2016, vii). Ariel Livneh (2016) has recently prepared a new edition of the second *quaestio* or "addition," with an analysis of its content and comparisons to Latin Scholasticism, especially Thomas Aquinas.

236. *Oṣar neḥmad*, 2:133. On this correspondence, see Ravitzky 1991, 139, 153–56; Idel 1998a, 313–15. In *DN* there are other passages that appear to be consistent with this view. For instance, when Maimonides speaks of the loss of the sciences—"Know that the *many* sciences . . . that have existed in our religious community have perished" (Pines 175)—the translator of *DN* translates: *Scito quod scientiae profundae* ["deep"; al-Ḥarizi: *ha-rabbot*, "many"] *quae fuerunt in gente nostra . . . fuerunt deperditae* (170 [71], MS Ottob. 644, fol. 66r [Giustiniani 1520, fol. 29r]).

237. See *Ḥemdah genuzah*, fol. 20r: "There is no one in [the nation of] Israel today who knows all the secrets of the *Guide*, its roots and its branches, more than I do, especially with regard to the second and third parts, which are the main part of the *Guide*."

make do with the interpretation of the text alone, without delving into its meaning. This, he explains, is both because educated individuals know the meaning, for it is found in the following chapters of the *Guide* (that is, the chapters of part II), and because he is loath to transgress Maimonides' oath—by which he means that he will not interpret the meaning of the premises for esoteric reasons.<sup>238</sup> Finally, in the *Rewards* and other works, Hillel repeatedly refers to the issue of equivocal terms.<sup>239</sup>

12. It seems that the translator of *DN* was not a kabbalist, even though he was apparently exposed to the ideas of the Gerona kabbalists and read some of their writings. This fits what we know about Hillel: he was exposed to the writings of kabbalists, as stated explicitly by Zerahyah ben Isaac<sup>240</sup> and as suggested by Nahmanides' influence on him,<sup>241</sup> even though he was not himself a kabbalist.
13. In his correspondence with Zerahyah ben Isaac, Hillel embraces a conception of language—or, to be more precise, of the “Holy Tongue”—according to which it is natural.<sup>242</sup> This position is in op-

238. *Perush le-k"h ha-haqdamot*, intro. (Hillel of Verona 1874a, fols. 32v–33r). Concerning the halakhically binding status of this oath, Hillel (on the basis of Mishnah, Shevu'ot 4:10) excludes the possibility that Maimonides meant something so legally strict. Nonetheless, Hillel emphasizes the need to “be very fearful of the command” of Maimonides, and notes that he presumed to interpret the premises on the grounds that Maimonides based himself on Aristotle. He adds that even though he will not expound upon the subjects connected with these premises, the “chapter headings” that he provides in the commentary will assist and enlighten the one for whom it is intended with regard to “sublime matters that will not be noticed even by those who have studied this book [the *Guide*] all their lives.” Here Hillel seems to contrast Aristotle's statements, which are not secrets, with other more “sublime” topics that are secrets and can be transmitted only in “chapter headings.” This is consistent with his view as it emerges from his correspondence with Zerahyah ben Isaac and with the view that emerges from *DN*.

239. See, e.g., Hillel of Verona 1981, 30, line 119; 67, lines 122–28; 83, lines 123–24; 106, lines 74–75. Hillel also addresses this topic in the *Commentary on the Twenty-Five Premises* and in the *questiones* or “additions” attached to the *Rewards*.

240. *Oṣar nehmad*, 2:142.

241. On this topic, see Rigo, in preparation. The question whether and to what extent Jonah Gerondi was a kabbalist or a pietist has been a subject of debate among scholars.

242. *Oṣar nehmad*, 2:135. Idel (1994, 33–34, 137–39) refers to the fact that Abraham Abulafia, in *Mafteah ha-ra'yon*, also criticizes the concept of language found in Hillel of Verona (among other thinkers). On Hillel's view of language, see also Schwartz 2009, 39. Moreover, it is interesting to note that in his commentary on *Guide* I 6, the kabbalist Josef Gikatilla—who was a student of Abraham Abulafia, who was a student of Hillel—in this chapter presents Maimonides' conception of language as conventional. As has been mentioned, the translator of *DN* apparently did not translate this chapter initially.



position to those of Maimonides, Ibn Tibbon, Jacob Anatoli, Moses of Salerno, Zerahyah ben Isaac, and many other philosophers who embrace the claim that languages are conventional. The opinion of the translator of *DN* is not clear, but when he reaches Maimonides' interpretation of Genesis 2:20 ("And the man gave names . . ."), he translates:

II 31 [30], MS Ottob. lat. 644, fol. 148r (Giustiniani 1520, fol. 61v): *Scire te convenit et percipiam*<sup>243</sup> *te super hoc, quia scriptura dicit: 'Vocavit Adam nomina,' in quo fecit nos scire quia lingua*<sup>244</sup> *sunt ex positione et convenientia, non sunt naturalia. **Intellige istud!***

Here the translator alters al-Ḥarizi's text. After the translation of the words *ha-leshonot hem muskamot, lo tiv'iyyot* (the languages are conventional, not natural), he does not translate the words *kemo she-ḥashvu anashim* (as some people have thought), and instead concludes the passage with *Intellige istud!* (Understand this!),<sup>245</sup> which matches Maimonides' language in other contexts to catch the reader's attention. It is not clear if these changes stem from the fact that the translator himself is one of those who hold a natural theory of language, but, as we mentioned above, the translator of *DN* has a special conception of *lingua Hebraica*.

In light of all these considerations, we cannot establish with certainty that the translator of *DN* was indeed Hillel. But if Hillel was not the translator, then *DN*'s translator was someone very close to the "*spiritualis*" world of Hillel.

On the other hand, if Hillel was indeed the translator of *DN*, we must reevaluate his relationship to the world of Latin Scholasticism. Not only was he influenced by his Latin environment. Through his Latin translation of the central work of medieval Jewish philosophy and his own understanding of it within the Maimonidean interpretive tradition, Hillel was—and must have

243. *percipiam*] *docebo* Giustiniani. The verb *percipere* appears frequently in Avicenna latinus, with different meanings and also together with the verb *cognoscere*. It appears that the translator of *DN* uses this meaning here and that *percipiam te* is, in effect, *faciam te percipere et cognoscere/faciam te cognoscere*.

244. *linguagia*] *idiomata* Giustiniani.

245. The version of *DN* here corresponds to neither the Arabic original nor the Ibn Tibbon translation.

seen himself as—a central, active link in the transmission of Jewish scholarship to the Christian world. Similarly, if Hillel was the translator, we can easily understand his engagement toward the end of his life (ca. 1289) in the defense of Maimonides' writings, primarily the *Guide*, as expressed in his first letter to Maestro Gaio. According to Hillel, what primarily moved him to write this letter and enter the controversy was the polemical campaign of Solomon ben Samuel ha-Şarfati (Solomon Petit) against Maimonides (and, in particular, against the *Guide*) and Solomon's journey through Italy on his way to the Holy Land at the end of the 1280s. Nonetheless, the central portion of this letter is devoted to the controversy of the 1230s, in which Jonah Gerondi, according to Hillel's testimony, played a central role. If Hillel is the translator, he must have seen himself as acting not only as a student of Jonah Gerondi but also as an essential agent in the transmission of Maimonides' great philosophical work to the Christian world after the controversy of the 1230s. It is interesting to note Hillel's enigmatic comment toward the end of the epistle: "I have already apologized *and done my part* (*we-ʿasiti et sheli*) and the soul of our master [Maimonides] can have no grievance against me, rather only against them [his opponents]."<sup>246</sup> Here it should be remembered that the Jews of Italy were generally not directly involved in the controversy over the writings of Maimonides (even though one can find echoes of the polemics in their writings), making Hillel an exception to this rule.

If the translation of *DN* was done in Jonah Gerondi's school in Barcelona, it can be understood as an initiative of the Jewish community and the followers of Jonah Gerondi in reaction to the polemic against the writings of Maimonides in general and, more specifically, as a reaction to the burning of the *Book of Knowledge* (*Sefer ha-maddaʿ*) and the *Guide* in MontPELLIER.<sup>247</sup>

246. *Hemdah genuzah*, fol. 21r.

247. In the first letter to Maestro Gaio, Hillel notes that the burning of the *Book of Knowledge* and the *Guide* took place in Paris, and that there passed only forty days between their burning and the burning of the Talmud (*Hemdah genuzah*, fol. 19r–v). The problematic nature of this text has already been noted by scholars; see Baer 1961–66, 1:401–2; Sermoneta 1962, 1:14–15; Silver 1965, 16–17, 148n4; J. Cohen 1982, 59–60; Eisenberg 2008, 98–102; Leicht 2013, 587–88. On this text, see also Schwartz 2015, 103; 2016, 491–94. Hillel's testimony, even on the basis of the only extant medieval manuscript (London, The Library of the Beth Din, MS 28, fols. 102r–5r, F 4699), does indeed pose problems, both with respect to the place in which Maimonides' books were burned and with respect to the time that elapsed between their burning and the burning of the Talmud, though with regard to the latter it is possible that Hillel exploits the symbolic meaning of the number forty. This text raises a number of questions: Was the identification of Paris as the location of the burning of Maimonides' books (*Hemdah genuzah*, fol. 19r–v) based on the oral testimony conveyed to Hillel from "the community of MontPELLIER" during the period he

Jewish sources—including Hillel himself<sup>248</sup>—describe the involvement of Christians in the event<sup>249</sup> and consider it the outcome of the accusation of “heresy” against Maimonides. This charge is a central theme (even without a connection to the Christians) in the epistles related to the controversy of the 1230s and can also be found in Hillel’s letter.<sup>250</sup> The translator of *DN* is likewise sensitive to the accusation of “heresy”: he omits from the translation any passages in which Maimonides could be perceived to be a *haeretikus* in the eyes of Christians, and he alters passages in the text that Christian readers could find problematic.<sup>251</sup>

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resided there (see fol. 20r: “I knew of the events that occurred in Montpellier and Paris from the testimony of all members of the community [*kol bene ha-qahal*] of Montpellier when I was there”) and on the desire of the people of Montpellier to dissociate their city from the burning of Maimonides’ books? Or did Hillel deliberately choose not to ascribe a tragic event such as the burning of Maimonides’ books to Montpellier, preferring to designate Paris instead? Montpellier, which was under Spanish sovereignty (unlike Paris), was the city in which his teacher Jonah Gerondi studied with Solomon of Montpellier, the city to which—according to Hillel’s testimony—Jonah returned after his journey to Paris (fol. 19v: “And he left there [Paris] and came to Montpellier, his city”), and the city in which Hillel himself had resided (fol. 20r). In light of all this, did he prefer to designate Paris as the city in which Maimonides’ books were burned, even though he also mentions Montpellier as the city in which the controversy over Maimonides’ writings flared up (fol. 19r: “until the two groups fought each other in Montpellier”)? Did he prefer to designate Paris as the site of the burning also because the instigators of the latest polemical campaign hailed—according to his testimony—from Ashkenaz and northern France (fols. 18v, 20v)?

248. *Hemdah genuzah*, fol. 19r–v.

249. See especially Baer 1961–66, 1:109, 400–402; J. Cohen 1982, 52–60; Schwartz 2016, 493–94.

250. *Hemdah genuzah*, fol. 19r.

251. For example, the translator of *DN* omits Maimonides’ references to the Trinity in I 49 [50] (Di Segni 2013, 139 [Giustiniani 1520, fol. 18r]) and in I 70 [71] (MS Ottob. lat. 644, fol. 67r [Giustiniani 1520, fol. 29v]), and two references to the Messiah in II 30 [29] (MS Ottob. lat. 644, fols. 139v, 141v [Giustiniani 1520, fols. 58r, 59r]). He also changes other passages in his translation that Christian readers could have perceived as problematic. Here are two examples: (1) in *Guide* II 37 [36], where Maimonides writes, “This also will be the cause for prophecy being restored to us in its habitual form, as has been promised in the days of the Messiah, may he be revealed soon” (Pines 373), *DN* translates: *Et ostensa est causa quare cessaret prophetia in diebus istis* (The cause/reason why prophecy has ceased in these days is shown) (MS Ottob. lat. 644, fol. 155v [Giustiniani 1520, fol. 64r]); (2) where Maimonides writes (in Hebrew) in the closing epitaph to the *Guide*, “and that He will grant us and all [the people of] Israel, being fellows, that which He has promised us” (Pines 638), *DN* translates: *Ipse vero adiuvet nos ad intelligendum legem eius et sapientiam ipsius sicut promisit nobis* (May He help us understand His Law and Wisdom as [He] has promised us) (MS Ottob. lat. 644, fol. 282v [Giustiniani 1520, fol. 113v]). The tendency to alter passages that Christian readers could find problematic can also be detected in *Liber praeceptorum*—for instance, in the translation of *praecepta affirmativa* 174, 176, 196, 198 and *praecepta negativa* 15, 16, 53, 56, 128, 235, 243, 303 (Di Segni 2014, 249–50, 252–53, 255, 258–59, 261).

From a historical perspective, the conditions of the Jews of Barcelona at the beginning of the 1240s would have been conducive to such a translation initiative on their part. Relations with Christians during this period in Barcelona were in fairly good order, and, in 1241, James I, King of Aragon and Count of Barcelona, granted a *privilegium* to the Jews of Barcelona.<sup>252</sup> Nahmanides, living in Gerona, was also in contact with the king already at the time of the controversy in the 1230s.<sup>253</sup> Once *DN* was completed and accessible to Christians, it could reach Albertus Magnus in Paris by 1244–45 through at least two possible avenues: through the Dominicans of Barcelona, whose convent had already been established around 1221, or through Montpellier,<sup>254</sup> which since 1204 had been under the sovereignty of the King of Aragon (and then James I in the 1240s), who also served as Lord of Montpellier.

252. On the situation of the Jews in Barcelona and Jewish-Christian relations during this period, see especially Klein 2006, 116–43, 174–78, 192–96. On the *privilegium* of 1241 for the Jews of Barcelona, see Septimus 1973, 396; Klein 2006, 128–30; Riera Sans 2009, 143–45. On the attitude of James I toward the Jews in his kingdom, see Bofarull y Sans 1910; Régné 1978, 1–73; and on his attitude toward the Jews of Catalonia, see Riera Sans 2009, 135–55. It should be noted that other translations were prepared (albeit from Arabic) by Jews in Barcelona during the reign of James I (1213–76); that James I himself was assisted by Barcelonese Jews as Arabic interpreters during his military campaigns; and that in his autobiographical chronicle (*Libre dels fets del rei En Jaume*), he mentions the son of Abraham Ibn Hasday, Astrug Bonsenyor (active 1258–78), as a secretary and Arabic interpreter. See Klein 2006, 134, 262n79. Although James I was among the monarchs who did not implement the decree of Pope Gregory IX in 1239 to confiscate and inspect copies of the Talmud in their countries (in contrast to the king of France, Louis IX), the situation would change after the Disputation of Barcelona. On August 28, 1263, he ordered the burning of *Sefer shoftim* of the *Mishneh Torah*: *ut omnes libros, qui vocantur Soffrim [!], compositos a quodam Iudeo, qui vocabatur Moyses filius Maymon egipciachus sive de Alcayra, Ihesu Christi blasfemias continentes, vobis sine mora et difficultate remota qualibet excusatione ostendant et tradant, quos mox in conspectu populi causa blasfemarum exposita comburi faciatis*. See Denifle 1887, 235; Régné 1978, 40, no. 212; Vose 2009, 170–78. But even after the Disputation of Barcelona, his attitude toward Jews is ambivalent. It is interesting to note that Don Sancho of Aragon, mentioned by Rubio (2006, 272; see above, n. 14), was a son of James I.

253. Nahmanides 1963, 1:365. See Baer 1961–66, 1:105; Klein 2006, 122; Marcus and Saperstein 2015, 390–94.

254. The Dominican convent in Montpellier was established around 1220. Relationships between Spain and Paris are documented already in early Dominican sources, such as the *Li-bellus de principiis ordinis praedicatorum* of the second general of the order, Jordan of Saxony. Jewish scholars migrated between Spain and Montpellier throughout the thirteenth century. On Montpellier in the Middle Ages and on the University of Montpellier, see especially Dumas 2014.



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## 4

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Pedro de Toledo's  
*Mostrador e enseñador de los turbados*  
The Christian Reception of Maimonides' *Guide*  
in Fifteenth-Century Spain

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LUIS M. GIRÓN NEGRÓN

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In memory of Ángel Sáenz-Badillos, beloved friend

Early on in Alfonso de la Torre's *La Visión Deleytable*, a fifteenth-century primer of philosophy for a Christian prince written in the form of an allegorical fable, the Intellect personified is escorted by Reason and Truth into the palace of Wisdom. The Intellect is introduced therein to a memorable pageant of ancient and medieval philosophical luminaries:

As he drew closer, he saw a great company of men who were very honorable and wise. All their faces were ablaze as if with the light of stars. He recognized some of the ancients . . . and he saw Plato therein, along with some of his contemporaries. Among the modern sages, he saw in there al-Fārābī, al-Ghazālī, Avicenna, and Moses of Egypt (*Muysén de Egipto*), and others in their company who were also held in great esteem.<sup>1</sup>

1. Spanish original in *Visión Deleytable* I-15 (De la Torre 1991, 1:150). Unless otherwise noted, all translations into English are mine; however, English translations of Maimonides' Arabic text of the *Guide* are from Pines.

Rambam's appearance in this gallery—he is its only Jewish member—is not ornamental. It does not represent a purely impressionistic effort to summon his name as a disembodied cipher of philosophical learning. De la Torre's encyclopedic fable is, rather, steeped in Maimonidean doctrine. It reconnoiters an unusual range of Greek, Jewish, Christian, and Muslim philosophical sources in order to expound his religious *Weltanschauung* for the benefit of a Hispano-Christian student, all framed by a substantive overview of Maimonidean thought. Maimonides' *Guide* is the primary source of De la Torre's philosophical curriculum. To the most basic staple problems in medieval Aristotelianism—especially in the fields of metaphysics and natural philosophy—De la Torre gives Maimonidean solutions excerpted from the *Guide*, sometimes verbatim, always in elegant didactic prose of enviable precision and even literary finesse.<sup>2</sup>

De la Torre's venerable classic raises an intriguing question for Iberian intellectual history: How could Maimonides become the main philosophical authority for the primary education of a Christian aristocrat in fifteenth-century Spain? What is the historical context that allowed Maimonides' *Guide*—the Jewish philosophical classic par excellence—to become a central reference in the intellectual life of Christian Spain in the late Middle Ages?

Part of the answer is to be found in the Old Spanish *Mostrador e enseñador de los turbados* by Pedro de Toledo: the oldest extant translation of the *Guide* into a European language other than Latin. Probably finished a few years before De la Torre's *Visión*, Toledo's *Mostrador* made the *Guide* readily available to an elite circle of Hispano-Christian readers.<sup>3</sup> It does not

2. On *Visión Deleytable's* philosophical content and literary fate, see Girón Negrón 2001.

3. Its first modern edition (Lazar 1989) made it accessible to a wider readership, but it is plagued with errors (Carpenter 1993). It has, moreover, a significant lacuna missed by Carpenter, accidentally replaced by a lengthy portion of an earlier section repeated therein: i.e., a few lines into *Guide* III 30, Lazar 320 (9th line from the bottom—the line that begins with *que te fizo comer magna en el desierto*) through midway into *Guide* III 40, Lazar 325 (6th line of the third paragraph where it begins with *aun que comiese alguno de Yrrael*) is a repetition of pp. 308–13 (i.e., midway through *Guide* III 24 [3rd line from the bottom] to midway through *Guide* III 26 [6th line of the last paragraph]). The text missing in Lazar's edition (pp. 320–25) more or less covers fols. 113v–122v, i.e., most of *Guide* III 30 through III 41. I have checked Lazar's edition against the original manuscript (which can be consulted online at the Biblioteca Nacional); a facsimile of the manuscript has been published by Escudero Ríos (1990). Finally, I have transcribed a few of the glosses in the missing section in some of the notes below. A final note: when this volume was close to publication, a partial edition of the *Mostrador* came out (Fernández López 2016), which I was unable to consult for this study. I hope it has managed to redress some of Lazar's editorial mistakes.

seem to have been De la Torre's immediate source on Maimonides. Be that as it may, both works represent a broader phenomenon in Iberian intellectual history that made Maimonidean philosophy substantive fodder for Hispano-Christian thought: the active recourse of Christian aristocrats to Jewish and converso scholars for the translation and study of Hebrew works in their Ibero-Romance vernacular. To appreciate Toledo's translation of the *Guide*, it must first be placed within this historical context on the Iberian side of the Pyrenees.

Pedro de Toledo's *Mostrador* belongs to a variegated corpus of Hebrew works translated into Spanish mostly in the fifteenth century. These translations cover a decent range of Jewish intellectual domains. They include Old Spanish *romanceamientos* of the Hebrew Bible, rabbinic exegetical sources, Jewish philosophical classics, synoptic digests of medieval Jewish law, ethical treatises, historical chronicles, and scientific literature.<sup>4</sup> Some of these texts were probably produced either for internal Jewish use or else for converso readers, including a handful in Hebrew script; and more than a few, while commissioned by Christians, were built upon an earlier tradition of intra-Jewish translation, as was the case with most Spanish Bibles. Most of these *romanceamientos* were made, nonetheless, at the behest of Christian patrons and are preserved, just like Toledo's *Mostrador*, in late medieval codices written in Latin script with a Hispano-Christian readership in mind.

Their Christian patrons were, by and large, prominent Castilian aristocrats steeped in contemporary politics, and caught up in the complex courtly alliances and internecine struggles between nobles and kings in the Iberian kingdoms of Castile, Aragón, and Navarre. These noblemen were not—unlike the intellectuals among the clergy—professional scholars with a command of Latin but, rather, learned amateurs with broader cultural interests or, at least, a protohumanist appreciation for the value of culture, and whose vernacular literacy had whetted their appetite for more acces-

4. See the appendix below. See also the recent overview by Faulhaber (2004), based on his comprehensive efforts in *Philobiblon* to catalogue the extant corpus of Old Spanish manuscripts and works. It should be noted, however, that Toledo's *Mostrador* and the Old Spanish *Kuzari* are listed therein among works of philosophy and religion translated from Arabic. (Faulhaber rightly points out that both treatises were originally written in Arabic, but he echoes, in Toledo's case, Lazar's questionable claim that the *Mostrador* was based on both the Arabic original and the two Hebrew versions—see below.) On the Old Spanish Bibles in particular, see also the wealth of information collected by Andrés Enrique-Arias at [www.bibliamediaval.es](http://www.bibliamediaval.es). For an earlier effort at a similar précis of Old Spanish translations from Hebrew, see Girón Negrón 2001, 50–60.



sible books on both secular and religious subjects. They commissioned translations from Latin and the other European vernaculars, built up impressive libraries, and brought a wide array of literati to their courts in order to foster their cultural interests. The latter included both Jewish and converso scholars who provided rare access to Hebrew sources and a cherished expertise in three particular domains of intellectual life they also valued: biblical scholarship, astronomy, and philosophy. These rabbinic scholars had a complex relationship with their Hispano-Christian benefactors that was rooted in delicate negotiations within social and institutional contexts of political subservience and the cumulative pressure of Christian apologetic and conversionary efforts. But even at a precarious time for Iberian Jews in the momentous aftermath of the 1391 massacres and mass conversions, the Tortosa disputations of 1413–14, and other comparable ordeals for the peninsular *aljamas*, Jewish and converso scholars were sought after and given protection by these Christian patrons at their learned humanist courts. These scholarly endeavors allowed the Jewish intellectual heritage to play a formative role in the cultural life of late medieval Christian Spain.<sup>5</sup>

For example, De la Torre's *Visión Deleytable*, which is not exactly a translation but an encyclopedic cento of translated sources, had been commissioned for the primary education of Carlos de Viana, crown prince of Navarre. The powerful masters of the three religious-military orders—Calatrava, Santiago, and Alcántara—also oversaw Renaissance-style courts *avant la lettre* with rabbinic scholars at their service associated with major translation projects and other cultural initiatives of comparable heft. During the last decades of the fifteenth century, the Jewish polymath Abraham Zacuto, author of the astronomical tables in *Ha-ḥibbur ha-gadol* and the historical treatise *Sefer yuḥasin*, served at the court of Juan de Zuñiga y Pimentel, Master of the Order of Alcántara from 1475 through 1494, and as court astronomer for John II of Portugal after 1492. Half a century earlier, Don Luis de Guzmán, Master of the Order of Calatrava and a highly influential Castilian politician in the circle of John II of Castile, expressly commissioned Rabbi Moshe Arragel of Guadalajara with a Spanish translation and commentary of the entire Hebrew Bible, which was prepared between 1422 and 1430 under his active patronage. The Arragel Bible remains one of

5. These considerations give the lie to Sánchez Albornoz's (1956, 2:267) notoriously anti-Semitic dismissal of these Jewish scholars; in particular reference to both Toledo's *Mostrador* and the Arragel Bible, he once claimed that these works "son tareas sin relieve que no pueden parangonarse con las auténticas aventuras creacionales de los cristianos de entonces."

the most impressive works of Hispano-Jewish scholarship in Old Spanish: a stunning translation with over 6,300 exegetical glosses that reconnoiter, at Luis de Guzmán's explicit behest, both the rabbinic midrashim and the medieval biblical commentaries, along with Christian addenda by mendicant friars from Luis's circle, and—particularly significant for our topic—selective rationalist interpretations of biblical passages and rabbinic aggadot in an allegorical key drawn from Maimonides' *Guide*. Arragel, like Toledo, was more than happy to educate his Christian patron on Maimonides' distinctive contributions to Jewish biblical interpretation.<sup>6</sup>

Like Arragel under Guzmán, Toledo also became the beneficiary of a Christian Maecenas at the learned court of an Iberian military order. Toledo's translation of the *Guide* was first commissioned by Gómez Suárez de Figueroa (ca. 1382–1429), first Lord of Feria, Zafra, and La Parra in the province of Badajoz, as stated in the prologue:

In the name of God Almighty, I, master Pedro de Toledo, son of Johan del Castillo, was asked and ordered by my lord Gómez Suárez de Figueroa, son of the very esteemed knight don Lorenzo Suárez de Figueroa, Master of the very honorable and esteemed chivalric Order of Santiago, to translate into Castilian the most esteemed book *Moreh* by the very famous sage, master Moses of Egypt, the Cordovan, son of the great judge, Rabbi Maimon of Córdoba, which deals with the most exalted science, the knowledge of philosophy and metaphysics, and of the prophecies, and of Moses's sacred law.<sup>7</sup>

6. I have been coediting this Hispano-Jewish classic along with Andrés Enrique Arias, Francisco Javier Pueyo Mena, and the late Ángel Sáenz-Badillos. For a general overview of this work, see Fellous-Rozenblatt 2001; Avenzoa 2011, 199–254; and the studies collected in Schonfield 1992, vol. 2, which is a companion volume to a facsimile reproduction.

7. Lazar 3; fol. 1r (all references to the Spanish original will include both the page number in Lazar's edition and the folio number in the manuscript). Toledo's hybrid reference to Rambam as *Moisés de Egipto el cordoví* is worth noting. "Moses of Egypt" is a designation for Maimonides popularized in late medieval Europe in the Latin *Dux neutrorum* (which consistently refers to the author as "Rabi Moyses Aegyptius"; see the section "The Tradition of the *Guide* among the Jewish Thinkers" in Caterina Rigo's contribution to this volume; Aquinas simply referred to him as "Rabi Moyses"), whereas "the Cordovan" is the correct demonym by which Rambam often identified himself in signing his name (Davidson 2005, 4). Toledo seems mindful of his Christian addressee in resorting to the former designation, but fleshes out the rabbinic lineage inscribed in his Hebrew name (Moses ben Maimon, "son of the great judge, Rabbi Maimon of Cordova") in line with Rambam's self-presentation (e.g., the colophon to his *Commentary on the Mishnah*). De la Torre, in the quote above, and Toledo's critic, in one of his glosses (see text quoted in n. 19), also refer to him as *Moisés de Egipto*.

Gómez was the firstborn of Lorenzo Suárez de Figueroa (1345–1409), a prominent early supporter of the Trastamaran dynasty and Grand Master of the Military Order of Santiago from 1383 through 1409. Clearly at Gómez's behest, Toledo finished translating the second part of the *Guide* in 1419 while in Zafra, one of Gómez's feudal domains. Moreover, while Gómez himself died in 1429, three years before the date recorded in the colophon of Toledo's translation of the third part, it seems more than probable that Toledo's *Mostrador* passed into the hands of yet another Hispano-Christian nobleman, a patron of Jewish scholars and a major poet in his own right, who probably supported its completion: Don Íñigo López de Mendoza, Marqués de Santillana. Santillana is revered among Hispanists not only as one of the great Spanish poets of the fifteenth century but also as an active patron of culture who amassed one of the most impressive protohumanist libraries in Castile at the Palace of the Infantado in Guadalajara. His library abounded with significant translations of classical and Renaissance works from Latin, Italian, and even Hebrew, almost certainly including Toledo's *Mostrador* and an Old Spanish *romanceamiento* of the Hebrew Bible.<sup>8</sup> Santillana's active interest in Hispano-Jewish culture is well established: his poetry showcases selective borrowings from the Old Spanish Bibles and probably even Maimonides' *Guide* via Toledo's translation (e.g., in his *Bías contra Fortuna*); in the famous *Prohemio e carta . . . al Condestable de Portugal*, he professes, as well, literary admiration for the Old Spanish gnomic poem *Proverbios morales* by Shem Tov de Carrión. Santillana and Gómez Suárez de Figueroa were also connected through their respective wives, who were sisters. Their close ties may explain how the only extant manuscript of Toledo's translation, found in the library of Osuna-Infantado at the time of its sale to the Biblioteca Nacional in 1884, may have belonged to Santillana's original collection in Guadalajara, as suggested by the Italian *romaniste* Mario Schiff in 1905 in his pioneering efforts to reconstruct and analyze the inventory of its holdings.<sup>9</sup>

This is *grosso modo* the Hispano-Christian context in which Toledo's translation of the *Guide* was conceived and executed.

8. On Santillana's library, see Schiff 1897; 1905, 428–44; and the corrections of and caveats regarding the former in Gómez Moreno and Kerkhof 1988, xxi–xxix; on Santillana's ties to Jewish scholarship, see Girón Negrón 2000; Gómez Moreno 2001, 79–86.

9. José María Rocamora's *Catálogo abreviado de los manuscritos de la biblioteca del Excmo: Señor duque de Osuna e Infantado* (1882) documents for the first time the existence of the BNM's manuscript of Toledo's *Mostrador* (entry 162, pp. 41–42). The library of Osuna-Infantado contained the holdings of Santillana's library in Guadalajara.

What else do we know about the *Mostrador* itself? Toledo's translation survives in a single manuscript at the Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid, no. 10289 (*olim* Kk-9). The codex is comprised of 141 folios with Toledo's translation in two columns (42–45 lines per page, with titles and capital letters in red).<sup>10</sup> The first twenty folios are also crammed with over 1,500 glosses, both marginal and interlinear, by an anonymous, delightfully cantankerous Jewish reader. This censorious commentator sharply and relentlessly criticizes the putative shortcomings of Toledo's translation, both linguistic and with respect to Toledo's rabbinic, exegetical, and philosophical learning, providing alternative translations of selected terms and even entire passages based on Ibn Tibbon.<sup>11</sup> A little more than 180 glosses by the translator himself are also scattered throughout the entire manuscript both as an *apologia pro opere suo* and for the pedagogical benefit of his Christian patron, confirming Toledo's exordial claims on his approach to translation.<sup>12</sup>

Very little is known about Pedro de Toledo's life. In his prologue to the *Mostrador*, Pedro introduces himself as the son of a Johan del Castillo. Some scholars identify the latter with Juan el Viejo de Toledo, a Jewish convert to Christianity who wrote an anti-Jewish tractate in 1416 entitled *Tractatus*

10. Full description of the manuscript in *Philobiblon* BETA manid 2510 (see also BETA texid 2037). In what follows, we cite Toledo's translation as T, e.g., **T II 13**. Toledo's numbering of the chapters differs at times from the *Guide's* original chapter division, so in order to avoid confusion we will always provide both: first, the *Guide's* reference by part and chapter, followed by Toledo's: e.g., *Guide* I 52/T I 51.

11. For an interpretive overview of these glosses, see Fernández López 2011, 57–70. He calculates a total of 1,563 glosses through folio 20v. Bar-Lewaw (1966, 61) and Fernández López deem Toledo's critic a Jew based on the precise scope of his rabbinic and philosophical learning, which seems by and large correct (although the critic's vitriol leads him at times, as we will see, to unfounded claims against Toledo rooted in his disregard for al-Ḥarizi's text). However, it is not clear to me, contra Schiff (1905, 431), that the critic's knowledge of the *Guide* was based on direct access to the Judeo-Arabic original.

12. Fernández López (2011, 50–57) calculates 186 glosses distributed as follows: book I—94; book II—20; book III—72. These numbers may lend themselves to minor tweaking (e.g., our comments below on the gloss split in two in **T I 51**). Forty-five of these glosses are also mixed up with the abundant *postillae* of the anonymous Jewish critic in the first twenty folios. Lazar's edition does not distinguish between them. For example, the gloss *ay on también de provechos otros* in *Guide* I 34/T I 33 (Lazar 63; fol. 16r)—[en] *ambos libros falle este capítulo bien desordenados e por eso escribí lo mejor de amos, vocablo por vocablo, porque me non pongan culpa*—was clearly written by Toledo. This can be corroborated in Lazar's photographic reproduction of the original folio between pp. 160 and 161 of his edition (said gloss was written on the right margin of the second column by the same scribe who copied Toledo's translation, whereas the glosses of the anonymous critic are written out with a clearly different handwriting). A new edition of the *Mostrador* should aim to distinguish clearly between the two sets of glosses.

*contra iudaeos*, a polemical treatise written in the aftermath of the Tortosa disputations and interwoven with rabbinic intertexts that also survives in Spanish translation, the *Memorial de las cosas que atañen a nuestro señor Jesús y a la su santa Fe*.<sup>13</sup> While certainly plausible, this conjecture remains unproven. Neither can we ascertain for sure whether Pedro himself was a Jew or a converso.<sup>14</sup> Toledo does not identify himself as a Jew anywhere in the extant text of his translation. One could plausibly argue from his command of philosophical Hebrew and the precise knowledge of Jewish realia evidenced in his glosses that he was either Jewish or else a first-generation converso, but such conjectural efforts remain inconclusive.

We stand on firmer ground with respect to the dating of his translation. Each of its three parts ends with a colophon providing precise information on Toledo's cumulative progress. In the brief text at the end of part I, Toledo offers a prayer of thanksgiving over the partial completion of an arduous task. In the lengthier colophon to part II, Toledo further specifies that this portion of the translation was concluded in Zafra on a Friday, the twenty-fifth day of an unspecified month in 1419, which we can surmise fell on August 25. Finally, the colophon to part III explicitly states that this portion was completed in Seville, also on a Friday, February 8, 1432; this colophon identifies the scribe's name as Alfonso Pérez de Cáceres. However, whereas in the first two colophons Toledo is explicitly identified with *verba dicendi* as the author (*dize maestro Pedro de Toledo*), no such attribution is put forward in the third. If one deems Toledo responsible for all three colophons, one might conclude with Moshe Lazar (1989, xv) that the entire

13. The seventeenth-century Sevillian bibliographer Nicolás Antonio already intimated in his *Bibliotheca hispana vetus* that Pedro de Toledo's father could have been the Toledan converso Juan el Viejo, author of the 1416 *Memorial*, and that the translator could have been the same Pedro who also wrote *De causa ob quam angeli in diversis locis simul esse non possunt* in 1433—a claim echoed by Schiff (1897, 167; 1905, 443–44) and quoted by Bar Lewaw (1966, 59) and Lazar (1989, xv); see also Gómez Moreno (2001, 69, 74). Gutwirth (1986, 133–34) observes as well that the *Guide* figures among the Jewish works cited by Juan el Viejo in his treatise.

14. Schiff (1905, 443; *Pierre de Tolède . . . est un juif converti, ou fils d'un juif converti*), Castro (1948, 502), and Escudero Ríos (1990, ii) deem him probably a converso; Bonilla y San Martín (1911, 302) and Millás Vallicrosa (1943, 300–301) consider him a Jew. Rosenblatt (1965, 52–53) first suggested that Pedro de Toledo may have been perhaps a Rabbi Hayyim ha-Levi, physician at the household of the archbishop of Toledo, Pedro Tenorio, who appointed him *alcalde* and *juez mayor* over the Toledan Jews in 1395 and whose name Pedro may have been taken after his apparent conversion (on Hayyim ha-Levi/Maestre Pedro, see Baer 1929–36, 2:228–30, 242–44, sources 241, 244, 258); Lazar (1989, xv) also echoes, with due reservations, Rosenblatt's conjecture.

translation was finished by 1432. Alvar and Lucía Megías (2009, 215–17) suggest, on the other hand, that February 8, 1432, is the date when Alfonso Pérez completed transcribing this particular manuscript, along with Toledo's glosses (perhaps at Santillana's behest, working from the original), not the actual date when Toledo finished the translation itself. Whichever scholar is right, 1432 stands at the very least as the definitive ante quem for Toledo's completion of the entire *Mostrador*.

In his preface to the translation, Toledo briefly summarizes for his patron's benefit his understanding of what the *Guide's* title means and Maimonides' purpose in writing this treatise. He tells Suárez de Figueroa that the title *Moreh* stands for *Mostrador e enseñador de los turbados* (*Guide and Teacher of the Bewildered*), that said *turbados* were "Jews deeply learned in philosophy who harbored doubts in their hearts and great confusion over many things in the holy scriptures that seemed to be against nature and reason," and that Rambam's purpose in writing his *Guide* was to "harmonize the holy scriptures of Moses and the prophets with the most exalted and excellent first philosophy, moral philosophy, and natural philosophy, as they are to be found by and large in said book."<sup>15</sup>

Toledo's unequivocal admiration for Maimonides' status as an unrivaled philosophical genius goes hand in hand throughout the other colophons with his insistent plea for indulgence of his putative insufficiencies as translator, partly a rhetorical gesture of *captatio benevolentiae* and yet laced with a precise awareness of genuine limitations in painfully bringing to fruition this demanding translation:

And you lord, your Grace, heed me on this one thing, and anyone who were to study this book, also heed me on this as long as he is deeply learned and subtle in all fields of knowledge, in the arts, in natural philosophy, in moral philosophy, and in the first philosophy: that since the time of Moses to the present no book has been written comparable to this one, neither in kind nor in terms of the science with which it

15. Lazar 3; fol. 1r. The anonymous critic inserts two revealing comments ad locum. He first points out that while Toledo's *mostrador* rightly renders the Hebrew *moreh*, *turbados* seems an imprecise, albeit acceptable, translation of the Hebrew *nevukhim* (*esto es pasadero*); he would rather translate it as *desarrados* (Márquez Villanueva 2004)—the critic equates the Old Spanish *turbados* with the Hebrew *nivhalim* and *mevohalim*. He also argues contra Toledo that Maimonides may have aimed to reconcile Scripture with metaphysics and natural philosophy, but not moral philosophy, as if the Torah were lacking in moral doctrine.

deals, nor has there been a learned sage among Jews, Christians, and Muslims comparable to him in kind. . . . I beseech you as my lord, and I demand in accordance with the teachings of the masters, that you should never read any given chapter without first reading the chapter that came right before, lest it cause you to doubt and thus fail to understand many things, given the great depth reached by this man in the aforementioned book. For there are two reasons given by Aristotle at the beginning of his *Metaphysics*, according to the Muslim translation, why you should not be astonished that some words are not perfectly rendered, but that you should rather be astonished at everything that is done well: the first reason is the profundity of its subtle and elevated subjects and the second reason is our insufficiency and meager capacity. And it is like this with me on account of my scarce understanding, even more because of my scarce learning and reach, on account of the necessary worldly labors that I need. (colophon to part II; Lazar 264; fol. 90v)<sup>16</sup>

What can be said about the translation itself? Toledo clearly translates from a Hebrew version, not from the Judeo-Arabic original.<sup>17</sup> But which of the Hebrew versions served as his immediate source? And how did Toledo approach the translation process? In the prologue Toledo expounds on his sources and method; the few glosses he wrote throughout the manuscript support most of his exordial claims, as does a perfunctory examination of the translation itself.

We are told in the prologue that there were different Hebrew transla-

16. Lazar commits a haplographic error in his transcription, eliding the underlined portion in the following sentence: *Porque vos non maravilledes de algunos vocablos non puestos a perfección, ante vos maravilledes de lo que está bien por dos razones que Aristóteles diz en comienço de su Metafísica, segunt la trasladación morisca.*

17. Schiff's (1905, 444) perplexity as to why Toledo did not translate from the original Judeo-Arabic is based on the incorrect assumption that his references to certain philosophers by their Arabized names (Alexander of Aphrodisias as Alixandre Alfaradosi, al-Fārābī as Abunacer Alfarabi) and to the *trasladación morisca* of Aristotle suggest he must have known Arabic. However, the Arabized names of these philosophers were known as such in Hebrew sources. According to Fernández López (2011, 46), on the other hand, "Pedro de Toledo tiene un conocimiento no extenso del árabe, ha estudiado filosofía, se ha servido de las traducciones árabes de los textos clásicos de la Academia y de los peripatéticos y está versado en los grandes temas y autores de la escolástica árabe, pero a partir de cualesquiera de las versiones latinas que ya desde el siglo XII circulan por la península." But contrary to what Schiff and Lazar (1989, xvi) thought, no unimpeachable proof has yet been found that Toledo had direct access to Arabic sources in the original.

tions of the *Guide*—Toledo later intimates that there were at least four!<sup>18</sup>—but he claims to have worked only with al-Ḥarizi and Ibn Tibbon. Both translators, he argues, erred at times—a problem, he says, that was compounded in their textual transmission by the cumulative mistakes of Hebrew scribes who introduced errors of their own<sup>19</sup>—but Toledo acknowledges the consensus of his Jewish contemporaries that al-Ḥarizi's belletristic version was marred by more substantive errors in his understanding of philosophy than Ibn Tibbon's calque rendering of the Judeo-Arabic original. While praising the quality and beauty of al-Ḥarizi's Hebrew, Toledo deems his technical appreciation for the finer points of the *Guide's* content more limited (*al-Ḥarizi es sabido ser bueno e complido en lenguaje e muy simple en la sciencia*), whereas Ibn Tibbon's superior command of Maimonidean philosophy is uncontested (*Aventabón mejor en la sciencia*).<sup>20</sup> Toledo's claim that both Hebrew translators erred may reflect some awareness of late medieval Hispano-Jewish critiques not only of al-Ḥarizi but also of Ibn Tibbon, as in the thirteenth-century *Moreh ha-moreh*, Shem Tov Falaquera's commentary on the *Guide* (Falaquera 2001), which, despite its supreme disdain for al-Ḥarizi's *Moreh*, insistently underscores some of Ibn Tibbon's interpretive

18. "And so that your grace may be pleased, if there be some critic, or if one comes, that feigns to be a learned sage, your grace may order to have a chapter of the Hebrew text read out from any of the four translations that there are nowadays" (Lazar 5; fols. 1r–v). Kaufmann (1910, 179) suggests that "Pedro auch die hebräische Bearbeitung des Führers in Versen durch Mattatja b. Ghartom gekannt habe."

19. Toledo's critic pointedly repudiates both of these claims ad locum (Lazar 4; fol. 1r): "Not all scribes are lacking in learning, nor have they all erred, even less the translators themselves, as he says and as will be seen later on, for the author himself consulted Ibn Tibbon's translation and deemed it good, even if this translator says that they all erred, just as he states right after: *that both translators erred*, a very bad thing to say if his intention was to exonerate himself and place all blame on them"; "*More so since both translators erred*. He is saving his own skin, since the author himself Rabbi Moshe of Egypt saw Ibn Tibbon's translation and authorized it; it is true that al-Ḥarizi's translation is marred with errors and his [i.e., Toledo's] even more."

20. "For there are different translators and they are diversely learned, good ones, regular ones, others that are neither. All copyists, on the other hand, since they are not learned, made visible mistakes. May I not be blamed if I err in what I do and may God be thanked in anything good that I say, more so since both translators erred in so many things! And one erred more than the other, there is no comparison, as it is well known that the one called Harizi had a fine and perfect command of the language but his knowledge of philosophy was simplistic, whereas the one with the best command of philosophy is called Ibn Tibbon! But I trust in God most high, and as far as philosophy is concerned, although I was little pleased with my commission, I will do the very best I can, anything within my power and within the reach of my limited understanding" (Lazar 3–4; fol. 1r).



and philological shortcomings over and against the latter. No critics of either Hebrew version are explicitly identified by Toledo himself.

Moving to his *romanceamiento*, Toledo states that he will aim, as is customary, at a periphrastic translation *ad sensum*, at times adding or subtracting for the sake of clarity (just as Maimonides recommended to Ibn Tibbon himself),<sup>21</sup> at other times rendering a passage *ad litteram* word by word, and mostly drawing from the best Hebrew version in accordance with the scholarly consensus. He will often pick and choose between the two versions—a portion from al-Ḥarizi here, another from Ibn Tibbon over there—and in the few cases where he simply fails to understand what a passage in the Hebrew text actually means, he promises to render it *ad litteram*.<sup>22</sup>

If we examine the translation more closely, Toledo's exordial claims bear out with one significant caveat. His own acknowledgment of Ibn Tibbon's superior grasp of philosophy notwithstanding, Toledo does tend at first to privilege al-Ḥarizi over Ibn Tibbon as the primary source of his translation. As promised, he does set al-Ḥarizi and Ibn Tibbon side by side, at times drawing from the latter, but his text more often than not closely hews to al-Ḥarizi. Toledo even follows al-Ḥarizi's chapter divisions of the *Guide*, combining into one chapters 26 and 27 in part I (cf. al-Ḥarizi 1:26–27) and renumbering accordingly all subsequent chapters (the anonymous glossist even marks the point where chapter 27 should have begun).<sup>23</sup> Indeed,

21. "The translator who proposes to render each word literally and adhere slavishly to the order of the words and sentences in the original will meet much difficulty and the result will be doubtful and corrupt. This is not the right method. The translator should first try to grasp the sense of the subject thoroughly, and then state the theme with perfect clarity in the other language. This, however, cannot be done without changing the order of the words, putting many words for one word, or *vice versa*, and adding or taking away words, so that the subject be perfectly intelligible in the language into which he translates" (Maimonides 1977, 132–33; Hebrew original in Maimonides 1988, 532). For a comparable view on Arabic-Hebrew translation, see also chap. 8 of Moshe Ibn Ezra's *Kitāb al-muḥāḍara wa-al-mudhākara*.

22. The relevant text reads: "Hence, as it is customary, I had to render one word with two and two words with one, and I had to add something in one place and take something away elsewhere, and in one place I had to explain further, in another I had to abridge, and yet in another I had to render it word by word as it was, basing myself mostly on the best translation, the one that I and others more learned deem and uphold as most worthy of consideration. Many times, I take a line from one translation and another line from the other one, and sometimes I will take it as it is, in accordance with how the translation renders it, not as it should be rendered (*segunt la traslació esté, non segunt deve*), since I do not understand it. In order not to err and not to render something with something else, I will render it according to the best translation aforesaid" (Lazar 4–5; fol. 1r).

23. In part II, Toledo also renumbers the introduction as chapter 1, as in al-Ḥarizi, giving way as well to mismatched numbers with the standard division.

throughout most of his *postillae* on Toledo's *romanceamiento* of part I, his curmudgeonly critic highlights what he considers the translator's problematic dependence on al-Ḥarizi, along with Toledo's other perceived intellectual insufficiencies, all set in stark contrast to Ibn Tibbon's Hebrew version, whose superiority he defends on Maimonides' own authority.<sup>24</sup> Toledo's rendering of the first sentence in Maimonides' epistle to Joseph ben Judah Ibn Simeon of Ceuta at the outset of the *Guide* swiftly establishes his initially greater dependence on al-Ḥarizi's text:

**Dios te dé su gracia [1] el disciplo muy onrado, [2] rabí Joseph, fijo de rabí Judá, que Dios perdone, [3] por que de entonces que estoviste ante mí, [4] e veniste de extremo de la tierra [5] para aprender de mí [6] fue onrada tu ánima ante mis ojos, [7] por que vi [la] tu grant amor para buscar la sciencia, [8] también por que vi en tus cantigas el tu grant deseo al acatamiento de las sabidurías. [9] (Lazar 5; fol. 2r)**

[1] **Dios te dé su gracia**

Al-Ḥarizi's addendum (*elohim yaḥnekha*), which Toledo translates, is neither in the Judeo-Arabic original nor in Ibn Tibbon (Latin: *propitius sit tibi Deus*).<sup>25</sup> At the same time, Maimonides' standard blessing upon Rabbi Joseph ("may the Rock guard you": *shomero šuro*) is reproduced by Ibn Tibbon but not al-Ḥarizi, and hence it is missing in Toledo.

[2] **onrado**

Maimonides: *al-talmīdh al-'aziz* (my honored pupil)

Ibn Tibbon: *ha-talmid he-ḥashuv*

al-Ḥarizi: *ha-talmid ha-yaqar*

Latin: *inclite discipule*

The anonymous glossist: *preciado*

Here and in [7] Toledo consistently renders al-Ḥarizi's *yaqar(ah)* as *onrado/a*.

24. On his critique of Toledo's prologue, see Fernández López 2011, 57–60.

25. Toledo's Old Spanish rendering of the blessing *elohim yaḥnekha*, which appears in Gen 43:29, coincides with its wording in the fifteenth-century Arragel Bible (*Dios te dé su gracia*). The other biblical *romanceamientos* offer alternative renderings: Faz. *Dios te aya merced*; E3 *Dios te aya piedad*; E19 *Dios, que te faga bien*; E7 *Dios te apiade* (also the Ferrara Bible); E4 *Dios aya piedad de ti*.

[3] **que Dios perdone**

Maimonides: *nuḥo 'eden* (may his repose be in paradise)

The anonymous glossist: *en paraíso sea Su reposo*

Maimonides invokes the memory of Rabbi Judah with a blessing reproduced by both Ibn Tibbon and al-Ḥarizi and faithfully rendered by the anonymous critic in response to Toledo's periphrastic "may God forgive [him]."

[4] **por que de entonces que estoviste ante mí**

Maimonides: *lammā mathalta 'indī* (when you came to me)

Ibn Tibbon: *hinneh me-az ba'ta elay*

al-Ḥarizi: *hinneh me-az asher 'amadta le-fanay*

Glossist: *ahé*

The anonymous critic decries the fact that Toledo did not translate *hinneh*, which figures in both Hebrew versions, but Toledo's *estoviste ante mí* reflects al-Ḥarizi's 'amadta le-fanay, rather than Ibn Tibbon's *ba'ta elay*.

[5] **e veniste de extremo de la tierra**

Maimonides: *wa-qaṣadta min aqāṣī al-bilād* (having conceived the intention of journeying from the country farthest away)

Ibn Tibbon: *we-kiwwanta mi-qeṣot ha-areṣ*

al-Ḥarizi: *u-va'ta mi-qeṣeh ha-areṣ*

Latin: *cum venisses de finibus terrae*

Toledo clearly follows al-Ḥarizi *ad litteram* (and you **came** [T *veniste* / al-Ḥarizi *ba'ta*] from the ends of the earth) and not Ibn Tibbon's more faithful rendering of the Judeo-Arabic.

[6] **para aprender de mí**

Maimonides: *lil-qirā'a 'alayya* (in order to read texts under my guidance)

Ibn Tibbon: *liqrot le-fanay*

al-Ḥarizi: *lilmod ešli*

Latin: *ita ut addisceres sub me*

Again, Toledo's *para aprender* reflects al-Ḥarizi's *lilmod* (to learn) rather than Ibn Tibbon's *liqrot* (to read), which calques the Judeo-Arabic *lil-qirā'a*.

[7] **fue onrada tu ánima ante mis ojos**

Maimonides: *‘azuma sha’nuka ‘indī* (I had a high opinion of you)

Ibn Tibbon: *gadelah ma’alatekha be-‘enay*

al-Ḥarizi: *yaqerah nafshekha be-‘enay*

Latin: *anima tua preciosa fuit in oculis meis*

Toledo's *tu ánima* reflects al-Ḥarizi's *nafshekha*, "your soul" (rather than Ibn Tibbon's *ma'alatekha* for the Judeo-Arabic *sha'nuka*); the glossist, once again, favors the Old Spanish *preciada* over Toledo's *onrada* for al-Ḥarizi's *yaqerah*.

[8] **porque vi la tu grant amor para buscar la sciencia**

Maimonides: *li-shiddati ḥirṣika ‘alā al-ṭalabi* (because of **your** strong desire for inquiry)

Ibn Tibbon: *le-rov zerizutekha ‘al ha-derishah*

al-Ḥarizi: *le-rov ahavatekha levaqqesh ha-ḥokhmah*

Latin: *propter vehemens desiderium tuum in acquirendo sapientiam*

Toledo's *tu . . . amor* for Rambam's *ḥirṣika* reflects al-Ḥarizi's *ahavatekha* ("your love"; Latin: *desiderium tuum*) rather than Ibn Tibbon's *zerizutekha* ("your promptness, diligence, eagerness" in rabbinic Hebrew), as also noted by the Jewish critic who proposes *deligencia* in lieu of *amor*, with Ibn Tibbon.

[9] **también porque vi en tus cantigas el tu grant deseo al acatamiento de las sabidurías**

Maimonides: *wa-li-mā ra'aytuhu fī ash'ārīka min shiddati al-ishtiyāqi lil-umūri al-naẓariyyati* (and because of what I had observed in your poems of your powerful longing for speculative matters)

Glossist: *por cuanto yo, cuando avía visto*

Ibn Tibbon: *u-le-mah she-ra'iti be-shirekha me-ḥozeq ha-teshuqah la-devarim ha-‘iyyuniyyim*

al-Ḥarizi: *gam ba'avur mah she-ra'iti be-shirekha me-rov ha-teshuqah le-‘iyyun ha-ḥokhmot*

Latin: *et etiam propter quod illud quod vidit in carminibus tuis de vehementia desiderii tui in speculatione scientiarum*

Toledo's *al acatamiento de las sabidurías* is a lovely translation of al-Ḥarizi's *le-‘iyyun ha-ḥokhmot* (*acatamiento*, as the nominal derivative of *acatar* ["to assess visually," and hence "to speculate" in its etymological

sense] is a felicitous choice to translate ‘*iyyun* [“reflection, reasoning, comprehension” in medieval Hebrew, derived from the rabbinic Hebrew verb ‘*iyyen*]), whereas Ibn Tibbon opts to calque Maimonides’ *lil-umūri al-naẓariyyati* (for speculative matters) with his *la-devarim ha-‘iyyuniyyim*. The glossist, on the other hand, corrects Toledo’s *porque vi as por cuanto yo, cuando avía visto* based on Ibn Tibbon’s *u-le-mah she-ra’iti*.

Al-Ḥarizi remains Toledo’s primary source throughout the entire translation, as can be gauged by a florilegium of minor examples drawn from other sections of the *Guide*:

### **Guide—Introduction**

Toledo: *porque en ellos se descubre la suziedad de su arte, e plata de escorias acatada cuant en su poder* (Lazar 18; fol. 5r)

Maimonides: *wa-li-anna yubayyan minhā ayḍan taziyf al-bahraj alladhī bi-aydihim* (and also because they would be led to recognize the falseness of the counterfeit money in their hands)

Ibn Tibbon: *u-va-‘avur she-mitba’er me-hem gam ken pasetul ha-ziyyufim asher bi-ydehem*

al-Ḥarizi: *gam ba’avur asher yiggaleh va-hem ziyyufamma’utam we-khesef sigim meṣuppeh asher bi-ydehem*

Latin: *etiam quia revelabitur in eis falsitas fraudis eorum et argentum quod est in manibus eorum quod est scoria*

Toledo’s gloss: “Note that Solomon says ‘silver-dross visible on earthenware (*plata d’escorias acatada sobre tiesto*) etc.’; better to say ‘covering earthenware (*cubierta sobre tiesto*)’”

His critic’s counter-gloss: “Solomon indeed says *cubierta* (covering) but the translator rendered it *acatada* (visible on): he got mixed up because of an equivocation with the word. But let us assume that Solomon said *acatada*—since he was the author and such a great sage—there, where this emendator claims that it would have been better to say *cubierta*. I would like to know, whichever way it is, since this text comes from *Proverbs*, chapter < . . . > [blank space in the manuscript], yet we do not find this text quoted in this passage by Rabbi Moshe of Egypt, author of this book, neither in Arabic nor in the true translations. It could be perhaps a scribal error.”

In this striking line, Maimonides compares the falsehoods upheld by bad philosophers (presumably the *Guide*’s first salvo against the *mu-*

*takallimūn*) with counterfeit money placed in their hands. Ibn Tibbon's rendering of Maimonides' analogy is faithful to the Judeo-Arabic original, whereas al-Ḥarizi's, with a stylistic conceit typical of his belletristic writings, intertwines his expansive paraphrase *ad sensum* with a pertinent biblical intertext from Proverbs 26:23 (al-Ḥarizi: "also because the falsity of their deceits and the *silver dross that covers* their hands would be exposed in them"). Al-Ḥarizi's recourse to this biblical proverb is inspired by the evocative association of its "silver dross" with Maimonides' "counterfeit money" and the concomitant contrast between the exposure of bad philosophers (Ibn Tibbon's *mitba'er*, al-Ḥarizi's *yiggaleh*) and the concealment of their errors (*meṣuppeh*). Toledo's translation aims at faithfully rendering al-Ḥarizi's paraphrase (*va-hem/en ellos; ziyyuf ramma'utam/ la suziedat de su arte; kheseṣ sigim/plata de escorias*). His only debatable choice is his apparent rendering of the scriptural *meṣuppeh* as *acatada* ("perceived, seen"; also "subjected to, obedient to"), more correctly translated in his note *ad locum* as *cubierta* (*acatada*, of course, could not be at all a translation of *meṣuppeh*, but rather part of a synonymic doublet, a periphrastic reinforcement of *se descubre* for al-Ḥarizi's *yiggaleh*—i.e., the falsity of their deceits *which are exposed*/the silver dross *visible* in their hands).<sup>26</sup> Intriguingly, the anonymous glossist, who rightly identifies the biblical quote from *Mishle*, embarks on a withering exposé of Toledo's putative waywardness. It begins with a perceptive critique of his primary choice for translating *meṣuppeh*; however, his snarky gloss climaxes with the misguided claim that Toledo had no basis whatsoever for the insertion of the biblical quote. It is not clear whether he actually missed al-Ḥarizi's biblical addendum as the basis for Toledo's or whether he was excluding al-Ḥarizi from his acceptable panoply of *trasladaciones verdaderas*. But Toledo clearly did not come up with this intervention on his own.

### Guide I 8/T I 8

Toledo: *quiere dezir: segunt su manera e su grant grado e fortaleza de su eser* (Lazar 32; fol. 8v)

Maimonides: *ya'ni bi-ḥasabi martabatihī wa-'uzmi ḥaẓẓihī fī al-wujūdi* (meaning, according to His rank and the greatness of His portion in existence)

26. The Old Spanish Bibles based on the Hebrew offer a comparable range of translations: E3 *como plata de escorias cubierto sobre tiesto*; E5/E7 *Évora como plata ensuziada tresnada por el suelo*; E4 *así como plata metalada e engastonada en barro*; BNM *plata de escorias engastonada en barro*; Arragel *cual es la plata metalada e engastonada sobre tiesto*.

Ibn Tibbon: *reṣono lomar kefi ma'alato we-'oṣem ḥelqo ba-meṣi'ut*  
al-Ḥarizi: *roṣeh lomar kefi 'inyano u-ma'alato we-'oṣem 'erko*  
*bi-meṣi'uto*

Latin: *secundum modum suum et gradum et fortitudinem respectus sui*  
*in essentia sua*

Ibn Tibbon renders the Arabic *ḥaẓẓ* in Maimonides' explanation of *maqom* in Ezekiel 3:12 (Blessed is the Presence of the Lord, in His place) as *ḥeleq* in accordance with its basic meaning as “portion, share, allotment.” Al-Ḥarizi, on the other hand, translates it as *'erekh* (value, estimation, honor, dignity). In his *Moreh ha-moreh*, as noted by Shiffman (1999, 53–54), Falaquera begrudgingly gives al-Ḥarizi his due, contesting Ibn Tibbon's rendering as erroneous on linguistic and philosophical grounds with its implicit suggestion that God had a share in reality when Maimonides clearly knew that all of reality was His (Falaquera 2001, 343, lines 54–55; on Falaquera's critique of Ibn Tibbon, see also Munk 1:52n2). Toledo follows al-Ḥarizi with a more expansive paraphrase that renders *'erekh* as *grado*, the apposite *'oṣem* as both the adjective *grant* and the noun *fortaleza* (Latin: *gradum et fortitudinem*) and *bi-meṣi'uto* as “of His being” rather than “in existence” (*bi* as “de” avoids the partitive connotation repudiated by Falaquera, whereas Toledo's *su* [His] reflects al-Ḥarizi's added pronominal enclitic, which is found neither in the Judeo-Arabic original nor in Ibn Tibbon [Latin: *in essentia sua*]). Interestingly, the anonymous glossist, who showcases with such persistence Toledo's linguistic sins against Ibn Tibbon, does not comment at all on Toledo's deviation in situ derived from al-Ḥarizi.

### Guide I 15/T 15

Toledo: *sobre él subían (e deçía [¿deçendían?])<sup>27</sup> en manera que alcançasen quien estava sobre él* (Lazar 38; fol. 10r)

Maimonides: “Everyone who ascends does so climbing up this ladder [*wa-fīhi yatasallaqu wa-yaṭlu'u kullu man yaṭlu'u*—literally, as Pines explains in n. 6: ‘upon it climbs and ascends everyone who ascends’] so that he necessarily apprehends Him who is upon it [*ḥattā yudrika man 'alayhu ḍarūratan*]”

27. The manuscript seems to read *e deçía*, with a sign above the last syllable partly covered by the accompanying gloss. Lazar renders it *e decía*, but most likely it is an abbreviated form of *e deçendían* (and descended) corresponding with the Hebrew *we-yoredim*, as in al-Ḥarizi.

Ibn Tibbon: *u-vo ya'aleh kol mi she-ya'aleh 'ad she-yaššig mi she-'alaw be-hekhrah*

al-Ḥarizi: *we-'alaw hayu 'olim we-yoredim kede she-yaššigu mah she-yesh 'alaw*

Glossist: *por él avía de sobir cualquier que subiese para que alcance el que estava sobr'él necesario*

Toledo, again, hews closely to al-Ḥarizi's paraphrase of how Maimonides begins to gloss Jacob's vision of the ladder in Genesis 28:12. He favors al-Ḥarizi's synthetic "and they were ascending and descending" (which recapitulates the biblical intertext) over Ibn Tibbon's Hebrew calque of Maimonides' *wa-yaṭlu'u kullu man yaṭlu'u* (and ascends everyone who ascends), as noted in a critical spirit by the anonymous glossist who provides a literal rendering ad locum based on Ibn Tibbon. Likewise, although both al-Ḥarizi and Ibn Tibbon eschew Maimonides' *yatasallaqu* (Pines's "climbs"), Toledo also reflects al-Ḥarizi's omission of Maimonides' adverbial *darūratan* (necessarily), Ibn Tibbon's *be-hekhrah* (the glossist's *necesario* in a rendering akin to Pines's alternative translation [41n7]).

### **Guide III 12/T III 12**

Toledo: *onde se pierden las virtudes e las cosas sin alcanzar lo que es menester* (Lazar 281; fol. 97v)

Maimonides: "forces and revenues [*wa-al-ḥawāšilu*] are spent for what is unnecessary"

Ibn Tibbon: *we-yikhlu ha-koḥot we-ha-qinyanim be-mah she-eno hekhraḥi*

al-Ḥarizi: *we-yikhlu ha-koḥot we-yo'vedu ha-'inyanim beli haššagat šorekh*

Toledo's *las cosas* seems to reflect al-Ḥarizi's *ha-'inyanim*, which derives, in turn — as noted by Munk (3:77–78n2) — from a less meaningful variant found in some of the Judeo-Arabic manuscripts (*al-aḥwālu*).<sup>28</sup>

28. The 1952/53 edition of al-Ḥarizi's translation offers a significant variation here: *we-yikhlu ha-koḥot we-ye'abbed ha-qinyanim be-haššagot ha-bilti šarikh*. However, the only extant complete manuscript of al-Ḥarizi's translation (Paris, BnF 682) confirms Schlosberg's transcription of *ha-'inyanim*, which corresponds with Toledo's *las cosas*, in the 1851–79 edition. We thank Yonatan Shemesh for his meticulous revision of our citations from Schlosberg's transcription against the original manuscript.



**Guide III 12/T III 12**

Toledo: *non entiendo que los perfectos piensen que han grant provecho si non por deleite o melezina* (Lazar 281; fol. 97v)

Maimonides: “I do not think that anyone of sound intellect can believe that man has strong need for them unless it be **for medical treatment** [*lil-taṭabbub*].”

Ibn Tibbon: *eni ḥoshev she-ehad mi-sheleme ha-da’at yahshov she-yesh ba-hem šorekh gadol la-adam ella’ la-refu’ah*

al-Ḥarizi: *eni ro’eh adam min ha-shelemim be-da’tam ya’amin ki yesh šorekh gadol alehem ella’ la-hana’ah we-le-ta’anug*

Toledo’s *por deleite o melezina* combines al-Ḥarizi’s “for pleasure and enjoyment” with Ibn Tibbon’s “for medical treatment” (cf. Munk 3:79n1 on al-Ḥarizi’s translation of a variant reading in the Judeo-Arabic manuscripts).

**Guide III 17/T III 17**

Toledo: *Las entenciones de los ombres en el acatar de Dios son cinco* (Lazar 291; fol. 101v)

Maimonides: “The opinions of people about Providence [*fi al-‘ināya*] are five in all.”

Ibn Tibbon: *de’ot bene adam ba-hashgahah ḥamesh de’ot*

al-Ḥarizi: *de’ot bene adam ba-shemirah ḥamishah de’ot*

Toledo’s *en el acatar de Dios* for divine providence clearly sidesteps Ibn Tibbon’s classical rendering in favor of al-Ḥarizi’s.

So, yes, al-Ḥarizi’s belletristic rendering provides the basic template for Toledo’s Old Spanish *romanceamiento* in philosophical prose.

There are, however, several places throughout the entire *Mostrador* where Toledo—as promised—does compare the two Hebrew versions, commenting on the contrast between them and even revising his translation against Ibn Tibbon’s in light of the latter’s greater philosophical precision.

In *Guide II 36 (T II 37)*, for example, Maimonides opens with his well-known definition of prophecy:

Maimonides (Pines 369)

Know that the true reality and quiddity of prophecy consist in its being an overflow overflowing from God, may He be cherished and honored,

through the intermediation of the Active Intellect, toward the rational faculty in the first place and thereafter toward the imaginative faculty.

Here is Toledo's *romanceamiento*:

Toledo's translation (Lazar 239; fols. 80v–81r)

*Sabe que la profecía e su quiditat es enfluencia enfluída de Dios por mediería de la Inteligencia Obradera sobre el ánima razonable primera mente e después sobre la maginativa.*

Toledo has a well-developed philosophical lexicon in Old Spanish. (Note his Latinate Scholastic *su quiditat* for Maimonides' *māhiyyatihā*, which both Ibn Tibbon and al-Ḥarizi render as *mahutah*, or the Old Spanish *Inteligencia Obradera* for "Active Intellect.") Toledo's basic source is also al-Ḥarizi, as reflected in his *sobre el ánima razonable* for the Hebrew 'al *koaḥ ha-nefesh ha-medabberet* over Ibn Tibbon's 'al *ha-koaḥ ha-dabberi* from the Judeo-Arabic 'alā *al-quwwati al-nāṭiqati*. However, Toledo eschews al-Ḥarizi's periphrastic characterization of the language of overflowing as *ha-kavod ha-ne'eṣal me-ha-bore'* (the glory emanated from the Creator) in favor of *enfluencia enfluída de Dios*, which seems to aim at rendering literally the Hebrew polyptoton in Ibn Tibbon's *shefa' shofea' me'et ha-eloah* (Maimonides: *fayḍun yafīḍu min allāhi*).

A more explicit example is found in *Guide II 38 (T II 39)*. Maimonides states: "Similarly the faculty of divination (*hadhihi quwwatu al-shu'uri*) exists in all people," which Toledo renders as *E así esta virtud mediante es fallada en todos los ombres*. Toledo's *virtud mediante* clearly derives from Ibn Tibbon's *koaḥ ha-mish'ar ha-zeh* (a calque of the Judeo-Arabic), as clarified by Toledo himself in his gloss ad locum (fol. 82v) where he explains how *onde diz "mediante" Abén Tabón, diz El Harizi "sintiente."*<sup>29</sup> (*Mediante* nicely corresponds to the medieval Hebrew *ha-mish'ar* [measure, conjecture], whereas *sintiente* is an accurate rendering of *ha-hergesh* [medieval Hebrew: "sensation, sense"] in al-Ḥarizi's *koaḥ ha-hergesh*.)

In *Guide III 14 (T III 14)*, a slightly more complex example, where Maimonides states "the distance between the center of the earth and the lower part of the sphere of Saturn (*al-bu'du bayna markazi al-arḍi wa-ḥaḍiḍi zuḥali*)," Toledo translates *la lueñidat de entre el centro de la tierra e fasta lo alto de Saturno*, adding in a marginal note (Lazar 287; fol. 100r): *do diz*

29. Lazar (243) failed to transcribe Toledo's gloss in full.

“altura” diz Abén Tabón “suelo de Saturno” e estúdialo bien (literally, “where it says ‘high part,’ Ibn Tibbon says ‘Saturn’s footstool,’ and you should study it well”). Toledo’s rendering of Maimonides’ *ḥaḏīd* (the lower part) as *lo alto* (the high part) is closer to Ibn Tibbon’s *qibbuw* (“the arch”: *qibbuw shabtay*) than to al-Ḥarizi’s *hadom* (footstool), a choice confirmed by the confusing note ad locum, where he seems to mix up Ibn Tibbon and al-Ḥarizi (*suelo de Saturno* is clearly based on al-Ḥarizi’s *hadom*, not Ibn Tibbon), probably an inadvertent error.<sup>30</sup> The gloss reveals, at least, a comparative awareness of both alternatives and a clear choice therein in favor of Ibn Tibbon.

Moreover, toward the end of *Guide* I 72 (T I 71), Toledo asserts in a significant gloss (omitted by Lazar [132]!) that to avoid further mistakes, he will mostly translate from Ibn Tibbon’s version, deemed best by everyone, from that point onward (i.e., through the end of part I, presumably).<sup>31</sup>

Examples could be multiplied.<sup>32</sup>

30. Compared to other such glosses, the second *diz* may have been redundant: if we eliminate it, it could be *do diz* “altura” *Abentabón*, [al-Ḥarizi has] “suelo de Saturno” e *estúdialo bien*. There are similar glosses comparing the two that do not pan out: e.g., *Guide* III 10/T III 10 (Lazar 276; fol. 96r): *Onde diz “ha menester obrador,” diz Abén Tabón: “non a menester”; e aquí del capítulo se entiende que lo deve aver, e que non lo deve aver, e ¿que faré con tal trasladación de amos libros?* Ibn Tibbon renders identically both instances of the phrase “nonbeing (*ha-he’eder*) does not need an agent” in *Guide* III 10. In the extant manuscript of al-Ḥarizi’s translation, its first instance is given as *ha-afisah ṣerikhah le-fo’el*, with a marginal indication that *enah* should be inserted after *ha-afisa* (the 1851–79 edition renders the corrected line in full as *ha-afisah enah ṣerikhah le-fo’el*; its second instance in the manuscript, faithfully rendered in the 1851–79 edition, is slightly different: *ha-afisah lo’ tištarekh le-fo’el*). The particular manuscript of al-Ḥarizi that Toledo was working on may have also been missing *enah* in *ha-afisah enah ṣerikhah le-fo’el*, which would explain both Toledo’s *la nichilidat ha men[e]ster obrador . . . la nichilidat non ha menester obrador* and the accompanying gloss. We are grateful to Yonatan Shemesh’s expert assistance with this matter.

31. *Sabed señor que por si mi libro muy errado, traslado todo lo más del de Abentabón de aquí adelante, bueno o malo, porque la an todos por mejor trasladación* (Know, my lord, lest my book be filled with too many errors, that I will mostly translate from Ibn Tibbon from this point onward, be it correct or not, since everyone deems it the better translation) (fol. 39v). This gloss was pointed out by Bar-Lewaw (1966, 58), but it did not catch the attention of subsequent critics (not even Fernández López).

32. In a gloss on *Guide* II 19 (T II 20), once again Toledo seems to be confused in a revealing way: *Abén Tabón diz “e esta fuerte cosa es un cielo,” onde diz “grant cuenta”* (Lazar 202; fol. 66v). As it happens, his translation ad locum, *e esta grant cuenta es el cielo* (Maimonides: “while **this great number** of fixed stars is to be found in one sphere”), reflects Ibn Tibbon (*we-zeh ha-mispar ha-gadol be-galgal ehad*), whereas the alternative reading attributed to *Abén Tabón* is actually al-Ḥarizi’s (*we-ki zeh ha-minyan ha-‘ašum hu’ be-galgal ehad*). The section accidentally omitted in Lazar’s edition yields yet another perplexing example: *Guide* III 39/T III 39 (fol. 119v; missing in Lazar): *Onde diz “otro lugar” dize El Harizi “en un lugar para fortificar la quereencia”* (Toledo’s alternative rendering in situ: *a otro lugar porque*

Moving to his translation method, faithful *ad sensum* renderings of his Hebrew sources alternate with slavish word-by-word calques and periphrastic reelaborations of problematic segments where he claims to be stumped by both versions per the guidelines in his proem. Thankfully, Toledo explicitly underscores in his glosses some of those nettlesome places where he opted either to translate *ad litteram* or else to paraphrase and abridge Maimonides' discussion, corroborating his exordial claim that he would often indulge in both hyperliteral calques and simplifications whenever he failed to understand a particular passage, presumably because of both personal limitations and intractable difficulties either with his Hebrew sources or, as is most often the case, with the philosophical ideas conveyed therein.

Let us consider some examples in context.

In *Guide I 51 (T I 50)*, Maimonides sets out to argue from God's unity that there are no nonessential attributes in Him by first reviewing a series of untenable claims to the contrary among the *mutakallimūn*. Toledo drastically compresses in translation Rambam's diatribe against *kalām*. The concluding paragraph, not only abridged but mostly rewritten by Toledo, also contains two marginal glosses that intimate the complementary reasons for its periphrastic reduction:

Toledo's translation (Lazar 87; fol. 23r)

*E estas cosas son feas que el que las afirma ser, e torna esmerar su creencia, falla turvación por que pone ser a lo que non es, e medio entre los contrarios que non han medio. ¿E como será entre lo que es e non es medianero?*

[Toledo's gloss: ; Señor, non puede ál fazer, que amas trasladaciones en esto son tales que non an seso nin razón romançadas, e recebid lo que mejor puedo, que non puedo más!]/Lord, there is nothing else I can do, for both translations are such that they have neither rhyme nor reason in translation, so accept this which is the best I can do, for I can do no more!]<sup>33</sup>

*E nunca pudieron entender sustancia corpórea simple en su eser sin reformaciones e costumbres. E por esto pusieron ser Dios de sustancia compuesta de muchas cosas, la una su sustancia e lo ál añadido sobre la sustancia; e*

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*multiplique el amorío*). It is not clear how much Ibn Tibbon's rendering (*be-maqom ehad le-hithazzeq ha-ahawah we-ha-ahawah*) is different from al-Ḥarizi's (*be-maqom ehad kede le-hazzeq ha-ahawah we-ha-ahawah*).

33. Lazar made an error in transcription: *Señor, non puedo* [Lazar: *puede*] *ál fazer*.

*algunos le quitaron la semejabilidad e creyeron la corporidat con sus maneras; e otros non la consintieron e le quitaron la corporidat e pusiéronle las costumbres. [Toledo's gloss: En este capítulo fallecen cosas que a cualquier letrado se le entenderá ser mejor non puestas que puestas, por la burla que es en amas las trasladaciones del escrivano e del un trasladador/There are things in this chapter that any learned man will clearly see it is better not to have them translated than to do so, as it would be a source of mockery over both the scribal transcription and the translator's version.] E esto les cabsó según lo llano de la ley, segunt declararé en los capítulos que traeré en estas cosas.*

#### Maimonides (Pines 114)

Should, however, the man who proclaims these things and attempts to establish them in the ways indicated, reflect upon his belief, he would find nothing but confusion and incapacity. For he wants to make exist something that does not exist and to create a mean between two contraries that have no mean. Or is there a mean between that which exists and that which does not exist, or in the case of two things is there a mean between one of them being identical with the other or being something else? What forces him to this is, as we have said, the wish to preserve the conceptions of the imagination and the fact that all existent bodies are always represented to oneself as certain essences. Now every such essence is of necessity endowed with attributes, for we do not ever find an essence of a body that while existing is divested of everything and is without an attribute. This imagination being pursued, it was thought that He, may He be exalted, is similarly composed of various notions, namely, His essence and the notions that are superadded to His essence. Several groups of people pursued the likening of God to other beings and believed Him to be a body endowed with attributes. Another group raised themselves above this consequence and denied His being a body, but preserved the attributes. All this was rendered necessary by their keeping to the external sense of the revealed books as I shall make clear in later chapters that will deal with these notions.

In this case, Toledo's problem as a translator is not with the relative quality of the two Hebrew versions (in this particular section, Ibn Tibbon and al-Ḥarizi do not differ significantly), but with the content itself—that is, Maimonides' repudiation of *kalām* views with extreme formulations of their philosophical absurdity, which Toledo deems, in a rhetorical fit of hyper-

bolic despair, refractory to translation. His two glosses ad locum highlight as many reasons for his treatment of the Maimonidean source as already gleaned in the prologue: (1) his failure to understand a passage after consulting both Hebrew versions; and (2) the presence of laughable notions that a learned man would rather leave untranslated. Toledo, in sum, not only abridges Rambam's excursus but also reformulates his sharp critique of *kalām* in simpler fashion for, apparently, greater clarity.<sup>34</sup>

Of course, Toledo's periphrastic moments often reveal as well a selective awareness of the limitations and sensibilities of Suárez de Figueroa and other potential Christian readers. His Christian addressee is never far from Toledo's mind. At times, for example, Toledo sidesteps philological excursus on technical points of Hebrew grammar that would be both difficult to translate and mostly incomprehensible to his patron. There is a perfect illustration in his rendering of *Guide* I 67 (T I 66). At the end of that chapter, Maimonides offers an extensive linguistic excursus on the Hebrew *wayanaḥ* in Exodus 20:11 to explain away the anthropomorphic description of

34. Marginal glosses of this type are scattered throughout the entire translation, many of them stemming from Toledo's profession of his own scholarly limitations. See, e.g., *Guide* I 54/T I 53 (Lazar 93; fol. 25v): *Este capítulo, maguer será comunal, non va a mi voluntad perfectamente*; *Guide* I 58/T I 57 (Lazar 99; fol. 27r): *Por quanto este capítulo non es bueno en amas trasladaciones, puse lo tal cual es, sin aderesçamiento de vocablos, por non errar más de lo qu'el mesmo es mal aderesçado*; *Guide* I 63/T I 62 (Lazar 110; fol. 31r): *Aquí ay dezires puestas al pie de la letra sin aderesçamiento por non errar*; *Guide* I 64/T I 63 (Lazar 111; fol. 31v): *Lo más de todo (d)este capítulo va vocablo por vocablo e bien*; *Guide* I 68/T I 67 (Lazar 117; fol. 33r): *Este capítulo va acabadamente, justo e bueno, que más non puede ser*; *Guide* I 72/T I 71 (Lazar 132; fol. 39r): *Nota de Aven Tabón: e cuerpos estables en los elementos e lo que d'ellos es compuesto*; *Guide* II 20/T II 21 (Lazar 206; fol. 68v): *Nota que estos dezires son muy nobles en abraico e en romance en contrario non puede ál ser*; *Guide* II 24/T II 25 (Lazar 213; fol. 71r): *Por que este capítulo es sutil e ha menester fuerte estudio, escrivo todo lo demás vocablo por vocablo por non errar*; *Guide* II 28/T II 29 (Lazar 219; fol. 73r): *Estos renglones postreros se entienden, mas non son tales que faga fuerça*; *Guide* II 30/T II 31 (Lazar 232; fol. 78r): *Aquí dixo palabras superfluas redobladas*; *Guide* II 38/T II 39 (Lazar 243; fol. 82v): *Onde diz dos vezes: segunt una razón e segunt esta razón, mas non se entiende*; *Guide* II 43/T II 44 (Lazar 253; fol. 86v): *Este capítulo, por ser intrepetado, escrívolo vocablo por vocablo tan comunal como está*; *Guide* III 2/T III 2 (Lazar 268; fol. 92v): *Esto lieva el abraico bien, mas el romance astramente*; *Guide* III 2/T III 2 (Lazar 268; fol. 92r): on the difficulty in translating Ezek 1:20): *Estas cosas non se pueden bien asentar si non en abraico, e si algunos les parescen bien, al del abraico parecen muy mal*; *Guide* III 14/T III 14 (Lazar 288; fol. 100r): *Esto está errado en amas trasladaciones, e póngelo según está, vocablo por vocablo*; *Guide* III 34/T III 34 (fol. 116r; missing in Lazar): *Todo este capítulo está mal adereçado en amas trasladaciones e romancelo tal cual está e lo más puse de Abentabón*; *Guide* III 24/T III 24 (Lazar 308; fol. 108v): *Este dezir fondo non gelo entiendo do diz posible e imposible*; *Guide* III 46/T III 46 (Lazar 340; fol. 128v): *elem parésceme error del escrivano, que non me remiembra qué es*; *Guide* III 47/T III 47 (Lazar 342; fol. 129v): *Non se me entiende*; *Guide* III 49/T III 49 (Lazar 352; fol. 133v): *Non lo puedo romançar*.

God's "rest" on the seventh day of creation. He first adduces the midrashic interpretation of the intransitive verb in *wa-yanaḥ* in Bereshit Rabbah 10:8 as a transitive verb meaning that creation ceased on that day. He then proposes an alternative explanation of *wa-yanaḥ* as an irregular conjugation of an altogether different Hebrew verb whose root is not NWH̄ but either YNH̄ (a first weak radical) or NHH̄ (a third weak radical), all in order to reinterpret Exodus 20:11 as stating that, after six days of cumulative innovations, God established only on the seventh day the whole of existence as is. This grammatical discussion is capped off, first, with a florilegium of biblical intertexts meant to illustrate verbal derivations of the second weak radical root NWH̄ with the additional meaning "to set, to establish" and, finally, a brief excursus on the verb *wa-yinafash* in Exodus 31:17.

What does Toledo do? He skips most of the biblical intertexts at the end of the passage, drastically simplifies the grammatical explanation, and adds for good measure three glosses in the margin on how most of these linguistic observations are either impossible to translate, linked to fallacious statements not worth the effort, or else irrelevant to his main purpose and hence discardable.<sup>35</sup>

Toledo's translation (Lazar 114; fols. 32r–32v)

*E segunt esta manera diz: "e folgó [wa-yanaḥ] en el día seteno" [Exod 20:11], mas los sabios e glosadores nombráronlo "folgança" [menuḥah], diziendo que es obra midaber. E dixieron los sabios: "E folgó para Su mundo en el día seteno"\* [Genesis Rabbah 10:9] quiere dezir: estajóse en él la criación. E puede ser que será, segunt el latín, abraico de sosiego de la "pe" o de la "ele",\*\* que será "sosiego a continuar e eternar lo que crió segunt que es en el día seteno," que diz: que en cada día de los seis se fazían cosas inovadas fuera d'esta naturaleza que oy es en todas las cosas que son. E en el seteno lo continuó siguiendo lo que oy se sigue. E non encubre nuestro dezir para la gramática de los vocablos, e quanto más en estas obras cansadas, nin por esta cosa estraña de los vocablos gramáticos se daña la razón, maguer sabemos que oy non alcançamos nuestro lenguaje del todo. E mas que todo lenguaje sus vías son muchas. . . . Mas el vocablo "e folgó" [wa-yinnafash] es derivado de (pasión) [pasivo] del "ánima" [nefesh]\*\*\* e ya declaramos equivocación del ánima e es dicho de voluntad e querer e*

35. This passage is briefly treated by Fernández López (2011, 54–55).

*en muchas cosas, e será su entención e su manera aquí: acabamiento de su voluntad e cumplimento de su querer.*<sup>36</sup>

### English rendering of Toledo's paraphrase

It is accordingly said: *And He rested on the seventh day* [Exod 20:11]. However, the Sages and commentators referred to it as “rest,” which they explained as a transitive verb.<sup>37</sup> And the Sages said: *He let His world repose on the seventh day\** [Genesis Rabbah 10:9], meaning: creation ceased on that day. It is also possible—putting it in Latinate form—that the first or third radicals in the Hebrew are weak,<sup>38\*\*</sup> for it will be a rest to continue and make endure what He created as it was on the seventh day. That is to say: in each of the other six days new things were made that do not share in the nature that nowadays all the things that exist do have. But on the seventh day he proceeded to make things endure as they are nowadays. And our assertion is not obscured by the grammar of words,<sup>39</sup> not even as it pertains to these weak verbs, nor is our line of reasoning spoiled by this strange issue of the grammatical terms, for we know that we do not have at the present a complete understanding of our language; moreover, the ways of any language are many.<sup>40</sup> . . . But the term *and He rested* is a passive

36. Lazar (114) both misses the actual biblical reference to Exod 20:11 and misidentifies its midrashic paraphrase in Genesis Rabbah 10 as a biblical quote from Exod 20:21. He also omitted, accidentally, the phrase *e ya declaramos equivocación del ánima*.

37. Toledo's transliterated *midaber* stands for the Hebrew *mit'abber* in Ibn Tibbon's rendering of the Arabic *muta'addin* (*po'al mit'abber*, “a transitive verb”) and *obra* for “verb” is a calque-translation of the Hebrew *po'al* (al-Ḥarizi skips altogether the clause “and that it is a transitive verb”).

38. The Old Spanish literally means “the quiescence of the P and the L”: P and L refer to the letters *peh* and *lamed*, 1st and 3rd radicals in the verb *pa'al* (Arabic *fa'ala*), which is used by medieval Hebrew philologists in order to illustrate the standard trilateral root of Semitic verbal forms. *Sosiego de*, on the other hand, is Toledo's calque rendering of al-Ḥarizi's *munah* for the Arabic *mu'tall* (“weak vowel”; Ibn Tibbon: ‘*alul*’), whereas *será sosiego* right after reflects al-Ḥarizi's *hishqit*.

39. This confusing statement (*E non encubre nuestro dezir para la gramática de los vocablos . . .*) represents a literal, yet imperfect rendering of al-Ḥarizi's *we-eno soter divrenu diqduq ha-millah . . .* (literally, “and our assertion is not refuted by the grammar of the word . . .”); cf. Maimonides: *wa-lā yanqudu qawlanā kawnu taṣṛīfīhi . . .* (The assertion made by us is not refuted by observation that the conjugation of . . .); Ibn Tibbon: *we-lo yifḥot ma'amarenu heyot shimmusho . . .* Toledo renders al-Ḥarizi's *soter* (to refute) as if it were related to *sutar* (to be covered, hidden); his *gramática* reflects al-Ḥarizi's *diquq* (Ibn Tibbon's *shimmush*; Maimonides' *taṣṛīf*, “conjugation”).

40. This final portion (*E mas que todo lenguaje sus vías son muchas*) offers a literal, somewhat imprecise calque translation of Ibn Tibbon's *we-she-darkhe* (Toledo's *vías*) *khol*



form derived from the word for “soul”\*\*\* and we have already expounded the equivocality of the word for “soul”; it is used to signify volition and purpose in many situations; the intended meaning in here is: the perfection of His purpose and the realization of His will.

Toledo’s glosses ad locum

\* *Aquí fallece un vocablo de gramática abraica que non faz fuerça que se diga.* (There is in here a technical term from Hebrew grammar that is not necessary to restate.)

\*\* *E esto non razón que se pueda romançar.* (There is no way that this could be translated.)<sup>41</sup>

\*\*\* *Nota que ‘ánima’ es llamada nefes, e folgó es dicho vaynafas, que es cerca de nefes. E aquí se dexó un poco de gramática abraica que es imposible romançar, quanto más ser en amas trasladaciones estos dezires que son más mentira que verdat, nin su verdat cumple saber a vuestro servicio.* (Note that “soul” is called *nefesh* and “He reposed” is *wa-yinnafash*, which is related to *nefesh*. Here I left out a little bit of Hebrew grammar that is impossible to translate, more so since these sayings in both translations are more false than true, nor would it be of use to you to know what is true about them.)

In another passage, Toledo also shows a slightly prudish side (again perhaps in deference to the religious sensibilities of his Christian patron) in bowdlerizing Maimonides’ discussion on the rabbinic prohibition against obscene language and the biblical euphemisms for lower bodily functions (excretion, urination, copulation) at the end of *Guide* III 8 (T III 8).

Toledo’s translation (Lazar 275–76; fol. 95v)

*E nuestro lenguaje es llamado santo non por nuestra bondat, mas por que non fallamos nombre de la obra luxuriosa claro si non por nombres*

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*lashon rubbim* (Falaquera: *rubbiyyim*—see Munk 1:300n2). Maimonides’ *wa-anna qawānīna kulli lughatin akthariyyatun* (and that in all languages rules conform to the majority of cases) is rendered by al-Ḥarizi as *we-ki ḥuqqe tekhunat kol lashon muskamot* (for truly the rules that characterize every language are in accord).

41. There is a hand drawn under this gloss with an elongated index finger pointing to the main text.

*emprestados, porque non son de se nombrar, quanto más ponellos nombre propio; e si es necesario de se nombrar dizen se por maneras secretas. E cuando es necesario de se fazer, nos encobrimos quanto podemos, e llamamos al miembro *guid*, por que es derivado de “venero de fierro” [Isa 48:4]; e llamamos fazer ombre sus mandados *çoa*, que se deriva de *yaça*, que es de “salir”; e la orina “aguas de pies”; e así las otras cosas viles de fabla.*

### English translation of Toledo's text

Our language is called “holy” not because of any goodness on our part, but rather because we cannot find any way to name the act of lust unless it be with loanwords, for these are not things that ought to be mentioned, even less should they be given specific names; when it is necessary to mention them, they are referred to in a secret fashion. And when there is a need to do such a thing, we do the best we can to hide it, calling the male organ *gid*, because it is derived from “iron sinew” [Isa 48:4];<sup>42</sup> and when a man attends to his needs we call it *šo'ah*, which derives from *yašo'* meaning “to go out”; and urine is called “waters of the feet”; and so on with other things that are too vile to mention.

### Toledo's gloss

*En este capítulo ay cosas astosas de se escrevir pocas e otras que non montan, que parecen burla en el romance, e por eso las abrevié, mas non fallece del capítulo cosa. (In this chapter there are a few things that are too vile to be written and others that are not important and would rather seem a joke in Romance, so I abridged them, but there is nothing missing in this chapter.)*

Toledo expunges Maimonides' laundry list of biblical examples, dispatched with a simple reference to *las otras cosas viles de fabla*, which is the textual basis of his exculpatory gloss.<sup>43</sup>

Despite such scruples and caveats, Toledo nonetheless does not give up on Suárez de Figueroa's request and its pedagogical ramifications. Most of his other glosses are, indeed, linked to passages more or less faithfully trans-

42. Toledo's *venero* for *gid* is an Old Spanish word for “source” derived from *vena* (vein): most of the other Old Spanish Bibles render it *nervio(s)*.

43. Cf. Fernández López (2011, 56–57) for two more examples of Toledo's sensibilities on sexual and other purity-related matters: his renderings of *Guide* III 47/T III 47 and *Guide* III 49/T III 49 (on the scriptural prohibition against marrying a eunuch in Deut 23:2).

lated from Hebrew simply to provide minimal explanatory notes on their philosophical content,<sup>44</sup> Maimonides' sources (both Greek and Arabic),<sup>45</sup> the meaning of difficult Hebrew terms based on their biblical and rabbinic intertexts,<sup>46</sup> Maimonides' scattered references to Jewish religious observance and related halakhic concepts that may have proved puzzling to a Christian,<sup>47</sup> his

44. Some examples of his philosophical glosses: *Guide* I 52/T I 51 (Lazar 88; fol. 23v), which is discussed below; *Guide* I 65/T I 64 (Lazar 111; fol. 31v): *Seer e quiditat son dos cosas fuera del eser de Dios, e por esto su eser es su mesma quiditat, porque toda la cosa simple es su eser de sise e lo compuesto el su eser es accidental a su quiditat (de sise = "in itself"; Toledo's sise is a Latinate word derived from sese, an ablative variant of the pronoun sui; the preposition de is missing in Lazar); Guide* I 72/T I 71 (Lazar 130; fol. 38v): *Nota que "ado" e "sito" son dos de los diez pedricamientos; Guide* I 73/T I 72 (Lazar 146; fol. 44v): *La [\*sentencia] d'esto es que si amos están contra el cielo ambos estarán; e si ál, ambos caerán; e esto es al entendimiento necesario e imposible a la imaginación; Guide* II 33/T II 34 (Lazar 237; fol. 80r): *Quier dezir: que nunca de ante tal fue la tal visión, nin jamás será después; Guide* III 28/T III 28 (Lazar 315; fol. 111v): *Entiende natural.*

45. In these four glosses, Toledo aims to identify sources related to a Maimonidean discussion: *Guide* I 62/T I 61 (Lazar 108; fol. 30v): *Non se puede esto entender bien si non con lo que diz en el Libro del ánima e Cartas de Aben Ruiz; Guide* I 72/T I 71 (Lazar 129; fol. 38r): *Nota que Aristóteles en los Metauros llama el cielo quinto "elementos"; Guide* II 20/T II 21 (Lazar 206; fol. 68v): *Convien a saber Aristóteles, en el segundo de los Fisicos, onde prueva la causa final en todas las cosas naturales; Guide* II 20/T II 21 (Lazar 206; fol. 68v): *Onde diz Avu Nacer saber que quien se entiende por dos cosas contrarias, onde es la razón muy profunda e ha menester gran estudio.*

46. Explanatory glosses of Hebrew terminology are particularly abundant throughout: *Guide* I 66/T I 65 (Lazar 113; fol. 32r): *Misna es una parte del Talmud; Guide* II 32/T II 33 (Lazar 235; fol. 79v): *queçem es manera de fechizo; Guide* II 43/T II 44 (Lazar 252; fol. 86r): *Nota que s[a]qued es almendro e es de afincar; Guide* II 43/T II 44 (Lazar 252; fol. 86r): *Nota: quelub cayz usan e romançan los judios: canastillo de figa; Guide* II 47/T II 48 (Lazar 261; fol. 89v): *berosim es nombre de grant árbol e dizen que es \*albagsez; Guide* III 2/T III 2 (Lazar 268; fol. 92v): *ofanim que(s) es ruedas; Guide* III 2/T III 2 (Lazar 268; fol. 92v): *ofan que es rueda; Guide* III 22/T III 22 (Lazar 304; fol. 106v): *yeçer es mal [?]; e el yeçer bueno es el buen ángel e el malo es mal ángel (Lazar only transcribes part of the gloss, and he transcribes it incorrectly: yeçer el malo e yeçer el bueno); Guide* III 26/T III 26 (Lazar 312; fol. 110r): *saatnez es lana de lino; Guide* III 33/T III 33 (fol. 115v; missing in Lazar): *orla es prepucio o capillo; Guide* III 41/T III 41 (fol. 121v; missing in Lazar): *peça es Pascua del pan cenceño; Guide* III 41/T III 41 (fol. 121v; missing in Lazar): *tesuwa es tornar a Dios; Guide* III 43/T III 43 (Lazar 330; fol. 124v): *Capara es un sabio ta[l]mu(l)đita; Guide* III 46/T III 46 (Lazar 336; fol. 127r): *arel es non cercuncido; Guide* III 46/T III 46 (Lazar 336; fol. 127r): *hatad es delito; veasam es culpa, que son manera de sacrificios; Guide* III 46/T III 46 (Lazar 336; fol. 127r): *selamin es manera de sacrificio; Guide* III 46/T III 46 (Lazar 337; fol. 127r): *arelim es non circuncidades; Guide* III 46/T III 46 (Lazar 337; fol. 127r): *Este peça aquí es carnero; Guide* III 46/T III 46 (Lazar 337; fol. 127v): *Mis fazes aquí quier dezir "mis iras"; Guide* III 46/T III 46 (Lazar 341; fol. 128v): *nedava es franqueza de limosna, e esto es xarifedat (xarifedat < xarife, an Arabism derived from sharif); Guide* III 51/T III 51 (Lazar 357; fol. 135v): *cabala es cosa rescibida fijo de padre, e padre de abuelo, fasta Moisés; Guide* III 51/T III 51 (Lazar 363; fol. 138r): *nesica: besamiento.*

47. *Guide* III 29/T III 29 (Lazar 318; fol. 112v): *Es idolatría (on the meaning of avodazara); Guide* III 35/T III 35 (fol. 116r; missing in Lazar): *quiere dezir mistión de lana e*

own lexical choices in Spanish,<sup>48</sup> and other clarifications (including alternative translations, rabbinic sources, and cross-references) for his readers' benefit.<sup>49</sup>

At times, Toledo even professes his own befuddlement over a conceptual difficulty—not with the overlapping interpretive shortcomings of al-Ḥarizi and Ibn Tibbon but with Maimonides' specific take on a technical-philosophical issue.

In *Guide* I 52 (T I 51), Maimonides' fivefold taxonomy of affirmative at-

*lino e de simientes*; *Guide* III 37/T III 37 (fol. 117v; missing in Lazar): *çelaçal es gusano*; *Guide* III 39/T III 39 (fol. 119v; missing in Lazar): *Todas estas que aquí díz son como manera de primicias*; *Guide* III 40/T III 40 (fol. 120v; missing in Lazar): *çadoquim son especie de hereges*; *Guide* III 41/T III 41 (fol. 121v; missing in Lazar): *malcud es cuarenta menos un açote*; *Guide* III 41/T III 41 (fol. 121v; missing in Lazar): *lav es no fagas en los mandamientos*; *lo taaçe es non fagas e açe es faze en los mandamientos*; *Guide* III 41/T III 41 (fol. 121v; missing in Lazar): *cared es tajamiento del ánima del que la come*; *Guide* III 41/T III 41 (Lazar 327; fol. 123r): *goya es ser fuera de la ley*; *Guide* III 43/T III 43 (Lazar 328; fol. 123v): *çun quipur es ayuno mayor* (Lazar misreads: “*çun quipur es non \*manjar*”); *Guide* III 43/T III 43 (Lazar 328; fol. 124r): *omer son las siete semanas contadas*; *Guide* III 43/T III 43 (Lazar 329; fol. 124v): *semini aseret e cetera es día octavo de la Pascua que se llama açered*; *Guide* III 43/T III 43 (Lazar 329; fol. 124v): *lulab es palma, e arrayhán, e sauze que es arava, e la toronja: éstas son las cuatro especias*; *Guide* III 44/T III 44 (Lazar 330; fol. 124v): *sema es un capítulo que díz “Oy Yrrael” e cetera*; *Guide* III 44/T III 44 (Lazar 330; fol. 124v): *teflim es lo de las correas*; *Guide* III 44/T III 44 (Lazar 330; fol. 124v): *mezusa es lo que mandó poner en los lumbreres de la casa*; *Guide* III 44/T III 44 (Lazar 330; fol. 124v): *çigid es como capulario*; *Guide* III 44/T III 44 (Lazar 330; fol. 124v): *çefertora es la Torá*; *Guide* III 45/T III 45 (Lazar 331; fol. 125r): *halacod de la behira es capítulos del escogimiento de la Casa Santa, e migdas es lugar de la santidad, e bia es el convenio de marido e muger*; *Guide* III 45/T III 45 (Lazar 332; fol. 125r): *aserod es enxertos*; *Guide* III 45/T III 45 (Lazar 334; fol. 126r): *azara quier dezir “[l]austra”*; *Guide* III 47/T III 47 (Lazar 341; fol. 129r): *tahara es mundificación*; *Guide* III 47/T III 47 (Lazar 344; fol. 130r): *çota es del agua con el polvo del tabernáculo que se dava a beber a la casada sospechada*; *Guide* III 47/T III 47 (Lazar 344; fol. 130r): *aduma es bermeja*; *Guide* III 47/T III 47 (Lazar 344; fol. 130r): *hatad es delito*; *Guide* III 48/T III 48 (Lazar 344; fol. 130r): *macalod açurod es comer vedados*; *sehita es el degollar*; e *nezirud es tanto como el nazareno*; e *nedarim es promesas*; *Guide* III 48/T III 48 (Lazar 345; fol. 130v): *çia es el nervio de la cadera, onde se encoxo Jacob*; *Guide* III 49/T III 49 (Lazar 348; fol. 131v): *mataná es dote*; e *quetubá es escriptura de casamiento*; *Guide* III 49/T III 49 (Lazar 351; fol. 133r): *arel quier dezir aquel non circuncidado, e orla es el capullo*; *Guide* III 49/T III 49 (Lazar 352; fol. 133v): *mamzerim, el que es engendrado con el mestruo*; *Guide* III 49/T III 49 (Lazar 353; fol. 133v): *tohu es cuasi cosa vana e vazia*.

48. These glosses are particularly valuable for Old Spanish philologists: *Guide* I 70/T I 69 (Lazar 122; fol. 35v): *cercamiento quiere dezir rodeamiento circular*; *Guide* II 8/T II 9 (Lazar 180; fol. 57r): *suenos quiere dezir “que suenan”*; *Guide* III 39/T III 39 (fol. 119v; missing in Lazar): *que quiere dezir franqueza* (on the meaning of *xarifes*); *Guide* III 46/T III 46 (Lazar 338; fol. 127v): *Miémbrame que, mientras aprendía, dezíamos el romance de altar ara: esto digo que ara segunt nos nunca la ovo en judíos*; *Guide* III 47/T III 47 (Lazar 343; fol. 129v): *mondo es tanto como limpio e polludo tanto como enconado*; *Guide* III 49/T III 49 (Lazar 352; fol. 133v): *esbiblada es que es contra ley de Dios*.

49. *Guide* I 48/T I 47 (Lazar 82; fol. 21v): *Trasladación mejor: en los conocimientos intrínscos, segunt acontece en los conocimientos sensuales intrínscos*; *Guide* I 56/T I 55 (Lazar

tributes, the Cordovan sage further subdivides the third group—affirmative attributes as qualities—into four genera, closely following Aristotle’s four-fold classification of qualities in *Categories* 8. The first of these four genera, which Aristotle describes as “habit and disposition” (ἔξις καὶ διάθεσις, *al-malaka wa-al-ḥāl* in the Arabic translation of the *Organon*), is explained by Maimonides as follows:

Maimonides (Pines 115–16)

You predicate of a man one of his speculative or moral habits [*bi-malakatin min malakātihi al-nazariyyatin aw al-khulqiyyatin*; Ibn

96; fol. 26r): *Nota que estas tres maneras son longura, e anchura, e fondura*; Guide I 68/T I 67 (Lazar 115; fol. 32v): *Reformaciones tanto quiere dezir como actos*; Guide I 74/T I 73 (Lazar 153; fol. 47r): *Otra nota mejor: e este todo postrero es más que lo todo primero*; Guide I 76/T I 75 (Lazar 157; fol. 48v): *Nota: otra onde diz aunado, diz junto*; Guide I 76/T I 75 (Lazar 157; fol. 48v): *Nota: que onde diz op[i]ñión, diz \*igualamiento*; Guide I 76/T I 75 (Lazar 158; fol. 49r): *Nota que lueñidades qui[e]re dezir la longura, e anchura, e fundeza, que el cuerpo se des[ . . . ]ron e llámanse así*; Guide I 76/T I 75 (Lazar 158; fol. 49r): *onde diz “mas dezir se ha de” a dezir “mas dirá que este cuerpo” etc.* (Lazar misreads *onde diz* as “contendedor”); Guide II 30/T II 31 (Lazar 227; fol. 76v): *Otra nota mejor: “de comienzo crió Dios lo alto e lo baxo”*; Guide II 47/T II 48 (Lazar 261; fol. 89r): *Para esto que se entienda es menester catar do diz esto en la ley*; Guide II 47/T II 48 (Lazar 261; fol. 89v): *El que quiere entender estos vocablos cate a principio del libro*; Guide III 2/T III 2 (Lazar 267; fol. 92r): *Otro romance do diz “non se acercan”*: “non se rodean”; Guide III 10/T III 10 (Lazar 278; fol. 96r): *Este dezir lieva el abraico meod, e non el romance*; Guide III 26/T III 26 (Lazar 312; fol. 110r): *Nota que diz: “suerte una a Adonay e una suerte a azazel”*; Guide III 26/T III 26 (Lazar 313; fol. 110v): *Onde diz “en las tres” quier dezir: cuando le fue mandado non multiplicar mugeres, e cavallos, e plata e oro*; Guide III 26/T III 26 (Lazar 313; fol. 110v): *Este testo es de David*; Guide III 29/T III 29 (Lazar 318; fol. 112v): *Declarado es*; Guide III 29/T III 29 (Lazar 318; fol. 112v): *Onde diz “labramiento de la tierra” es otra nota que diz “servicio de la tierra”*; Guide III 34/T III 34 (fol. 116r; missing in Lazar): *Esto es un dicho usado en el Talmud* (an assertion found in BT Shabbat 35b and BT Hullin 9a); Guide III 35/T III 35 (fol. 116v; missing in Lazar): *en el postrimero cuaderno ha declaraciones d’estos todos vocablos*; Guide III 36/T III 36 (fol. 116v; missing in Lazar): *De aquí adelante en estas XIV generalidades de los 613 mandamientos es a mí en lo más muy poco entendido porque es lo más del Talmud e dicho en los XIV libros que fizo*; Guide III 38/T III 38 (fol. 119r; missing in Lazar): *Libro es que se llama así*; Guide III 39/T III 39 (fol. 119r; missing in Lazar): *Estos todos son nombres de libros e de capítulos*; Guide III 39/T III 39 (fol. 119r; missing in Lazar): *manera es de ofrenda*; Guide III 39/T III 39 (fol. 120r; missing in Lazar): *Manera es de capítulos*; Guide III 39/T III 39 (fol. 120r; missing in Lazar): *Los más d’estos capítulos e lo más d’ellos non lo puede emendar sino aquel que leyó todos esos XIV libros*; Guide III 40/T III 40 (fol. 120r; missing in Lazar): *Lo más d’este capítulo es escuro por no sab[er] los libros que aquí diz[en]*. *Onde es más la [ . . . ] e más claro, porque aquí habla con aquel que los leyó e entendió*; Guide III 41/T III 41 (fol. 121r; missing in Lazar): *Esto es de corregir con el testo*; Guide III 46/T III 46 (Lazar 339; fol. 128r): *Este testo viene de Job*; Guide III 51/T III 51 (Lazar 363; fol. 138r): *Por señas*; Guide III 54/T III 54 (Lazar 366; fol. 139v): *Fazer los ha sabios*; Guide III 54/T III 54 (Lazar 367; fol. 140r): *al día del juicio*.

Tibbon: *be-qinyan mi-qinyanaw ha-'iyyuniyyim 'o ha-midotiyyim*; al-Ḥarizi: *qinyan mi-qinyane ha-'iyyun 'o ha-yeşuriyyot*] or one of the dispositions [*al-hay'atin*; Ibn Tibbon: *ha-tekhunot*; al-Ḥarizi: *ha-tekhuniyyot*] subsisting in him qua an animate being, as when you say someone is a carpenter or chaste or ill. There is no difference between your saying a carpenter or your saying a learned man or a sage, all of these being dispositions subsisting in the soul [Ibn Tibbon: *ha-kol tekhunah ba-nafesh*; al-Ḥarizi: *ha-kol middot la-nafesh*]. There is also no difference between your saying a chaste man and your saying a merciful man. For all arts, sciences, and settled moral characters are dispositions [Ibn Tibbon: *tekhunah*; al-Ḥarizi: *tekhunot*] subsisting in the soul. All this is clear to whoever has occupied himself even to the slightest extent with the art of logic.

Here is Toledo's translation and gloss:<sup>50</sup>

Toledo (Lazar 88; fol. 23v)

*Primero enxemplo: apropiando al ombre abituación de algunt estudio o costumbres, o maneras que aya en quanto es animal, diziendo: fulano es carpentero, o temiente de pecar, o doliente. E non ay diferencia entre dezir carpi(re)ntero, o el sabio, o el físico, ca todo es abituación en el alma. [E non ay diferencia entre dezir] e[l] vergonçoso, [o] piadoso. E esto es declarado al que estudio quisquiera en la arte de la lógica.*

Toledo's gloss

*Nota que en este enxemplo primero nombró las dos que dize Aristóteles en los Pedricamientos, que son avituación e manera, en el primer genus de las cuatro cualidades. E el ábito es fuerte de estar; en la manera, ligera de quitar. En amas trasladaciones me parecen que non van regladas las maneras de estas genus, que en el primero puso avituación, e en el tercero la manera que es ligera de quitar, e turvóme por qué manera e avituación amos an a ser juntos en un genus según Aristóteles. E el capítulo va bueno,*

50. The accompanying gloss was split in two in the manuscript, with the second half linked to a later part of Maimonides' discussion, i.e., the third of the four subgenera of qualities. This understandable error on the copyist's part was probably based on the assumption that Toledo's comment on *en el primero* and *en el tercero* referred to two of the four genera of qualities discussed by Maimonides (which led said scribe to link half of the gloss with the first example and the second half with the third) rather than (as is the case) to the tripartite scheme in the first example alone (i.e., "[1] his speculative or [2] moral habits or [3] one of the dispositions . . .").

*mas non vos asegures en su regla, o non entiendo más.* (Note that in this example, he first named the two mentioned by Aristotle in his *Categories*, namely, habit and disposition, which belong to the first genus of the four qualities. A habit is lasting; a disposition is easy to remove. In both translations it seems to me that the varieties of this genus are not properly arranged [*non van regladas*], for his first example is a habit and his third example a disposition that is easy to remove, and it bothered me how Aristotle could lump together a disposition and a habit. The chapter is fine but do not rest assured of its premise [*non vos asegures en su regla*] or I do not understand anything else.)

Toledo picks and chooses from both al-Ḥarizi and Ibn Tibbon in his translation of this passage. (His *temiente de pecar* derives from Ibn Tibbon's *hanizhar me-ḥeṭ*, rather than al-Ḥarizi's *ha-'anaw*, whereas his *maneras que aya en cuanto es animal* is a tad closer to the translation of al-Ḥarizi [*ha-tekhuniyyot ha-nimṣa'im lo mipene she-hu' ḥay*] than it is to that of Ibn Tibbon [*ha-tekhunot asher yimaṣe'u lo ba-asher hu' ba'al nafesh*].) However, both Hebrew translators coincide, as noted with frustration by Toledo, in their respective formulations of the content issue that mystifies him (*en amas traslaciones me parescen que non van regladas las maneras de este genus*): an apparent problem in Maimonides' Aristotelian source that Rambam himself does not address (at least as far as Toledo can gauge from the Hebrew versions of the *Guide*). In his gloss, the Spanish translator rightly identifies Maimonides' source for his fourfold classification of qualities as Aristotle's *Categories*, known in the Latin Middle Ages as the *Predicamenta* (Toledo's *Pedricamientos*). Toledo also correctly establishes, with respect to the first of these genera ("habits and dispositions"), Aristotle's clarificatory distinction, which Maimonides skips, between "habit" as a more lasting condition (*es fuerte de estar*) illustrated by various types of acquired knowledge and moral virtues, and "disposition" as a condition that is easily changed (*ligera de quitar*), such as health. But how—Toledo now asks—could a habit and a disposition belong to the same genus? How could Aristotle justify lumping together something lasting and something easily changeable under the same generic rubric? This is the crux of Toledo's perplexity: a genuine intellectual quandary over an Aristotelian assertion echoed in the *Guide* that he finds inconsistent (again, with the obvious limitation imposed by his lack of access to the Arabic original) and that he is more than happy to share with his Christian addressee.<sup>51</sup>

51. Here I differ with the proposed explanation of this gloss by Fernández López (2011, 52–53), who misses the root of Toledo's perplexity in comparing both Hebrew versions of the discussion with the Aristotelian source, which he clearly knew.

Much more remains to be ascertained about Toledo's intellectual profile as a Jewish scholar from his Spanish translation of the *Guide*. For example, what is the exegetical scope of Toledo's scriptural learning? One could examine comparatively Toledo's translation of Maimonides' scriptural quotes both in light of the rabbinic and medieval commentaries and in relationship with the other Old Spanish *romanceamientos* of the Hebrew Bible to gauge with more precision Toledo's philological skill in biblical Hebrew and his exegetical *forma mentis* whether as an observant Jew or as a converso.

Note the following passage from his translation of *Guide* I 16 (T I 16), Maimonides' excursus on *šur* (Rock) as a biblical designation for God:

Toledo's translation (Lazar 39; fol. 10r)

*Peña es nombre equívoco que es dicho por el monte, segunt diz: "e ferirás en la peña" [Exod 17:6]. E es nombre de piedra fuerte, commo diz peña del pedernal: "fuertes espadas" [Josh 5:2].*

Toledo's translation of the brief segment from Exodus 17:6 (*we-hikkita va-šur*) coincides with all the extant Old Spanish renderings of the Hebrew (Faz., E3, E19, E7, E4, and Arragel): *e ferirás* (Faz. *ferrás*) *en la peña*. On the other hand, the following line (whose Spanish translation is closer to that of al-Ḥarizi)<sup>52</sup> is capped off with a scriptural tidbit translated variously across the Old Spanish biblical corpus:

*ḥarvot šurim* (Josh 5:2)

|          |                                     |
|----------|-------------------------------------|
| E3       | <i>navajas de piedra</i>            |
| E19      | <i>navajas de pedernales</i>        |
| E7 E4    | <i>navajas agudas</i>               |
| Arragel  | <i>navajas de pedernales agudas</i> |
| Oxford   | <i>navajas de pedernal</i>          |
| Toledo   | <i>fuertes espadas</i>              |
| Glossist | <i>espadas de peña</i>              |
| Vulg.    | <i>cultros lapideos</i>             |
| GE E6    | <i>cuchiello de piedra</i>          |

52. Judeo-Arabic: *wa-huwa ismu ḥajarin šulbin ka-al-šawwān* (Pines: "It is also a term denoting a hard stone like flint"); Ibn Tibbon: *we-hu' shem even qashah ka-ḥallamish*; al-Ḥarizi: *we-hu' shem even ḥazaq šur ha-ḥel*. Toledo's *commo diz* points to a biblical intertext for the juxtaposition of *šur* and *ḥallamish*: cf. Deut 8:15 and 32:13.



The primary meaning of *ḥarvot* is “swords,” and that of *ṣurim* is “stones”: the anonymous critic of Toledo’s *Mostrador* translates it most literally as *espadas de peña* (stone swords). Its biblical context—God’s request to Joshua that he make *ḥarvot ṣurim* to circumcise the Israelites a second time—suggests that *ḥarvot* are actually knives (flint knives, to be more precise), as in Jerome’s *cultros lapideos*, echoed by GE and E6. Most of our medieval Jewish *romanceamientos* also reflect a similar contextual understanding, its *peshat* elucidation by both Rashi and David Qimḥi based on Onqelos’s Aramaic translation as *uzmelawan ḥarifin* (sharp circumcision knives). The Spanish *navajas* (knives) for *ḥarvot* in E3, E19, E7, E4, Arragel, and Oxford harks back to this *peshat* explanation, but three of these Bibles (E3, E19, and Oxford) translate *ad sensum* the Hebrew *ṣurim* (*de piedra, de pedernales, de pedernal*), two others (E7 and E4) fully adhere to Onqelos (along with Rashi and Qimḥi) with their *navajas agudas* (the same reading as in the King James Bible—“sharp knives”), and Arragel combines both trends in his composite *navajas de pedernal agudas* (sharp flint knives). Where does Toledo fit within this spectrum? His *fuertes espadas* (strong swords) has no exact parallels, combining, as it does, a hyperliteral reading of *ḥarvot* as “swords,” only echoed by his critic, with the adjectival *fuertes*, which closely reflects Qimḥi’s wording in his *peshat* commentary on *ḥarvot ṣurim* as *ḥarvot ḥazaqim* (strong swords).<sup>53</sup>

Again, examples could be multiplied.<sup>54</sup>

But let us conclude. Evidence is scarce but suggestive as to the concrete fate of Toledo’s translation in late medieval and early modern Spain. There are two allusions to possible copies of the *Mostrador* in the fifteenth-century library of the Count of Benavente and the sixteenth-century library of Her-

53. Qimḥi explains that *ṣurim* is a metaphoric reference to their strength, further suggesting, with Onqelos, that they were made of metal (*neḥoshet* [copper, bronze]; in *la’az* as *açier* [steel]) in order to minimize the pain as much as possible with their sharp edges.

54. Fernández López (2011, 62), for example, discusses an interesting passage that shows Toledo’s limitation in translating biblical Hebrew: his rendering of *we-holidah we-ḥišmiḥah* (a portion of Isa 55:10 quoted by Maimonides in *Guide* 1/7/T I 7 [Lazar 31; fol. 8v]) as *e parió e creció*. Toledo offers an alternative translation in a marginal gloss (*otro romance diz: “nació e creció”*), but both versions are sharply disputed by his critic (who states *nin el suyo nin el vuestro señor notante; mas el romance verdadero es “e fázela engendrar e fázela crecer”*—even transliterating the Hebrew original, a portion of the gloss omitted by Lazar). In this case, Toledo’s critic rightly highlights, along the lines of the other Old Spanish Bibles, the causative element of the two *hiphil* verbs, which is not reflected in either version (the critic’s own translation coincides in essence with Arragel and RAH): E3 *e la faze nacer e la faze crecer*; E7 E4 *e la faze nacer e florecer*; BNM *e la faze engendrar e nacer*; RAH *e la faga engendrar e la faga crecer*; Arragel *e la faze engendrar e crecer*.

nando de Colón at the Biblioteca Colombina, respectively.<sup>55</sup> In an earlier essay (Girón Negrón 2000), I had also made a case for its possible impact on one of Santillana's philosophical poems, his neo-Stoic dialogue *Bías contra Fortuna*, partly based on both thematic concomitances with the *Guide* and the plausible availability of Toledo's translation in Santillana's library. But whether or not this was the case, Toledo's *Mostrador* is not merely a bibliographic *avis rara* in Ibero-medieval studies. It can justly be hailed, along with De la Torre's *Visión* and Arragel's Bible, as a rather impressive capstone to the cumulative array of Old Spanish Jewish sources that first introduced Maimonides' religious philosophy to a receptive cohort of Christian readers on Toledo's side of the Pyrenees. The *Guide*'s intellectual legacy in these vernacular garbs glowed with crepuscular softness on the Christian *imaginaire* of late medieval Spain.

### Appendix: Old Spanish Translations of Hebrew Sources

#### Manuscripts Containing Partial or Full Spanish Translations of the Hebrew Bible

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| Fazienda de Ultramar | Biblioteca Universidad de Salamanca, MS<br>1997—ca. 1230              |
| E3                   | Escorial I.i.3—2nd half of the 15th cent.                             |
| E4                   | Escorial I.i.4—ca. 1400–1430  |
| E7/E5                | Escorial I.i.7—ca. 1400–1430  |
|                      | Escorial I.i.5—ca. 1420–45  |
| E19                  | Escorial J.ii.19—ca. 1420   |
|                      | Copy of a lost original from late 13th/early<br>14th cent.            |
| Ajuda                | Biblioteca de Ajuda, MS 52-XIII-1—ca. 1420–30                         |
|                      | Text coincident with E3   |
| BNM 10288            | Biblioteca Nacional de Madrid no. 10288—1st<br>half of the 15th cent. |
| RAH 87               | Real Academia de la Historia 87—ca. 1450–75                           |
| Arragel              | Biblia de Arragel (Palacio de Liria)                                  |
|                      | Translated between 1422 and 1430; copied<br>shortly after             |

55. In the inventory of the Count of Benavente's fifteenth-century library, there is mention of "el More, en papel cebtí mayor, con tablas de madero cubierto de cuero colorado" (Sáez 1789, 376—entire inventory on pp. 374–79).

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Évora                 | Biblioteca Pública de Évora, MS CXXIV/1-2<br>Copied 1429<br>Text coincident with E5 |
| Oxford                | Bodleian Canon. Ital. 177   |
| <i>Megillat Ester</i> | Universidad de Salamanca, MS 2015, fols.<br>43v–50v                                 |

Full transcriptions and bibliography of the Old Spanish Bibles (both from the Vulgate [GE, E6/E8] and the Hebrew Bible) at [www.bibliamedieval.es](http://www.bibliamedieval.es).

There is also an Old Spanish version of *Megillat Antiochus* (a paraliturgical text in Aramaic written for *Ḥanukkah*), copied at the end of the Ajuda Bible (fols. 162v–64v): it is the oldest known version of this text in a European vernacular.

### Philosophy

- \* *Guide of the Perplexed (Mostrador e enseñador de los turbados)*, translated by Pedro de Toledo (1419–ante quem 1432), BNM, MS 10289
- \* *Sefer ha-Kuzari*, abridged version by 15th-century anonymous translator, BNM, MS 17812

### Rabbinic and Medieval Ethical Treatises

(Note: All four sources below are contained in the same manuscript as *Megillat Ester* above—i.e., Universidad de Salamanca, MS 2015, a florilegium of mainly Jewish texts entitled *Suma de casos de conciencia*.)

- \* Old Spanish digest of Jonah ben Abraham Gerondi's *Sha'are teshuvah* (1r–32v)
- \* Excerpts from section I of Jacob ben Asher's *Ṭur, Oraḥ ḥayyim* (fols. 50v–99r)
- \* Old Spanish version of *Pirqe avot* (fols. 32v–43r)
- \* Old Spanish version of *Midrash 'ašeret ha-dibrot* (fols. 125r–41r)

### Astronomy/Astrology

#### Four texts by Abraham ibn Ezra

These are found in two Segovia manuscripts: Archivo Catedralicio B-332 (texts translated before September 14, 1432) and Biblioteca Universidad de Salamanca, MS 2138 (copied ca. 1520–21)

- \* *Reshit hokhmah* (*Comienzo de la sabiduría*), SAC B-332, fols. 75–143; BUS 2138, fols. 1–84v
- \* *Sefer ha-ṭe'amim* (*Libro de las razones del sabidor*), SAC B-332, fols. 144–68; BUS 2138, fols. 85–119v
- \* *Sefer ha-moladot* (*Libro de los nacimientos del sabidor*), SAC B-332, fols. 169–201; BUS 2138, fols. 120–65v
- \* *Sefer ha-'olam* (*Libro del mundo sabidor*), SAC B-332, fols. 202–11; BUS 2138, fols. 218–34

The 16th-century MS 2138 of the Universidad de Salamanca contains three more fragmentary texts by Ibn Ezra translated into Spanish with a 1521 *ad quem*: *Sefer ha-me'orot* (*Libro de los luminarios*), fols. 189v–201v; *Sefer ha-mivḥarim* (*Libro de las elecciones*), fols. 202v–3 (it covered fols. 202v–17); and *Sefer ha-she'elot* (*Libro de las cuestiones o demandas*), fol. 189 (it covered fols. 166–89).

#### Three texts by Abraham Zacuto

- \* *Ha-ḥibbur ha-gadol* (*Almanach perpetuum; Compilación magna*), translated in 1481 (Latin: Joseph Vicino; Spanish: Juan de Salaya), 4 MSS (Colombina 5-2-32 and 12-1-9, BUS I-176, RAH Hebreo 14).
- \* *Juicio de los eclipses* (only survives in Spanish), copied ca. 1476–1527 (Colombina 5-2-21)
- \* *Tratado breve en las influencias del cielo*, copied ca. 1476–1527 (Colombina 5-2-21)

#### Historiography

*Sefer Yosippon*, Biblioteca de Menéndez Pelayo M-54 (= 310), translated between 1400 and 1450, MS copied in the second half of the 15th century



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## 5

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### The Second Ibn Tibbon Salomon Munk and His Translation of the *Guide*

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A little over a century before Shlomo Pines's translation of the *Guide*, another Solomon had rendered Maimonides' philosophical masterpiece into a modern European language, but in a very different spirit and using a very different methodology.<sup>1</sup> The French rendition by Salomon Munk (1803–67) is not only a work of scholarship in itself, but it also became a model for subsequent translations into various languages. The present study will first examine how it was possible for an early nineteenth-century German Jew who was initially destined for a rabbinical vocation to acquire the intimate knowledge of Arabic and Islamic philosophy necessary for such an undertaking. Second, it will examine why Munk chose to translate Maimonides' *Guide* specifically.

To answer this double inquiry, it is essential to examine both Munk's educational background and the intellectual climate of his time. The following sketch will discuss Munk's biography and the light it sheds on the choice and genesis of his translation of the *Guide*.

1. I have greatly benefited from the numerous suggestions made by the editor Yonatan Shemesh, whom I would like to thank.

For Munk's life we are fortunate to have at our disposal the excellent biography by the famous French Judaic scholar and librarian Moïse Schwab (1839–1918).<sup>2</sup> Better known as the author of the French translation of the Jerusalem Talmud, Schwab was also Munk's secretary during the precise period in which the *Guide* was completed and published, that is, from 1856 to 1866.<sup>3</sup> In addition, Munk's correspondence with his widowed mother, which contained over 200 letters in German, provides a glimpse into his inner life.<sup>4</sup>

Salomon (Shelomo b. Eliezer) Munk was born in Gross-Glogau (Prussian Silesia), a relatively poor region that, in the nineteenth century, produced a disproportionate number of Jewish students and scholars.<sup>5</sup> His father, Lippman Samuel Munk, a community official, taught him the rudiments of Hebrew, and his mother provided him with instruction in French. Having lost his father when he was barely eight years of age, he furthered his Jewish studies at the rabbinical school in his native town under the local rabbi, Jacob Joseph Oettinger (b. Glogau 1780, d. Berlin 1860).<sup>6</sup> Upon Oettinger's appointment in 1820 as rabbi and head of the Veitel Heine Ephraim-schen Lehrinstitut in Berlin, Munk followed him to the Prussian capital in order to complete his rabbinical diploma.

Oettinger was to have an enduring influence on Munk. The following pithy quip with which Oettinger is credited reflects how he encouraged his students to be curious about history: "A Rabbi should not only know what Rashi said, but also what brand of snuff he used." No wonder then that, besides Munk, he was to count among his pupils Eliezer Landshuth (1817–87), who later became a liturgical scholar and historian, and Michael Friedländer (1833–1910), who later authored the first English translation of the *Guide* and who, like Munk, studied Arabic and Persian in Berlin.<sup>7</sup> Apparently, Munk also gave Arabic lessons in Berlin.<sup>8</sup> The intellectual atmosphere of the Lehrinstitut under Oettinger's guidance may have helped

2. Schwab 1900.

3. For a biography of Schwab, see Sidersky 1919.

4. Parts of this correspondence were published in Brann 1899.

5. David Kassel, Eduard Munk, Michael Sachs, Meir Wiener, Joseph Zedner, and our author himself, to name just a few.

6. On Oettinger, see Herlitz and Kirschner 1927–30, 4:641–42.

7. Friedländer 1881–85. In 1904 he published a revised one-volume edition of his translation without the notes, which was the standard English version of the *Guide* until Pines's 1963 translation. On Friedländer's translation, see W. Z. Harvey's contribution to this volume.

8. One of his students may have been Ber Goldberg. See below, n. 28.

induce the two future translators to take a special interest in Maimonides' Arabic text.

However, the impetus also came from the struggle of Jewish scholarship to achieve integration into German academics. Having obtained his Abiturienten-Examination in 1824, Munk registered in linguistics and classics at Berlin University, where he attended lectures by Hegel. He became aware of Hegel's disregard for Judaism's and Islam's contributions to Western thought. The German philosopher saw Judaism as an antiquated religion and antagonistic to true philosophy, which was the proprium of Greek and German civilization. Under the influence of Leopold Zunz (1794–1886), who became his lifelong friend, and Zunz's mentor, August Böckh (1785–1867), Munk abandoned speculative philosophy and turned to the tools of philology as a means to reconstruct the history of Jewish thought and establish its relevance to the humanistic study of Western philosophy.

Meanwhile, Munk began cataloguing the Hebrew manuscripts in the Berlin Royal Library, where he may have first encountered Judeo-Arabic texts that epitomized the interconnection between Jewish and Islamic thought. Realizing that the university's discriminatory laws left him little prospect as a Jew for obtaining a post in Prussia, he decided, in 1827, to abandon his doctoral diploma and to make his way to Paris. Before leaving German soil, he spent a term at Bonn University studying Arabic with Georg Freytag (1788–1861) and Sanskrit with Christian Lassen (1800–1872).

Munk arrived in Paris in 1828 and pursued his Arabic studies with the famed Orientalist Antoine Silvestre de Sacy (1758–1838) at the Collège de France, as well as Persian with Etienne Quatremère (1782–1857) and Sanskrit with Antoine-Leonard de Chézy (1773–1832). When he was not supporting himself as a Hebrew teacher, he spent most of his time in the Royal Library in Paris deepening his knowledge of Arabic and Hebrew manuscripts. The editors of the *Encyclopédie nouvelle*, Pierre Leroux and Jean Reynaud, noticed Munk's precocious erudition and, in 1832, approached him to write the articles on Arabic literature and the Muslim philosophers al-Kindī, al-Fārābī, Avicenna, al-Ghazālī, and Averroes.

Eventually, after ten years sojourn in France, Munk was appointed custodian of Oriental manuscripts at the Royal Library in 1838 and given the task of composing a catalogue of the library's Sanskrit manuscripts. At the same time, he would spend long hours poring over ancient Arabic, Hebrew, and Latin manuscripts to gather information about their authors and schools. He had described this activity in an earlier letter (1832) to the French minister of education:



I was struck by the following instance . . . : a great number of scientific writings of the Muslims, which are to be sought in vain among the Arabic manuscripts, have been preserved by the rabbis. They either copied the originals into Hebrew characters or translated them into Hebrew. Besides many medical and mathematical works, this is especially the case for works on philosophy, to which the medieval rabbis devoted themselves with astounding zeal and success. Our notions about Arabic philosophy are still imperfect, and in this respect there is a lack to be filled in all works dealing with the history of philosophy. Having the ambition to cultivate the study of philosophy as well as Oriental literature, I have begun research into Arabic philosophy.<sup>9</sup>

Before proceeding, it is worth pausing to appreciate both the fact that Munk had this realization long before Steinschneider's *Hebräische Übersetzungen* and the degree to which this passage legitimizes the study of Hebrew sources in order to obtain a better grasp of Islamic philosophy.

At this time, the study of Islamic thought was still in the cradle. Historians such as Johann Brücker (1696–1770) in his *Historia critica philosophiae* (Leipzig, 1742–44), Heinrich Ritter (1791–1869) in his *Geschichte der Philosophie* (Hamburg, 1829–53), and Franz August Schmölders (1809–80)<sup>10</sup> in his *Essai sur les écoles philosophiques chez les Arabes et notamment sur la doctrine d'Algazzali* (Paris, 1842) were still using “Leo Africanus’ fables” or Latin translations of Arabic works simply because the originals were unavailable to them. Furthermore, Edward Pococke had published a Latin translation of Ibn Tufayl in his *Philosophus Autodidactus sive Epistola Abi Jafaar Ebn Tophail de Hai Ebn Yokdhan* (Oxford, 1671),<sup>11</sup> later translated into English by Simon Ockley as *The Improvement of Human Reason* (London, 1708). It will be recalled that in his *Porta Mosis* (Oxford, 1655), Pococke also published extracts from Maimonides’ Arabic commentary on

9. Schwab 1900, 33 (my translation). Unless otherwise stated, all translations from Arabic, French, German, and Hebrew are mine.

10. Schmölders, who was not Jewish, had studied at Bonn shortly after Munk; he studied the same subjects and under the same teachers before moving to Paris to further his Arabic with Silvestre de Sacy. Perhaps Munk had Schmölders’s imperfect treatment of Ibn Rushd in mind when he remarked: “For anyone who desires to undertake a serious study of Arabic philosophy, a profound knowledge of rabbinical Hebrew is indispensable” (Munk 1857–59, 335). Nonetheless, Munk often quotes him in his notes; see, e.g., Munk 1:208n3, 209n1, 383n2, 386n1, 392n2, 400–401n2, 428–29n4.

11. Which is quoted by Munk; e.g., Munk 1:12n1.

the Mishnah, with a facing Latin translation and learned notes.<sup>12</sup> The results of Munk's labors came to fruition in his *Mélanges de philosophie juive et arabe* (Paris, 1857–59), a coherent history of Jewish and Islamic thought in which his unequaled mastery of the Arabic speculative schools enabled him to contextualize and systematize them with ease.<sup>13</sup>

His intellectual curiosity and his journey into philosophy inevitably brought him to Maimonides, the champion of the Haskalah scholars. We shall soon see that our scholar—unlike his Jewish contemporaries—considered the *Guide* to be primarily a philosophical rather than a theological work. As Munk himself claims, Maimonides' *Guide* was practically the only source from which scholars had derived their impressions of the schools of Arabic philosophy, but faulty Hebrew and Latin versions of the work had led to a number of misapprehensions on their parts. Not content with reading the *Guide* in the Hebrew renditions of Ibn Tibbon and al-Ḥarizi, Munk was determined to restore the Arabic original, manuscripts of which he had discovered in the Royal Library in Paris.

As early as 1834, he expressed in writing his intention to publish, translate, and annotate the entire text of the Arabic *Guide*. As it turns out, he had a predecessor: the English Orientalist Thomas Hyde (1636–1703), Regius Professor of Hebrew at the University of Oxford, who also succeeded Edward Pococke as Laudian Professor of Arabic in 1691. At the time of his succession, Hyde was the curator of Oriental manuscripts at the Bodleian Library. As early as 1690, he had recommended the publication of the original Arabic text of the *Guide*, which was in the library's holdings. He even published a prospectus of the Arabic accompanied by an annotated Latin

12. Quoted by Munk; e.g., Munk 1:400n2. Munk also takes Pococke to task; see, e.g., 1:232–33n2.

13. Munk 1857–59. See Ivry 2000; see also Ivry's short but most apposite article "Salomon Munk and the Science of Judaism Meet Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*" (2004). Previously, Munk had given a historical sketch of Jewish thought in his essay "Juifs (Philosophie chez les)," published in the *Dictionnaire des sciences philosophiques*, edited by Adolphe Franck (Munk 1847). (Munk also wrote the entries for all the principal Muslim philosophers in the *Dictionnaire*.) This essay was subsequently republished with supplementary notes in the *Archives Israélites* (Munk 1848) and also as a separate forty-page pamphlet (Munk, n.d.). The essay, later included in his *Mélanges*, proved quite popular and was translated into German with additional notes by Bernard Beer as *Philosophie und philosophische Schriftsteller der Juden: Eine historische Skizze* (Munk 1852) and into English by Isidor Kalisch as *Philosophy and Philosophical Authors of the Jews: A Historical Sketch* (Munk 1881). Incidentally, a manuscript of Munk's notes in French and Hebrew on various philosophers is found in JTS MS 2244; see Jewish Theological Seminary 1974, 1.

translation.<sup>14</sup> Having received little encouragement, he subsequently abandoned the project, and no further installments appeared.

While waiting to realize his project, Munk published two samples of his future translation in Samuel Cahen's (1798–1862) French translation of the Bible.<sup>15</sup> The first two chapters (*Guide* III 27 and 31), which were based on two hitherto unidentified Judeo-Arabic manuscripts that had been housed in the Royal Library in Paris,<sup>16</sup> were appended to his introductory essay on the book of Leviticus.<sup>17</sup> The eleven-page appendix bore the title “Deux chapitres de la troisième partie de la *Direction* [*sic*] *des Égarés*, par le Réis de la nation israélite Mousa Ibn-Maïmoun de Cordoue.” The layout prefigures Munk's later (full) edition: the Arabic original faces the French translation, which is accompanied by copious footnotes of philological and philosophical observations.<sup>18</sup>

In the first note, Munk writes:

As soon as a complete copy of the Arabic original becomes available to me, I propose to publish Maimonides' chef d'oeuvre in its entirety. It will be accompanied by a translation and commentary, in which I shall endeavor to throw some light on the philosophy of the Arabs, about which we still have rather imperfect notions. I have already begun to gather material for this work, although I must confess that this requires deep study and extensive research, which remain to be carried out. Until now, Maimonides' work has been almost the only source from which notions about the philosophical studies of the Arabs had been drawn, but by using the Hebrew translation, or the two Latin versions derived from it, scholars have committed many errors. Had space not been lacking, I could have quoted numerous examples. Perhaps I will have the

14. G. Sharpe published Hyde's prospectus as an appendix to his edition of the latter's papers, *Syntagma dissertationum* (Hyde 1767, 2:433–38). Munk was aware of this publication and quotes it in a note to *Guide* I 2 (Munk 1:38n1). Among Hyde's other achievements is his Arabic transcription of Joseph Tavus's Persian translation of the Pentateuch (which had previously been published in Hebrew characters in Constantinople in 1546) for Walton's *Polyglott Bible* (London, 1657). On Hyde, see Marshall 1986.

15. Cahen 1831–39, vols. 4 and 9.

16. MSS 229 and 230 Ancien fonds; Zotenberg 1866, nos. 760 and 761.

17. Munk 1833, 1–56.

18. Munk 1833, 79–89. It is interesting to point out that this text is preceded by his French translation of book 5 of the Sanskrit work *The Laws of Manu* (Munk 1833, 57–78). Here Munk shows himself to be a veritable disciple of Maimonides, adopting his approach to comparative religion in order to explain Jewish custom.

opportunity to revert to this in an extract from part III, which I propose to publish. I think it necessary to warn the reader that in the translation of these two chapters, I had faithfulness foremost in mind, and so I have rendered the Arabic text almost literally.<sup>19</sup>

The second extract, derived from *Guide* II 29,<sup>20</sup> appeared five years later as an appendix to his “Notice sur Rabbi Saadia Gaon, et sa version arabe d’Isaïe.”<sup>21</sup> The twenty-five-page appendix bore the title “Extrait du livre Dalalat al-hayirin de Mousa Ben-Maimon, sur les métaphors employées par Isaïe et par quelques autres prophètes,” and was originally published in the ninth volume of Cahen’s *Bible*.

Munk points out that these extracts represent the very first publications that were based on the Arabic original.<sup>22</sup> They constitute a preview of the method that he would employ in his later edition. Embedded within brackets in the meticulous French translation are explanatory terms and numerous philological notes, including comparisons of Arabic philosophical terms with their Latin Scholastic interpretations, all of which were almost exclusively derived from manuscript sources.

Munk envisioned his proposed edition “as a work which will be of the greatest importance for Oriental studies in general and for Judaism in particular,” and in the ensuing years, he was constantly preoccupied with establishing the textual basis for its translation.<sup>23</sup> In order to broaden the scope of

19. Munk 1833, 80–81n1: “Je me propose de publier en entier le chef-d’oeuvre de Maimonides, dès que j’aurai pu me mettre en possession d’une copie complète de l’original arabe. Je l’accompagnerai d’une traduction et d’un commentaire, où je tâcherai de jeter quelque lumière sur la philosophie des Arabes, sur laquelle on n’a encore que des notions très-imparfaites. J’ai déjà commencé à recueillir des matériaux pour ce travail, mais je ne me cache pas qu’il exige des études profondes et des recherches immenses qu’il me reste encore à faire. L’ouvrage de Maimonides a été jusqu’ici presque la seule source où l’on ait puisé des notions sur les études philosophiques des Arabes, mais les savans, en se servant de la traduction hébraïque, ou des deux versions latines qu’on a faites de cette traduction, ont commis bien des erreurs. Je pourrais en citer de nombreux exemples, si l’espace ne me manquait. Peut-être aurai-je l’occasion d’y revenir dans un extrait que je me propose de publier de la troisième partie. Je crois devoir avertir le lecteur que dans la traduction de ces deux chapitres j’ai visé surtout la fidélité, et que j’ai rendu le texte arabe presque mot pour mot.”

20. Munk does not specify the manuscript source for this textual extract, but I surmise it is based on MS Ancien fonds 237, which contains precisely the concluding chapters of part II of the *Guide*. See Zotenberg 1866, no. 759.

21. Munk 1838a, 160–84. It was also printed separately; see Munk 1838b, 88–112.

22. Munk 1838a, 160.

23. Schwab 1900, 65.

his research, he set out to look for further remnants of the original Arabic texts and to compare them with the Hebrew and Latin translations.

Initially, he did not have much to go on. Until his time, only four full translations of the *Guide* into European languages (other than Munk's) had been recorded: two into Latin, one into Castilian, and one into Italian. Both Hebrew versions of the *Guide* were translated into Latin: that of al-Ḥarizi, the work of an anonymous translator, was published by Agostino Giustiniani (1470–1530?) in Paris (1520),<sup>24</sup> while that of Ibn Tibbon was translated and published by Johannes Buxtorf II (1599–1664) in Basel (1629).<sup>25</sup> There was also a medieval Castilian translation by Pedro de Toledo<sup>26</sup> and an Italian translation, titled *Erudizione de' confusi*, which had been made by Amadeo di Musetto (Yedidya ben Moshe) Recanati in 1583, and which was dedicated to the kabbalist Menahem Azariah da Fano.<sup>27</sup>

From Hyde's prospectus, Munk had learned of a manuscript of the original Arabic version of the *Guide* in Oxford; he deemed a study trip to the Bodleian Library indispensable. One of his former pupils from Berlin, who was a librarian in Oxford at the time,<sup>28</sup> informed him of the enormous repository of Judeo-Arabic manuscripts housed there. I suspect that the very same student sent him a transcript of some of the essential manuscripts in January 1835, thus reducing Munk's need for a prolonged stay in Oxford.

It is sobering for modern-day researchers to read the circumstances under which yesterday's scholars had to toil. In a letter dated December 26, 1834, Munk explains to his anxious mother the necessity of a voyage overseas:

I have not yet made any firm decision about the trip to England, though it is quite clear to me that I must make it sooner or later. . . . For it is

24. Giustiniani, who was versed in philosophy, theology, Arabic, Greek, Hebrew, and Syriac, was bishop of Nebbio in Corsica. In 1515, he published the famous Polyglot Psaltium in Genova and was working on a Polyglot Bible when he was captured by Barbary pirates in 1530 and never heard from again. On him, see Bayle 1969, 8:542–45. This translation, which is the object of Caterina Rigo's contribution to this volume, is being critically edited by Diana Di Segni at the University of Cologne.

25. M. Kayserling reports that in 1633, Jacob Roman had prepared an edition of al-Ḥarizi's Hebrew translation with facing Arabic, accompanied by a third column containing the Latin version (Kayserling 1884, 89, 94). Since this proposed edition is not recorded by any Hebrew bibliography, I assume that it never saw the light of day.

26. See Luis M. Girón Negrón's contribution to this volume.

27. See Kaufmann 1981, 240–41. Recanati also translated Maimonides' *Maqāla fī šinā'at al-manṭiq* (*Treatise on the Art of Logic*).

28. Despite much effort, I have been unsuccessful in uncovering his identity.

unthinkable that they would allow the manuscripts to come to Paris. It would already be an enormous favor if, in Oxford, they permit me to work on the manuscripts outside of the library. In this respect, in England and Germany they are much less liberal than in France. In Paris, I can continuously borrow manuscripts that are of particular interest to me and take them home to consult and copy them at my leisure.<sup>29</sup>

In another letter to his mother, dated May 24, 1835, he says the following about his proposed expedition:

These past few days, I have succeeded in greatly extending my literary corpus and henceforth a brief stay in Oxford would be sufficient to complete the material for a work that will have great importance for Oriental studies in general and Judaism in particular. I would not fulfill a pressing duty if I were not to make this small sacrifice for the sake of my own future and that of knowledge.<sup>30</sup>

Munk finally set out for Oxford in August 1835. In a way, his quest for Maimonides marks the point of departure of the modern discipline of Judeo-Arabic studies (although, strictly speaking, he was not the founder of the field). He was principally motivated by the prospect of copying the Arabic manuscripts of Maimonides' *Guide*, but once he was in Oxford, Munk was able to examine numerous Judeo-Arabic literary treasures that had been preserved in the collections acquired by Robert Huntingdon and Edward Pococke in the eighteenth century—extracts from which he would later incorporate into his groundbreaking studies. He also read Islamic works that related to the social and intellectual history of the Jews.

29. Brann 1899, 182–83: “Ueber diese Reise nach England habe ich noch keinen festen Entschluss gefasst, obgleich mir soviel klar ist, dass ich sie früher oder später doch unternehmen muss. . . . Es ist garnicht daran zu denken, die Handschriften nach Paris kommen zu lassen. Es wäre schon eine grosse Begünstigung, wenn ich sie in Oxford selbst ausserhalb der Bibliothek benutzen könnte; dann man ist in dieser Beziehung in England und in Deutschland weit weniger liberal als in Paris, wo ich fortwährend die Handschriften, die mich besonders interessiren, mit nach meiner Wohnung nehmen und nach Bequemlichkeit durchblättern oder abschreiben kann.”

30. Brann 1899, 184: “Da es mir in den letzten Tagen gelungen ist, meine litterarischen Sammlungen sehr zu erweitern, und nunmehr ein sehr kurzer Aufenthalt in Oxford genügen würde, um meine Materialien zu einem Werke zu vervollständigen, welches für die orientalischen Studien im Allgemeinen und besonders für das Judenthum vor der grössten Wichtigkeit sein wird, so würde ich eine grosse Pflicht verletzen, wenn ich meiner eigenen Zukunft und der Wissenschaft nicht dieses kleine Opfer brächte.”

Like many of the German Orientalists who were his contemporaries, Munk was initially a student of biblical exegesis and theology; as such, he was the first scholar to establish his discipline on solidly philological and historical foundations.

The first fruits of his labors materialized in his pioneering study “Notice sur Rabbi Saadia Gaon, et sa version arabe d’Isaïe,” which appeared in Paris in 1838. It was a model monograph. Although it was mainly devoted to Sa’adya’s exegesis, Munk also states triumphantly:

In volume 4 of S. Cahen’s *Bible*, I announced my intention of publishing the Arabic text of the *Moreh nevukhim* along with a translation and notes, of which I supplied a sample. I now possess the entire text, principally based on the superior manuscripts in Oxford. . . . But in order to contribute toward diffusing these studies as soon as circumstances allow, I intend to publish extracts from the *Moreh*, or even a chrestomathy of rabbinical writings in Arabic for which I have gathered a certain amount of material, and which will include several Arabic writings of the rabbis, of which no Hebrew version even exists.<sup>31</sup>

While Munk was immersed in the depths of Maimonides’ thought, an unexpected and dramatic occurrence interrupted his labors and transported him to the very landscape where Maimonides had composed his philosophical masterpiece. We lack the space for a discussion of the heroic role that Munk played in the Damascus Affair (1840) in his capacity as secretary and interpreter to Adolphe Crémieux (1796–1880) and Moses Montefiore (1784–1885), whom he accompanied on a dangerous mission to the East,<sup>32</sup> but the point here is that unlike many European Orientalists, Munk experienced the Islamic world directly. The journey took him to Egypt and Syria, where he came into contact with the living tradition of Judeo-Arabic culture.

31. Munk 1838a, 74–75: “J’ai annoncé moi-même, dans le quatrième volume de la Bible de M. Cahen, que j’avais l’intention de publier le texte arabe du *Moré Nebouchim*, accompagné d’une traduction et de notes, et j’en ai donné un *spécimen*. Je possède maintenant le texte tout entier, tiré, en grande partie, des meilleurs manuscrits d’Oxford. . . . Mais pour contribuer à répandre ces études, je compte publier, aussitôt que les circonstances le permettront, des extraits du *Moré*, ou bien même une *Chrestomathie arabe-rabbinique*, pour laquelle j’ai recueilli un certain nombre de matériaux, et où trouveront place plusieurs écrits de rabbins arabes, dont il n’existe pas même de version hébraïque.”

32. On this affair, see Florence 2004.

In his correspondence, he described his visit to Old Cairo, where “Maimonides lived and practiced medicine”<sup>33</sup> and where Munk was able to acquire many Judeo-Arabic manuscripts. His acquisitions included two Maimonidean compositions: the commentary on *Rosh ha-hashana* that was attributed to Rambam, and the Arabic homilies that had been ascribed to R. David Maimonides.<sup>34</sup>

Munk had not lost sight of his cherished project. In 1842, shortly after his return from the East, he published his “Notice sur Joseph ben-Iehouda ou Aboul’hadjâdj Yousouf ben-Ya’hya al-Sabti al-Maghrebi, disciple de Maimonide,” which was the first historical study on this medieval scholar for whom Maimonides had composed the *Guide*.<sup>35</sup> This publication was followed by his “Notice sur Abou’l-walid Merwan Ibn-Djana’h et sur quelques autres grammairiens hébreux du Xe et du XIe siècle,”<sup>36</sup> which earned him the Prix Volney from the Institut de France. These two essays were major contributions to the as yet uncharted field of Judeo-Arabic studies. Indeed, apart from Johannes Uri’s woefully incomplete catalogue of 1787, there was no detailed conspectus of the Oxford holdings at the time. Steinschneider’s appeared only in 1857, while Neubauer’s was published in 1886—half a century after Munk’s visit to Oxford.

Eventually, the long hours that Munk had spent poring over manuscripts in the Royal Library took their toll. In 1850, he lost the sight of one eye; he was stricken with total blindness a year later. Others would have been discouraged by this physical impairment, but Munk courageously continued to pursue his scholarship in spite of this new challenge.<sup>37</sup>

### Establishing the Text

It is no exaggeration to state that Munk’s methodology in his translation of the *Guide* set the standard for subsequent scholarship. The necessary preliminary to the translation, he maintained, was to establish a reliable text—

33. Schwab 1900, 108. It is noteworthy that before his return, Munk was instrumental in opening a European-type school in Cairo.

34. The list is given in Schwab 1900, 103.

35. Munk 1842.

36. Munk 1850.

37. In the preface to the first volume of his translation of the *Guide*, Munk movingly declares (1:iv): “Unfortunately, I was unable to undertake this task before the very time Providence chose to inflict me with the harshest ordeal that is capable of paralyzing an author’s efforts, for which the most careful reading and research are both an imperious necessity and duty.”



not Ibn Tibbon's Hebrew translation, but Maimonides' original Arabic text. The task was easier said than done, since, despite the work's reputation, no complete Arabic version of the *Guide* could be found in the major manuscript collections of the time. It was therefore necessary to assemble the various available segments.

Throughout his misfortune, Munk worked toward his masterpiece, spending his mornings on his edition of Maimonides' *Guide* and his afternoons working as secretary of the Consistoire Central des Israélites de France. He was assisted by a young student named Isidor Stillmann, who helped establish the text of the first volume. Unfortunately, he passed away prematurely. Munk laments his death in his preface to volume 1. His place was taken by Joseph Mistowski, who in turn was replaced by the future librarian of the Bodleian, the Hungarian-born Adolf Neubauer (1831–1907). The greatest assistance, however, was lent by Albert Cohn, to whom we will return.

The first volume finally appeared in April 1856—twenty years after Munk had first conceived of the project. In addition to the Hebrew and Latin translations, in the comparison of which he benefited from the assistance of a certain Rabbi Trenel, Munk had at his disposal in Paris two incomplete fragments, which were later supplemented by the Oxford manuscripts that Hyde had already used. Munk regretted that he had not prolonged his stay in Oxford so as to “definitively fix all the parts of the text.”<sup>38</sup> Later, Hendrik Engelinus Weyers (1805–44), a professor and librarian at Leiden, generously sent two manuscripts to Paris for Munk's perusal, upon which Munk primarily relied.<sup>39</sup> He also made use of the Arabic text that was written in the outer margin of a manuscript of Ibn Tibbon's Hebrew version, which belonged to the L. Loewe collection.<sup>40</sup>

For the second volume, which appeared five years later in 1861, our translator benefited from an early manuscript that the English Orientalist Rev. William Cureton (1808–64) had lent from his personal collection.<sup>41</sup>

Finally, for the third volume, which appeared in 1866, Munk had at

38. Munk 1:iii–iv.

39. These are certainly cod. 18 and 221, both described in *Catal. Leiden* (Senguerdus, Gronovius, and Heyman 1716, 410), and later by Steinschneider (1858, 380–82). On Weyers, see Molhuysen and Kossmann 1937, 10:1191–92.

40. Cf. Hirschfeld 1894, 409; Munk 1:iii.

41. Cureton was known above all as a scholar of Syriac, but he also published Tanḥum's Judeo-Arabic commentary on Lamentations (Cureton 1843) as well as an edition and English translation of al-Shahrestāni's *Kitāb al-milal wa-al-nihal* (Cureton 1846), to which Munk often refers in his notes (see, e.g., Munk 1:207n1).

his disposal the following: two Leiden manuscripts, sent by Weyers, and MS Cureton, Royal Library Paris 237, Paris Suppl. 63—in addition to the Bodleian manuscripts. Moreover, he benefited from the joint assistance of his secretary (who would later become his biographer) Moïse Schwab, who dictated the proofs to him, and a young rabbinical student, Zadoc Kahn (1839–1905), who went on to become the founder of the Société des études juives and the Chief Rabbi of France.

Particularly valuable was the collaboration of Albert Cohn (b. Presburg 1814, d. Paris 1877). A scholar and philanthropist, Cohn had been the tutor of the Rothschild family and had taught in an honorary capacity at the Paris Rabbinical Seminary. In 1833 and 1834, he studied Arabic, Syriac, Persian, and Sanskrit at Vienna University with the professor for Protestant theology Johann Georg Wenrich (1787–1847); he then moved to Paris to study Arabic with Silvestre de Sacy. As a member of the Jewish Consistoire of France, Cohn undertook journeys to Palestine, Algeria, and Morocco, where he helped to establish educational and community institutions. A close friend of Munk's, he took on the revision of the Judeo-Arabic text. For this purpose and at Munk's behest, Cohn, while on a journey to Rome in 1838, visited the Vatican in order to copy the *Ma'amar ha-yihud*, attributed to Maimonides. Despite his blossoming friendship with the clergy, he was not authorized to copy it and, according to his biography, resorted to memorizing the text.<sup>42</sup>

### The Translation

In the title of this chapter, I describe Munk as “the second Ibn Tibbon.” The two translators, who toiled on French soil 600 years apart, worked in similarly pioneering conditions. Like Samuel Ibn Tibbon before him, Munk had few models to emulate or reference works on which to rely when preparing his translation. A limited number of Arabic philosophical texts had been published and translated into Latin at that point—one example is the *Epistola de Hai Ebn-Yokdhan*, which was edited by Edward Pococke (1671)—but none, as far as I am aware, had appeared in French, and there were certainly no specialized lexicons of philosophical terminology. Certain historical and geographical works had been translated into French, but the same could not be said of speculative works.

In his translation, Munk does not rely exclusively on Arabic manuscripts (some of which were copied centuries after Maimonides' lifetime) but in-

42. Loeb 1878, 13.

stead proposes textual improvements based on variant readings from Hebrew translations and commentaries. He systematically refers to the translations of both al-Ḥarizi and Ibn Tibbon and the readings that they reflect in an effort to restore and piece together a text that is as close to the original as possible.<sup>43</sup> He occasionally points out where the translators had misunderstood Maimonides.<sup>44</sup> He also refers to the wordings of the classical commentators on the *Guide*, such as Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera, Efodi (Profayt Duran), Joseph Ibn Kaspi, and Moses of Narbonne, as well as supracommentators and secondary sources such as Samuel Zarza's *Meqor hayyim* and Abarbanel's commentary on the Pentateuch. Interestingly, Munk quotes from the commentary of Moses of Salerno, which is unpublished to this day.<sup>45</sup> Munk was the very first scholar to apply the criteria of philology in its fullest sense (Arabic, Hebrew, Latin, and, to some extent, Greek) to a work of Jewish philosophy.

Had Munk produced only his elegant and precise translation, it would have been enough. (*Dayyenu!*) But he also supplemented his translation with notes that would prove invaluable for understanding the *Guide*. Often, in the body of the translation, Munk will offer a metaphorical or literary rendering of a phrase; he then supplies its literal meaning in the notes. In this essay we can only gesture toward the abundant textual and contextual clarifications that Munk grants his readers as he enables them to follow Maimonides' thought. Munk furnishes the kind of literary and historical information that a reader would need in order to comprehend the text; he makes a point of stating that not even the lengthiest of his notes have any superfluous digressions.<sup>46</sup> The notes were to be a sort of repository of Jewish theology and Arabic philosophy: Munk intended for readers of the planned *Prolegomena* to the *Guide* (which never materialized) to refer to them.<sup>47</sup>

43. It is relevant here to recall that Munk also composed the notes for vols. 2 and 3 of Schlosberg's edition of al-Ḥarizi's translation (Schlosberg 1851–79; vol. 2, 1876; vol. 3, 1879).

44. See, e.g., Munk 2:260n2, where he points out that both translators misconstrued the Islamic concept of *al-jāhiliyya*, "paganism." See below, n. 61.

45. Munk 2:233n2. For Moses of Salerno's commentary on the preface to the *Guide*, see De Souza 2014, 305–59, 484–504; for his commentary on the chapters on prophecy (II 32–48), see Binyamin 2005.

46. Munk 1:viii.

47. Munk gives an outline of the proposed companion volume in his preface (Munk 1:ii). It was to have contained a biography of Maimonides, a study of his times, his works, the existing manuscripts and editions, and an essay on the importance of the *Guide* as one of the "monuments of Arabic literature." Ivry (2004) elaborates on Munk's methodology in his commentary.

When Munk sets out to explain certain aspects of Maimonides' thought, he bases his analysis on biblical exegesis and Jewish theology (both Rabbanite and Karaite<sup>48</sup>) and Aristotelian philosophy—including that of its Jewish and Muslim adepts, such as Ibn Tibbon,<sup>49</sup> al-Fārābī, and Avicenna. Where possible, he identifies references to rabbinic and classical sources, which often include lengthy quotations from unpublished manuscripts. He quotes from the Greek originals or their commentators, especially Albertus Magnus, who had incorporated entire sections of the *Guide* into his works. Sometimes he resorts to the Hebrew translations of Arabic sources that were unavailable in the original in his time.<sup>50</sup> Interestingly, he quotes Adolf Jellinek's edition of Ibn Ṣaddīq's *Olam qaṭan*, which appeared in Leipzig in 1854, only two years before Munk published his work.<sup>51</sup>

In the preface to the first volume, our French translator confesses that three of Maimonides' references, including one to Alexander of Aphrodisias, escaped him.<sup>52</sup> When it came to everything else, he informs us, he relied solely on his memory of what he had read before he went blind. Munk's numerous cross-references stand as similar testaments to his extraordinary ability.

Munk supplemented the first volume with a list of variant readings from Ibn Tibbon's and al-Ḥarīzī's translations; he included an alphabetical subject index to both the text and the notes and a very useful list of the Arabic and Hebrew terms explained therein.

The final pages of volume 2 (1861) contain additions and corrections to volume 1. Of particular interest here are some extracts from Leibniz's notes (dating from 1672) on the Latin *Guide*.<sup>53</sup> Munk also adds a long note ex-

48. Notably, Aaron ben Eli's *Eṣ ḥayyim* (cf. Munk 1:238n1, 286–87n3, 448n4; 3:106n1, 123n1, 129n4), Yefet ben 'Ali (1:286–87n3), and Joseph al-Baṣīr (3:129n4).

49. Munk includes several of Ibn Tibbon's unpublished glosses that he culled from MS Sorbonne no. 108, which were recently studied by Carlos Fraenkel (2007). As Munk points out (1:102–3n2), this manuscript once belonged to Azariah de Rossi and carries his marginal notes. For examples of Ibn Tibbon's glosses, see Munk 1:102–3n2, 330n5, 425n3.

50. For example, in a note to *Guide* I 53 (Munk 1:208n3), he quotes a medieval Hebrew translation of al-Ghazālī's *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*. His quotations also served to demonstrate that it was the Jews, in large part, who had preserved the corpus of Islamic philosophy.

51. Munk 1:354n1. Similarly, in order to substantiate Maimonides' citation of al-Fārābī's *Kūtib al-'aql* in *Guide* II 18, he quotes (2:139n1) M. Rosenstein's dissertation (1858) on the medieval Hebrew translation.

52. Munk 1:viii.

53. In 1:186n3, Munk wonders whether Leibniz's concept of monads was inspired by Maimonides.

plaining why he chose to translate *al-ḥā'irīn*, which figures in Maimonides' title, as "égarés" rather than as "perplexes."

Munk's meticulousness left little room for improvement. Nonetheless, the critical remarks and variants that Hartwig Hirschfeld offered in his review article were an additional contribution to the textual basis of the *Arabic Guide*.<sup>54</sup>

An attempt at evaluating Munk's consummate skill as a translator would far exceed the limits of the present study. We shall content ourselves with a few chosen examples.

### Islamic Expressions

Munk's mastery of Islamic thought and culture enabled him to identify in Maimonides' lexicon a certain number of terms that have a distinctly Islamic taste. Some had been misconstrued and incorrectly rendered by the classical translators, whose knowledge of Islamic culture Munk considered deficient. Here are a few examples.

When describing God's enthronement in *Guide* I 28, Maimonides uses the verb *istawā*. Munk, in a note, draws attention to the fact that this term is a Qur'anic locution (1:95n1; cf. Q 7:54). He observes that the verb had already been noticed by Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera in his *Moreh ha-moreh*, who quoted the relevant verse from the Qur'an.<sup>55</sup>

In *Guide* I 51 (1:188–89n5), Munk correctly points out that the Arabic word *dark* signifies "bottom," "depth," or "infinite degree," and that it also belongs to the Qur'anic lexicon (cf. Q 4:145).<sup>56</sup> Ibn Falaquera had already remarked that both translators had misunderstood its purport: Ibn Tibbon had taken it to be Hebrew and translated it as *derekh* (path), whereas al-Ḥarizi understood it to be a synonym of *idrāk* (apprehension) and translated it as *haśśagah*.<sup>57</sup> Pines (114) uses the word "consequence" in his translation; Friedländer (1:177) uses the term "theory." The same misunderstanding occurs once more when the word is used in *Guide* III 8 (3:52 and n4). Again, the medieval translators understand it as *haśśagah*.<sup>58</sup> Friedländer (3:29)

54. Hirschfeld 1895. In particular, he made use of Codex Loewe (now Sassoon 1240), which had belonged to Haim Farhi, the Jewish minister whom Ibrahim Pasha put to death.

55. See Falaquera 2001, 345.

56. Munk's remarks parallel those of Scheyer in vol. 1 of Schlosberg's edition (al-Ḥarizi 1:49n5), which may indicate that he had benefited from Scheyer's notes.

57. Falaquera 2001, 347–48.

58. Falaquera 2001, 348.

translates the phrase in which it appears as “reach the lower creatures,” and Pines (435) gives “descending to the lowest degree.”

In *Guide* II 4 (2:60 and n3), Munk recognizes the Qur’anic phrase *al-malā’ika al-muqarrabūn*<sup>59</sup> and translates it as “[Les Intelligences sont donc] les anges qui approchent (de Dieu).” Friedländer (2:33) translates it as “[the Intelligences . . . , which are identical with] the angels, and act by direct influence.”<sup>60</sup> Pines (258) offers as a translation “[For the intellects are] the angels, which are near to Him.”

In Maimonides’ discussion of the categories of prophecy in *Guide* II 32, the first opinion he presents is that of the *jumhūr al-jāhiliyya*. As Munk points out in a note (2:260n2), both Ibn Tibbon and al-Ḥarizi translate the word as “the multitude of fools,” although they use different Hebrew terms for it. Ibn Tibbon translates *hamon ha-peta’im* (the multitude of simpletons), whereas al-Ḥarizi gives *ha-sekhalim* (the ignorant). Munk (2:260) translates it as “les peuples païens” (pagan peoples)—a nod to the Muslim thinkers for whom the term referred to humankind’s state of “ignorance” before the Muḥammadan revelation. As for Friedländer, he flatly translates “ignorant people” (2:161), whereas Pines follows Munk and gives “the multitude of those among the Pagans” (360). Munk corrects the medieval translations on this point again in *Guide* III 39 (3:305 and n1), translating *akhlāq al-jāhiliyya* as “mœurs des païens.” Friedländer keeps to “the ways of the fools,” adding in a note that others translate the term as “heathens” (3:188 and n1), while Pines has it both ways, for he proposes “moral qualities pertaining to the Pagans,” but adds in a note: “Or: ignorant” (554 and n39).<sup>61</sup>

To his translation in *Guide* III 41 (3:327–28 and n3)—“selon sa doctrine personnelle”—Munk appends a note explaining the meaning of the term *ijtihād* in Islamic judicial writings. His explanation is adopted in the translations of both Friedländer (“guided by his own reasoning,” 3:202) and Pines (“in accordance with a doctrine established by his own efforts,” 564).

In a note on *Guide* III 45 (3:349n1), Munk explains Maimonides’ use of the term *qibla* to designate Mount Moriah. It was an Islamic technical term, initially indicating the direction of Jerusalem to which Muslims would

59. Cf. Q 4:170. See also Munk’s additional note on p. 368, where he shows that Sa’adya already uses this expression.

60. Friedländer adds a rather significant note to his unusual translation: “Lit., ‘that approach,’ viz., the spheres; that is, which influence them. Actual approach cannot be meant here, as the relations of space do not apply to the Intelligences.”

61. In his notes to al-Ḥarizi’s version, Munk also comments on the translation of *jumhūr al-jāhiliyya* in II 32 (al-Ḥarizi 2:52n2).

turn in prayer, but which later came to refer to the direction of Mecca.<sup>62</sup> Ibn Tibbon dodges the issue and gives simply *ha-ma'arav* (the West), whereas al-Ḥarizi paraphrases the term as *we-sam kawwanat tefillato mugbelet li-fe'at ma'arav* (he directed the intention of his prayer to the West). Friedländer writes, “He selected the west of the mount as the place toward which he turned during his prayers,” and supplies the following note: “Kiblah in the original. Ibn Tibbon has not translated this word” (3:217 and n3). Pines uses similar terminology in his translation: he “determined and defined the direction toward which one would turn in prayer, fixing it exactly in the West” (575).

### Sufi Terms

A certain number of words belonging to the technical terminology of Sufism are part of Maimonides' Islamic vocabulary. In connection with the theme of prophetic experience that comes up in his translation of *Guide* I 46, Munk (1:161n1) provides a long note on his understanding of the term *maqām*, which Ibn Tibbon had rendered as *ma'amar* (statement).<sup>63</sup> Munk believes that Ibn Tibbon had misread the Arabic word *maqām* as *maqāl* (statement) and proposes that the Arabic word parallels the Hebrew *ma'amad* (al-Ḥarizi's choice of translation), which refers to the traditional designation of the Sinaitic revelation as *ma'amad har sinai*. Friedländer (“although the passage also contains the description of a prophetic vision,” 1:155 and n3),<sup>64</sup> Pines (“although this station also constituted a *vision of prophecy*,” 100), and Qafih (*'im heyot oto ha-ma'amad gam mar'eh nevu'ah*, 1:102 and n38) all adopt this interpretation. However, “standing before Sinai” is generally called *wuqūf* in Judeo-Arabic texts; the term parallels the designation for the halt on Mount 'Arafah that is performed during the ceremonies of the Islamic pilgrimage.<sup>65</sup> In my opinion, Maimonides is using the term *maqām* in its technical sense of a “spiritual station” or “state.” Indeed, it is in this sense that Maimonides' younger contemporary and fellow countryman Rabbi Abraham he-Ḥasid (d. 1224) employs the term when

62. See also al-Ḥarizi 3:68n1. However, the term—which may reflect pre-Islamic Jewish or Christian Arabic usage—had already been appropriated by Jews during the Geonic period to refer to Jerusalem; see Blau 1981, 160; 2006, 526.

63. Scheyer also comments on this word; see al-Ḥarizi 1:43n5.

64. However, he takes issue with Munk's interpretation and suggests that *maqām* can mean “passage,” which he suggests is Ibn Tibbon's approach.

65. See Fenton 1981, 65n50. See also Septimus 2007, 179–81.

he uses it to reference the spiritual elevation of the Children of Israel at the revelation at Sinai.<sup>66</sup>

This is not Maimonides' only use of Sufi terminology. *Guide* II 36 features the expression *al-kāmil al-mutawahhid*, which Munk (2:286) translates as "l'homme parfait et solitaire," explaining in a note that the author intended to evoke the "sage who isolates himself from human society in order not to be disturbed by their vices in his meditation." He is followed by both Friedländer ("the perfect and distinguished man," 2:176) and Pines ("the perfect man who lives in solitude," 372). Munk discusses the occurrence of these terms in the philosophical tradition and refers to Ibn Bājja's *Governance of the Solitary* (*Tadbīr al-mutawahhid*). While it is true that these terms can have a philosophical connotation, it is also true that both "the perfect man" (*al-insān al-kāmil*) and the "solitary devotee" (*al-mutawahhid*) are key concepts in Sufi doctrine.<sup>67</sup>

Furthermore, in *Guide* II 39, in connection with prophecy, while discussing certain forms of religious behavior that he considers excessive, Maimonides mentions alongside monasticism (*ruhbāniyya*) the practice of *siyāha*, which Munk translates as *la vie de pèlerin*, "the life of a pilgrim" (2:304 and n2; cf. Friedländer 2:187: "the service of a hermit or pilgrim"; Pines 380: "monastic life and pilgrimage.") In a note, Munk simply refers to Ibn Tibbon's (nonsensical) rendition of *siyāha* as *ṭīlṭul le-'avodah*. However, the word could refer to the devotional practice of "wandering," a spiritual discipline that was widespread among Sufis of Maimonides' time. Moreover, Maimonides' son Abraham is well aware of this practice; he claims that the Hebrew patriarchs themselves engaged in it.<sup>68</sup>

Another Sufi idea that Munk draws out in his translation is that of the "veil"—the material obstacles that prevent humans from witnessing the

66. Fenton 1981, 61, line 8: *u-ma'amad har sinai huwa al-maqām al-kashfī*. See also lines 5, 15, 16; 62, lines 13, 1, 10; 63, line 5. The term is also to be found with this sense concerning the Sinaitic revelation in Abraham Maimonides' *Commentary on Genesis and Exodus*; see A. Maimonides 1958, 315, line 13; 325, lines 15 and (especially) 20, where it is synonymous with *al-wuṣūl al-nabawī* (the prophetic attainment); and cf. 379, line 20: *maqām ibrahīmī* (Abrahamic station). Cf. also 'O. Maimonides 1981, fol. 3a, line 10 (Arabic text).

67. On the perfect man, see Nicholson 1921, 77–142; Fenton 1987, 188n166. Maimonides also employs this expression in *Guide* III 51 (Munk 3:444: *al-shakḥ al-kāmil* [*al-idrāk*]; 445: *al-kāmil*), a chapter absolutely replete with Sufi terms, such as *al-ḥaqā'iq al-khaṣṣa*, *al-qāṣidīn*, *al-yaqīn*, *al-maqām al-muqaddas*, *al-'ibāda al-khāṣṣa bi-al-mudrikīn li-al-ḥaqā'iq*, *dhikr Allah*, *al-inqītā'*, *al-wuṣṣla*, *ifrāt al-maḥabba*, *infirād*, *'ishq*, *khalwa*, *riyāda*, *sarīr*, *al-itihād bi-Allah*, *inkishāf asrār al-ilāhiyya*. On solitary devotion, see Fenton 2013.

68. See A. Maimonides 1927–38, 2:388; Fenton 1987, 63.



Divine directly.<sup>69</sup> In *Guide* III 9 (3:56), Maimonides employs the word *ḥijāb*, translated into French as “voile” (veil); his word choice evokes the rich imagery of the veil in Sufism that he believes was behind Maimonides’ own use of the term. Again, Friedländer and Pines show similar understandings of the image: Friedländer renders the word as “a large screen” (3:31); Pines calls it “a strong veil” (436).

### Two Flaws in Munk’s Translation

By way of an interlude, I would like to point out two instances in which Munk’s translation may be flawed. In *Guide* I 74, when discussing al-Fārābī’s refutation of the Mu‘tazilite arguments for the creation of the universe, Munk (1:438 and n2) translates the adjective *al-mu‘arra min al-ta’aṣṣub* as “un examen impartial” (an impartial examination), explaining in a note that *ta’aṣṣub* means “montrer de la partialité” (to show partiality). Friedlander (1:354) follows Munk’s lead by offering the adverb “dispassionately.” Bearing in mind the ethnic tensions that the *‘aṣabiyya* illustrated in al-Andalus, these translations seem a bit understated. Pines, I think, comes closest to the (truly forceful) meaning of the word when he renders it as “without partisanship” (222), which Munk could have more strongly conveyed with an expression such as “par préjugé idéologique.”<sup>70</sup>

The second instance appears in *Guide* III 15 (3:105 and n4), when Munk translates the term *al-a’yān* as “la transformation des *principaux*” — a rather incongruous choice in view of its established philosophical usage. He points out in a note that Silvestre de Sacy translates this word as “substances,” which is indeed its meaning in the earliest Arabic philosophical texts, and it is the sense of the word that Pines (“transmutation of substances,” 459) and perhaps Friedländer (“elementary components,” 3:60) adopted.

Lastly, I would like to point out that a recent discovery has confirmed one of Munk’s intuitions. While arguing against the opinions of the philosophers in his discussion of divine knowledge in *Guide* III 16, Maimonides

69. This notion, to which Munk refers in notes to *Guide* III 9 and 51 (Munk 3:56n3, 450n2), is much developed by al-Ḥujwīrī in his *Kashf al-maḥjūb* (al-Ḥujwīrī 1911, 325ff.). See also Chelhod 2012.

70. See also *Guide* II 22 (2:178 and n5), where Munk translates *muta’assibīn* as “passionate men.” He notes that al-Ḥarizi translates as *ha-meqann’im* (zealous men), whereas Falaquera offers *ha-mitgabberim* (violent individuals). For reference, in *Guide* II 22, Ibn Tibbon gives a periphrasis for this word: *ha-‘ozrim le-ohavehem*, “who aid their supporters.” Cf. Friedlander 2:107: “partial critics”; Pines 319: “men imbued with a partisan spirit.”

quotes from a work by Alexander of Aphrodisias titled *Fī al-tadbīr* (On Governance), which the French translator renders as *Du Régime* (Munk 3:111). At the time of Munk's translation, Alexander's treatise was unknown; nevertheless, Munk treats it as an authentic work. Pines similarly assumes that it is Alexander's *Treatise on Providence* to which Maimonides refers.<sup>71</sup> The Arabic translation, of which there are two versions, has only recently been discovered and edited.<sup>72</sup> It can now be shown that Maimonides is indeed quoting Alexander's text, which he uses with great freedom, adapting it to the needs of his theological and philosophical arguments. Significantly, Maimonides calls the work *tadbīr*—the same name that the circle of al-Kindī gave it. (Maimonides ultimately seems to have been familiar with both translations.)<sup>73</sup>

### The Aftermath

When the first volume of Munk's work appeared, Samuel David Luzzatto addressed a Hebrew poem ("Hommage poétique à M. Munk") to him. It began:

They used to say in olden times: "a blind man is as good as dead."  
 You, however, have demolished this proverb.  
 Who is more alive than you?! Who so vital, even now?!  
 Even though sun and fiery spark withhold from you their light.<sup>74</sup>

The monumental three-volume edition and annotated French translation of the Arabic original of Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed* (Paris, 1856–66) became, of course, the crowning achievement of Munk's career. For his work that had cost him his eyesight he was awarded the Legion d'honneur and, in 1864, he succeeded Renan to the prestigious chair of Hebrew at the Collège de France.

71. Pines 1963, lxv.

72. Alexander of Aphrodisias 1999.

73. Alexander of Aphrodisias 1999, 90–91.

74. Luzzatto 1856, 707:

*'iwwer ke-met hu', qadmonim millelu,  
 akh ha-mashal ha-zeh attah hishbatta.  
 mi hay kamokha, mi gibbor gam attah  
 ki shemesh u-sheviv esh lakh lo' yahellu.*

See also Luzzatto 1879, 318. On the relationship between Munk and Luzzatto, see Adorasio 2017b.

This appointment was to make an enormous impression on Jewish intellectuals in Prussia and eastern Europe; the whole European Jewish scholarly world held its breath as the man who had raised Jewish studies to the status of an academic discipline gave the inaugural lecture of his Hebrew course at the Collège de France.<sup>75</sup>

Friedländer hailed Munk as the “regenerator of the Guide.”<sup>76</sup> Nothing could be more true. The scholarly standard of his edition completely changed the face of research on Maimonides and of Jewish studies in general. European Jewish theologians gave his edition an enthusiastic welcome, and several positive reviews were published in German scholarly journals. In a lecture in Vienna in 1865, Adolf Jellinek praised Munk’s edition as the “philosophical Bible of the Jews.”<sup>77</sup>

The nineteenth century witnessed the production of several translations of the *Guide* into various European languages, almost all of which, apart from Simon Scheyer (1838) and Raphael Fürstenthal (1839), were indebted to Munk.<sup>78</sup> But despite Munk’s influence, none of these other translations rival the original by Munk. They are either translations of his version or highly dependent upon it.

A truly systematic comparison of Shlomo Pines’s translation and that of Munk lies beyond the scope of this chapter, but as I have attempted to demonstrate in the pages of this essay, the two men hold more in common than merely their first names: Munk and Pines frequently follow similar paths in their translation and interpretation. Nonetheless, as Alfred Ivry has already pointed out, Pines’s text, as a post-Enlightenment work, does not carry the apologetic dimension of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. Whereas Munk felt obliged to clarify Maimonides’ text both philosophically and philologically to demonstrate how it encapsulates the very spirit of enlightenment, Pines had no such agenda, and his annotations and textual observations are as minimal as possible.<sup>79</sup>

A new edition of Munk’s Arabic text was published (without the French translation and notes) by Issachar Joel in Jerusalem in 1930/31. Variants were placed at the back of his edition, which included the publication of Maimonides’ autograph pages, which had been discovered by Hirschfeld in

75. See Munk 1865 for the published version of the inaugural address.

76. Friedländer 3:xvii.

77. Jellinek 1865, 20.

78. For details, see the introduction to this volume.

79. Ivry 2004, 488.

the Cairo Genizah.<sup>80</sup> The volume also includes a brief index of biblical verses and technical terms.

The Paris publisher Maisonneuve then reissued the French translation and notes (but not the Arabic text) in 1960; this version was published again in 1970 and yet again in 1981.<sup>81</sup>

In 1979, the French publisher Verdier brought out a one-volume edition of Munk's translation—but pruned of its critical apparatus and copious notes. In Verdier's revised version of this edition, published in 2012, many of Munk's original notes are restored.<sup>82</sup>

Before turning to the polemical overtones of Munk's work, it seems fitting to point out the strange bond that links the destiny of the *Guide* to France. It seems somewhat uncanny that four of its major translations were composed and (in part) published on French soil: the Hebrew of Ibn Tibbon, the Hebrew of al-Ḥarizi, the Latin of Agostino Giustiniani, and the French of Salomon Munk.

### Ideological Overtones

Having discussed the circumstances surrounding the accomplishment of Munk's French translation of the *Guide*, I would like to conclude by examining the ideological reasons that may have persuaded him to pursue this monumental task. We recall that Munk's earlier work focused on Sa'adya Gaon. Why, then, did Munk choose to translate the *Guide*—and not Sa'adya's *Book of Beliefs and Opinions*, Judah Halevi's *Kuzari*, or any other major work of Jewish thought? Was Munk's scholarship animated by purely intellectual concerns, or could there have been some ideological motivation behind his enormous efforts?

These questions demand that we take into account the nineteenth-century struggle of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in Germany to establish Jewish studies as an academic discipline and also to harmonize Judaism with the ideals of modern science.<sup>83</sup> This struggle represented an openly

80. Hirschfeld 1903.

81. Munk 1960. A reprint of the Paris original was also made by Otto Zeller (Osnabrück, 1964).

82. Munk 1979.

83. My reflections on Munk's place in the intellectual debates of the nineteenth century owe much to Simon-Nahum 1991 and Adorasio 2012. See also Adorasio's new book, *Dialectic of Separation: Judaism and Philosophy in the Work of Salomon Munk* (2017a), and Fenton 2018.

polemical reaction to the vision of Judaism that liberal Protestant theology and religious studies were propounding at the time.<sup>84</sup> Christian theologians had reproached Judaism for being imprisoned within its particularistic cult—one that had been rendered obsolete by the universalism of Christian teaching. In their eyes, Jewish ritual was an archaic practice that stood to be eliminated by conversion or assimilation. Jewish thinkers countered this criticism by integrating Judaism's particularism into a universal system of principles and beliefs. This development became a centerpiece in the debate with Christianity: it not only demonstrated that there was an eminently universal dimension in Jewish thought, but also put Judaism's capacity for internal evolution on display. For Munk, the role of the *Guide* in this debate is fundamental, for only the *Guide*—and not, say, Sa'adya's *Book of Beliefs and Opinions*—would have granted its translator an opportunity to respond fully to Christian allegations.

According to the German historian of philosophy Heinrich Ritter (1791–1869), the Jews had not produced a single original philosopher throughout their history; he therefore omitted them from his Hegelian twelve-volume *Geschichte der Philosophie* (Hamburg, 1829–53). Munk's translation of the *Guide* into a European language (and his abundant notes on the work) testified to Maimonides' significant influence on Christian theology in general and on Albertus Magnus in particular.<sup>85</sup> Munk used the tools of philology (and, it should be said, the sweeping force of Maimonides' thought) to challenge the hegemony of Christian theology.

Underlying this observation is the understanding that under the sway of Islam, Judaism formulated its doctrine in rational terms long before the Christian West began to do the same. Munk's edition of the *Guide* is a demonstration of the ancient faith's capacity to adapt to the contingencies of a contemporary cultural context. As Munk argues,

It is commonly held that the Muslim philosophers of Spain were the philosophical mentors of the Jews of that land. This opinion is exact in relation to Maimonides and his successors in Christian Spain. However, my study of Ibn Gabirol, or Avicbron, has convinced me that the Jews

84. This struggle is described in Wiese 1999.

85. His identification of Avicbron, who was also most influential on Albertus Magnus, with the Jewish philosopher Solomon Ibn Gabrirol had the same effect.

of Spain had much success before this discipline had found a worthy representative among the Muslims.<sup>86</sup>

Later, the spread of peripatetic philosophy among the Jews predisposed them to become, once again, the intermediaries between the Arabs and Christian Europe and the transmitters of Greek philosophy to the West.<sup>87</sup>

In addition, by drawing his reader's attention to the fact that the works of Averroes and other Arab philosophers—as well as the majority of scientific works that had been written in Arabic—had been translated into Latin by Jews, Munk legitimized the study of Hebrew sources, arguing that they were highly valuable to the understanding of Arabic philosophy. By reconstructing a more faithful (and, hence, a more complex) image of medieval Arabic philosophy, Munk made Hebrew philology a discipline that was of fundamental importance to the study of Islamic thought, and, by the same token, to the Christian Scholasticism that Islamic thought had influenced. Here we see Munk invite his Christian counterparts to deepen their knowledge of Jewish philosophical works so that they might broaden their understanding of the development of Christian theology. Indeed, in the concluding statement of his historical sketch of Jewish philosophy in the *Mélanges*, Munk overturns the Christian, Eurocentric historical perspective by flaunting the fundamental role of Judaism and Islam's combined efforts to civilize Europe:

In effect, as a nation or a religious society, the Jews only played a secondary role in the history of philosophy. But this was not their mission. However, they share undeniably with the Arabs the merit of having preserved and propagated the philosophical discipline throughout the centuries of barbarity, and of having exercised, for a certain period, a civilizing influence on the European world.<sup>88</sup>

86. Munk 1857–59, 480–81: “On croit communément que les philosophes musulmans d’Espagne furent les maîtres en philosophie des Juifs de ce pays. Cette opinion est exacte pour ce qui concerne Maïmonide et ses successeurs de l’Espagne chrétienne; mais on a pu se convaincre, par notre travail sur Ibn-Gebirol ou Avicbron, que les Juifs d’Espagne cultivèrent la philosophie avec beaucoup de succès avant que cette science eût trouvé parmi les Musulmans un digne représentant.”

87. Munk 1857–59, 487.

88. Munk 1957–59, 511: “En somme, les Juifs, comme nation ou comme société religieuse, ne jouent dans l’histoire de la philosophie qu’un rôle secondaire; ce ne fut pas là leur mission. Cependant ils partagent incontestablement avec les Arabes le mérite d’avoir

Fascinated by Maimonides' role as the founder of a rational theology (who then reestablished traditional laws on the grounds of that rational teleology), Munk reads in the *Guide* the expression of his own ideal of conciliation between reason and religion.<sup>89</sup> He focuses in on Judaism's universal dimension and uses Maimonides' discussion of sacrifices to argue in its favor. The ritual particularism inherent in Mosaic worship is not a constitutive element, he explains, but is instead determined by the circumstances of its promulgation. According to Maimonides—on the basis of his wide readings in ancient Arabic literature—sacrifices, as well as certain other commandments, were originally polytheistic practices. These practices were nonetheless tolerated and codified by Hebrew legislation, since it would have been impossible to eliminate them at the time. However, they were imbued with new meanings that would align with the monotheistic message. In the Sinaitic legislation, ceremonial laws therefore occupy a position that is secondary to their underlying universal significance. The history of the Jewish people thus displays a progressive conquest of spirituality.

### Conclusion

My final words address Munk's inclusion of Muslim thinkers in his notes to the *Guide*. Disengaged from the anti-Islamic prejudices of contemporary German theologians, Munk displays a generally positive attitude toward Islamic civilization. In his footnotes, he highlights Islam's catalyzing influence on Jewish thought and underlines the combined contribution of Islamic and Jewish philosophy to Christian Scholasticism. Whereas his Protestant contemporaries denigrated Islam on account of its supposed cultural inferiority, Munk emphasizes its civilizing effect on the West while pointing out the intermediary role that Jews played in its transmission. At the same time, however, Munk appears not to have adhered to some idealized vision of a Judeo-Islamic golden age in al-Andalus: he was the first to write at length about the Almohad persecutions at the time of Maimonides.<sup>90</sup> Indeed, he turned to this topic shortly after his visit to the East at the time of the Damascus Affair, and one wonders whether his encounter with Islamic society

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conservé et propagé la science philosophique pendant les siècles de barbarie, et d'avoir exercé, pendant un certain temps, une influence civilisatrice sur le monde européen."

89. Munk 1:i. Cf. Ivry 2004, 482–83.

90. Munk 1842.

afforded him a more sober vision of the reality of Jewish existence under Islam. His interest in Judeo-Arabic studies, on the other hand, was driven by his preoccupation with the “interdisciplinary” philosophical stances of its authors.

Munk’s promotion of medieval Judaism legitimized the process of political and cultural emancipation. The importance of Hebrew sources for the study of Western Scholasticism justified, in his time, the Jewish presence in European universities and simultaneously transformed the area of Jewish studies into an academic discipline. Heinrich Graetz’s comprehensive account of Munk’s life and scholarship stands as a poignant (and contemporary) evaluation:

The glory of Jewish history during the Middle Ages developed during the rule of the Arabs in the East and West; its dawn began with Saadiah, and it reached its zenith with Maimuni. Munk banished the obscurity in which this epoch had been enwrapped, and illuminated it with the full light of his profound studies. The innermost thoughts of Maimuni, the awakener of intellects, to whom the Jewish race is chiefly indebted for its renaissance in modern days, were completely revealed only through the researches of Munk. He renewed in its original form what had been spoilt by continual emendations. The proud boast of Christendom, that even in the obscurity of the Middle Ages it had disseminated the bright germs of thought, Munk controverted by incontestable proofs that without Arabic and Jewish philosophy, the darkness of the Middle Ages would have been impenetrable, and that the so-called Christian schools of philosophy of that period were fed upon the crumbs which fell from the lips of Jewish thinkers. Munk so conclusively established this historical fact that it is scarcely possible to speak of a Christian philosophy. . . . Munk fully recognized that the self-respect of the Jews would be confirmed only by self-knowledge, reached along the paths of science.<sup>91</sup>

Although it is doubtful that Munk’s foremost intention was to engage in anti-Christian apologetics, Graetz’s words reflect an overall trend that emerged in German-Jewish scholarship and heralded a powerful Maimonidean renaissance in the second half of the nineteenth century—a renaissance that was accompanied by the rediscovery of medieval Jewish thought.

91. Graetz 1870, 547–48; 1895, 665–66.





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## 6

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### Michael Friedländer's Pioneering English Translation of the *Guide*

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WARREN ZEV HARVEY

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In the author's note following her recent celebrated novel *A Guide for the Perplexed*, Dara Horn writes: "The most accurate English translation available [of Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*] is that of Shlomo Pines, and Pines's edition is the indispensable entry point for English-language readers embarking on a philosophical study of this work. Quotations from the *Guide* that appear in this novel are drawn . . . from an older translation by M[ichael] Friedländer due to that translation's greater accessibility."<sup>1</sup> According to this award-winning novelist's judgment, Pines's 1963 translation of the *Guide* is more "accurate," while Friedländer's 1885 translation is more "accessible." In other words, Pines's translation is more suitable for study in a philosophy seminar, but Friedländer's is more suitable for quotation in a popular novel. Reading Horn's note, I recalled a conversation I had more than three decades ago with the distinguished Israeli Bible scholar Nehama Leibowitz, who asked whether the greater accuracy of Pines's translation really and truly justified replacing Friedländer's old translation, which she thought read more smoothly.

1. Horn 2013, 338–39.

Literary individuals, like Horn and Leibowitz, appreciate Friedländer's felicitous translation of Maimonides' *Guide*. However, it would be an exaggeration to see the relationship of Friedländer's English translation to Pines's as similar to that of al-Ḥarizi's Hebrew translation to Ibn Tibbon's. Friedländer was much less a poet than al-Ḥarizi; and Pines was much less a literalist than Ibn Tibbon. Friedländer and Pines had one thing in common: an extraordinary knowledge of classical, Oriental, and European languages. Neither spoke English as a native language.<sup>2</sup>

Michael Friedländer, the author of the first English translation of the *Guide*, was born in Jutrosin, Prussia, in 1833. In 1850, he moved to Berlin, then the capital of Prussia, and studied Talmud under Rabbis Jacob Joseph Oettinger (1780–1860) and Elhanan Rosenstein (1796–1869), and classics, Oriental languages, and mathematics at the University of Berlin.<sup>3</sup> He received his doctorate from the University of Halle in 1862. His dissertation, "The Ancient Persian Kings" ("De veteribus Persarum regibus"), was a study of the history of the ancient Persian kings, based on classical Greek sources, like Herodotus, which have the advantage of chronological proximity, and medieval Arabic sources, like Abū al-Faraj al-İṣfahānī, Ḥamza al-İṣfahānī, and Abū al-Fidā', which have the advantage of geographical proximity.<sup>4</sup> In 1865 he was invited to London to assume the position of principal of Jews' College, which he held until his retirement in 1907. He died in London in 1910. Among his many works are a commentary on the Song of Songs, written in German (1867); a critical edition and English translation of Abraham Ibn Ezra's *Commentary on Isaiah* (1873); *Essays on Ibn Ezra* (1877); *Spinoza: His Life and Philosophy* (1888); and *The Jewish Religion*

2. In references to the *Guide*, I will cite the English translations by Friedländer (1881–85; abridged edition, 1904) and Pines (1963); the Arabic text by Munk and Joel (1930/31); the medieval Hebrew translations by Ibn Tibbon (1981), al-Ḥarizi (1851–79), and Falaquera (2001); the modern Hebrew translations by Qafih (1972) and Schwarz (2002); and the French translation by Munk (1856–66).

3. It is remarkable that Salomon Munk, the author of the French translation of the *Guide* (1856–66), had also studied with Rabbi Oettinger. Often Oettinger is caricatured as being a narrow-minded traditionalist and an enemy of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. He is famously quoted as saying: "If you want to know what kind of snuff Rashi used, ask Zunz; if you want to understand what Rashi wrote, ask me." Nonetheless, two of his leading students studied Oriental languages at European universities and translated the *Guide*. On Munk's translation, see Paul Fenton's contribution to this volume.

4. See Friedländer 1862, 1, on the methodological point about chronological and geographical proximities.

(1891). His annotated translation of Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed* was completed in 1885.<sup>5</sup>

The English translation of the *Guide* was initiated by the short-lived Hebrew Literature Society, London. Friedländer was not the original translator. The introduction to the *Guide*, part I, was translated by Hermann Gollancz (1852–1930), and *Guide*, part I, chapters 1–25, was translated by Joseph Abrahams (1855–1938). Friedländer assumed responsibility for the translation beginning with *Guide* I 26. Part I of the *Guide* was published in 1881. Parts II and III appeared in 1885.<sup>6</sup> The translation has been reprinted many times and is still in print.

Friedländer not only wrote copious and helpful notes to his translation, but also provided historical and analytical discussions. In his introduction to part I, he presents a biography of Maimonides, along with a long excursus on his alleged early conversion to Islam, and a detailed and astute survey of the contents of the *Guide*. In his introduction to part III, he discusses the Arabic text of the *Guide*; its Hebrew, Latin, and other translations; its commentaries; and the controversies concerning it. These introductions reflect impressive erudition and keen analytic ability.

A caveat is required here. In 1904, Friedländer published what he frankly called a “cheap edition” of his translation, designed “to bring the work of Maimonides within the reach of all students of Theology and Jewish Literature.”<sup>7</sup> In this popular edition, Friedländer omitted his learned notes, helpful parenthetical references to Hebrew words and phrases, and also other materials, such as the excursus on Maimonides' alleged conversion to Islam. He also changed the name of the book from the more correct “The *Guide of the Perplexed*” to the more accessible “The *Guide for the Perplexed*.” It is this “cheap edition” of Friedländer's translation that is currently in print, and the more valuable early annotated editions can be found today only in libraries and bookstores dealing in rare books. This said, it should also be noted that the 1904 edition contains some consequential corrections in the translation; for example, the phrase *jāhil min jumhūr al-rabbānīn* (*Guide* I, intro.) is translated as “an ill-informed *Theologian*,” not “an ill-informed *rabbi*”;<sup>8</sup> the phrase *ahl al-lugha* (*Guide* I 8) is translated as “authors,” not

5. Theodor H. Gaster, “Biographical Sketch,” in Friedländer 1946, i–viii.

6. Friedländer 1:iv, 2:v–vi.

7. Friedländer 1904, v.

8. Friedländer 1:13; 1904, 5; Munk-Joel 5, line 27. Ibn Tibbon: *sakhal me-hamon ha-rabbanim*; al-Ḥarizi: *ish kesil me-hamone ha-rabbanim*; Munk 1:15: “un ignorant du vulgaire

“orators”;<sup>9</sup> and the phrase *al-ma‘qūlāt al-uwal* (*Guide* I 34) is translated as “common sense,” not “innate ideas.”<sup>10</sup>

Preparing his abridged version of the *Guide* in 1904, almost four decades after having assumed the principalship of Jews’ College, Friedländer may have come to realize that his British readers, unlike German readers, were not interested in lengthy scholarly annotations. Indeed, it is likely that Friedländer had learned this lesson much earlier. Part I of his *Guide*, completed in 1881, contains many notes on the precise meanings of Arabic words and phrases, while parts II–III, completed in 1885, contain many fewer such notes. Indeed, the difference between part I and parts II–III is obvious at a glance, even to one who knows no Arabic, Hebrew, or English: every single page of part I is adorned with ample annotations featuring Arabic and Hebrew quotations printed in Hebrew letters and occasionally in Arabic letters; not one page of parts II or III bears quotations in Hebrew or Arabic letters. After the publication of part I, Friedländer may have been impressed that few British readers appreciated his profuse notes on Arabic terminology, and those few could probably read French and consult the notes to Salomon Munk’s 1856–66 Arabic text and French translation. It is also possible that the Hebrew Literature Society, which was in the process of going out of business, no longer had the resources for Hebrew or Arabic fonts.

Friedländer had supreme respect for Munk’s text and translation. He refers to Munk reverently as “the regenerator of the *Guide*.”<sup>11</sup> Regarding Munk’s text and apparatus, Friedländer comments: “In [Munk’s] notes . . . the various readings of the different MSS. are discussed with such completeness that the student . . . is spared the trouble of consulting the MSS., and he will find little to add by consulting those MSS. which were not yet known

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des rabbins”; Pines 10: “an ignoramus among the multitude of Rabbanites.” The Arabic *rabbānī* may mean either “divine” or “rabbinical.” Friedländer’s (or Gollancz’s) original translation was superior to the corrected one. Cf. Qur’an 3:79.

9. Friedländer 1:51; 1904, 20; Munk-Joel 22, line 17. Ibn Tibbon: *ba’ale ha-lashon*; al-Ḥarizi: *ba’ale ha-lashon*; Munk 1:52: “on en fait dans notre langue”; Pines 33: “the people of our language.” Maimonides seems to mean native Hebrew speakers or authentic Hebrew speakers. If so, neither of Friedländer’s (or Abrahams’s) translations is accurate.

10. Friedländer 1:125; 1904, 48; Munk-Joel 53, line 7. Ibn Tibbon: *ha-muškalim ha-rishonim*; al-Ḥarizi: *ha-muškalot ha-rishonot*; Munk 1:128 and n3: “les notions premières,” “intelligibilia prima”; Pines 78: “the first intelligibles.” Both of Friedländer’s translations are wrong.

11. Friedländer 3:xvii.

or not accessible to Munk.”<sup>12</sup> This may in part be an excuse for Friedländer's not always examining the manuscripts himself, but it is, I think, in larger part an honest report of his experiences in the Bodleian, the British Museum, and other libraries.

Comparing the Hebrew translations of Ibn Tibbon and al-Ḥarizi, Friedländer writes: “Ibn Tibbon's version is more accurate; he sacrificed elegance of style to the plan of conscientiously reproducing the author's work, so as not to omit even any particle, however unimportant it may appear.”<sup>13</sup> In order to illustrate what he called Ibn Tibbon's “anxiety to retain peculiarities of the original,” he refers us to a passage in Ibn Tibbon's translation of *Guide* I 58, where he parses the normally feminine Hebrew word *meṣi'ut* as masculine in order to replicate the ambiguity of a pronominal reference in the Arabic text.<sup>14</sup> As for al-Ḥarizi, Friedländer has this to say: “[He] was less conscientious about words and particles, and wrote in a superior style.” Friedländer does not tell us which translation he prefers, but concludes: “*Vox populi* decided in favor of . . . Ibn Tibbon.”<sup>15</sup>

When translating the *Guide*, Friedländer had the translations of Ibn Tibbon, al-Ḥarizi, and Munk open before him, cites them in his notes, and is influenced by them. However, as we shall see, he also sometimes ignores previous translations and goes his own way.<sup>16</sup>

In addition to the Hebrew translations of Ibn Tibbon and al-Ḥarizi, Friedländer sometimes cites the selected Hebrew translations made by Shem Tov Falaquera (ca. 1225–95) in his commentary on the *Guide*. For example, in *Guide* I 72, Maimonides writes that the divine force in the universe acts not egotistically but altruistically, like a benefactor who acts

12. Friedländer 3:ix.

13. Friedländer 3:xi.

14. Friedländer 3:xi. This passage will be discussed below. Pines and Strauss are in agreement with Ibn Tibbon about the importance of literalness. See Pines, preface, vii: “Wherever the original is ambiguous . . . , the translation has . . . attempted to preserve that very ambiguity.”

15. Friedländer 3:xi–xii.

16. In the passages I examined for this study, I did not find corroboration for Simon Hopkins's charge that “much of [Friedländer's version] has been translated from Ibn Tibbon's Hebrew rather than from Maimonides' Arabic.” See Hopkins 2005, 106. Although Friedländer's translation is influenced by his predecessors, in particular Ibn Tibbon and Munk, his many notes on the Arabic text reflect a concern for fidelity to the original. However, as mentioned above, this concern is much more manifest in part I of the *Guide* than it is in parts II or III. Hopkins does not cite evidence for his charge, but it is plausible he had in mind passages from parts II or III.

*karama ṭibā'in wa-faḍīlata sajiyyatin lā li-tarajjin*; and Friedländer translates: “not from any selfish motive, but from a natural generosity and kindness.” In a note, Friedländer cites the translations of Ibn Tibbon, al-Ḥarizi, and Falaquera, and asserts that the phrase is rendered “more exactly” by the latter. However, he is merely following Munk, who cites Ibn Tibbon and Falaquera and remarks that “la version d’Ibn-Falaquera est plus exacte.”<sup>17</sup>

While Friedländer constantly keeps his eye on Munk’s French version, he certainly does not always follow him, and often explicitly rejects his translations in his notes. Thus, in *Guide* I 29, with regard to the exegesis of Genesis 6:6, he criticizes Munk’s understanding of the object in the prepositional phrase *fīhi* as referring to God not Adam;<sup>18</sup> in *Guide* I 73, kalamic premise 4, he asserts that Munk’s translation of *min aḥadihā* as “d’un accident quelconque” “cannot be correct”;<sup>19</sup> and in *Guide* II, preface, Aristotelian premise 24, he faults Munk for translating *bi-al-quwwa* in the sense of contingency, not potentiality.<sup>20</sup>

Regarding the structure of the *Guide*, Friedländer took an original approach. He notes that in the epistle dedicatory Maimonides mentions subjects he intends to teach his disciple, the addressee of the book, Joseph ben Judah. These include “esoteric ideas in the books of the prophets,” metaphysics, and “the method of the Kalām.” In addition, Friedländer notes, in his introduction to part I, that Maimonides mentions two other goals: the explanation of homonymous, figurative, and hybrid words in Scripture; and the explanation of allegories in it. The *Guide* thus begins with a discussion

17. Friedländer 1:305–6 and n6; Munk-Joel 133, lines 13–14. Ibn Tibbon: *li-nedivut ṭeva'im u-le-ma'alamat lo' le-tohelet*; al-Ḥarizi: *ba'avur ṭeva' nikhbad she-yesh bo we-yitron nefesh lo' le-tiqwah*; Falaquera 2001, 191: *li-nedivut ṭeva' u-le-ma'alat yeṣirah lo' le-tohelet gemul*; Munk 1:372: “par générosité de caractère et par une bonté innée et non pas dans l’espoir (d’une récompense)”; and see Munk 1:372n2. In Friedländer’s succinct translation, the adjective “natural” modifies both “generosity” and “kindness,” thus rendering both *ṭibā'* and *sajiyya*, which are roughly synonymous. His free translation of *lā li-tarajjin* has no precedent in his predecessors and is an example of his own distinctive approach to translating.

18. Friedländer 1:103n3; Munk-Joel 42, line 16; Munk 1:100n2. Pines (63) agrees with Friedländer, not Munk. The word *fīhi* is not translated in al-Ḥarizi, nor in some texts of Ibn Tibbon, but in others it is translated ambiguously.

19. Friedländer 1:318n2; Munk-Joel 138, line 9; Munk 1:385n2. Friedländer’s criticism is unclear. He seems to be criticizing Maimonides himself for his ambiguous use of *min aḥadihā*, which could be misconstrued to mean “of either of them,” i.e., either substance or accident. Friedländer translates: “no material thing can be without them,” i.e., without accidents. Pines (198) translates: “no body is exempt from one of them,” i.e., one of the accidents.

20. Friedländer 2:8n3; Munk-Joel 167, line 18; Munk 2:21n2. Pines (239) agrees with Friedländer, not Munk.

of homonymous, figurative, and hybrid words (I 1–70); continues with a critique of *kalām* (I 71–76); moves on to a discussion of Aristotelian metaphysics (II 1–12); and then to esoteric expositions of Genesis 1–4 (II 13–31), of Prophecy (II 32–48), and of Ezekiel 1 (III 1–7). It concludes with an “appendix” treating sundry “theological themes” (III 8–54). The plan of the *Guide*, according to Friedländer, thus reflects Maimonides’ comments in his epistle dedicatory and introduction.<sup>21</sup>

Friedländer was critical of Maimonides’ esotericism. Many medievals, like Moses Narboni, Joseph Kaspi, and Profayt Duran (Efodi), and many moderns, like Leo Strauss and Shlomo Pines, give the impression that they have understood Maimonides’ esoteric doctrine, and that their task is to reveal it discreetly to their readers. Friedländer’s approach is different. He often points to Maimonides’ esoteric hints and feigns ignorance of their meaning, and he sometimes intimates that they may have no meaning at all and that Maimonides embraces mysteriousness for its own sake. Thus, Friedländer writes: “When . . . we examine the work itself, we are at a loss to discover to which parts the professed enigmatic method was applied. His theories concerning the deity, the divine attributes, angels, *creatio ex nihilo*, prophecy, and other subjects, are treated as fully as might be expected.”<sup>22</sup> True, continues Friedländer, “a cloud of mysterious phrases enshrouds the interpretation of *ma’aseh bereshit* (Gen 1–3) . . . and *ma’aseh merkavah* (Ezek 1),” but the “significant words” in these biblical texts are explained in part I of the *Guide*, and “a full exposition” of the two themes is found in parts II and III.<sup>23</sup> Maimonides, concludes Friedländer, writes explicitly while insisting that he does not.

Friedländer suggests that Maimonides’ esotericism serves as a substitute for philosophical argument. When Maimonides adjures the reader not to reveal the secrets of the *Guide*, Friedländer writes: “Maimonides increased the mysteriousness of the treatise by expressing his wish that the reader should abstain from expounding the work, lest he might spread in the name of the author opinions which the latter never held. But it does not occur to him that the views he enunciates might be themselves erroneous.”<sup>24</sup> Friedländer remarks that other philosophers, like Saadia Gaon and Bahya Ibn Paquda, “were conscious of their own fallibility, and invited the reader to make such

21. Friedländer 1:xli–xliii.

22. Friedländer 1:xlvi–xlvi.

23. Friedländer 1:xlvi.

24. Friedländer 1:xlvi.



corrections as might appear needful.” Maimonides, however, wrote with “a strong self-reliance,” which discouraged philosophical debate.<sup>25</sup> How can one debate with an infallible author? Friedlander thus charges that there is something unphilosophical about Maimonides’ authoritarian style.

Although Friedländer was educated in German universities, he acquired a British distaste for abstract metaphysics, and this is evidenced in many of his notes throughout the *Guide*. In his popular book *The Jewish Religion*, he wrote: “Abstruse metaphysical disquisitions about the essence and the attributes of the Divine Being will be avoided in the present work,” because trying to understand such things is a waste of energy and time.<sup>26</sup>

In short, Friedländer believed in translating plainly and simply, even if the text is not plain and simple. He had little patience for the niceties of metaphysics, and preferred a clear and felicitous translation over a strictly literal if awkward one. In order to appreciate his style and method, let us look at some examples from his translation. I have divided my discussion into two sections: “No Anxiety about Accuracy” and “Political or Social.”

### No Anxiety about Accuracy

We begin with the passage from *Guide* I 58, mentioned previously, which, according to Friedländer, illustrates Ibn Tibbon’s “anxiety” about accuracy. In this profoundly abstract metaphysical passage, Maimonides writes that the existence (*wujūd*) or essence (*dhāt*) of the divine Being (*mawjūd*) does not suffice itself with its own Being, but many existences (*wujūdāt*) emanate from it (*‘anhu*).<sup>27</sup> This is the sort of metaphysical statement that can give one a headache. Ibn Tibbon observes that there is an ambiguity in Maimonides’ writing, which in his opinion should be preserved in translation. What is the source of the emanation of the existences? To what does the pronominal suffix of *‘anhu* refer? Is the source of emanation the divine *Being* or the divine *existence*? Does the pronominal suffix of *‘anhu* refer to *mawjūd* or to *wujūd*? This ambiguity is able to exist because the Arabic words *mawjūd* and *wujūd* are both masculine, and thus the masculine pronominal suffix of *‘anhu* could refer to either. In Hebrew, however, *nimša’* (Being) is masculine, and *meši’ut* (existence) is feminine. Therefore a word-for-word translation, such as is generally favored by Ibn Tibbon, would *not* preserve the ambiguity in Maimonides’ Arabic. The only way Ibn Tibbon saw to pre-

25. Friedländer 1:xliv.

26. Friedländer 1946, 3.

27. Munk-Joel 92, lines 21–23.

serve the ambiguity was to turn the Hebrew word *meṣi'ut* into a masculine noun, and that's just what he did. In his translation, the existences "overflow from it" (*shof'ot me'itto*), and "it" may refer equally to *nimṣa'* or *meṣi'ut*. Ibn Tibbon explains his thinking in a marginal note to his translation.<sup>28</sup>

Friedländer, who, to say the least, took metaphysics much less seriously than did Ibn Tibbon, writes calmly about the ambiguous reference of the pronominal suffix: "It does not make any difference as regards the sense of the passage."<sup>29</sup> Existence, essence, Being—they're all one in God anyway, according to Maimonides. There is no anxiety in Friedländer. He translates: "The existence, that is, the essence, of this being is not limited to its own existence, many existences emanate from it."<sup>30</sup> In a note, he offers a more literal reading: "As regards this existing Being, it does not content itself with its existence, which is the same as its essence, that it should exist alone."<sup>31</sup> While in his translation Friedländer preserves Maimonides' ambiguity, in his note he clarifies univocally that the pronominal suffix of *'anhu* refers to *mawjūd* (Being), not *wujūd* (existence).

Al-Ḥarizi's Hebrew translation was also unequivocal. Like Ibn Tibbon, he used *nimṣa'* and *meṣi'ut* to translate *mawjūd* and *wujūd*, but he parsed *meṣi'ut* as feminine. The existences are emanated from the divine Being (not from the divine existence): *ne'eṣlu mimmennu* (not *mimmennah*).<sup>32</sup>

Similarly, Munk, using the masculine "être" for *mawjūd* and the feminine "existence" for *wujūd*, translated the sentence unequivocally: it is the divine Being (not the divine existence) that emanates the many existences: "il [*not elle*] en émane de nombreuses existences."<sup>33</sup>

28. Fraenkel 2007, 317: "An apology of the translator. I have by necessity used here the word *meṣi'ut* as masculine, for the pronouns 'its' and 'from it' may refer to 'Being' or 'existence,' and one differs from the other. If I were to parse *meṣi'ut* as feminine, I would have decided in favor of one way. I avoided this and translated word for word." It will be noted that not only here, but also throughout his translation of the *Guide*, Ibn Tibbon parses *meṣi'ut* (and similar words) as masculine. It is often presumed that his motive was stylistic. However, judging from this "apology," it seems that his motive was the desire to preserve ambiguity. In any case, it is clear from the "apology" that translating "word for word" included, for Ibn Tibbon, preserving ambiguities.

29. Friedländer 1:210n3.

30. Friedländer 1:210.

31. Friedländer 1:210n3.

32. In al-Ḥarizi's numbering of the chapters of the *Guide*, I 58 = I 57. Regarding the translation of the Arabic *fayḍ*, Ibn Tibbon prefers *shefa'*, and Pines "overflow," while al-Ḥarizi prefers *aṣilut*, and Friedländer "emanation."

33. Munk 1:243: "L'existence de cet être, laquelle est son essence, ne lui suffit point de manière à exister seulement (lui-même), mais qu'au contraire, il en émane de nombreuses existences."

As for Pines, he translated: “The existence of this being, which is its essence, suffices not only for His being existent, but also for many other existents flowing from it.” By using “His” to refer to the divine Being (*mawjūd*) and “it” to refer to the divine “existence” (*wujūd*), Pines seems to translate, contra al-Ḥarizi, Munk, and Friedländer: the existences flow from the divine existence.<sup>34</sup>

As far as I understand this passage, I am inclined to believe that Maimonides intended to write mysteriously but *not* equivocally. I think that Friedländer, following al-Ḥarizi and Munk, has translated it correctly, and Pines has erred.<sup>35</sup> I think the best translation here is that of al-Ḥarizi. I also think that Friedländer was right in his criticism of Ibn Tibbon’s *anxiety* about accuracy—which in this case led him to translate less accurately than al-Ḥarizi.

Friedländer’s nonanxiety about accuracy may be illustrated not only by recondite examples, like the one from *Guide* I 58, but also by simple ones. At the beginning of *Guide* II, preface, Maimonides states with regard to the first twenty-five Aristotelian premises (but not premise 26) that Aristotle and the Peripatetics *atā ‘alā burhān*.<sup>36</sup> Translators fretted over how to translate this phrase. Ibn Tibbon translated: *‘aśah mofet*. Al-Ḥarizi: *badaq mofet*. Munk: “ont abordé la démonstration.”<sup>37</sup> Friedländer translated simply: “have proved.” He added the following note: “Literally, ‘arrived at the proof’ . . . There is no doubt that, according to Maimonides, the school of Aristotle has not only attempted to prove, but has, in fact, proved all the twenty-five propositions.”<sup>38</sup> Pines translates: “have come forward with a demonstration.”<sup>39</sup> Maimonides’ phrase is nuanced, but the meaning of this nuance is not of interest to Friedländer, who is confident that there is “no doubt” about Maimonides’ view.

### Political or Social

In explaining the advantages of Pines’s translation of the *Guide* over previous translations, in particular Friedländer’s, Pines and Strauss write:

34. Pines 136. Pines’s curious use of “its” and “His” in this sentence seems to reflect an error in the editing.

35. Qafih (1:142) and Schwarz (1:145) translate like al-Ḥarizi, Munk, and Friedländer, although Schwarz recognizes the other possibility in a note (1:145n14).

36. Munk-Joel 165, line 8.

37. Munk 2:3.

38. Friedländer 2:1 and n1.

39. Pines 235.

“A single example must suffice: where Maimonides speaks of ‘political,’ previous translators speak of ‘social’; where Maimonides says ‘city,’ they translate ‘state’; where Maimonides speaks of ‘political civil actions,’ they speak of ‘social conduct’. . . . An entirely different perspective is provided when the political is mentioned, rather than the social.”<sup>40</sup>

Let's compare some passages.

In *Guide* II 40, Friedländer translates: “It has already been fully explained that man is naturally a social being (*madanī bi-al-ṭabʿ*), that by virtue of his nature he seeks to form communities (*mujtamaʿ*); man is therefore different from other living beings that are not compelled to combine into communities (*al-ijtimāʿ*).”<sup>41</sup>

This passage from *Guide* II 40 is translated by Pines as follows: “It has been explained with utmost clarity that man is political by nature (*madanī bi-al-ṭabʿ*) and that it is his nature to live in society (*mujtamaʿ*). He is not like the other animals for which society (*al-ijtimāʿ*) is not a necessity.”<sup>42</sup>

Here, Maimonides makes reference to Aristotle's famous teaching that the human being is by nature “political” (*Nicomachean Ethics* I.7.1097b6; *Politics* I.2.1253a2). Aristotle uses the word *politikos*, which should of course be translated “political”—although there is an old and stubborn tradition of translating it as “social.”<sup>43</sup> The Arabic *madanī* translates *politikos*. Friedländer, in translating “a social being,” follows the old and stubborn tradition. Pines, in translating “political,” follows Aristotle and Maimonides faithfully.

Ibn Tibbon translates: *ha-adam medini be-ṭevaʿ*; al-Ḥarizi paraphrases: *ṭevaʿ ha-adam huʿ ʿal minhag ha-medinah*; Munk: “l'homme est naturellement un être sociable.”<sup>44</sup> Friedländer's translation, “man is naturally a social being,” is borrowed directly from Munk.

In *Guide* III 27, Friedländer translates: “The general object of the Law

40. Pines vii.

41. Friedländer 2:189; Munk-Joel 270, lines 5–6.

42. Pines 381.

43. This tradition should not be dismissed simply as an error. It seems to reflect nineteenth-century connotations of the terms “social” and “political.” It also has medieval Latin antecedents. Although William of Moerbeke, in his translation of Aristotle's *Politics* (ad loc.), wrote *homo natura civile animal est*, Aquinas often explained *civile animal* as *animal sociale* or *animal sociale et politicum*. See, e.g., his commentary on Aristotle's *Politics* I.1; commentary on Aristotle's *Ethics* I.1; *On Kingship* I.1; *Summa theologiae* I, q. 96, a. 4; I-II, q. 72, a. 4; I-II, q. 95, a. 4; II-II, q. 109, a. 3; *Summa contra Gentiles* III, cap. 117, 128, 129, 147. Cf. Albert the Great, questions on *De animalibus* I, q. 8 (re *History of Animals* I.1.487b33–488a13): *homo est animal civile et sociale*.

44. Munk 2:306.

is twofold: the well-being of the soul and the well-being of the body. . . . Of these two objects, the one, the well-being of the soul, or the communication of correct opinions, comes undoubtedly first in rank, but the other, the well-being of the body, the government of the state (*tadbīr al-madīna*), and the establishment of the best possible relations among men (*ṣalāḥ aḥwāl ahlihā kullihim ḥasab al-tāqa*), is anterior in nature and time.”<sup>45</sup>

The same passage from *Guide* III 27 is translated by Pines as follows: “The Law as a whole aims at two things: the welfare of the soul and the welfare of the body. . . . Know (*i’lam*) that as between these two aims, one is indubitably greater in nobility, namely, the welfare of the soul—I mean the procuring of correct opinions—while the second aim—I mean the welfare of the body—is prior in nature and time. The latter aim consists in the governance of the city (*tadbīr al-madīna*) and the well-being of the states of all its people according to their capacity (*ṣalāḥ aḥwāl ahlihā kullihim ḥasab al-tāqa*).”<sup>46</sup>

The conciseness of Friedländer’s translation, as compared to Pines’s, is striking: Friedländer uses 70 words, Pines 84. This difference provides a clue both to Friedländer’s *accessibility* and to Pines’s *accuracy*. Friedländer omits Maimonides’ characteristic exhortation *i’lam*, presumably seeing it as a gratuitous manifestation of the author’s imperious “self-reliance,” whereas Pines duly translates it: “Know that as between these two aims . . .” Friedländer’s phrase “the government of the state” translates the Arabic *tadbīr al-madīna*. Pines translates: “the governance of the city.” The Arabic *madīna* renders the Greek *polis*; and Pines and Strauss are probably justified in their preference that it be translated as “city” and not “state.” Ibn Tibbon translates: *hanhagat ha-medinah*; al-Ḥarizi: *hanhagat ‘inyane ha-medinah*; Munk: “ce que la société soit bien gouvernée.”<sup>47</sup> Munk’s translation is remarkable for its introduction of the social. As for Friedländer’s streamlined phrase “the establishment of the best possible relations among men,” it is more fluent but less precise than Pines’s “the well-being of the states of all its people according to their capacity.”

Let’s look at one more passage on the subject of “political or social.” The passage is in *Guide* III 31.

Friedländer translates: “But the truth is undoubtedly as we have said, that every one of the six hundred and thirteen precepts serves to inculcate

45. Friedländer 3:129; Munk-Joel 371, lines 17–28.

46. Pines 510.

47. Munk 3:211.

some truth, to remove some erroneous opinion, to establish proper relations in society (*qānūn 'adl*), to diminish evil, to train in good manners, or to warn against bad habits. All this depends on three things: opinions, morals, and social conduct (*al-a'māl al-siyāsiyya al-madaniyya*).<sup>48</sup>

Pines translates this passage as follows: "Rather things are indubitably as we have mentioned: every commandment from among these six hundred and thirteen commandments exists either with a view to communicating a correct opinion, or to putting an end to an unhealthy opinion, or to communicating a rule of justice (*qānūn 'adl*), or to warding off an injustice, or to endowing men with a noble moral quality, or to warning them against an evil moral quality. Thus all [the commandments] are bound up with three things: opinions, moral qualities, and political civic actions (*al-a'māl al-siyāsiyya al-madaniyya*)."<sup>49</sup>

The conciseness of Friedländer's translation, as compared to Pines's, is again apparent: this time Friedländer uses 60 words, Pines 85. Friedländer's phrase "proper relations in society" translates the Arabic *qānūn 'adl*. Pines's translation "a rule of justice" is clearly more precise. Ibn Tibbon translates *seder yashar*; al-Ḥarizi: *ḥuqqim yesharim*; Munk, adumbrating Pines: "une règle de justice."<sup>50</sup> Friedländer's two-word phrase "social conduct" translates the Arabic *al-a'māl al-siyāsiyya al-madaniyya*. Pines's three-word translation is more faithful: "political civic actions." "Political," as Strauss and Pines correctly insisted, is usually the preferable translation of *siyāsiyya*. Ibn Tibbon translates: *ma'aśeh ha-hanhagah ha-medinit*; al-Ḥarizi: *ha-ma'aśim ha-yesharim*; Munk: "la pratique de devoirs sociaux."<sup>51</sup> Whereas Ibn Tibbon and Pines speak here of the political, Munk and Friedländer speak of the social.

In sum, Pines and Strauss's criticism of "previous translators" who used the term "social" instead of "political" applies not only to Friedländer but also to the vaunted Munk.

## Conclusion

To conclude, I cannot resist quoting a passage from the *Guide* that appears in Dara Horn's novel *A Guide for the Perplexed*. The passage is taken from

48. Friedländer 3:148–49; Munk-Joel 383, lines 9–13.

49. Pines 524.

50. Munk 3:248.

51. Munk 3:248.

*Guide* III 17–18, and presents Maimonides’ own personal opinion on the problem of divine providence. One of the protagonists in the novel is said to have been “stunned” by this opinion of Maimonides’. The opinion is described as “heartless and beautiful,” “utterly and cruelly logical,” and “intolerant of nonsense.” As quoted in the novel, in Friedländer’s English, the passage reads as follows:

My opinion on this principle of divine providence I will now explain to you . . . It may be mere chance that a ship goes down with her contents and drowns those within it, or the roof of a house falls upon those within; but it is not due to chance, according to our view, that in the one instance the men went into the ship, or remained in the house in the other instance . . . Divine influence reaches mankind through the human intellect, and divine providence is in proportion to each person’s intellectual development.<sup>52</sup>

Here is Pines’s translation of the same text:

As for my own belief with regard to this fundamental principle, I mean divine providence, it is as I shall set it forth to you. . . . If, as he [Aristotle] states, the foundering of a ship and the drowning of those who were in it and the falling-down of a roof upon those who were in the house, are due to pure chance, the fact that the people in the ship went on board and that the people in the house were sitting in it is, according to our opinion, not due to chance. . . . The divine overflow . . . is united to . . . the human intellect . . . [and] providence is graded as the human perfection is graded.<sup>53</sup>

Let us agree that Pines’s 120-word text, which tries to reproduce the complexity of Maimonides’ Arabic, is more suited for analysis in a philosophy seminar, but that Friedländer’s 92-word text, written simply, directly, and dramatically, is more suited for a novel. The dramatic quality of Friedländer’s translation is particularly important, since it is intimated in the novel that Maimonides’ reference to “a ship that goes down” recalls the tragic death at sea of his beloved brother, David.<sup>54</sup>

52. Horn 2013, 163; cf. 197, 322. Friedländer 3:74–75, 79–80.

53. Pines 471–72, 475.

54. Horn 2013, 321–22.

Since Friedländer's pioneering English translation in 1885, there have been several attempts to translate the *Guide* into English—either in whole or in part. In addition to Pines's excellent translation, one may mention the partial translations of Chaim Rabin (1952) and Lenn E. Goodman (1977), each of which has its own real strengths. That 128 years after its completion, Friedländer's translation—and not one of its more recent rivals—should be chosen by an accomplished author for use in her novel is testimony to its lasting worth.





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## 7

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### The Elegance of Precision On Pines's Translation of the Literary Parts of the *Guide*

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SARAH STROUMSA

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When Shlomo Pines's translation of the *Guide of the Perplexed* was first published, published with it was the "Translator's Introduction." As translators' introductions go, this is a peculiar one, since it says practically nothing about the translation: in vain will we search for an exposition of the language and style of the original Judeo-Arabic text, or of the style and method chosen for the English translation. Instead, most of the introduction is explicitly dedicated to "indications, which may prove helpful . . . concerning Maimonides' philosophic sources, his evaluation of them, and the way in which he utilizes them."<sup>1</sup> Moreover, even simple technical notes that one would expect to find in a translator's introduction, such as a note on the translation of biblical verses—did they follow one of the many English translations available at the time, or were they translated by Pines himself?—are conspicuously absent from the introduction. Only a few sentences on the first page of the introduction tell us, in a somewhat roundabout way, what Pines considered to be typical of the style of the *Guide*. Juxtaposing Maimonides' "systematic, lucid, and authoritative legal code" with his "often dislocated and broken

1. Pines 1963, lviii.

up” *Guide*, written some twenty years later, Pines remarks that Maimonides “had [not] lost his gift for lucid exposition,” and adds: “Indeed this gift is brilliantly displayed in certain passages of the *Guide*.” Pines further says that “the disconcerting impression” that “the peculiar method used by Maimonides in composing [the *Guide*]” (namely, that same “often dislocated and broken up text”) is “apt to produce at first upon most of its readers . . . was certainly aimed at by Maimonides. His book’s impact depends upon it.”<sup>2</sup> One would have expected the translator to say whether he sees it as his task to follow Maimonides’ “peculiar method,” or, rather, to emulate his “gift for lucid exposition” by translating Maimonides’ ideas into a clear and accessible English. But neither these tasks nor any others are spelled out in the introduction. Conventionally, introductions serve, among other things, to introduce and highlight, in one way or another, what the author regards as the main points of his work; in Pines’s “Translator’s Introduction” to the *Guide*, however, the translator’s work is hardly noted.

I suspect, although I cannot prove it, that the misleading heading “Translator’s Introduction” was not chosen by Pines but, rather, decided by others.<sup>3</sup> Be that as it may, it seems that Pines did not intend to offer a typical translator’s introduction, and it is even possible that he consciously avoided writing an introduction of the kind that the title seems to assign to him. The content of the introduction that he *did* write strongly suggests that Pines regarded his translation primarily as a scholarly endeavor, rather than a literary one. Notwithstanding the enormous investment that such a translation demands, Pines’s introduction seems to minimize the significance of the translation as such, and to highlight its import as part of analytical research carried out by a historian of philosophy. That this is indeed how Pines regarded his introduction can be clearly seen in the fact that its Hebrew translation appeared later as an essay, independent of the English translation of the *Guide*. The Hebrew translation of the introduction was fittingly titled “The Philosophical Sources of the *Guide of the Perplexed*,” with only a note referring the reader to the original context (the *Guide*’s translation) in which this essay first appeared.<sup>4</sup>

A peephole into the difficulties of translating the *Guide* as well as of the choices made by the translator was nevertheless opened through Pines’s correspondence with Leo Strauss, parts of which were published by Joel

2. Pines 1963, lvii.

3. See below, n. 15.

4. Pines 1977; and see below, n. 15.

Kraemer and Josef Stern.<sup>5</sup> As this correspondence shows, Pines made a deliberate decision to translate “every Arabic technical term by one and the same English one.”<sup>6</sup> According to Kraemer and Stern, this decision allowed Pines to keep the nuances of meaning in the *Guide* that Maimonides used as directives to the discerning reader.<sup>7</sup> This decision also seems to have meant that Pines ignored Maimonides’ own advice to Samuel Ibn Tibbon regarding the translation of the *Guide* into Hebrew.<sup>8</sup> Maimonides’ instructions to Ibn Tibbon would have necessarily meant explicating the esoteric parts of the *Guide*, and since Ibn Tibbon “spontaneously” (in Pines’s words) decided to preserve in his translation the esoteric aspect, he (Ibn Tibbon) thus acted contrary to “Maimonides’ explicit (or exoteric) instructions. And Pines follows Ibn Tibbon, not Maimonides, in his own method of translation.”<sup>9</sup> As Kraemer and Stern convincingly argue, Pines had a clear notion of his method of translation, a method that he was following consistently.<sup>10</sup> He consciously adopted Ibn Tibbon’s fidelity to the peculiar syntax of the *Guide*, and in his translation, syntax and terminology were rather consistently translated.

Kraemer and Stern cite Pines, who describes Maimonides’ style as “loose” and who consciously follows it. Herbert Davidson also speaks of “the loose syntax typical of the *Guide*,” or “the loose and choppy style characteristic of the *Guide*.”<sup>11</sup> Maimonides’ syntax is indeed often anacoluthic, as is common in Middle Arabic in general and Judeo-Arabic in particular,<sup>12</sup>

5. Kraemer and Stern 1998.

6. Kraemer and Stern 1998, 23. Goodman (1977, 435) quotes Pines’s statement to this effect from his introduction (vii: “Every Arabic technical term has been rendered by one and the same English term . . .”) with no further comment regarding the translation. Goodman clearly regards this sentence as the cornerstone of Pines’s translation, as well as of what Goodman regards as its shortcomings.

7. Kraemer and Stern 1998, 17: “Maimonides frequently uses near-synonymous but subtly different Arabic technical terms, with the intention that his discerning reader will be drawn to the relevant philosophical distinction from the shift in terminology.”

8. See Maimonides 1988, 2:532–33; Kraemer and Stern 1998, 17 and n11.

9. Kraemer and Stern 1998, 17.

10. Kraemer and Stern 1998, 15.

11. Kraemer and Stern 1998, 17–18; Davidson 1992/93, 83, 103.

12. See Blau 1981, 97–98. According to Blau, the large number of anacolutha results from the fact that “many authors of Judaeo-Arabic texts seem not to bother to arrange their thoughts prior to writing, but write down directly the first idea that occurs to them, only afterwards fitting it as best they can into the framework of the sentence.” Blau regards this “carelessness in language” as “one of the chief characteristics of Judaeo-Arabic style.” The assumption that anacoluthic writing reflects the spoken language is also shared by Daniel Gimaret, who regards it as one of the signs of a text composed by dictation (*imlā*’); see

and, as is the case with other philosophers, his syntax certainly deviates from what is taught by textbooks of classical Arabic,<sup>13</sup> but it is anything but loose. Just like the *Guide*'s terminological and lexical precision (noted by Leo Strauss when he speaks of "a book as carefully worded as is the *Guide*"<sup>14</sup>), and like its intricate but deliberate, carefully planned structure, the syntax of the *Guide* is measured and calculated to direct the reader according to his (Maimonides would not bother to add "or her") capacity. The treatment of the *Guide*'s syntax as "loose" ignores Maimonides' use of changing styles as a tool for the same purpose.

From Pines's correspondence with Strauss it appears that Strauss had been aiming at achieving a uniform translation as far as possible, and also that he had encouraged Pines to adopt a literal translation—an injunction that at some point Strauss had felt Pines was following too literally. In the published letter, Pines asks Strauss for clear directives as to the method to be employed. Strauss's response is unfortunately not available to us, but whatever this response may have been, Pines was a person who ultimately did what *he* understood to be right. I assume that this is also what happened in the present case, despite his uneven status vis-à-vis Strauss, a status that followed from the context of a commissioned translation and that emerges clearly from the published letter.<sup>15</sup> The English-Arabic glossary provided by Pines at the end of the translation also confirms that Pines indeed adopted a

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Gimaret 1981, 22. While the associative thinking-while-writing phenomenon may well be reflected in letters and other Judeo-Arabic compositions, it can hardly be considered to have characterized Maimonides' modus operandi in writing the *Guide*. Notwithstanding the cultural background for the development of the anacoluthic syntax in Judeo-Arabic, by the time it reached Maimonides it seems to have become an integral feature of the Judeo-Arabic language as Maimonides knew it, a style that is also kept in very carefully thought-out texts.

13. The philosophers' peculiar Arabic syntax often follows the translations from the Greek texts, on which their works were based. The specificity of the translations' syntax is recognized by Gerhard Endress and Dimitri Gutas, who include syntactical issues in their *Lexicon*; see Endress and Gutas 2002, intro., 1\* and 6\*.

14. Strauss 1963, xxv.

15. Compared to the authoritative and intriguing heading of Strauss's introduction ("How to Begin to Study *The Guide of the Perplexed*"), the dull, technical heading "Translator's Introduction," stressing the role assigned to Pines, also underlined their difference in status. This is so even if the heading was decided by Pines, and certainly so if, as I suspect, it was not. In this uneven work-relationship, Pines's de facto refusal to write a conventional translator's introduction was also a (conscious or unconscious) assertion of his scholarly authority, highlighting the primary significance of his translation as an independent scholarly work. See above, nn. 1–4.

consistent translation of the terminology, where every English term almost always translates the same Arabic word.<sup>16</sup>

Michael Friedländer's translation notwithstanding, Pines's translation of the *Guide* into English has been a watershed in introducing Maimonides to the world of scholars of medieval Islamic philosophy.<sup>17</sup> Its publication in 1963 coincided with the start of momentous transformations in the academic world: the consolidation of English as *the* universal academic language, on the one hand, and the beginning of the dramatic expansion of higher education, on the other. In this context, the new English translation offered by Pines was, and remains to this day, the single most effective vehicle for introducing Maimonides to scholars and to students of medieval Islamic philosophy.

Nevertheless, over the years, users of the translation have occasionally, and perhaps growingly, expressed reservations regarding the style of the translation. More often than not, the criticism is not published or explicitly written—out of respect for Pines's stature, out of appreciation for the overall authority of the translation, or for whatever other reason. But one often hears reservations concerning the translation of this or that passage, and, more generally, concerning the present value of the translation. Quite often, the criticism leveled against Pines's translation targets precisely his uniform, somewhat literal translation, and the fact that he kept the same word for the same term, thus creating what critics regard as stiff, archaic, or inelegant translation. Such a criticism is evident, for example, when Lenn Goodman says:

There is a natural tendency on the part of a translator to confuse literalism with accuracy. When consistently followed, this tendency can render any translation of a medieval Arabic work unintelligible.

16. Although quite a few English terms also refer the reader to another entry in the glossary, where another term renders the same Arabic word. Thus the English verb "apprehend" translates the Arabic verb *adraka*, but the glossary also refers the reader to another English verb, "grasp." See Pines 639–41. By comparison, see the fluctuations in the translation of this term noted by Michael Schwarz in Goodman's translation, fluctuations that Schwarz assumes result from Goodman's attempt to show the contemporary relevance of Maimonides; see Schwarz 2002, 2:762–63; Goodman 1977, 56–57, 64.

17. Friedländer's translation, published in 1881–85, was reprinted in 1947. On this and other (partial) English translations of the *Guide*, see Schwarz, "The *Guide* of the Perplexed: Its Translations and Translators," in Schwarz 2002, 2:742–66; see also the introduction to this volume, as well as Zev Harvey's contribution (chapter 6).

Although Goodman does not mention Pines's name, the object of his criticism, within the context of Goodman's introduction to his anthology of translations of Maimonidean texts, is obvious. Goodman regards Maimonides' style as "a clear, flexible, and direct Arabic, not overburdened by cumbersome terminology and jargon," and therefore he sees "no reason why the same clarity cannot be rendered in English."<sup>18</sup>

Furthermore, Pines's very fidelity to the Arabic text seems to have been perceived as unnecessarily pedantic. Goodman, for instance, says (again, without mentioning Pines's name):

Arabic syntax is not English syntax. . . . It is impossible to translate from Arabic to English simply by substituting one English term consistently for a given Arabic term. By ignoring these fundamental facts Arabic scholars have produced fairly extensive shelves of books which are of great value to other Arabists . . . but are of no particular use to anyone who does not have a good Arabic text before him and the ability to use it.<sup>19</sup>

The thinly veiled target of Goodman's criticism is again Pines's supposedly rigid style. Moreover, beyond his explicit criticism, one can further detect in the sentences quoted above an impatient tone; the very insistence on the all-important original Arabic text of Maimonides seems to irritate. Goodman's implicit claim here is that many of the rank and file of Maimonides' contemporary readers do not read Arabic, and do not care to be constantly reminded of the Arabic original in particular or of Maimonides' integration into the Arabic-speaking cultural world in general. One can see how, with such a public in mind, Goodman's introduction employs in his English text the translated Hebrew name of the *Guide*, *Moreh nevukhim*, rather than the original Arabic name *Dalālat al-ḥā'irīn*.<sup>20</sup> Apparently, he assumes that for his English-speaking readers the Hebrew name is (or should be) nevertheless meaningful, whereas the original Arabic name remains, like the faithful translation, "of great value to . . . Arabists . . . but . . . of no particular use to anyone who does not have a good Arabic text before him and the ability to use it." In view of this translation policy, one should not be surprised to find in Goodman's introduction a summary of the intellectual backgrounds of Maimonides' philosophy that includes only two subsections: one on the

18. Goodman 1977, vii–viii.

19. Goodman 1977, viii.

20. Goodman 1977, xi.

Greek tradition, and another on the Judaic tradition, but no subsection on the Arabic, Islamic tradition.<sup>21</sup> The fact that Goodman himself is a qualified Arabist, versed in the Islamic philosophical tradition and well aware of its importance for Maimonides, makes this self-censorship only more regrettable.

Pines's methodology in studying Jewish thinkers gave prime of place to the cultural world in which these thinkers lived and wrote. Without ignoring the continuity of the Jewish tradition, Pines believed that, qua philosophers, Jewish thinkers belonged to their time and place, and contemporaneous philosophy was the primary influence on the development of Jewish philosophy. Particularly regarding the Islamic Middle Ages, Pines argued that "in the sphere of philosophical literature . . . Jewish thinkers had recourse primarily to the books of their Moslem counterparts," whereas "rare and only of secondary significance is their relationship to the teachings of their Jewish predecessors."<sup>22</sup> In our context, Pines's position would mean that the fact that Maimonides wrote in Arabic cannot be treated as a minor issue, of interest only to Arabists. The Arabic language in which Maimonides wrote was one aspect of his integration into the Arabic-speaking cultural world. His opinions and arguments are couched in the nuanced Arabic language of this world, and the full weight of his carefully chosen Arabic terminology must be appreciated as a window on the philosophy that it reflects.

From the outset it should be said that, of course, no translation is free of faults, and Pines's translation is no exception. Furthermore, it is only natural that, half a century after its publication, any faithful reader of this translation will have accumulated a list of his or her own suggested corrections to it. Nevertheless, and despite the other valuable translations available—Ibn Tibbon's, Salomon Munk's, Michael Schwarz's—for Maimonidean scholars, Pines's translation remains indispensable. This is not only because of Pines's undisputed erudition and understanding of medieval Arabic philosophy in general and of Maimonides' philosophy in particular, which are reflected in the translation. As I will try to show here, it is precisely Pines's above-mentioned terminological and syntactical consistency that is, rather than a weakness, a veritable asset.

21. Goodman 1977, 16–34; the meager two pages dedicated to the Muslim tradition (30–31) are squeezed within the discussion of the Judaic tradition.

22. Pines 1967, 1. On the significance of this position within the broader discussion of the methodology of studying Jewish thought, see Stroumsa 2009, concl.



In order to demonstrate this claim, I wish to revisit the question that was most hotly debated in the last years of Pines's life and in the decade following his death—namely, the human possibility of attaining knowledge of metaphysical realities. This philosophical problem is already noted, briefly but quite clearly, in Pines's introduction to his translation of the *Guide*, where he explicitly says that “we are faced in Maimonides' text with a fundamental ambiguity.”<sup>23</sup> Indeed, it is often the case that one finds in Pines's introduction, ensconced in a few sentences, the insights that he was to develop and expound upon in later publications. But the debate in question started in earnest only after the publication, in 1979, of Pines's article on the limitations of human knowledge according to al-Fārābī, Ibn Bājja, and Maimonides.<sup>24</sup>

In this article, Pines grappled with what he regarded as a fundamental and perplexing problem presented by the *Guide*—namely, the irreconcilable contradiction between the narrow limits that Maimonides sets to human knowledge and his affirmation that the human being's ultimate goal and felicity consist in knowledge and contemplation.<sup>25</sup> Pines endeavored to show that “this contradiction need not remain unsolved”<sup>26</sup> and to identify Maimonides' solution to it by putting forward some very bold assertions. He argued that, according to Maimonides, the “intellection of the immaterial entities and of the union with them . . . are impossible for man,”<sup>27</sup> that Maimonides held “an agnostic position with regard to the thesis of the permanence of the intellect,”<sup>28</sup> that “it is . . . on the face of it unlikely that the immortality of the intellect, which in the judgment of Maimonides of the *Guide* is an obscure and problematic matter, should be considered by him as the goal of the human individual,”<sup>29</sup> that “apprehension of God may, in view of the limitations of the human mind, be equated with the knowledge of God's governance,”<sup>30</sup> and, finally, that for Maimonides, “the practical way of life . . . is superior to the theoretical.”<sup>31</sup>

23. Pines 1963, cv, and see also lxxix–lxxxii; compare Davidson (1992/93, 53), who says that in putting forward these arguments, Pines abandons his hitherto held view that Maimonides' esotericism is “a form of deism in the Aristotelian mode.”

24. Pines 1979. See also J. Stern 2013, 4–6, 133–34.

25. Pines 1979, 82. See also Pines 1981, 1986.

26. Pines 1979, 100.

27. Pines 1979, 99.

28. Pines 1979, 97.

29. Pines 1979, 97.

30. Pines 1979, 99.

31. Pines 1979, 100.

In putting forward these assertions, and in the analysis that led to them, Pines relied heavily on reports regarding al-Fārābī's lost *Commentary* on Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics*, as well as on a text by Ibn Bājja, which was still unpublished at the time. Since then, the publication of Ibn Bājja's text and its analysis by several scholars have corrected Pines's reading of this text in ways that made it unresponsive of Pines's argument.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, the initial question asked by Pines regarding the seemingly irreconcilable contradiction in the *Guide* remains.

The fiercest response to these claims came from Herbert Davidson, for whom Pines's article turned the *Guide* into "the most bizarre work in the history of philosophy, a 450 page book written . . . with the purpose of concealing a handful of remarks that, sotto voce, undermine virtually everything the book says."<sup>33</sup> Davidson contested the accuracy of Pines's reading of al-Fārābī and Ibn Bājja, as well as Maimonides' dependency upon them, which he regarded as at best conjectural.<sup>34</sup> But his main critique addressed Pines's esoteric reading of the *Guide*. For Davidson, "in ascertaining an author's intent, even an author who indulges in esoteric expression, the starting point surely should be what he himself says."<sup>35</sup> Therefore the *Guide*, like any other philosophical book, must be taken seriously to mean what it says, and therefore, if Maimonides says that the human goal is the achievement of knowledge, then he must consider this knowledge attainable for humans.<sup>36</sup> Davidson reviews seven passages in the *Guide* that were discussed by Pines, and concludes that "if we respect Maimonides' words and refrain from interpreting him as perversely meaning the opposite of what he says . . . the passages fall into a comfortable and consistent pattern."<sup>37</sup>

Pines's question indeed revealed a fundamental ambivalence in the *Guide*, an ambivalence that Davidson's response, seeking to establish "a comfortable and consistent pattern," does not recognize. At the same time, Pines's own attempt to resolve this ambivalence also fails to accept what I consider to be its inherently unresolvable nature.

32. The text, preserved in Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Pococke 206, was published in Ibn Bājja 1983, 197–202. See also S. Harvey 1992b, 225–31; Vallat 2004, 102–26; Genequand 2010, 10–13.

33. Davidson 1992/93, 54.

34. Davidson 1992/93, 67.

35. Davidson 1992/93, 84.

36. Davidson 1992/93, 87. Davidson's methodological disagreement with Pines applies also to other issues, such as the creation of the world; but it is on the possibility of attaining metaphysical knowledge that his article focuses.

37. Davidson 1992/93, 86.

In this context, the philosophers' position toward the religious doctrine of the resurrection of the body is revealing. The Qur'ān, and thereafter the Muslim tradition, speak specifically and repeatedly about resurrection. The Hebrew Bible does not discuss this issue, but by the twelfth century the resurrection had long become a commonly held and undisputed doctrine in Judaism as well. Consequently, and despite the different positions of their respective scriptures, this doctrine presented a similar problem for Jewish and Muslim philosophers. We therefore find Maimonides and Averroes negotiating their positions in a similar way—namely, admitting the doctrine as such on the force of the religious tradition, while refusing to discuss it philosophically.<sup>38</sup> The philosophers' delicate position is particularly obvious in the case of Maimonides, who treats this topic as a Pandora's box: better left unopened. To the extent that he had to advocate for resurrection, he limited it to the messianic era, insisting that the resurrection is not for eternity: those risen from the dead will die again. Maimonides was the first Jewish thinker to present resurrection as a binding article of faith, but neither this fact nor his more elaborate discussion of the issue in his *Epistle on Resurrection* averted the accusations that he, in fact, did not believe in the resurrection. The ensuing protracted "Maimonidean debate" also had some political aspects, but it resulted mainly from the fact that Maimonides' tight-lipped policy concerning this issue was perceived as betraying what is indeed likely to have been his genuine position: that the resurrection was an article of faith rather than a probable truth.<sup>39</sup>

Regarding the immortality of the soul, or, rather, of the intellect, the philosophers' difficulty was less obvious, as this topic seemed to be more amenable for harmonization with their conflicting authoritative texts. The scriptural language on this topic is less explicit, and therefore it gave more space for philosophical, demythologizing interpretations. Furthermore, the philosophical tradition also suggested some sort of immortality that could be achieved through conjunction with the separate, immaterial intellect. We therefore find that the philosophers usually displayed confidence in humans' intellectual ability to achieve this goal and managed to find evidence for it in their respective traditions.<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, the philosophers' observations and teaching indicated to them that the attachment of the human intellect to the inherently temporal body is a constant that

38. See Averroes 1998b, 555–59; 1954, 359–63; Maimonides 1939; and see the references in nn. 39–40 below.

39. On the philosophers' position on resurrection, see Stroumsa 1998a, 56–57, 70; 1998b, 325, 331; 1999, x–xiv; 2009, 165–83.

40. On the philosophers' hereafter, see Stroumsa 1998a; 2009, 153–65.

defines humanity, just as much as the ultimate intellectual human goal defines it. With the philosophers' firmly held belief in the corruptible nature of matter, and their somewhat puritan disdain for the coarse body, it is only natural that they would at times lose heart and lapse into uncertainty or even disbelief regarding the immortality of anything human. Their position regarding the resurrection of the body reveals how strongly they felt the insurmountable gap between the human, attached to the temporal body, and anything that can aspire to be divine or eternal. Their statements about the possibility of immortality therefore vary in intensity, and sometimes even in content. These fluctuations are not due to what Paul Veyne, following Michel Foucault, called two "programmes de vérité," nor do they reflect a double truth of the kind attributed to Averroes.<sup>41</sup> In Maimonides' theoretical attitude toward immortality, the religious and the philosophical "systems of truth" could agree with each other, and he considered it possible for people like him, who belonged to the philosophical elite, to harmonize them (whereas, regarding people who did not belong to this elite, Maimonides' explicit instruction was to hold on to the religious truth and not to delve into the philosophical discussion).<sup>42</sup> The ambivalence regarding immortality that Pines detected in the *Guide* therefore does not reveal a shift in Maimonides' theoretical position. It does, however, faithfully reflect his fluctuating psychological confidence in the attainability of an immensely daunting goal.

Obviously, we cannot expect to find Maimonides, or any other philosopher, admitting this fluctuation explicitly, just as we cannot expect them to say explicitly anything that could sound like a denial of religious doctrines; only the difference of intensity between the various references to immortality betrays these fluctuations. It would therefore be incorrect, in my view, to weigh Maimonides' statements on this particular issue against each other in search of his single true belief, to be reflected by one statement as opposed to another statement, which would be only camouflage.<sup>43</sup>

It is remarkable that, while Pines's articles attempted to push Maimon-

41. Veyne 1983. On Averroes' double truth, and its actual connection to Ibn Rushd's philosophy, see von Kügelgen 1994, 2–3; Wirmer 2008, 10–12.

42. See his response to Ibn Jābir regarding a similar metaphysical issue in Maimonides 1988, 1:414. In this, Maimonides adopts Averroes' position as expressed in *Faṣl al-maqāl*. Maimonides diverts from this position only regarding God's incorporeality, where his position is that of the Almohads. See Stroumsa 2009, 73–79.

43. The topic of immortality, and the possibility of attaining metaphysical knowledge, thus differ, in my view, from other esoteric issues, where one can expect to detect, behind the conflicting statements, Maimonides' unequivocal firm conviction. In these other issues, a scholar refusing to acknowledge Maimonides' different statements ipso facto also cannot admit Maimonides' true but esoteric position.

ides to one side of this ambivalence, his translation gracefully and subtly follows the pendulum of Maimonides' emotions in this respect. Without abandoning his method, which aimed at a uniform and consistent translation of technical terms, Pines follows in his translation the changing mood of the *Guide* in ways that convey fully and with precision the different philosophical stress of each chapter. The *Guide's* usually even and measured style changes at times abruptly, moving to exclamations, to direct address to the reader (such as "know that . . ."), or to a more poetic style. Such sudden changes serve as pointers, awakening the reader to the importance of the passage or highlighting the need to read it carefully, with an eye to a central or withheld truth that it may contain.

Furthermore, there are several passages in the *Guide* that, while they do not belong strictly to the genre of poetry, can surely be described as literary or even poetic, and in which the metaphorical, elated prose seeks to convey an exalted state of mind. Pines's sensitive English translation is attuned to the calculated shifts in Maimonides' style. The more literary parts of the *Guide* belong to the category of passages that mark a change in the flow of the *Guide's* usual style. In the translation of these literary passages, Pines's sensitivity to the *Guide's* shifting mood is evident. At the same time, one is struck by his fidelity to Maimonides' vocabulary, on the one hand, and to his own methodical principle in the translation, on the other. For instance, in his aforementioned controversial article, Pines cites the lightning simile. He notes Maimonides' likely indebtedness to Avicenna's *Ishārāt* and the Sufi overtones in Avicenna's terminology.<sup>44</sup> He also notes Maimonides' possible indebtedness to Ibn Bājja. His own translation of the passage, accordingly, reflects these sources, and the English text rings with the same Sufi overtones.<sup>45</sup> At no point, however, is Pines carried away by the poetics of the translated text so as to forget the uniform terminological translation he adopted. Thus, the most frequent epistemological term used by Maimonides in the lightning simile, *l-w-ḥ*, is translated by Pines as "flashes" or "flashing," but when Maimonides introduces into the same poetic text the technical term *idrāk*, Pines faithfully renders it by his own technical translation, "apprehension."

Another example is *Guide* III 51, which contains the parable of the king in his palace and Maimonides' explanation of the midrashic image of death through God's "kiss."<sup>46</sup> Pines mentions this last passage as "the only passage

44. Pines 1979, 89.

45. *Guide* I, intro. (Munk-Joel 4; Pines 7).

46. *Guide* III 51 (Munk-Joel 454–63; Pines 618–28); and especially the passage beginning with the "call to attention" (*tanbīh*) (Munk-Joel 457; Pines 621).

in the *Guide* which contains an apparently unambiguous affirmation of the survival of the intellect,<sup>47</sup> while Davidson, for his part, remarks that Maimonides' language here "falls short of technical precision."<sup>48</sup> "Falls short," however, does not strike me as a fair description of what must have been Maimonides' conscious change of style in order to expand on his perception of the hereafter, a change of style that, just like the heading "A call to attention" (*tanbīh*) in the middle of this chapter, serves as a pointer to the importance of this passage. For Pines, the change of style highlights Maimonides' ambivalence in this chapter; for Davidson, it seems to be of negligible importance.<sup>49</sup> I agree with Pines that the change is too remarkable to be ignored, but if the style of the text is significant, then what it says is also of primary importance. Borrowing terminology used by Pines in the same controversial article, we can distinguish in Maimonides' *Guide* between "epistemological sections" where he follows Aristotelian epistemology more closely, and parabolic (or, in Pines's terminology, "metaphysical") sections, which "lack semantic rigor."<sup>50</sup> Indeed, we can distinguish different kinds of sections even within the same chapter. In the "epistemological sections," a central term that appears repeatedly is "apprehension" (*idrāk*). *Guide* III 54 is peppered with twenty-nine occurrences of derivatives of *adraka*, but they are not evenly distributed. In the more parabolic or metaphysical sections of the chapter, this term is less prominent and sometimes altogether absent.<sup>51</sup> Pines argued that from the appearance of this term in the last chapter of the *Guide* (III 54) "it is evident that *idrāk* of God does not mean an intellectual act that brings about the identity of the subject and object of intellection. The meaning of the term is much weaker."<sup>52</sup> In translating the *Guide*, however, Pines adhered to the uniformity of translation, preserving the word "apprehension" in the parabolic sections as he did elsewhere. For example, we hear that Moses, "for his great joy (*ightibātīhi*) in that which he apprehended (*adraka*), he did neither eat bread nor drink water."<sup>53</sup> Maimonides expresses the joy of illumination with the term *ightibāt*, a figurative term that rings with Sufi and Avicennian undertones, but he

47. Pines 1979, 95.

48. Davidson 1992/93, 98.

49. See Stroumsa 1998a, 51–77, especially 74–75.

50. Pines 1979, 84, 86, 93. The lack of semantic rigor is attributed by Pines to Ibn Bājja.

51. The same phenomenon can be detected in other such sections of the *Guide*. See, for instance, the lightning simile in the introduction (and see above, p. 236); *Guide* I 62 (Pines 152); *Guide* II 4 (Pines 258), quoted by Pines 1979, 90.

52. Pines 1979, 91, in reference to *Guide* III 54 (Pines 636, 638).

53. *Guide* III 51 (Munk-Joel 456; Pines 620).

immediately checks the exuberance with the more semantically rigorous Aristotelian *adraka*. Pines unfailingly keeps to Maimonides' pace, changing registers as drastically and as often as Maimonides does.

As a result of this rigorous method, Pines's translation allows us to verify, and at times to criticize, Pines's own analysis. Regarding the possibility of attaining metaphysical knowledge, Pines's translation allows us to see where both he and Davidson try to erase Maimonides' ambivalence. As a translator, Pines followed the most scrupulous scientific standards, whereby it should be possible to repeat the experiment so that others can verify it. Indeed, Pines demonstrated scientific detachment throughout his work; as many will recall, he often concluded his lectures by saying that "further research will confirm or disprove the results offered here" (or something to that effect). His translation of the *Guide* gives readers the tools necessary for conducting such further research.

As mentioned above, with the passing of time, Pines's translation of the *Guide* has been occasionally censured for what its critics regard as inelegant rigidity. I have attempted to show here that precision rather than rigidity is what characterizes this translation. Maimonides was not a poet, and his attitude to poetry was, on the whole, ambivalent at best. But he had a soft spot for poets, like his favorite disciple, Joseph Ibn Shim'on, who put his pen at the service of the philosophical quest.<sup>54</sup> On rare but significant occasions, Maimonides himself indulged in such poetry, as when he chose to open and conclude the *Guide* with short Hebrew verses. Furthermore, as we already saw, there are several passages in the *Guide* that, although not belonging strictly to the genre of poetry, can surely be described as poetic, where the metaphorical, elated prose seeks to convey an exalted state of mind. Pines's sensitive English translation is attuned to the calculated shifts in Maimonides' style. Significantly, Pines's translation includes both the opening and the concluding verses of the *Guide*, as compared to the first edition of Schwarz's Hebrew translation, which omitted the opening verses, reflecting some doubt about Maimonides' authorship of them.<sup>55</sup> This doubt was rather common at the time, until the discovery of an autograph fragment of the opening verses eventually dispelled it.<sup>56</sup> Pines, for his part, does

54. See Yahalom 1997.

55. See Schwarz 1996; Stroumsa 1997, 141–42. In the subsequent publication of Schwarz's full translation in 2002, the poem was reintegrated into the text; see Schwarz 1:1, 2:676; Tzeri 2002.

56. Kraemer 1999, 61n18; Sirat 2011, 199–200.

not seem to have doubted that such poetic writings were as authentically Maimonidean as the more arid parts of the *Guide*.

Pines took great care to follow Maimonides: the technical, scientific, and Aristotelian Maimonides as well the poetic, elated, and Sufi Maimonides, the Maimonides certain of the validity of the school's metaphysical tradition as well as the disheartened Maimonides, consumed by doubts. Pines put forward his own bold conclusions in a number of scholarly articles. In the translation, however, respecting what he saw as Maimonides' "gift for lucid exposition," Pines seems to have stepped aside and attempted to let Maimonides speak, without editing him and without presuming to create a more coherent and perhaps more elegant Maimonides. The resulting translation is endowed with the enduring elegance of precision, and is therefore likely to remain indispensable for many years to come. In this, Pines promises to join the league of Ibn Tibbon.





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## 8

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### Pines's Translation of the *Guide* Alternative Possibilities

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ALFRED L. IVRY

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My first exposure to the *Guide* in English was with the Friedländer translation, sitting in class with Professor Altmann while he corrected Friedländer's readings. The 1963 Pines translation appeared the year I got my doctorate from Brandeis, and it has accompanied me in my travels ever since, marked up as it is with my underlinings and marginal references to the Arabic that underlies the translation, a translation that gave me pause and perplexity at times. That Pines knew his translation would follow the original text in causing a "disconcerting impression" upon most of its readers is clear,<sup>1</sup> yet he felt it inevitable.

Often I found myself wishing Pines had explained in footnotes his choice of terms and construal of sentences more than he did. I asked him once why his translation lacked a more robust set of notes. He told me that Strauss had informed him that the publishers felt the manuscript could not financially bear the weight of additional annotation—a disappointing response, given the great benefit Pines's erudition would have brought to clarifying

1. Pines 1963, lvii. Pines hoped that the "disconcerting impression" would only be an initial response to the work.

the text. Subsequently, I realized that Pines and Strauss deliberately chose to offer a translation with a minimum of textual annotations and contextual clarifications. They did so presumably out of a sense of loyalty to the Rambam's wishes to let the *Guide* speak for itself, each reader expected to react to it in proportion to his or her philosophical sophistication. The lengthy introductions that both Strauss and Pines contributed to the book could suffice to orient the reader to its subtleties, both men presumably reasoned, without their having to reveal the *Guide's* essential message.

Pines's translation was intended, then, to be as objective as possible, free from tendentious readings, an accurate rendition in English of a medieval Judeo-Arabic text. The technical terms would be offered as Maimonides would have wished to present them, in language that his readers would have recognized, if in varying degrees of comprehension.

The translation as a whole accomplishes this goal brilliantly, and has contributed greatly to the increased scholarship on the *Guide*. At the same time, the translation has not made the *Guide* more accessible to or popular among a wider reading public. This is probably due to the demands of the text—demands both stylistic and substantive—as well as to the lack of a readership equipped to appreciate its exegetical and philosophical subtleties. This too Pines foresaw.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the splendid achievement that Pines wrought, it may be said that the translation is not entirely free from privileging a certain reading of the *Guide*. This is probably inevitable, in that every translation is an interpretation. Pines's interpretation is to present Maimonides' God and His relation to the world in personal terms, even as Maimonides insisted that his God had no affect. Believing that, Maimonides yet wrote in a way that gave God personality, and Pines translates Maimonides accordingly, making no attempt to alert the reader to the dissimulating character of Maimonides' text. Pines's translation thus keeps Maimonides' secret as he would have wished it kept, although it does not grant the English reader full awareness of the text's ambiguity.

In what follows, I hope to give examples of this, beginning with minor stylistic issues.

Every translator has to choose between literal and nonliteral renditions of the original language. Pines mostly follows the Arabic closely, with allowance for syntactic changes, but supplements it on occasion with an addi-

2. Pines 1963, lviii.

tional word or two to bring out Maimonides' obvious intention. These small modifications may be seen as essentially stylistic touches, and are mostly innocuous—evidence of Pines's masterly control of his source language. At the same time, they give the English reader of the *Guide* a particular way to read the book, with little opportunity to consider alternative readings.

Consider, for example, Pines's translation of *al-khayrāt*. In *Guide* II 4 (256), Maimonides is said to exclaim the “good effects,” *al-khayrāt*,<sup>3</sup> that necessarily result from the circular motion of a celestial body. In *Guide* II 11 (275), however, *al-khayrāt* is given as “good things” in the sentence “from the benefits received by the [separate] intellects, good things and lights (*khayrāt wa-al-anwār*) overflow to the bodies of the spheres; and . . . from the spheres . . . forces and good things (*quwan wa-khayrāt*) overflow to this body.”<sup>4</sup>

Pines continues treating *khayr* as a “good thing” in the beginning of the next sentence, when Maimonides writes *wa-i'lam anna kull mufīd khayr mā fī hādhā al-tartīb* . . . Though this could be rendered simply as “Know that everything in this order that emanates some good . . .,” Pines fills out the sentence as “Know that in the case of every being that causes a certain good thing to overflow from it according to this order of rank . . .” Here, Pines's stylistic concern with fleshing out Maimonides' intentions merges with what we will see is his tendency to avoid using nominal or verbal forms of the term “emanation” (*fayd*), and with his tendency to treat Maimonides' adoption of the indefinite pronoun *mā* as denoting a specific or definite object.

Pines's clarifications of the original text are often subtle. For example, at *Guide* II 4 (258–59), where Maimonides gives his understanding of Aristotle's view of God's relation to the separate intellects of the heavens, Pines's translation reads as follows: “It cannot be true that the intellect that moves the highest sphere should be identical with the necessary of existence. For it has in common with the other intellects one separately conceivable thing, namely, that represented by the act of (*wa-huwa*) causing bodies to move. Now every intellect is distinguished from any other intellect with respect to one separately conceivable thing.”

This follows Maimonides' Arabic, except where Pines takes liberty with the Arabic *ma'nān*, an admittedly elastic term. For where the text says that

3. Munk-Joel 178, line 19.

4. Munk-Joel 191, lines 27–28.

the intellect that moves the highest sphere shares with the other intellects *maʿnan wāḥid*,<sup>5</sup> “one thing,” or “one notion,” and it is that thing, or notion, that distinguishes it from the other intellects, Pines identifies that “thing” as a “separately conceivable” thing. He does this to make Maimonides’ point more transparent, inasmuch as equating God with the first intellect would, as Maimonides says, make God subject to two separately conceivable notions, as are all the intellects, thereby introducing multiplicity into the deity. Why Pines chose “thing” over “notion” is another question, however, since Maimonides is describing the mental acts of the separate intellects.

On rare occasions, Pines does comment on his translation. Sometimes, however, his comment could use further comment. For example, in *Guide* II 11 (276), he comments on his choice of “ignorant” in “when the wicked from among the ignorant communities (*shirār al-mīlal al-jāhīlīyya*) ruined our good qualities.”<sup>6</sup> His note 13 points out that “ignorant” is semantically correct, as *jāhīlīyya* derives from the verb *jahila*, “to be ignorant,” and that it is “applied ordinarily to the pre-Islamic Arabs because of their paganism.” Pines then says that Maimonides “did not wish to suppress this shade of meaning,” but the quotation Maimonides cites from Isaiah 29:14—“And the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid” (*we-avdah ḥokhmat ḥakhamaw u-vinat nevonaw tistatar*)—obliged Pines to prefer “ignorant” to another term, “even though it does not render an essential element of the meaning.”

What is the “essential element” to which Pines is referring? I suggest it is the association of the word *jāhīlīyya* with pagan Arabs, and by extension with the Arab *umma*. Maimonides is likely casting aspersions upon Islam, and Pines’s note may be seen as a discreet nod to this notion, not elaborating upon it.

An example of an ambiguous choice is Pines’s translation of “the passion” for *al-infiʿāl* in the sentence in *Guide* III 52 (630) that he renders as “He, may He be exalted, has explained that the end of the actions prescribed by the whole Law is to bring about the passion (*ḥuṣūl hādha al-infiʿāl*) of which it is correct that it be brought about.”<sup>7</sup>

*Infiʿāl* would ordinarily be translated as “affect,” which has a more neutral and scientific ring to it. Presumably, Pines chose “passion” rather than

5. Munk-Joel 180, line 3.

6. Munk-Joel 192, lines 20–21.

7. Munk-Joel 464, lines 18–19. Munk (3:453) translates the entire sentence thus: “Dieu a exposé lui-même que le but de toutes les pratiques prescrites par la Loi, c’est de recevoir par la ces impressions dont nous avons . . . démontré la nécessité.”

“affect” because of the emotions of fear and awe of God that Maimonides would have follow the perfect person’s observance of the Law. This, though, conveys a sense of ecstasy and rapture that Maimonides does not emphasize elsewhere in the *Guide* as the culminating existential moment of perfection. Of course, the “passion” of Pines approximates “affect” in its Latin affinity to passivity, though that would have been misleading to the average reader. Pines’s “passion” thus alludes to the emotional effects of perfect knowledge and actions—which Maimonides may or may not have wished to convey.

On occasion, Pines’s choice of words may seem too literal and unfamiliar. At *Guide* I 10 (36), Maimonides associates the appearance and disappearance of the *shekhinah* with the biblical terms of descent and ascent, respectively.<sup>8</sup> As Pines indicates in a note, Maimonides uses the Arabic *sakīna* for the equivalent Hebrew *shekhinah*. Pines, however, chooses to use “Indwelling,” with the aforementioned note. He doesn’t thereby explain what or who the *shekhinah* is, let alone the “Indwelling.”<sup>9</sup> Maimonides would have expected his readers then as now to be familiar with the concept of the *shekhinah*, however amorphous it was—and is. It has been commonly associated with the immanent presence of the Divine, its personal aspect often highlighted as expressing the feminine, compassionate side of the Deity. Pines may have thought Maimonides would not have wanted to encourage such unphilosophical associations with the term, personalizing God’s presence unduly. Pines thus introduced an artificial term (a neologism?) in translating *shekhinah* as “Indwelling,” thereby bringing attention to a theory of providence Maimonides had yet to develop in the *Guide*. Perhaps Maimonides used the Arabic form of *sakīna* rather than the Hebrew *shekhinah* for this reason, to alert his specially attuned readers to his equivocal use of the term.

Pines’s choice of “Indwelling” resonates well with Maimonides’ reference a few sentences later to calamities that occur “in accordance with His [God’s] pre-eternal will,” *bi-ḥasb mashī’atihi al-qadīma*. Here, Pines follows his source literally, though it would have helped the average reader to explain what Maimonides meant by a “pre-eternal” will, as opposed to simply an “eternal” will.<sup>10</sup> As Maimonides elaborates, all divine “descents” are part of an eternal plan, or even a “pre-eternal” plan, referring to a will that pre-

8. Munk-Joel 24, lines 16–20.

9. Munk 1:57: “la majesté divine.”

10. As Munk (1:57) does in his translation. At *Guide* I 71 (180–81), Maimonides differentiates between “pre-eternity” and “sempiternity,” Pines’s choices for *azal* and *sarmad*, respectively.

ceded creation. He says, “Man is too insignificant to have his actions visited and to be punished for them, were it not for the pre-eternal will.”

Actually, Maimonides ends the sentence saying “were it not for the will,” Pines tacking on “pre-eternal.” He thereby draws attention to Maimonides’ view of the eternal nature of God’s will,<sup>11</sup> which has never changed, being present before creation.<sup>12</sup> Though the sentence just read would seem to indicate a predestined particular fate for every individual, it does not necessarily imply that, as we shall see, and Pines’s translation here assists in alerting us to Maimonides’ philosophical dressing of biblical figures of speech.

In his discussion of divine providence in *Guide* III 17 (469), Maimonides employs some of the same terms and ideas we have just been looking at.<sup>13</sup> In the fifth view of providence expressed, Maimonides offers the “opinion of our Law,” *ra’y shari’atinā*, with which he claims to agree. Thus, he says that God’s will that animals and humans move by means of their own will, and that man has free choice as well, stems “from His eternal volition in the eternity a parte ante,” *min mashī’atihi al-qadīma fī al-azal*. Maimonides has here doubled down on the notion of a pre-creation eternal will, using both *qadīma* and *azal* to convey the idea.

It is God’s eternal will that has already, and always, established and determined the rules of the game for the created world, what can and will happen to people consequent upon their actions. *Kull dhālika*, all the fortunate and unfortunate things that happen to an individual or group, Maimonides says, occur *‘alā jiha al-istiḥqāq*, in accordance with that which is deserved. As before, Pines translates this phrase as having every event “determined according to the deserts of the men concerned,” introducing determination into the sentence, as well as making God appear to act in an ad hominem manner.

Pines reinforces the impression of God’s partiality in the following paragraph, when Maimonides offers examples of actions that men interpret as divine punishments or rewards, but which occur simply *bi-istiḥqāq*—a term that Pines translates “according to his deserts,” but which should be “according to that which is deserved.” And again, a bit later in this chapter (472), he has Maimonides say that the calamities that people suffer at sea or at home are “not due to chance, but to divine will in accordance with the

11. Cf. Munk 1:57n2.

12. This foreshadows Maimonides’ view of God’s creation of the world, which was created “not from a thing,” but from His (eternal) will.

13. Munk-Joel 338–39.

deserts of those people," *fa-laysa . . . bi-al-ittifāq . . . bal bi-irāda ilāhīyya bi-ḥasb al-istiḥqāq*;<sup>14</sup> for the latter phrase, "in accordance with that which is deserved" is arguably preferable.

Pines's understanding that Maimonides was a determinist is to be found in other places in the *Guide* as well. In *Guide* III 20 (480), Maimonides says that God's knowledge is unchanging and unitary, encompassing future contingent events. As Pines translates, "For, seeing that [God] knows that a certain man is now nonexistent, but will exist at a certain time, will go on existing for such and such a duration, and will then become nonexistent, there will be for Him no additional knowledge when that individual comes into existence as He had known beforehand."

Pines has Maimonides assert God's prior knowledge of particulars by rendering the Arabic *fulān*<sup>15</sup> as "a certain man," instead of the more indeterminate "someone." Pines's choice would seem to be strengthened by the end of the sentence, however, when God is said to acquire no additional knowledge, "when that individual comes into existence as He had known beforehand." Thus Pines translates the Arabic *fa-inna idhā wujida dhālika al-shakhṣ ka-mā taqaddama al-ilm bihi*.

This sentence could, though, also be given as saying that no additional divine knowledge is acquired "whenever that individual exists like that of whom there was prior knowledge." That is, Maimonides is acknowledging that God knows all the ways future contingencies may become realized and become necessary, so that whenever one such occurs, He may be said to have known it already.

Maimonides makes this very point later in the chapter (482) when he explicitly says that God's knowledge of the actualization of future possibilities does not deprive them of their possible status. Again, Pines writes of a "certain possible thing," when the Arabic is *mumkin mā*,<sup>16</sup> "some possible thing." Maimonides is saying that God, in His eternal unchanging knowledge, knows that possible things, as truly possible, will be realized—their modal status then changing from possible to necessary. Not related to temporality, God does not know when that will happen, or which real possibility will then be realized, but whichever and whenever, He may be said to have known it (theoretically) always, not tampering with its contingent status.

14. Munk-Joel 341, lines 2–3.

15. Munk-Joel 347, line 25.

16. Munk-Joel 349, line 3.



That is the point of Maimonides' closing remark here that it is "one of the fundamental principles of the Law of Moses . . . [the basis of] the whole of religious legislation, the commandments and the prohibitions . . . that His knowledge concerning what will happen does not make this possible thing quit its nature" (482).

My alternative readings of Maimonides to those offered by Pines are induced by the Rambam's concept of God's eternal and unchanging being, which conflates His knowledge and will. Therefore, He cannot know changing, contingent beings as such, and Maimonides' attempts to make it seem possible only disqualify him as a philosopher and identify him with the *mutakallimūn* whom he despised. His preferred commitment was to philosophy, with all the reservations he expressed. Pines's translation at times blurs this commitment, deliberately.

Pines's translation choices in Maimonides' presentation of *creatio ex nihilo* in *Guide* II 13 (281ff.) are also noteworthy.<sup>17</sup> The first opinion given, which is the opinion of "all who believe in the Law of Moses," is that before God created the world it was "purely and absolutely nonexistent"; Pines chooses "nonexistent" to translate 'adam, which is literally "privation."

"Afterwards" (*thumma*), Maimonides writes (in Pines's translation), God volitionally "brought into existence (*awjada*) out of nothing all the beings as they are," including time. Pines's "out of nothing" translates *lā min shay'*, which is literally "not from a thing."

The second opinion that Maimonides presents is that of "all the philosophers," who say, as Pines translates, "it is absurd (*min al-muḥāl*) that God would bring a thing into existence out of nothing (*min lā shay'*)," and "it is likewise not possible that a thing should pass away into nothing (*ilā lā shay'*)." Reiterating his position, Maimonides writes that the philosophers believe it impossible that a hylomorphic being can be "generated out of the absolute nonexistence ('adam *maḥd*) of that matter, or that it should pass away into the absolute nonexistence of that matter."

In this last remark, Pines maintains his earlier preference for translating 'adam as "nonexistence," rather than "privation." He continues this locution at the end of the chapter, when Maimonides summarizes his position. The paragraph reads, in Pines's translation (285), "For the purpose of every follower of the Law (*sharī'a*) of Moses and Abraham our Father or of those who go the way of these two is to believe that there is nothing eternal (*laysa thamma shay' qadīm*) in any way at all existing simultaneously with God;

17. Munk-Joel 196–98.

to believe also that the bringing into existence of a being out of nonexistence (*ijād al-mawjūd min 'adam*) is for the deity not an impossibility (*al-mumtani'*), but rather an obligation (*wājib*).<sup>18</sup>

This last sentence of Maimonides' may furnish a clue to why Pines chose to translate *'adam* as "nonexistence," rather than "privation." The "absurdity" and "impossibility" of generating a being from nothing are logical evaluations that are more transparent with the term "privation," which in itself begs the existence of an actual existing object. It is for that reason also that the philosophers' deity is obliged to bring the privation of something into existence, since it is a possible reality, and all true possibilities must be actualized at some time. The philosophers, of course, deny the possibility of an "absolute" privation, which for them is a logical absurdity, something that is less apparent perhaps in the more metaphysically attuned "absolute nonexistence." Given that Maimonides is aware of this, and that he would have approved of the manner in which Pines presented the matter, did Maimonides also intend to signify that the Jewish view of an original state of "pure and absolute" privation (which Pines gives as "nonexistence") also makes no sense?

In the passages read, Pines translates both *lā min shay'* and *min lā shay'* as "out of nothing," rather than, respectively, "not from a thing" and "from no thing." As seen, he also translates *laysa thamma shay' qadīm* as "there is nothing eternal," rather than "no eternal thing is there." Though the alternatives mentioned are less felicitous, they do hint at Maimonides' understanding that God did not create the world out of absolute nothingness (since the forms of the world had to have been in His mind eternally), but rather without prior existing material "things."

Pines's translations here thus reinforce his conviction that Maimonides wanted to present his view of creation in a conventional manner that would shield it from unsuspecting eyes. That impression is foreshadowed in *Guide* I 28 (61), where Maimonides interprets the encounter at Sinai described in Exodus 24:10 as a parable depicting the creation of first matter—God being, according to Pines, its "creator ex nihilo." That is how Pines translates *mubdi'uhā*,<sup>19</sup> though he notes that *mubdi'*, while generally connoting a creator ex nihilo, is "less explicit than this Latin-English expression." Indeed it is, for the term is used by Avicenna and others simply to denote an "Originator," a deity who does not necessarily create from nothing. Pines has inter-

18. Munk-Joel 199, lines 6–9.

19. Munk-Joel 41, line 17.

preted Maimonides as wishing to present creation, at least exoterically, as being from nothing, and fastens on this term to do that.

A third example of this is Pines's translation of forms of *ikhtiyār* as "free choice," rather than simply "choice." Thus in *Guide* II 19 (303), Maimonides summarizes Aristotle's doctrine of the necessity that governs an eternal world in saying, as Pines translates, "Accordingly nothing has come into being in virtue of the purpose of One possessing purpose who chose freely and willed that all things should be as they are." The Arabic for "chose freely" is simply *ikhtāra*,<sup>20</sup> "chose," but Maimonides has in this case given Pines ample justification for adding "freely," in that Maimonides is contrasting Aristotle's God and his on this very point—namely, that the Greek god acts of necessity, without free choice, while the God of Israel chooses volitionally, presumably by His free will.

In *Guide* II 21 (314–15), Pines vacillates in his translation of this term. In the opening sentence, Maimonides summarizes the views on eternity of the "latter-day" philosophers, *al-muta'akhhirīn min al-falāsifa*, notably Avicenna and al-Fārābī. They assert, Maimonides writes, that God is "the Agent of the world, who chose that it should exist, purposed it, and particularized it" (*fā'il al-'ālam wa-mukhtār wujūdihi wa-qāṣiduhu wa-mukhaṣṣiṣuhu*).<sup>21</sup>

Thus, Pines renders *mukhtār* here as "chose," though at the next opportunity he again modifies the choice as "free." As Maimonides is said to say, these philosophers claim "there is no difference between your saying . . . an agent, one who wills, one who purposes, one who chooses freely, or one who particularizes." And again, in reiterating the Aristotelians' supposed position, which conflates necessity and free choice, Maimonides is rendered as saying that the meaning of Aristotle's assertion of the necessary and perpetual causation of the world is the same as what is meant by his followers asserting that "the world derives from the act of the deity or exists in virtue of His purpose, will, free choice, and particularization" — "free choice" being *ikhtiyār* in Arabic.

Maimonides has correctly assessed his Muslim predecessors' attempts to combine will and necessity in God's governance of the world, though in the Neoplatonic tradition that they inherited the will was not particularly free. If they did not resolve this antimony, though, neither did Maimonides, at least not philosophically. He stresses repeatedly that God's will, as

20. Munk-Joel 211, line 16.

21. Munk-Joel 219, line 21–22.

His knowledge and power, is not separate from His essence, and that that essence is unchanging and eternal, as we have seen. For Maimonides, then, God has always known what he intends to do, and He can never change that will without changing His being. His will, accordingly, is not free, not as we understand the term. Maimonides is, however, intent on claiming free choice for God, and Pines's translation encourages us to believe that that is his real position.

As mentioned, Pines frequently translates Maimonides' references to God by personifying the Deity, notwithstanding Maimonides' declared theoretical position against such a conception. Pines presents this in small as well as large ways. Thus, at *Guide* I 52 (119), Maimonides says that the different acts attributed to God do not reflect different notions within His essence, but, as Pines translates, "all His different acts, may He be exalted, are all of them carried out by means of His essence," *jamī' af'ālihi ta'ālā al-mukhtalifa kulluhā bi-dhātihi*.<sup>22</sup>

Pines has here rendered the phrase *kulluhā bi-dhātihi*—which, referring to the different divine acts, simply says that they are "in (or related to) His essence"—by the phrase "carried out by means of" that essence. It is, of course, the instrumental *bi* in *bi-dhātihi* that allows Pines to fill out the sentence as he does, though "carried out" by means of His essence adds a touch of personification to God that Maimonides may or may not have intended.

Similarly, in a number of places in the *Guide*, Pines has Maimonides say that God "watches over" His ordered creation. In *Guide* I 58 (137), God's governance of existent things is said to mean that He "watches over their order," *yahruzu niẓāmahā*,<sup>23</sup> when it could as well be said that He "preserves their order."

Pines uses the phrase "watching over" regularly to express God's providence, even where the sentence lacks the necessary verb. Thus, in *Guide* III 18 (475), providence is repeatedly said to "watch over" prophets, righteous individuals, and the like, though the Arabic is less direct. Pines has Maimonides say "that when any human individual has obtained, because of the disposition of his matter and his training, a greater portion of this overflow than others, providence will of necessity watch more carefully over him than over others." The Arabic of the latter part of this sentence reads simply, *kānat al-'ināya bihi akthar ɗaruratan*,<sup>24</sup> "providence will necessarily

22. Munk-Joel 80, line 22.

23. Munk-Joel 93, line 22.

24. Munk-Joel 343, line 16.

be greater for him.” So too, a few lines later, the prophets are said to have a providence that is simply *‘aẓīma jiddan*, “very great,” not “watched over,” as Pines has it.<sup>25</sup>

Pines continues this locution of “watching over” at *Guide* III 51 (624), where Maimonides explicitly ties providence to intellectual attainment. Once again, where the Arabic is laconic, saying that “providence will be with him,” *takūn al-‘ināya bihi*,<sup>26</sup> Pines has “watches over.” Later in the chapter (625), Pines has Maimonides assert that God’s providence is “constantly watching over those who have obtained this overflow,” *wa-takūn ‘ināya allāh dā‘imatan bi-man ḥuṣīla lahu dhālika al-fayḍ*.<sup>27</sup>

In essence, this is a tautology, Maimonides saying that God’s providence is constantly bestowed upon those to whom it is bestowed, provided they exert themselves to obtain it. By translating as he does, Pines emphasizes a volitional aspect in what is otherwise an automatic process. That is, the emanation that is constantly endowing the world with its forms particularly benefits those attuned to it, and this maximal amount of the omnipresent emanative forces is singled out as betokening God’s watchful presence. Maimonides, however, probably would not have objected to this popularization of his understanding of providence, for all the personalization and volitional attribution it brings to his image of God.

As is known, the Neoplatonically inspired notion of emanation is for Maimonides the “mechanism” through which God relates, indirectly for the most part, to the world. *Fayḍ* is the Arabic term for this, and its presence, mostly in verbal forms, is ubiquitous in the *Guide*. True to its etymological origins, *fayḍ* in its various constructions is given by Pines as “overflow” and “overflowing.” The first mention of this term is in *Guide* I 2 (24), where Maimonides describes the intellect of pre-lapsarian man as one that “God made overflow unto man,” *al-‘aql alladhī afāḍahu allāh ‘alā al-insān*.<sup>28</sup>

At *Guide* I 46 (100), Maimonides considers the actions and language ascribed to God in the Bible as, in effect, metaphors for divine emanation. As Pines translates, “Action and speech are ascribed to God so that an overflow proceeding from Him should thereby be indicated” (*Wa-ustu‘ira lahu al-fi‘l wa-al-kalām li-yadulla bihi ‘alā fayḍ mā fā‘id ‘anhu*).<sup>29</sup>

25. Munk-Joel 343, line 20.

26. Munk-Joel 460, line 11.

27. Munk-Joel 461, lines 3–4.

28. Munk-Joel 16, line 13.

29. Munk-Joel 67, line 18–19. Cf. too *Guide* I 58 (136).

At *Guide* I 69 (169), Maimonides writes, in Pines's translation, "For the universe exists in virtue of the existence of the Creator, and the latter continually endows it with permanence in virtue of the thing (*bi-al-ma'nān*) that is spoken of as overflow."<sup>30</sup>

A fuller description of *ḥayḍ*'s activity is found at *Guide* II 12 (279), where Maimonides writes that "it has been said that the world derives from the overflow of God (*qīla anna al-'ālam min ḥayḍ allāh*) and that He has caused to overflow to it (*wa-annahu afāḍa 'alayhā*) everything in it that is produced in time. In the same way it is said that He caused His knowledge to overflow to the prophets (*innahu afāḍa 'ilmahu 'alā al-anbiyā'*) . . . and it is His action that is called overflow."<sup>31</sup>

Pines is justified in calling *ḥayḍ* "overflow," for Maimonides says God Himself is sometimes likened to an overflowing spring of water, an image supposedly of an action separate from matter. Yet, the emanative process is not purely immaterial, for, as Maimonides says toward the end of this chapter (280), the material celestial spheres, as well as the separate intellects of the heavens, also act by overflowing.<sup>32</sup>

For all his mention of *ḥayḍ* as the principal factor in the actions of God and the celestial intelligences and spheres, Maimonides repeatedly alleges that he does not understand its meaning, and nowhere does he endorse the hypostatic Intellect and soul of classical Neoplatonism. Translated as "overflow," *ḥayḍ* remains metaphorical but ill defined, a popular term disguising its scientific and philosophical forebears.

Toward the end of *Guide* III 51, Pines again interprets Maimonides as personalizing a relation that essentially is not personal. It is the relation had by an individual's acquired intellect to the universal Agent, or Active, Intellect at the time of a person's death. That relation is commonly called "conjunction," *ittiṣāl*, and though Maimonides scarcely uses the term in the *Guide*, it is a key feature of his epistemology.

The first appearance of a version of this term is found in the first chapter of the *Guide* (23), where Maimonides expounds on the unique feature of "intellectual apprehension," *al-idrāk al-'aqlī*, which only human beings possess. He writes, "It was because of this something, I mean because of the

30. Munk-Joel 116, lines 22–23.

31. Munk-Joel 195, lines 1–3. *Guide* II 41 (385) enlarges upon the role of emanation in prophecy.

32. In *Guide* II 11 (275), Maimonides describes this emanative process in greater detail, down to the actions of the Agent Intellect.

divine intellect conjoined with man (*min ajli hādhā al-ma'nā a'nī min ajli al-'aql al-ilāhī al-muttaṣal bi-hi*), that it is said of the latter that he is in the image of God and in His likeness.”<sup>33</sup>

In *Guide* I 68 (164), Maimonides expands his description of intellectual apprehension. He does not speak of conjunction per se, but it is the activity described, that of the joining of subject and object in cognition. As Pines translates, “For in the case of every intellect, its act is identical in essence [*fī'luhu huwa dhātuhu*; literally, ‘its act is its essence’] . . . for the true reality and the quiddity of the intellect is apprehension (*li-anna ḥaqīqat al-'aql wa-māhīyatahu hiya al-idrāk*).”<sup>34</sup>

In concluding this explanation, Maimonides says (165–66) that “the numerical unity of the intellect, the intellectually cognizing subject, and the intellectually cognized object (*al-'aql al-'āqil wa-al-ma'qūl*) does not hold good with reference to the Creator only (*fī ḥaqq al-bārī' faqaṭ*), but also with reference to every intellect. Thus in us, too, the intellectually cognizing subject, the intellect, and the intellectually cognized object, are one and the same thing (*shay' wāḥid*) whenever<sup>35</sup> we have an intellect in actu.”<sup>36</sup>

In *Guide* III 8 (432), Maimonides, though not Pines, refers to conjunction by name when he writes of those men who “seek a state of perpetual permanence (*al-baqā' al-dā'im*) . . . [and] only reflect on the mental representation of an intelligible, on the grasp of a true opinion regarding everything, and on union with the divine intellect (*wa-itṭiṣāl bi-al-'aql al-ilāhī*).”<sup>37</sup> Pines has here substituted “union” for “conjunction,” perhaps as a way of further distancing Maimonides from acknowledging his acceptance of a well-recognized doctrine, and instead having him speak in more general and, for Maimonides, less philosophical terms.

The term for “conjunction,” *ittiṣāl*, is absent in the concluding chapters of the *Guide*, though its presence is felt strongly. In *Guide* III 51, Maimon-

33. Munk-Joel 15, lines 17–19.

34. Munk-Joel 113, lines 8–10. Pines notes repeatedly that his rendering in this passage of *'aql* as “intellect” is “more appropriate” than “intellectual cognition,” though it is “impossible to separate the two senses,” given that the intellect in act has been described as nothing more than intellectual cognition, or apprehension. Still, “intellect” fits the context much better than “intellectual cognition.” Would “the quiddity of intellectual cognition is apprehension” make much sense? Pines’s note is thus a rare instance of his wishing to emphasize a point Maimonides has made.

35. Pines: “wherever.” Arabic is *matā*.

36. Munk-Joel 114, lines 8–11.

37. Munk-Joel 310, lines 27–29.

ides uses the terms “soul” and “intellect” interchangeably. He has not, however, provided any systematic description of the faculties of the soul, as did Averroes, nor any argument for or defense of the concept of an independent, individual, and immortal soul, as did Avicenna. Maimonides believed that the only faculty of the soul that survived death was the intellect, and that to the degree it achieved conjunction with the Agent Intellect, the degree to which it participated in universal and eternal truth. That did not give the individual intellect individual immortality, however, and Maimonides says on two occasions that there is but one eternal intellect, that which contains all the forms on earth.

Nevertheless, writing in a popular vein at the end of his book, in chapter 51, Maimonides conflates “intellect” and “soul.” Thus he first says (627) that as “the fire of the desires is quenched, the intellect is strengthened, its lights achieve a wider extension, its apprehension is purified, and it rejoices in what it apprehends.” Then, when an old and “perfect” man approaches death, his apprehensions and joy become greater and transform into “a great love for the object of apprehension [i.e., God] . . . until the soul is separated from the body at that moment in this state of pleasure.”

Concluding the chapter, Maimonides writes, as Pines has it (628), “After having reached this condition of enduring permanence, that intellect remains in one and the same state, the impediment that sometimes screened him off having been removed. And he will remain permanently in that state of intense pleasure, which does not belong to the genus of bodily pleasures . . .” In so rendering it, Pines has chosen to treat the subject of the sentence as a person, rather than as the person’s intellect. A closer reading would provide “After this, that intellect (*dhālika al-‘aql*) will remain permanently in one state, since the impediment that sometimes obscured it (*al-‘ā’iq alladhī kāna yahjubuhu ba‘ḍa al-awqāt*) had been lifted. And it will remain permanently (*wa-yakūnu baqā’uhu*) in that state of intense pleasure . . .”<sup>38</sup>

This is a poetic description of the anticipated bliss that Maimonides envisaged conjunction would bring the intellect that joined with the Agent Intellect, even though qua intellect there is no emotional dimension to conjunction. It is the person while alive whose soul imagines the delight to be had in conjunction, the experience itself being purely intellectual, particularly after the demise of the soul. Nevertheless, Pines chooses to

38. Munk-Joel 463, lines 10–12.



translate Maimonides in such a way as to personalize conjunction, as he does with emanation. He clearly felt that is what Maimonides would have wanted (whatever he believed), and that as translator his primary obligation was to respect the author more than his readers. Can we—ought we—do otherwise?

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## 9

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# Rabbi Yosef Qafih's Modern Medieval Translation of the *Guide*

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Y. TZVI LANGERMANN

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### Early Biography in Yemen: A Medieval Philosopher of the Twentieth Century

The various translators of Maimonides' *Dalālat al-ḥā'irīn*, medieval and modern, all had an excellent command of Arabic. However, only two of them can be considered native speakers: Yehudah al-Ḥarizi and Yosef Qafih.<sup>1</sup> While Samuel Ibn Tibbon may well have spoken Arabic at home, he did not grow up in an Arabic-speaking environment. The ability of native speakers goes far beyond the ability to communicate freely in the language; they are familiar with the entire culture of expression for which the language is the main medium. Native speakers possess sensitivity to nuance and innuendo that is nearly impossible to teach, or even for emigrants to pass on within their households.

1. The family name in Arabic was al-Qāfiḥ. The rabbi had little interest in the proper spelling of his name in English, a language that he did not read; Mossad ha-Rav Kook, which published the rabbi's editions and translations of Maimonides, prefers Kafih. Here, I will simply use Qafih, without diacritics.

Rabbi Yosef Qafih had yet another advantage: he was born and spent his formative years in the Yemen, a country in which medieval traditions of philosophy and astronomy, close to those in which Maimonides himself was involved, were very much alive.<sup>2</sup> But the Yemen was not closed to the outside world. To the contrary, “modern” ideas and books were received there by way of the Turkish authorities as well as Jewish visitors. Rabbi Yihya Qafih (1850–1931), Yosef’s grandfather, was very open to these new resources, which he viewed to be fully compatible with Maimonidean philosophy. His library included books on modern science in Hebrew, products of the European Haskalah, and in Arabic, reflecting a parallel development in the Middle East.<sup>3</sup> Rabbi Yihya instituted a major revival based on the two pillars of Sa’adya Gaon and Maimonides, and Rabbi Yosef’s life work was mostly devoted to the writings of those two figures.<sup>4</sup>

The influence of his grandfather on Rabbi Yosef cannot be overstated. An orphan almost from birth (his father died after being brutally struck by a Yemeni soldier, and his mother died soon after he was born), Yosef was raised by his grandparents. Though Yosef was only a young boy when Rabbi Yihya passed away, the precocious youngster absorbed a tremendous amount of learning from his grandfather.

Among Rabbi Yihya’s many activities, two in particular are directly relevant to Rabbi Yosef’s translation: his regular study sessions on the *Guide* and his efforts to preserve the Yemeni literary heritage. Rabbi Yihya taught Maimonides (and Sa’adya) to a select group of students; Arabic, of course, was the language both of the texts and of instruction. Though still only a child, Rabbi Yosef sat in on those sessions, and would even follow up later privately on some question that had been raised. Decades later he recalled specific remarks of his grandfather.

An interesting example of this is found in the introduction to his edition and translation of Maimonides’ *Book of Commandments*. Rabbi Yosef recalls that often there were not enough manuscripts of the text for all the participants, and some had to use, instead, a printing of Moshe Ibn Tibbon’s translation. This led to many questions concerning differences and

2. To date, the only published biography is that written by his granddaughter Avivit Levi (2003), which contains liberal citations from the rabbi’s handwritten autobiography. There are scattered references in Rabbi Qafih’s writings to his discussions with Muslim astronomers and philosophers. David King mentions meeting, during a visit in 1974, several elderly Yemenis who had studied computational astronomy from medieval texts; see King 1983, 10.

3. Langermann 1987, 10–11.

4. Rabbi Yihya’s reform is discussed in Ahroni 1986, 154–56.

omissions from the original (as taught by Rabbi Yihya) and the medieval Hebrew version.<sup>5</sup> In a note, Rabbi Yosef recalls a specific case: Ibn Tibbon apparently did not recognize in one place that an initial *alif* serves as the interrogative particle, and so misread *a-wa-lā* (and is it not?) as *awwalan* (at first).<sup>6</sup>

As European collectors scoured the Yemen for manuscripts, Rabbi Yihya initiated a desperate attempt to preserve the written heritage of Yemenite Jewry. He could not outbid the foreigners, but he was able to reach an agreement with some agents to deposit manuscripts with him overnight so that they could be copied (by hand, of course) before they were shipped out. Over the course of the night, the manuscript would be divided among a team of copyists, and Yosef, although he was only six years old, took part in the effort. His edition of the *Dalāla*, from which he prepared his translation, is based on the Munk-Joel edition checked against three Yemeni copies, all of which were recommended by Rabbi Yihya to his grandson.<sup>7</sup>

### Entry into the World of Translation and the Academic Periphery

The social relations that obtained within Jewish society toward the end of the British Mandate and the early years of the State of Israel, the period when Rabbi Yosef began his literary activity, seem today like a romantic fantasy. The young Yemenite rabbi was befriended by some of the most eminent scholars of his generation, such as Shlomo Dov Goitein, one of the first non-Yemenites whom Rabbi Yosef met upon arrival in Jerusalem. Goitein recognized that the Judeo-Arabic culture that he had studied in university was still very much alive in people like Rabbi Yosef. Still, he did not look upon Rabbi Yosef as a talking artifact to be exploited for his own academic publications. Instead, the two developed a true friendship based, as all such relationships must be, on mutual respect.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, the dividing lines be-

5. Qafih 1971, 9–10.

6. Qafih 1971, 52–53n35. The divergence was noticed in the specific manuscript used by Rabbi Yihya. The *Book of Commandments* has never been critically edited, and most of the manuscripts have yet to be taken into consideration.

7. See the introduction to his edition and translation (Qafih 1:14–15). Many more Yemeni copies are extant; see Sirat 1991; Langermann 2000b.

8. Rabbi Qafih thanks Professor Goitein for reading over the manuscript of his *Halikhot Teiman: Jewish Life in San'a and Environs* (Qafih 1963a). In one of the two prefaces to his *The Yemenites: History, Communal Organization, Spiritual Life* (Goitein 1983), Goitein cites from his first publication on the Yemenites, which appeared in 1931, in which he wrote that the Yemenite community is blessed with many scholars and intellectuals who are more capable

tween formal academic (i.e., university) and traditional scholarship were nothing like the trench warfare that now besets Israeli society. Eminent researchers such as Saul Lieberman and Simha Asaf, who both straddled the university-yeshiva divide themselves, also befriended Rabbi Yosef. Asaf's mediation was critical in convincing Rabbi Y. L. Maimon, head of Mossad ha-Rav Kook, to accept, in 1950, Rabbi Yosef's plan to publish the entire Maimonidean corpus (excluding the medical writings): *Commentary on the Mishnah, Guide of the Perplexed, Book of Commandments, Letters, and Responsa*.<sup>9</sup>

### Translation Procedure for the *Guide*

The encouragement that he received for his earlier translation projects notwithstanding, Rabbi Qafih clearly felt the need to justify a new Hebrew version of the *Guide*. Of all the translations of Maimonidean writings, surely Samuel Ibn Tibbon's *Moreh ha-nevukhim* has had the greatest impact. This was the version studied by generation after generation of Jews who did not read Arabic; and it was the version that enraged some elements in the Jewish communities, leading to the Maimonidean "controversies."<sup>10</sup> Ibn Tibbon's text established the idiom and vocabulary for Hebrew philosophical writing that were maintained well into modern times. Rabbi Qafih quickly disposed of the translation by al-Ḥarizi, Ibn Tibbon's contemporary. Ibn Tibbon's own negative judgment of his rival has held to this day, and al-Ḥarizi's translation has been read by only a few (though some, such as Moses Nahmanides, are very important to the history of Jewish thought).<sup>11</sup> Ibn Tibbon's work required a more serious critique. Rabbi Qafih pointed to two interconnected weaknesses: Ibn Tibbon was not well versed in phi-

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than he of carrying out the study of their language. In the preface to the later anthology, he names Rabbi Yosef Qafih and Professor Yehudah Ratzaby (in that order) as two individuals who made his prophecy into a reality.

9. Rabbi Qafih relates the story in the introduction to his edition and translation of Maimonides' *Commentary on the Mishnah* (Qafih 1963b, 8); for undisclosed reasons, Mossad ha-Rav Kook delayed publication for some ten years, which gave Rabbi Yosef the opportunity to critically review the materials that he prepared once more; the volumes mentioned all appeared eventually, except for the responsa, which were published by Joshua Blau. Rabbi Qafih did retranslate many of the responsa in the notes to his edition of the *Mishneh Torah*, his last and most extensive project, which he completed shortly before his demise.

10. Fraenkel 2007.

11. See Raymond Scheindlin's contribution to this volume and the section titled "The Tradition of the *Guide* among Jewish Thinkers . . ." in Caterina Rigo's contribution.

losophy, and his ability to handle the *Guide* properly was hampered by the fact that his study of Arabic was limited to medical texts. On the other hand, Rabbi Qafih conceded that Ibn Tibbon's skills had improved over time.<sup>12</sup>

Rabbi Qafih's translation contains many notes indicating disagreement with Ibn Tibbon, occasionally accompanied by a barb at the Provençal translator. Nonetheless, he does not hesitate to compliment Ibn Tibbon for an elegant translation. A good example of the latter is the passage from III 30 that describes the origins of astrolatry among the ancients, which was instituted at the behest of "their men of knowledge, as well as the ascetics and *ahl al-taqwā* among them."<sup>13</sup> How best ought one to translate *ahl al-taqwā*? Pines translates "men of piety," closely following Munk's "pieux." Rabbi Qafih himself chooses *ḥasid*, the Hebrew word for "pious." *Taqwā* usually means "fear of God," but the context here clearly indicates that Maimonides is speaking of fear of sin, which will bring on disaster. Hence Ibn Tibbon translates *yir'e ḥeṭ'*, "those who fear sin." Rabbi Qafih praises this choice as elegant (*na'eh*).<sup>14</sup>

Rabbi Qafih translated many books, but it was only in connection with the *Guide* that he sensed the need to explain his method at length. It seems clear enough that the reason for this is the extraordinary care that he took in translating this particular text. Maimonides chose his words very carefully, and his translators ought to do no less. Though the *Guide* is indeed especially challenging, the concerns and worries that the rabbi openly confesses certainly apply to all translation. I will quote here extensively from his introduction. However, since he translates from his own edition, I should first say a few words about that.

Rabbi Qafih recognizes two traditions, for lack of a better term, of the original text: that of the Munk-Joel edition (Jerusalem: Junovitch, 1930/31), which presents the version sent to Provence and used by Ibn Tibbon for his translation; and the Yemeni tradition. The differences between the two are for the most part trivial, although not entirely so. An instance of the latter is found in the opening sentence of III 23, concerning Job, where the two provide different groupings of the letters into words: Munk-Joel displays *awwal mā*, the Yemeni manuscripts *aw li-mā*. Thus, only the Yemeni tradition preserves in that chapter the option Maimonides offers (following the rabbis)

12. Qafih 1:16–20.

13. Pines 522.

14. Qafih 3:570n2; notes 1, 8, 12, 13, and 16 to the same chapter are critical, some extremely so.

of reading Job as a parable *or* as a historical occurrence. Pines translates: “If it is supposed that the story of Job happened, the first thing that occurred was . . .”<sup>15</sup> Rabbi Qafih’s Hebrew has, instead: “When the episode of Job was supposed, or when it happened, the issue upon which the five agreed upon was . . .”<sup>16</sup> Some of the Yemeni readings that the rabbi consigned to the apparatus open up interesting avenues of interpretation, even when it is quite certain that they are copyists’ interventions.<sup>17</sup>

The Yemeni tradition appeared to be essentially uniform, and, though he consulted seven Yemeni copies, Rabbi Qafih settled on three that he used for his edition. Two are twentieth-century copies, one of them prepared by the rabbi himself when he was only twelve years old. It was copied under the supervision of his grandfather from a “very old” manuscript deposited in the Alshaykh synagogue. Not surprisingly, Rabbi Qafih held the Yemeni tradition to be truer to the original. As noted, the rabbi described his method of translation in great detail:

As for my translation, [I began it only] after I had studied the book several times. Indeed, when still very young I sat before my grandfather. I heard his explanations as he taught the best of his students; they studied it in the Arabic original, and he explained it as need be. When I prepared my own copy [of the Judeo-Arabic original], I asked him more than once about the meaning of one thing or another. Now again I have gone over it more than once. After I established for myself the correct reading of the original, as given above, I translated the whole thing without looking at the earlier translations so as not to be influenced by their understanding, and thus not be able to understand that which I am capable of understanding freely.<sup>18</sup>

It is indeed tempting, when confronted with a difficult passage, for the translator to turn to an earlier translation for help. However, it would then

15. Pines 490.

16. Qafih 3:534. In a note to his Arabic text, Rabbi Qafih records the Munk-Joel version and uncharacteristically adds parenthetically *we-shibush hu’* (it is a mistake).

17. For example, according to some Yemeni manuscripts, Maimonides announces that he will make use of the sixth cause of contradiction (and not just causes five and seven, as most versions and all interpreters agree); some medieval Yemeni commentators explore this new possibility. See Langermann 2009, 170–75.

18. Qafih 1:20.

be difficult to produce one's own rendering "freely," and this is a situation that the rabbi wanted to avoid:

After I completed the translation I went over it again, this time in close comparison to the original, for the purpose of testing and checking. Then I reviewed it once more without the original in order to see if it could be read without obstacles or difficulties in the sentence structure. Sometimes, when the translator reads his translation together with the original, and the sentences of the original are ordered in his mind, he is unable to sense the difficulty in the translation. For this reason I reviewed it again without referring to the original. Wherever I encountered difficulties of any sort that could be readily corrected, I consulted the original and corrected as best as possible. Only after this did I compare my translation with that of my predecessors, R. Shemuel ben R. Yehudah Ibn Tibbon and R. Yehudah al-Ḥarizi. Wherever I found a discrepancy in understanding our author, I examined and checked the original once again, and corrected whatever I saw fit to correct; but wherever both my rendering and that of R. Shemuel seemed equally possible, I cited R. Shemuel's words in my footnotes. Occasionally I did find that R. Shemuel had a better way of expressing it than I did, in which case I rejected my translation and inserted that of R. Shemuel. For my entire purpose was only to present our author's words to the reader in the most correct and precise manner.<sup>19</sup>

### A Critical Correction: The Translation of *al-āthār* in *Guide* II 30

As one may expect, most of the corrections of Ibn Tibbon that Rabbi Qafih offers are minor. One correction, however, seems to me laden with meaning for students of the *Guide*, since it shows both proper understanding of a critical passage in the *Guide* and a mature appreciation of the expectations that many readers brought to it. Ibn Tibbon's choice, it seems to me, is not due to a lexical ambiguity or error, but is, rather, the product of a mistaken anticipation—an anticipation based on his idea of what the *Guide* is all about. Ibn Tibbon's (mis)understanding remains solidly entrenched to this day, especially in academic circles. We shall see that the "fatal mistake" detected in the rabbi's alternative by a very senior scholar is a product of

19. Qafih 1:20.



the same prejudice. Finally, Rabbi Qafih's understanding—which I take to be correct—looks to me to be the natural way in which a native speaker would understand the passage. This native speaker is someone who has not merely attained near-native proficiency in the study of the language, but someone who has been brought up in an arabophone culture and its ways of expression. Only one other translator of the *Guide* was as deeply immersed as Rabbi Qafih in Arabic culture and language, experiencing it and participating in it as a living phenomenon, and that was Yehudah al-Ḥarizi. Though his translation of the passage is not entirely clear, he understood the key phrase just as Rabbi Qafih did.

The passage occurs at a climactic moment in Maimonides' discussion of the critical, and highly sensitive, problem of the creation of the world. After offering some thoughts on day two in the Genesis account (the “making of the firmament”), he cites the most loaded passage in Talmudic esoterica, the story of the four who entered paradise (*pardes*, the orchard; Ḥagigah 14b), after which he remarks:

Reflect, if you are one of those who reflect, to what extent he has made clear and revealed the whole matter in this statement, provided that you consider it well, understand all that has been demonstrated in *al-āthār*, and examine everything that people (*al-nās*) have said about every point mentioned in that work (*fī kullī shay'in minhā*).<sup>20</sup>

I have quoted from Pines's translation, leaving the pivotal word in the original. In parentheses I have placed additional Arabic words, which were almost certainly mishandled as a result of the erroneous translation of *al-āthār*. Ibn Tibbon took *al-āthār* to be shorthand for *al-āthār al-'ulwiyya* and a reference to Aristotle's *Meteorologica*. It is not hard to see why he did this: preparing a Hebrew version of the *Meteorologica* was his first project in the translation of philosophical or scientific books. Moreover, Ibn Tibbon saw in that Aristotelian book in particular an important key for unlocking the “secrets” of the *Guide*.<sup>21</sup> His translation, however, is mistaken, because by itself *al-āthār* will never refer to the *Meteorologica*. *Athar*, the singular of *āthār*, literally means “trace” or “track,” and by extension, “effect,” just like

20. Pines 353.

21. On Ibn Tibbon's translation of the *Meteorology*, see Fontaine 1995. Aviezer Ravitzky pressed hard for the critical role of the *Meteorology* in Ibn Tibbon's understanding of the *Guide*; see, e.g., Ravitsky 2008.

“footprint” in contemporary English means “effect,” “traces of someone’s or something’s activity.” But tracks or traces of what? Aristotle’s book took on the name *al-āthār al-‘ulwiyya* because, in Aristotelian science, the rainbow, halo, rain, snow, and so forth, all of which are discussed in the *Meteorologica*, are the effects or traces produced by the celestial bodies in the earth’s atmosphere. Hence *al-āthār al-‘ulwiyya*, “the higher traces,” are the traces in the upper reaches of the terrestrial realm of celestial forces.<sup>22</sup>

However, without the adjective *‘ulwiyya*, *al-āthār* will never refer to Aristotle’s book. Instead, especially in the context of a reference to an ancient source such as the Talmud, it will mean “tradition,” namely, the tracks or traces left for us by an earlier generation. This usage is very widespread in Islamic literature.<sup>23</sup> Accordingly, Rabbi Qafih translates *al-āthār* as *divre ḥakhamim*, “the words of the Sages.” Al-Ḥarizi uses here *otot ha-ḥokhma*. Like Ibn Tibbon, he renders *āthār* literally by *otot*. However, the modifying noun that he uses in the formation of the construct refers to wisdom, and tradition does preserve for us the traces of (ancient) wisdom. Ibn Tibbon’s modifying noun, *ha-shamayim*, reflects his assumption that this is a reference to Aristotle’s *Meteorologica*, to which Ibn Tibbon gave the Hebrew title *Otot ha-shamayim*.<sup>24</sup>

I have no doubt that Rabbi Qafih and al-Ḥarizi—the only two translators who had true native proficiency in Arabic—are correct. Ibn Tibbon (and subsequent translators, such as Munk, Pines, and Schwarz, all of whom follow Ibn Tibbon in translating *al-āthār* as the *Meteorologica*) was certainly aware that *al-āthār* means “tradition.” At the beginning of III 39—a passage well removed from the discussion of creation—Ibn Tibbon renders it correctly with the Hebrew *qabbalah*.<sup>24</sup> However, he was not deeply enough immersed in Arabic usage to know, as both Rabbi Qafih and al-Ḥarizi knew well, that without a qualifying adjective, *āthār* cannot refer to the *Meteorologica*—even if the topic is the creation of the world. Moreover, his

22. The Arabic versions of Aristotle’s treatise are studied in depth by Paul Lettinck (1999).

23. Indeed, Rabbi Qafih’s translation is close to the more precise usage of the term listed by Jabre (1970, 1): “tout enseignement positif ayant pour auteur une personnalité autre que le Prophète.” There is now a whole school of Salafi theologians called al-Atharī, who take their name from their exclusive reliance on tradition; see Halverson 2010. As we shall see, it was the context rather than the lexicography that tripped up Ibn Tibbon and the other translators; when the context has no connection to the creation of the world, the Arabic was handled properly.

24. In a note to the passage in II 30, Rabbi Qafih sarcastically refers to III 39, where, he remarks, Ibn Tibbon’s translation is “almost correct.”

mistake led to additional, unwarranted interventions in the text. Ibn Tibbon renders *al-nās*, “people,” as *anshe ha-ḥokhma*, “people of wisdom,” or even “scientists.” Pines, who follows Ibn Tibbon’s lead, speaks of “that work,” though the Arabic makes no mention at all of a book. He has in mind the pronomial suffix, *-hā*, in the last word of the sentence, *minhā*.

Rabbi Qafih’s very different translation of *al-āthār* has not drawn much attention. Michael Schwarz does not even mention it in the note to his Hebrew translation, though he refers to it obliquely by citing, at the end of the same note, my contribution to the Pines Festschrift, in which I adduced evidence that some medieval Yemeni thinkers took *al-āthār* to mean something other than the *Meteorologica*.<sup>25</sup> That same paper was cited by Herbert Davidson in his book on Maimonides. Davidson remarks: “The fatal weakness in Kafah’s reading is that Maimonides would scarcely have spoken of something’s being *demonstrated* in tradition” (Davidson’s emphasis).<sup>26</sup> This interesting comment in fact furnishes an additional example of the same expectation that Maimonides is writing exclusively in the technical vocabulary of Aristotelian philosophy, the very same expectation that led to Ibn Tibbon’s mistranslation. I will proceed to debunk it by citing one among several passages where *burhān* (or the verb *barhana*, the Arabic term for “demonstrate” that features in the passage under discussion) is definitely not used in the sense of a logical demonstration. This passage will afford another glimpse at Rabbi Qafih’s approach to translation.

Let us look, then, at *Guide* III 23. Maimonides is discussing Job’s enlightenment, which leads him to admit the errors in his earlier accusations and to withdraw his complaints. The passage reads: “[Job] had given up his opinion, which was most mistaken, and had demonstrated (*barhana* ‘*alā*) that he had been mistaken therein.”<sup>27</sup> It should be clear to all that no demonstration in the Aristotelian sense is to be found in the book of Job. (Indeed, some would question whether there even exists a demonstration for providence as it is understood by Job after his enlightenment.) Rabbi Qafih translates *barhana* as *hokhiaḥ*, which also means “demonstrate,” but in a note he explains: “*Barhana*: in the course of the investigative debate, it was proven to him by proofs based on thinking that he erred in his first assumption; but it is possible [to translate] ‘publicized.’”<sup>28</sup> The rabbi was

25. Schwarz 1:365–66n43; Langermann 1988.

26. Davidson 2005, 100–101n137.

27. Pines 492.

28. Qafih 3:537n26.

clearly troubled by the passage; many arguments are found in the book of Job, but no demonstration worthy of being called a *burhān* in the strict technical sense. Though he cautiously reproduces the dictionary meaning in his translation, he suggests, in this note, an alternative that suits the context far better. “To publicize” is indeed what Job does.

In fact, as one finds in Louis Gardet's entry in the second edition of the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, *burhān* is used for all sorts of proofs, including those drawn from tradition and scripture.<sup>29</sup> Ibn Tibbon's mistaking *al-āthār* for a reference to a book by Aristotle, and the mistaken remark of Herbert Davidson in defense of Ibn Tibbon's mistranslation, are both due to the same expectation or assumption that the language of the *Guide* is always technical and Aristotelian. Maimonides is committed to the philosophical tradition, but the *Guide* is not by any means written strictly or exclusively in the philosophical idiom.

### The Translation of *Shanā'a* and Other Words Constructed from the Same Root

In this final section, I would like to compare Rabbi Qafih's translation of an important word form with its translation in the four other major translations of the *Guide*. Although it is not considered a “technical term,” and hence it has not been given the attention (or what is at times, in my view, almost obsessive consideration) that such terms receive in current research, *shanā'a* is actually a very important tool in Maimonides' kit. As we shall see, it plays a pivotal role in his arguments against the eternity of the world—perhaps the most delicate and difficult issue treated in the *Guide*.

The dictionary definitions of *shanā'a* give no indication of its applications in philosophy, nor of the variety of meanings that it can take on. Wehr's dictionary lists “ugliness,” “hideousness,” “horridness,” and “repulsiveness.” In its weightiest appearances in the *Guide*, when it is a criterion for rejecting the arguments in favor of the eternity of the universe, *shanā'a* means something like “absurdity”—in what sense the thing it describes is “absurd” will be clarified below. It also features in Maimonides' discussion of the rationale of the religious commandments.<sup>30</sup> Other forms constructed

29. Gardet 2012.

30. For example, *Guide* III 26 (Pines 509); see below for its occurrence in connection with levirate marriage. On some other occasion I hope to present a comprehensive study of all of the word's appearances.

from the same root are found in the *Guide* and have caused headaches for the translators. In the following, I will take a close look at some of the most interesting cases and how they were handled by all of the translators.

Prima facie, the translator ought to try to use the same word (or words constructed from the same root) to translate a word from the donor language as consistently as is feasible. Doing so not only transfers the idiom and the lexical units but also alerts the reader that a single word is being used consistently in the donor language. (Such consistency is now one of the demands—again, as far as is possible—of academic translation, especially when dealing with so-called technical terms.) However, the semantic fields and other baggage that words carry with them differ greatly from one language to another, and often one must choose to use more than one word in order to render its meaning in different contexts as precisely as possible in the recipient language.

*Shanā'a* is certainly very difficult to translate, and translators of the *Guide* have had to resort to more than one word when they render it into Hebrew, French, or English. Munk, followed by Pines, often chooses “absurd.” Schwarz, the author of the most recent translation, usually wavers between the Hebrew *absurd*, a foreign loanword that was not available to earlier Hebrew translators (I doubt that Rabbi Qafih knew of it, or would have considered it if he had known), and *megunneh*, which is used often, but not always, by Ibn Tibbon, and which is reflected in Pines’s occasional choice of “disgraceful.” Ibn Tibbon will also use *harḥaqah*, literally, “putting something at a distance,” or, more loosely, “rejecting.” Al-Ḥarizi prefers *dibbah*, a reverse translation of Sa’adya’s rendition of the biblical *dibbah* as *shanā'a* (Num 13:14; Prov 10:18). As Jacob Klatzkin notes, *dibbah* in medieval Hebrew does not mean “slander,” but rather a false claim, nonsense, or absurdity.<sup>31</sup>

Rabbi Qafih almost always (rare exceptions are reviewed below) translates the word with forms of the Hebrew *zar*, *zarut*, “strange,” “out of place.” He will occasionally supply a note explaining exactly what Maimonides is calling strange. Only once does he acknowledge Ibn Tibbon’s alternative. In the discussion of levirate marriage in *Guide* III 49, Maimonides twice states that the brother of the deceased may wish to avoid the *shanā'a* of the ceremony of “the taking off of the shoe” (*haliṣah*; see Deut 25:7–10)

31. Klatzkin 1928–33, 1:124.

and consent to marry his sister-in-law. Pines translates the term as “shame.” Here Rabbi Qafih notes that Ibn Tibbon’s *gennut* is “possible.”<sup>32</sup>

Before proceeding to our examples, the meaning of “absurd” as a stand-in for *shanā’a* must be clarified. “Absurd” is a philosophical judgment, and it is the translation used often, though by no means consistently, by Munk, Pines, and Schwarz. How appropriate is “absurd” as an expression of the negative judgments Maimonides offers in the *Guide*? Arabic-writing philosophers and scientists, Maimonides among them, certainly recognized the proof known in mathematics, especially Euclidean geometry, as *reductio ad absurdum*. In that proof, two premises lead to two contradictory statements, an impossible impasse. In Arabic, this situation is expressed not by *shanā’a*, but rather by the phrase *wa-hādhā muḥāl*, “and that is impossible.” However, the “absurdities” rejected by Maimonides in the *Guide* are not logical impossibilities; hence he uses *shanā’a* rather than *wa-hādhā muḥāl*. The problematic statements are, as a rule, far-fetched options—so far-fetched as to lie beyond the bounds of reason. With this in mind, Rabbi Qafih’s *zar*, “foreign” or “out of place,” seems to capture more precisely the sense of absurdity that Maimonides has in mind.

Moreover, it seems almost uncanny that in his choice of *zar*, Rabbi Qafih has hit upon an exact translation of the Greek word that is likely to stand behind *shanā’a* when used in philosophical argumentation: *atopos*, literally, “out of place.”<sup>33</sup> According to Liddell and Scott, *atopos* can take on the meanings of “strange, paradoxical,” which is the meaning given to *shanā’a* in Rabbi Qafih’s translation, and also “disgusting, foul,” conveyed by *megunneh* in the translations of Ibn Tibbon and others. However, when employed in a logical context, the first of these two meanings seems to be more appropriate; it is used in this sense by Aristotle in *Categories* 11a37, and is usually translated as “absurd.”

Now on to our examples, the most important of which figure in Maimonides’ extensive critique of the philosophers’ claims concerning the eternity of the world.

*Guide* II 14 (Qafih 2:314; Pines 288; table 9.1) contains the penultimate argument of the philosophers against creation, which Maimonides characterizes as *‘alā jihat al-tashmī’*, “by way of bringing about a *shanā’a*.” This is the

32. Pines 603; Qafih 3:657n26.

33. I thank Michael Chase for his help in clarifying this; Chase refers to Hadot 1995, 158.

argument that before creating the world the deity would have been idle in pre-eternity. It seems clear that in this setting, *shanā'a* must mean something “strange,” “unseemly,” “hard to fathom,” or “absurd,” in the sense of “out of place,” as explained above. This range of meanings is captured well by the Hebrew *zarut*.

Table 9.1

| Rabbi Qafih             | Ibn Tibbon                 | al-Ḥarizi                       | Schwarz  | Pines   | Munk                |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---|---------------------|
| <i>'al ṣad ha-zarut</i> | <i>'al ṣad ha-harḥaqah</i> | <i>'al ṣad tameha we-dibbah</i> | <i>kede le-gannot</i> ; and, in a note, “in order to show the <i>gennut</i> of the belief or the absurd within it” | to prove that the opposed doctrines are disgraceful | réduire à l'absurde |

*Guide* II 16 (Qafih 2:320; Pines 294; table 9.2), at the very end of the chapter, reads as follows (my translation from the Judeo-Arabic): “I shall make it clear that just as a certain *shanā'a* is forced upon us in maintaining creation, a more serious *shanā'a* than that is forced when maintaining [the world’s] eternity.” Its usage in both this and the preceding passage reinforces the claim that *shanā'a*, even if it is not usually admitted to the club of “technical terms,” is a key tool in Maimonides’ argument; it furnishes an important criterion for deciding the delicate issue of creation versus eternity. This is one instance where Rabbi Qafih departs from his usual translation, choosing instead the Talmudic term *qushiyot*, “difficulties” or “objections.” Note that both Rabbi Qafih and Ibn Tibbon use a plural form. This is perfectly acceptable, even though *shanā'a* is singular, because here *shanā'a* refers collectively to the difficulties caused by a series of objections, which are spelled out in the subsequent discussion.

Table 9.2

| Munk      | Pines    | Schwarz                                       | al-Ḥarizi     | Ibn Tibbon      | Rabbi Qafih     |
|-----------|----------|---|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| absurdité | disgrace | absurd (the loan-word, written out in Hebrew) | <i>dibbah</i> | <i>harḥaqot</i> | <i>qushiyot</i> |

Schwarz again signals his discomfort in a note; he refers to Dozy's dictionary, adding that the primary meaning is "something disgraceful" (using the Tibbonian *megunneh*).

In *Guide* II 21 (Qafih 2:342; Pines 315; table 9.3), Maimonides opens the chapter by remarking that "the latter-day philosophers," even though they subscribe to eternalism, nonetheless refer to God as "agent," "chooser," "He Who purposed," and "particularizer." These words reflect no change at all in their accepting the necessity (*luzūm*) of the world being as it is; they have simply reworded their exposition for the purpose of a nicer expression (*taḥsīn 'ibāra*) or to remove a *shanā'a*.

Table 9.3

| Rabbi Qafih  | Ibn Tibbon      | al-Ḥarizi        | Schwarz                                  | Pines    | Munk                        |
|--------------|-----------------|------------------|--|----------|-----------------------------|
| <i>zarut</i> | <i>harḥaqot</i> | <i>ha-dibbah</i> | <i>genmut</i> ; in a note, <i>absurd</i> | shocking | quelque chose de malsonnant |

In this context, *shanā'a* should relate somehow to *'ibāra*, and thus the fault should lie in the articulation of the argument rather than in its logic. For this reason, both Munk and Pines choose a translation that is different from their usual preferences. As usual, Rabbi Qafih sticks with *zarut*, and that makes sense too: something can be "foreign" or "out of place" for literary or aesthetic reasons as well as for logical ones.

The culmination of this argument offers an interesting instance in which both Pines and Munk appear to agree on the same (seemingly incorrect) understanding. Maimonides is, as we have seen, arguing here that the philosophers think there is no real difference between saying that the world exists of "necessity" as the effect of divine cause and saying that it is an act or intentional particularization of the deity, unless we accept that it has come to be at a particular instant, etc. There are certain criteria that must be met with regard to the proper understanding of "intent" (*qaṣd*) in order to make the verbal distinction meaningful. So the final sentence of this section, beginning *fa-idhā fahimta al-ma'nā hākadhā* (Qafih 343; Pines 315: "Now if you understand the meaning of the term in this way . . ."), should be making this very point, namely, that, by itself, the verbiage changes nothing. This point is missed by both Munk and Pines, who understand the last part of this sentence (that the world has come to be through an act or an intentional particularization) to be the correct view that Maimonides wants



his reader to accept. That is not untrue, but it's not what Maimonides wants to get across here; rather, he wants to get across that the later philosophers hold two incompatible views.

By contrast, Rabbi Qafih's translation of *ma'nā* is '*inyan*, "issue," rather than "meaning of the term." A note explains that the issue is the contradiction between something being both a particularized act of the deity and one necessarily issued from him.<sup>34</sup> Schwarz registers his disagreement with Pines in a note, but takes notice of neither Rabbi Qafih nor Munk.

In *Guide* II 30 (Qafih 2:380; Pines 349; table 9.4), the term appears twice in the same argument presented at the beginning of the chapter. I cite here Pines's translation, inserting forms of *shanā'a* in place of his translations: "On the other hand the statement, which you find formulated by some of the Sages, that affirms that time existed before the creation of the world is very difficult. For that is the opinion of Aristotle . . . : he holds that time cannot be conceived to have a beginning, which is *shanī'*. . . . They express their opinion in the following text [from Genesis Rabbah III] . . . *that there existed before that an order of time . . . that the Holy One, may His name be blessed, used to create worlds and destroy them. . . . This second opinion is ashna'* than the first." This citation further illustrates the critical role played by *shanā'a* and its derivatives in deciding the all-important question of creation; it also serves to exemplify the difficulty translators had in finding its proper equivalent, especially here, where we encounter the adjective in normal and comparative forms. Here, Rabbi Qafih uses *muzar*, "strange"; Ibn Tibbon sticks to *megunneh* and is followed here by Schwarz. Pines chooses "incongruous," a word he will use occasionally—though not consistently—later on. All of the above produce the comparative by means of an additional qualifier in Hebrew or English. Munk uses two entirely different words, perhaps because "plus absurde" does not sound right. Al-Ḥarizi, too, has two different words—indeed, two different parts of speech.

Table 9.4

| Munk          | Pines               | Schwarz                         | al-Ḥarizi        | Ibn Tibbon                      | Rabbi Qafih        |
|---------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| absurde       | incongruous         | <i>megunneh</i>                 | <i>dibbah</i>    | <i>megunneh</i>                 | <i>muzar</i>       |
| plus blamable | more<br>incongruous | <i>yoter</i><br><i>megunneh</i> | <i>yoter ra'</i> | <i>yoter</i><br><i>megunneh</i> | <i>yoter muzar</i> |

34. Recall that the mathematical usage of *shanā'a* is "absurd" in the sense of two incompatible conclusions.

The next set of examples comes from the discussion of the intertwined issues of divine providence and knowledge in *Guide* III 16 (Qafih 3:502; Pines 461; table 9.5). Here, too, *shanā'a* functions as an important criterion. Notable here is Maimonides' severe characterization of the "philosophers'" opinions concerning God's knowledge as "evil (*sayyi'a*) and *shanī'a*." *Shanī'a* is an intensive adjectival form built from the same root as *shanā'a*.

Table 9.5

| Munk     | Pines       | Schwarz            | al-Ḥarizi         | Ibn Tibbon         | Rabbi Qafih       |
|----------|-------------|--------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| absurdes | incongruent | <i>ha-megunnot</i> | <i>ha-reḥoqot</i> | <i>ha-megunnot</i> | <i>ha-muzarot</i> |

The pairing of the two adjectives may indicate that in this case, Maimonides is passing a moral judgment. Such an understanding is reflected in the translations of Munk ("mauvaises et absurdes") and Schwarz (*ha-ra'ot we-ha-megunnot*). But Rabbi Qafih translates *sayyi'a* as *geru'ot*, "bad" in the sense of "faulty" rather than "evil" (Munk's "mauvaise" may perhaps be taken in this sense), and maintains his consistent translation of *shanī'a* with *muzarot*. The rabbi senses here the need for an explanatory note, in order to explain that the *zarut*, "strangeness," consists in this: in order to avoid ascribing to the deity a lack of care for creation—an ethical defect—they ascribe to him ignorance, an essential defect in the correct conception of the deity. In his reading, Maimonides is not ascribing any evil intent to the philosophers. Instead, they have tried (once again, as it seems Maimonides' opponents have the tendency to do) to avoid one difficulty only to fall into a more serious one. In other words, it is a case of what we would call poor judgment.

In the chapter that follows (*Guide* III 17; Qafih 3:508; Pines 466), Maimonides asserts that the Ash'ariyya stance on the question of divine providence brings along with it "tremendous *shanā'āt*," which they willingly bear and take upon themselves. *Shanā'a* is rendered by each of the translators exactly as it was in the previous example. But just what are these *shanā'āt*, strange or absurd notions, that the Ash'ariyya school knowingly accepts? I have not seen any of the translators—including Rabbi Qafih—address this in their notes. However, in one of his classes on the *Guide* that I attended, the rabbi explained that the "strange things" incumbent upon them are their religious commandments, imperatives accompanied by threats, which are hard to reconcile with the notion that everything is governed by pre-eternal divine will.

In *Guide* III 17 (Qafih 3:513; Pines 471; table 9.6), Maimonides sums up his opinion concerning ‘*ināya*, usually translated “providence,” and called here a *qā’ida*, which literally means a “pillar” (of Judaism).<sup>35</sup> Pines translates: “I am not relying upon the conclusion to which demonstration has led me, but upon what has clearly appeared as the intention of the book of God and of the books of the prophets. This opinion, which I believe,<sup>36</sup> is less disgraceful (*aqallu shanā’atan*) than the preceding opinions and nearer than they to intellectual reasoning (*al-qiyās al-‘aqlī*).”

Table 9.6

| Munk              | Pines       | Schwarz  | al-Ḥarizi                                      | Ibn Tibbon                                      | Rabbi Qafih       |
|-------------------|-------------|--|--|---|-------------------|
| moins             | less        | <i>paḥot</i>   | <i>safeqoteha</i>                              | <i>yoter</i>                                    | <i>me’atāt</i>    |
| d’invraisemblance | disgraceful | <i>megunneh</i> ;<br>in a note,<br><i>absurdit</i> (?) | <i>we-</i><br><i>dibbotiha</i><br><i>paḥot</i> | <i>me’atāt</i><br><i>ha-</i><br><i>harḥaqot</i> | <i>ha-zaruyot</i> |

This is one of the most important passages for the study of the term *shanā’a* and, I think, an important and overlooked passage in Maimonides’ epistemology. Maimonides admits that he has no “demonstration” (*burhān*) for his position on providence—or at least he will not reveal it if he has one.<sup>37</sup> His view has been formed by an inspection of Scripture; its superiority over all the other views lies in its (1) possessing less *shanā’a* than any other position and (2) being the closest of all to *al-qiyās al-‘aqlī*. There are then two criteria, which play out against each other in this way: in the absence of *burhān*, we must settle for the view that is weighed down with the least *shanā’a* and is closest to *al-qiyās al-‘aqlī*. In other words, in the absence of a full proof, we choose the most reasonable and least troublesome alternative.

All three Arabic terms denote criteria employed in logical reasoning. Hence Pines’s choice here of “disgraceful” for *shanā’a* looks to be out of place. Schwarz’s doubts are revealing: though he chooses *megunneh*, “dis-

35. So also does he dub his famous thirteen “articles of faith,” articulated in his *Commentary on the Mishnah* and now part of the daily prayer of many Jews. There are some interesting differences between the *qawā’id* that are mentioned in the *Guide* and those in the “canonical” thirteen; I hope to address them on some other occasion.

36. I think it would be clearer to translate here, “which I hold to be true.”

37. I have shown above that *burhān* need not always mean “demonstration” in the sense of a proof constructed with all the rigor of formal logic. However, that is the usual meaning of the term. Maimonides could also be referring to a demonstration drawn from oral tradition, as he is in II 30.

graceful," he questions in a note whether *absurdit* is not the better translation. Elsewhere Schwarz offers alternative translations for *shanā'a* in a note, but this is the only place I have found where he punctuates his note with a question mark. Munk offers, here, a new translation for *shanā'a*, one that he has not yet offered; to my mind it suits the context perfectly. Munk's translation means something like "less unreasonable"; it indicates that we are choosing here the least troublesome of alternatives, none of which has been satisfactorily demonstrated.

Al-Ḥarizi's version is interesting: either his copy of the original added *shakk*, "doubt," or he, as translator, saw a need for clarification and added a synonym. Rabbi Qafih sticks with *zarut*, though, like Ibn Tibbon and al-Ḥarizi, he displays a plural form. This indicates that he takes *aqall* to mean "less in quantity." One could also take it to mean "less in severity," in line with Maimonides' own statement that it is the severity of doubts, rather than their quantity, that ultimately rules an opinion out of court.

One could justify, on purely lexical grounds, rendering *al-qiyās al-'aqlī* as "intellectual proof" or even "rational syllogism." However, Maimonides emphasizes here that he has no "demonstration," so a good translation must therefore make it clear that *al-qiyās al-'aqlī* is something less than a demonstration. Ibn Tibbon's literal rendering, *he-heqesh ha-šikhli*, glosses over the difference. Munk's translation, "le raisonnement de l'Intelligence," followed closely by Pines, is again an excellent fit within the context. Rabbi Qafih translates *ha-shiqqul ha-šikhli*, literally, "weighing by the intellect." This phrase conveys the act of sizing up the different views by means of reason, in a manner that falls short of proof; like Munk's translation, which the rabbi could not read, it is a fine contextual solution.

There is at least one place where Maimonides uses *shanā'a* to convey a moral judgment: Rabbi Qafih certainly thinks so, but most other translators do not agree. The passage is found in *Guide* III 37 (Qafih 3:597; Pines 546), where Maimonides describes how the ancient fire-worshippers would intimidate people into passing their children through the fire, asserting that this ritual would protect them. He observes further—citing Pines's translation—that "there is no doubt that because of this absurd belief (*al-shanā'a*) everybody hastened to perform this action." Pines's translation of the sentence is as literal as one can get and still maintain clear English. Munk (3:288) has slightly rearranged the sentence structure, in effect highlighting the role of *shanā'a* by making it the subject: "Cette croyance absurde eut indubitablement pour effet que chacun s'empresserait d'accomplir l'acte en question." "Absurd,"

for Munk and Pines, and *harḥaqa*, for Ibn Tibbon, are common translations for *shanā'a*. They convey, however, the rational judgment that the pagan practice makes no sense. Rabbi Qafih, who, as noted, is the most consistent of all translators with regard to *shanā'a*, here uses a different word, *mifga'*, meaning “nuisance” or “obstacle” in modern Hebrew. Knowing the rabbi’s predilection for biblical phrases as they are interpreted by Sa’adya, I suggest that he had in mind Job 7:20, where Sa’adya takes *mifga'* to mean “opponent and rival” (Sa’adya 1972, 64). In context, then, the pagan practice dubbed *shanā'a* is an act of hostility or opposition to God. Schwarz uses an even stronger term, *to'evah*, “abomination,” to indicate that the judgment is here a moral one. Interestingly enough, in this case, it is the two most recent translators who depart from their usual policy regarding alternatives. Rabbi Qafih, who generally ignores alternatives in the rendering of *shanā'a*, footnotes both the Arabic term and Ibn Tibbon’s translation. Schwarz, as we have seen, almost always wavers between *absurd* and *megunneh*; but the very different meaning taken on by *shanā'a* in this particular instance seems so clear that he sees no need for a note.

Finally, let us look at some instances where *shanā'a* appears as a verb. In *Guide* III 40 (Qafih 3:607; Pines 556; table 9.7), Maimonides employs *shanna'a* as a verb in the second form, meaning “to make something a *shanā'a*.” The context is the ridicule heaped on the Torah by the *khawārij* (heretics, literally, “those who have stepped outside,” that is, out of the bounds of the religious norms) in connection with the law that an ox that has fatally gored a human is to be put to death. This, asserts Maimonides, is not a punishment for the ox, *ka-mā yushanni'u 'alaynā al-khawārij*; Pines translates: “an absurd opinion that the heretics impute to us.” Only Ibn Tibbon has available to him a verbal form of one of his preferred translations. Both Rabbi Qafih and Schwarz find Hebrew verbs that convey the meaning accurately enough; Munk uses a verb that, in my opinion, misses the slanderous sting of the heretics’ claim. Pines and al-Ḥarizi employ one of their usual translations but must add a verb to convey the transitive sense.

Table 9.7

| Munk                     | Pines                          | Schwarz         | al-Ḥarizi     | Ibn Tibbon             | Rabbi Qafih    |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|------------------------|----------------|
| comme nous le reprochent | impute an absurd opinion to us | <i>mal'izim</i> | <i>dibbah</i> | <i>yarḥiqu 'alaynu</i> | <i>lo'agim</i> |

Finally, a passage in *Guide* III 46 (Qafih 3:635; Pines 582; table 9.8) speaks of the rationale behind slaughtering the paschal lamb and sprinkling its blood on the doorposts; there *shanā'a* features as a verb in the tenth form. Perhaps it was this unusual form, along with the context, that raised difficulties for all of the translators. I offer here my own English version, which is as literal as possible. Citing Exodus 12:23, where Moses tells the Israelites that, as a result of the ritual, God will spare the Israelites the destruction that will befall the Egyptians, Maimonides explains that this is “a reward for publicizing their obedience and eliminating that which the idolaters held to be a *shanā'a* (*yastashni'uhu*).”

Table 9.8

| Rabbi Qafih                                  | Ibn Tibbon                                       | al-Ḥarizi                             | Schwarz  | Pines            | Munk              |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|--|------------------|-------------------|
| <i>she-haya ḥamur</i><br><i>be'ene . . .</i> | <i>she-hayu</i><br><i>marḥiqim</i><br><i>oto</i> | <i>she-hayu</i><br><i>nizharim bo</i> | <i>harḥaqat</i><br><i>(ma'asehem</i><br><i>we-de'otthem)</i><br><i>he-megunnim</i> | absurd<br>things | les<br>absurdités |

Rabbi Qafih's Hebrew follows the Arabic precisely in sentence structure and syntax, until *yastashni'uhu*. There is no Hebrew equivalent of *shanā'a* in this form, so he renders it “was severe (*ḥamur*) in the eyes of the idol worshippers.” I believe that he means here that this was held to be a severe violation of their religious code. Both Ibn Tibbon and al-Ḥarizi applied similar translation strategies; in fact, both manage to find an appropriate verb and keep idol worshippers as the subject, as it is in the Arabic. Ibn Tibbon once again maintains consistency with many of his other translations, in which *shanā'a* is rendered by *harḥaqah*.

Munk has considerable difficulty with the passage. He translates (3:363): “les absurdités professées par des<sup>38</sup> idolâtres.” Pines follows Munk closely, writing: “This is in recompense of their manifestation of obedience and their having put an end to the absurd things done by the idolaters.” The same sense is conveyed by Schwarz, though he wisely chooses *megunneh* here over *absurd*, and adds a rare parenthetical clarification (610): “and their keeping afar the (acts and beliefs) of the idolaters that are *megunim*.”

Munk, however, is clearly not satisfied with his translation. In a note to

38. This is certainly a typographical error; it should be “les,” as it is in the alternatives given in the note to the passage.

the passage, he suggests some alternatives based on his understanding of *istashna'a*, which, in his opinion, must mean “faire ou croire des absurdités” here. He adds that this is not the usual meaning, which is “réputer absurde.” Finally, he cites both Ibn Tibbon and al-Ḥarizi, chiding the latter (but, for some reason, not the former) for not giving a good account of *istashna'a*. In my view, “absurd” is not at all fitting in this passage. The point is not the absurdity of Egyptian belief, but rather the brazen effrontery in slaughtering the animal held by them to be sacred. Rabbi Qafih, Ibn Tibbon, and al-Ḥarizi all agree on the proper sense, which is that the Israelites were rewarded for committing an act that the idolaters held to be utterly forbidden.

Michael Schwarz's  
 Hebrew Translation of Maimonides'  
*Guide of the Perplexed*

AVIRAM RAVITSKY

The Hebrew Translations of the *Guide*

The problems raised by the *Guide of the Perplexed* and the methods that Maimonides used to solve them have set an agenda for Jewish philosophy since the Middle Ages. Its Hebrew translation from the Arabic original, even during Maimonides' lifetime, was more than a matter of transferring a text from one language to another. *Dalālat al-ḥā'irīm*, composed in Judeo-Arabic, represents the culmination of Jewish philosophy as it flourished in the Arabic-speaking world. *Moreh ha-nevukhim* marks the beginning of Jewish philosophy written in Hebrew in Christian Europe. The translation of the *Guide* from Arabic into Hebrew was the transformative moment for this geo-cultural change, whose importance cannot be overestimated.<sup>1</sup>

I would like to thank Professor Warren Zev Harvey for his comments.

1. See Fraenkel 2007, 37–40; and cf. 226: “The acceptance of the writings of the *falāsifa* in the Jewish communities in Christian Europe required a conceptual framework that could justify the study of philosophy in a religious world. This role was filled by Maimonides' interpretation of Judaism as a philosophical religion, in the distribution of which Ibn Tibbon put great efforts.” In general, it seems that the choice made by medieval Hebrew translators to translate (Greek, Islamic, and Jewish) philosophy from Arabic into Hebrew specifically



There were two complete, roughly contemporaneous medieval translations of the *Guide* into Hebrew, one by Samuel Ibn Tibbon and another by Judah al-Ḥarizi.<sup>2</sup> Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera subsequently translated significant parts of the *Guide* as part of his commentary entitled *Moreh ha-moreh* (*The Guide of the Guide*), which includes an entire chapter dedicated to criticism of Ibn Tibbon's translation.<sup>3</sup> There were a number of modern attempts to translate or paraphrase the *Guide*, or parts of it, into Hebrew, beginning with that of Menachem Mendel Lefin (1824–33) and continuing into the twentieth century with that of Aharon Seliman Eliyahu Mani (1956/57).<sup>4</sup> Until recently, the most important, widely used, and successful modern Hebrew translation was that of Rabbi Yosef Qafih (1972),<sup>5</sup> who dedicated a considerable part of his life's work to translating the best of medieval Judeo-Arabic philosophical and theological literature into Hebrew.<sup>6</sup> The latest attempt to provide a complete translation of the complex contents of the *Guide*, with its loaded terminology and nuanced literary style, from Arabic into Hebrew is that of Professor Michael Schwarz.<sup>7</sup>

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and not into a vernacular, which would have allowed Jewish readers at varied times and places to understand what was written, reflects a deep cultural tendency. See Ivry 1990, 172: "The decision to translate philosophical texts into Hebrew should be seen as a deliberate act of appropriation, the absorption of philosophy into the inner recesses of Judaism." Ivry's explanation seems correct in particular with respect to the translation of the *Guide* and in general with respect to the depth of the change undergone by the Jews of Christian Europe, or at least part of it, following its translation.

2. On these two translations, see James Robinson's and Raymond Scheindlin's contributions to this volume. Ibn Tibbon consulted with Maimonides concerning the translation of several expressions in the *Guide*, but in general he did not see himself as obligated to follow Maimonides' advice or directions for translation (see Maimonides 1988, 2:511–54, especially 532–33; Baneth 1951/52, 171–72, 188–89). In this sense, Ibn Tibbon might be considered not only the first translator of the *Guide* but also a critic of Maimonides' own choice of Hebrew terminology for a translation. Ibn Tibbon was also self-critical, repeatedly changing and refining his translation over the years, as if it were the translation of a work of art whose every attempt calls for refinement and improvement (Fraenkel 2007, 80–102). For an explanation of the philosophical-metaphysical background for Ibn Tibbon's criticism of al-Ḥarizi, see Fraenkel 2007, 156–57. On al-Ḥarizi's translation and its influence, see Sadik 2016 and Raymond Scheindlin's contribution to this volume.

3. See Shiffman 1994, 1995/96, 1999.

4. For a review of these works, see Schwarz 2:747–49 and the introduction to this volume.

5. Qafih 1972.

6. On Qafih and his translations, see Schwarz 2:749–52 and Tzvi Langermann's contribution to this volume.

7. For a new Hebrew translation of the *Guide* that appeared as this volume was going to press, see Gershuni 2018.

## The Historical Centrality of Ibn Tibbon's Translation of the *Guide* and the Tasks of a Modern Hebrew Translator

In his excellent survey of translations of the *Guide*, Schwarz writes of Ibn Tibbon's rendering:

The translation was a pioneering project. Not only is it accurate and faithful to the original. When there were no Hebrew words to translate concepts and terms in the Arabic original, the translator was forced to create new Hebrew words. . . . As for the grammatical structure of the sentences, the translation for the most part follows the Arabic syntax of the original, which makes it difficult to read for the contemporary reader of Hebrew. Thus the translator created a philosophical Hebrew language that served Hebrew-writing philosophers in the following generations. . . . Most medieval commentators on the *Guide of the Perplexed* used Ibn Tibbon's translation in their commentaries. Therefore one who wishes to understand Jewish philosophy in the Middle Ages must study and understand this translation.<sup>8</sup>

Indeed, Ibn Tibbon's translation of the *Guide* was the foundation stone of medieval philosophical Hebrew. From the thirteenth century to the early modern period, its terminology, its syntax and grammar, and its philosophical interpretation of terms and phrases became standard. Anyone who studies Gersonides' *Wars of the Lord*, Crescas's *Light of the Lord*, Albo's *Book of Principles*, and many other classics of medieval Jewish philosophy that were originally written in Hebrew will encounter the Hebrew of Ibn Tibbon. Ignorance of or unfamiliarity with Ibn Tibbon's philosophical Hebrew is tantamount to being cut off from the Jewish philosophical legacy of the Middle Ages—the period with the greatest formative influence on Jewish thought up to the present.<sup>9</sup>

Some ancient books are inaccessible to modern readers because the syntax and vocabulary therein have left active linguistic use. This is not exactly what occurred with the language of the various Hebrew translations of the *Guide*, and especially not with the language of Ibn Tibbon. The

8. Schwarz 2:744–45.

9. In his review of Ibn Tibbon's translation of the *Guide*, Schwarz himself emphasized the centrality of Ibn Tibbon's translation for one who "wishes to understand medieval Jewish philosophy" (Schwarz 2:744–45).

philosophical-Hebrew linguistic tradition of Ibn Tibbon was adopted by and continued to be the language of Jewish philosophers and scholars throughout the Middle Ages. However, modern Hebrew—an eclectic, evolving continuation of the Hebrew language in all its stages<sup>10</sup>—has adopted some features in its history and dropped others. The philosophical-Hebrew linguistic tradition is one dimension of the language from which most speakers of modern Hebrew have become estranged. Reading medieval Jewish philosophy in Ibn Tibbon’s Hebrew is not a part of the curriculum in the public educational system in Israel; it is not present in elementary school, high school, or the universities (apart from the specialization in Jewish philosophy). As a consequence, most modern Hebrew speakers today, including educated and learned Israelis with academic degrees, find Ibn Tibbon’s Hebrew unintelligible. Contemporary Israeli students, most of whom are native speakers of modern Hebrew, find medieval Hebrew Jewish philosophy very hard to read, despite the fact that—or perhaps precisely because—modern Hebrew is their mother tongue.<sup>11</sup> This fact constitutes a fascinating chapter in the history of Zionism and the formation of a Jewish nation in modern times. Zionism, reflecting the ideology of its European founders,<sup>12</sup> has produced a largely secular national Jewish identity. Modern Hebrew has distanced itself, consciously or not, from various diasporic dimensions—for example, from a body of traditional sources of the language—thereby making a cultural-linguistic “selection” that has had a decisive influence on the culture and identity of the modern, largely secular Israeli.<sup>13</sup> A modern Hebrew translator of a classical Hebrew book that is rich in tradition, most of which has been forgotten by most contemporary speakers, must *prima facie* decide the degree to which his translation will be contemporary: How

10. See Morag 1987; Laufer 2007.

11. Cf. Stroumsa 1997, 140: “Ibn Tibbon’s translation, which found favor with Maimonides, stands out in its unique Hebrew style; however, its style is so distant from the language we speak that it sometimes requires its own translation.”

12. Jews of the Islamic world—North African and Middle Eastern Jews—have a different connection to diasporic traditionalist Jewish culture; see Zohar 2001. On prevailing Zionist attitudes in the ideology of the Jews of the Islamic world, see Tobi 1987.

13. Admittedly, medieval philosophical Hebrew was used in the Middle Ages not only for theology and religion but also for physics, medicine, and astronomy—what might be called “secular” sciences. However, inasmuch as these medieval sciences are not studied (let alone used) now (except by the historian of science), the abandonment of medieval philosophical Hebrew by nationalistic-Zionist Jews reflects first and foremost their lack of interest in religion and Jewish theology. On the role of Zionist ideology in founding a nationalist secular Jewish identity, see Shimoni 1995, 269–332; cf. Katz 1983, 72–84.

much of the linguistic tradition of the Middle Ages will he ignore? How much will he faithfully preserve?

A careful reader of Schwarz's translation of the *Guide* will conclude that the translation articulates the propositions of the *Guide* in modern Hebrew while taking into account the Arabic philosophical, theological, and scientific contexts out of which it emerged. Many scholars have acknowledged the virtues of Schwarz's translation, especially his clear and precise modern Hebrew phrasing.<sup>14</sup> (More on this to follow.) Moreover, the critical notes appended to Schwarz's translation are achievements in themselves; they express the author's considerations in translation and explain the methods and practices of Ibn Tibbon, al-Ḥarizi, Falaquera, and others. Through these notes, Schwarz manages to preserve, in part, the historical linguistic

14. A different approach can be seen in the work of another Arabic-to-Hebrew modern translator, Rabbi Yitzhak Shailat. In Shailat's translations, there is a clear decision to focus on preserving the connection with the historical linguistic tradition of medieval Jewish thought. At the beginning of his translation of Judah Halevi's *Kuzari*, Shailat explicitly declares his intention to give "an accurate Hebrew translation *in the style of the period in which it was written*" (Shailat 2010, 1; my emphasis). Shailat's translations are characterized by their faithfulness to the Arabic original, including its syntax and grammar, its adoption of medieval Hebrew terminology, and its consistent use of the same Hebrew terms to translate technical Arabic terminology. Shailat's translations are of great value, but they are comprehensible only to those who are accustomed to medieval philosophical Hebrew. Moreover, it is possible to be *too* faithful to the original text. An example is Shailat's translation of *Kuzari* 3:11: *Fa-lā yataṣarrafu al-khayr wa-la yatakallamu wa-la yufakkiru illā wa-ya'taqidu anna bi-ḥaḍratihī a'yunan tarāhu* (Halevi 1977, 98; 2001, 99). Shailat translates: *We-en he-ḥasid 'ōseh we-lo medabber we-lo ḥoshev ela we-hu' ma'amin she-'imo 'enayim ha-ro'ot oto* (and the pious [man] does not act and does not speak and does not think [literally:] **except and he believes** that with him are eyes that see him) (Shailat 2010, 71). However, *wa-ya'taqidu* is a *jumlat al-ḥāl* that is intended to describe the state of the observant person in action. A more elegant and comprehensible translation would be *ela ke-she-hu' ma'amin*. Another example is Shailat's translation of *Kuzari* 2:20: *Wa-anna jamī'a al-qabā'il yaḥujju ilayhā* (Halevi 1977, 55; 2001, 56). Shailat translates (following J. Ibn Tibbon 1880, 2:37r): *we-she-kol ha-ummot ḥogegim elaw* (and that all the nations [literally:] are **festive toward it** [= toward the place of the temple]) (Shailat 2010, 41; and cf. p. 42, his translation of *Kuzari* 2:23). Like Shailat, Qafih also translates this passage as *we-she-kol ha-ummot ḥogegim eleha* (and that all the nations [literally:] are **festive towards her** [= to the Land of Israel]) (Qafih 2001, 56). The translation *ḥogegim elaw* (or *eleha*) reflects in form and sound the Arabic source, and it was also in use in Hebrew literature at Judah Halevi's time (see, e.g., Abraham Ibn Ezra's commentary on Gen 16:14 [Ibn Ezra 1976, 1:60]; Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*, "Laws of the Chosen House," 1:1 [Maimonides 1985, 10:3]). But its meaning is unclear, certainly for the modern Hebrew reader. The meaning of the verb *ḥajja* is "to make pilgrimage" (Hava 2013, 111 q.v.; cf. Lane 1984, 2:513 q.v.). And indeed, Even-Shemuel translates it *she-ken kol ha-katot ha-datiyot 'olot la-regel eleha* (for all the religious sects make pilgrimage to it [= to the Land of Israel]) (Even-Shemuel 1972, 61). Shailat could have helped his readers by adding a note of explanation to his translation or a reference to relevant literature.

connection between the *Guide* and the Hebrew philosophical tradition that emerged after and because of it, revolving around and reacting to it.

However, such preservation was not Schwarz's primary intention. In a critical review of Qafih's translation of the *Guide*, he writes:

Ibn Tibbon sought to convey the elements of the original accurately and he succeeded to a considerable extent. However, his language is difficult to understand for a contemporary educated Hebrew reader who is familiar neither with Arabic nor with the Hebrew of the Tibbonide family. Hence there was a great need for an accurate translation of the book into modern Hebrew. It is surprising that we still do not have one even though it is already ten years since Prof. Shlomo Pines presented us with an exemplary translation of the *Guide* from Arabic into English (Chicago, 1963).<sup>15</sup>

About Qafih's translation, Schwarz writes that "its language is a Hebrew of rabbis and religious scholars; therefore its language is no easier for educated readers or for students at Israeli universities with no rabbinic background."<sup>16</sup> Whether Schwarz's criticism of Qafih's translation is justified or not, this statement implies that Schwarz believed that a new Hebrew translation should both meet a high scholarly standard and be clear and appealing to an educated modern Hebrew-reading audience, just as Pines's translation is both of a high standard and clear and appealing to an educated modern English reader. And, indeed, in the introduction to his Hebrew translation, Schwarz writes: "I have thus tried to prepare a new translation of the *Guide of the Perplexed* that will be both faithful to the original and written in language accessible to the contemporary Hebrew-educated reader."<sup>17</sup>

Schwarz's primary aim for his translation was to render the Arabic *Guide* of the twelfth century accessible to the Hebrew reader of the twenty-first century in as accurate and readable a manner as possible. This goal was achieved to a great extent. However, Schwarz's notes to his translation not only explain the exact meanings of Maimonides' terms but also help the modern reader understand the language of the medieval Jewish translators and philosophers, thus rendering the edition valuable from educa-

15. Schwarz 1972/73, 195. For the principal intentions that guided Pines in his English translation, see Kraemer and Stern 1998.

16. Schwarz 1972/73, 195.

17. Schwarz 1:29.

tional and methodological perspectives as well. Finally, Schwarz's critical apparatus and notes contain rich references to modern scholarship written on or around the *Guide*, filling in its historical, cultural, philosophical, and theological background. Among other things, the notes cite recent Hebrew translations of Islamic philosophical texts (especially those of al-Fārābī); summarize discussions in *kalām* literature, an area of great expertise for Schwarz;<sup>18</sup> provide biographical and bibliographical information about figures mentioned in the *Guide*; and identify Maimonides' talmudic and midrashic sources to the degree to which they can be tracked.<sup>19</sup>

Schwarz's notes and bibliographical references are valuable for both the general (educated) reader and the academic. Unfortunately, only a relatively small portion of the notes focuses on issues of language, translation, or comparison with other translations. Had Schwarz used them more consistently to explain his choices of translation, analyze the Arabic language of the *Guide*, compare his own translation to the medieval and other modern Hebrew translations, or clarify the terminology and grammar of the other translations, he would have achieved greater success in recounting the historical linguistic connection between the *Guide* and the Hebrew philosophical tradition. If Schwarz had used the notes primarily to explicate his own use of language along with that of previous translators, he could have helped the modern reader understand the kind of philosophical Hebrew in which the classics of Jewish thought were composed. As Warren Zev Harvey writes, Schwarz's notes "are indeed very instructive, but I would have preferred to see more linguistic comments explaining the translator's decisions in controversial passages and fewer comments dealing with the

18. See, e.g., his well-known article: Schwarz 1991–93.

19. In one instance, Schwarz even discusses a possible reason for the difference between Maimonides' citation of the rabbis (in the Sifra) and the wording of that citation in a printed edition of the rabbinic source (the Venice 1545 edition of the Sifra); see Schwarz 2:540n18. There is one instance in which Schwarz does not provide a reference to any rabbinic source; see Schwarz 1:363, where Maimonides alludes to a rabbinic statement about an agricultural laborer (an *ikar*, in Schwarz's translation). Other translators and editors of the *Guide* did not identify Maimonides' source here either (Munk 2:234; Qafih 2:381; Pines 350), so it seems to be a lost rabbinic text to which no reference could be made (though future research may reveal it). Friedlander (2:146n3) and Even-Shemuel (1959–87, 4:64) refer to Bereshit Rabba XII 4, but the midrash uses the example of fig collectors, which hardly resembles Maimonides' agricultural laborer. In any case, it would have been appreciated if Schwarz had informed the reader that he could not identify the source of Maimonides' allusion (cf. Schwarz 1:279n13, 357n42, where Schwarz does inform the reader that he did not find the exact source).

vast research literature, which is of interest primarily only to researchers.<sup>20</sup> Notes of this kind would have been of considerable cultural and educational value.

### **Editions of Schwarz's Translation of the *Guide***

Like Ibn Tibbon's translation, Schwarz's was published in stages; it was edited and improved over time. Presumably, Schwarz had considered producing his own translation by 1972/73, when he reviewed Qafih's translation (quoted above).<sup>21</sup> A translation of the first twelve chapters was published in 1988. In 1990, his translation of Maimonides' introduction to the *Guide* was released, and a translation of another thirteen chapters from part I (13–25) followed in 1993.<sup>22</sup> A translation of the entire first part of the *Guide* was published as an independent volume in 1996.<sup>23</sup> The entire translation appeared as a two-volume edition in 2002; it was edited by the translator's son, David Tzeri.<sup>24</sup> The first volume includes a detailed table of contents and the translation of parts I and II; the second volume contains the translation of part III, a comprehensive bibliography, a critical survey of the *Guide*'s previous translations into multiple languages, various indices, and Tzeri's comments on the opening and concluding poems of the *Guide*. Schwarz also compiled a detailed list of addenda and corrigenda, which was published in his own Festschrift.<sup>25</sup> Alongside the hardcover edition of Schwarz's translation, Tel Aviv University Press published an online version that was accessible for free.<sup>26</sup>

### **Schwarz's Translation of the *Guide* Compared to Others**

Several scholars have critically reviewed Schwarz's translation and compared it to the medieval and modern Hebrew translations, as well as to Munk's French and Pines's English translations.<sup>27</sup> In their eyes, Schwarz's

20. W. Z. Harvey 1997b, 462; and cf. 2013, 333–34.

21. A draft of Schwarz's translation (at least to part I of the *Guide*) was already available in 1989; see Levinger 1989, 40.

22. Schwarz 1988, 1990, 1993.

23. Schwarz 1996.

24. Schwarz 2002.

25. Schwarz 2009.

26. The press took the online edition down in 2015.

27. Stroumsa 1997; W. Z. Harvey 1997b; cf. 2003; M. Lorberbaum 2012.

emerges as the translation that is the most accessible to today's Hebrew readers. It is because of this accessibility that scholars of Maimonidean philosophy who have written in Hebrew in the last decade overwhelmingly rely on Schwarz's translation.<sup>28</sup> Since the style of Schwarz's language is the most consistent with the conventions of modern Hebrew, scholars who use it do not need to cross any language gaps (as they would have to do if they were to use, say, Ibn Tibbon's translation) in order to explain Maimonides' ideas to their readers.

Schwarz's translation of the *Guide* is precise, which is to say that it follows the exact meaning of the words of the Arabic original. It is also comprehensible to its intended reader—in this case, the modern Hebrew reader. Each of these two characteristics, when taken to the extreme, may contradict the other, a fact that was noticed already in the Middle Ages, and in particular by Maimonides and the medieval Hebrew translators. A short analysis of the approaches to translation in the medieval Arabic and Judeo-Arabic world will show that Schwarz's method of translation is close to that which Maimonides himself recommended.

Khalil Ibn Aybak al-Şafadī (d. 1363) describes how translators of philosophical literature from Greek into Arabic (often through Syriac) take one of two approaches to their work. The first approach, according to al-Şafadī, adopts a method of word-for-word translation. The translation closely follows the word order of the original sentence, simply replacing Greek words with Arabic ones. The second approach adopts a more open method of translation that aims to use a complete Arabic sentence to capture the overall meaning of the original Greek sentence.<sup>29</sup> There is a fundamental difference between the two approaches. According to the first method (which al-Şafadī criticizes), the translator preserves the syntax of the original and the meanings of its individual words, but he does so at the expense of the sentence's overall meaning. With the second method, the translator has much more freedom; the goal of the translation is to convey the overall meaning of the text and the intention of the author. With the first method, the translation is an imitation of the original language; with the second, the translation is an imitation of the original meaning.

In general, medieval Arabic-to-Hebrew translators reject a strict adherence to the first method that al-Şafadī describes. However, among the

28. See, e.g., Kasher 2004; Y. Lorberbaum 2002; Sadik 2014; Hadad 2011.

29. For an English translation of this passage, see Rosenthal 1975, 17–18. For criticism of al-Şafadī (who ignores the complexity of real translation methods), see Gutas 1998, 142–50.



Hebrew translations of the Middle Ages, some tend toward the first, more literal approach, while others are more inclined to use the second, more open one.<sup>30</sup> In his letter to Ibn Tibbon, Maimonides rejects the first method and advises him to follow the second.<sup>31</sup> However, as David H. Baneth has shown, Ibn Tibbon ignored Maimonides' advice: his translation of the *Guide* inclines toward the first, more literal approach,<sup>32</sup> as do the translations of his father, Judah Ibn Tibbon.<sup>33</sup> From this perspective, Schwarz is a more faithful disciple of Maimonides than Ibn Tibbon was. Moreover, Schwarz's translation is concise; it strikes a balance between precision and clarity. The Hebrew of Schwarz's translation also shows a notable elegance of language; the clarity of its phrasing contributes to its aesthetic impact.<sup>34</sup>

Two examples will suffice to demonstrate the clarity and precision of Schwarz's translation. First, at the beginning of the introduction to the

30. S. Harvey 2003, 264–65.

31. See Maimonides 1988, 2:532–33 and below for Maimonides' view of translation, which is related to his Aristotelian conception of language.

32. Baneth 1951/52; cf. S. Harvey 2003, 264–65.

33. In his famous introduction to his translation of Bahya Ibn Paquda's *Duties of the Heart*, Judah Ibn Tibbon acknowledges the disadvantages of a literal translation and the necessity for a translator to change word order and omit or add words so that the translation is accurate and intelligible: "For the translator will not be able to perfect his translation unless he changes the order of words, adds and omits [words], and sometimes he will need to translate the meaning of a word with a meaning that is similar and close to it in the language to which he translates, or to alter the parable and the phrasing" (J. Ibn Tibbon 1964, 59–60). Nevertheless, he describes his own method of translation as one that tends, as much as possible, toward the literal: "And as much as it was possible for me to translate word for word—although the language was not as suitable as I desired—I have done so. And that which was impossible for me to translate following this method, I would contemplate and reflect on it (*hayiti mištakel* [with *sin*, not *samekh*] *u-mitbonen* [literally, I used *šekhel* (reason) and *tevunah* (reflection)]) until I comprehended it, and then I would translate it to the best of my ability" (1964, 61; and cf. p. 59). While both Judah Ibn Tibbon and Maimonides rejected the first method that al-Šafadī describes, the former emphasized the centrality of language in translating while the latter emphasized the centrality of meaning.

34. From Schwarz's review of Even-Shemuel's translation of the *Kuzari* (Schwarz 1973/74), we can see that he believes that a translator has the flexibility and the right to depart from the language of the original text as long as he is faithful to the original meaning. See Schwarz's explanation of Even-Shemuel's translation of *Kuzari* 3, end of section 17 (pp. 198–99). Even-Shemuel's translation of the *Kuzari* is loose and allows for deviations from the Arabic original. Schwarz's general appreciation of Even-Shemuel's translation of the *Kuzari* is high, and from his words we can infer the criteria by which he believes a good translation should be measured: "[Even-Shemuel] has succeeded in producing a translation that excels in being faithful to the nature of the original (to the extent that he managed to recover it), and also in his excellent and fluent Hebrew rendering that, despite its classical roots, is not strange to the spirit of the contemporary reader" (p. 199). For another evaluation of Even-Shemuel's translation of the *Kuzari*, see Avineri 1979.

*Guide*, Maimonides writes: *Hādhihi al-maqāla gharaḍuhā al-awwal tabyīn ma‘ānī asmā’ jā’at fī kutub al-nubuwwa*.<sup>35</sup> Ibn Tibbon translates this sentence: *Ha-ma’amar ha-zeh ‘inyano ha-rishon leva’er ‘inyane shemot ba’u besifre ha-nevu’ah* (‘This treatise—its first intention is to explain meanings of names [that] came in the books of prophecy’).<sup>36</sup> Ibn Tibbon’s language presents certain difficulties to the modern reader. First, he uses the term ‘inyan (intention, meaning, notion) to translate both *gharaḍ*<sup>37</sup> and *ma’nā*<sup>38</sup>—a choice that a reader might find confusing. Second, Ibn Tibbon translates the verb *jā’at* literally as “came” (*ba’u*), but in this context, it means “were written,” “were said,” or something similar.<sup>39</sup> Third, Maimonides’ Arabic sentence contains a *jumlat ṣifa* (a type of relative clause), *asmā’ jā’at fī*, whose Hebrew translation requires a relative pronoun: “names that came [or ‘which came,’ or ‘which were written’] in the books of prophecy.” The term *asmā’* presents another problem. Ibn Tibbon translates the word as *shemot* (names), which is what it means literally. The usual meaning of the Arabic *asmā’* and the Hebrew *shemot* is words that denote persons, substances, accidents, or attributes—that is to say, nouns and adjectives.<sup>40</sup> However, throughout the lexicographical chapters of the first part of the *Guide*, it is clear that Maimonides’ intention is to explicate verbs as well.<sup>41</sup> It seems therefore that Maimonides uses *asmā’* here not in its precise grammatical sense but in a looser way to denote “words” or “terms.” Indeed, in the first chapter of his *Treatise on the Art of Logic*, Maimonides uses the term *ism* in two distinct ways: the first is a broader usage in which the term also denotes verbs, whereas the second is a narrower one in which *ism* is distinguished from verbs, particles, and phrases.<sup>42</sup> In the first sentence of the *Guide*, Maimonides uses the term *asmā’* in its broader sense. Ibn Tibbon’s translation is therefore literal, but it may be misleading if the Hebrew *shemot* is understood in the narrower sense that excludes verbs.

Maimonides’ other translators address these difficulties in different ways.

35. Munk-Joel 2.

36. Ibn Tibbon 4.

37. Meaning: “goal,” “purpose.”

38. Meaning here: “meaning,” “semantic content.”

39. Cf. Ayalon and Shinar 1965, 63.

40. See Lane 1984, 4:1435 q.v.; Blau 2006, 310–11 q.v.; Ben-Yehuda 1980, 15:7201 q.v.

41. See, e.g., *Guide* I 4, 7, 10.

42. This fact was noted by Leon Roth (1965, 3n1, 4n1). For the Judeo-Arabic text, see Maimonides 1966, 9–10. In his English translation, Efros uses “noun” for *ism* (Maimonides 1938, 34). This translation is accurate for Maimonides’ use of *ism* in its narrower sense, but not his broader use of the term.

Al-Ḥarizi translates: *Zeh ha-sefer kawwanato ha-rishonah leva'er 'inyane shemot asher nimṣe'u be-sifre ha-nevu'ah* (This book—its first intention is to explain meanings of names that were found in the books of prophecy).<sup>43</sup> He distinguishes between “intention” and “meaning” and then adds the relative *asher* (that). He also translates *jā'at* as “found,” which is not the most literal choice (of course, his translation is not a literal one in the first place), but it is clearer than Ibn Tibbon’s “came” (*ba'u*). Yet al-Ḥarizi’s *Zeh ha-sefer* (unlike Ibn Tibbon’s *Ha-ma'amar ha-zeh*) is Arabized. Qafih translates: *Ma'amar zeh maṭrato ha-rishonit be'ur 'inyane shemot she-ne'emru be-sifre ha-nevu'ah* (This treatise—its first intention: clarification of meanings of names that were said in the books of prophecy). In a note, he explains that the term *asma'/shemot* (names) includes nouns, adjectives, and nominal verbs.<sup>44</sup> Pines translates: “The first purpose of this Treatise is to explain the meaning of certain terms occurring in the books of prophecy.”<sup>45</sup> We can see that he uses “terms” instead of “names.” A Hebrew translation that follows Pines’s understanding of *asmā'* in this context would be *munahim* (instead of *shemot*).

Schwarz translates: *Maṭrato ha-rishonah shel sefer zeh lehasbir mashma'uyotehem shel shemot ha-mofi'im be-sifre ha-nevu'ah* (The first purpose of this book is to explain the meanings of names that occur in the books of prophecy).<sup>46</sup> This translation overcomes some of this passage’s difficulties. Schwarz abandons the sentence’s dislocation, and opens simply with “the first purpose of this book”; he distinguishes between *gharaḍ* (*maṭrato*) and *ma'ānī* (*mashma'uyotehem*); and, like Ibn Tibbon, al-Ḥarizi, and Qafih, he uses *shemot* for *asmā'*, preferring a literal translation that conveys the usual meaning of *asmā'* over a looser translation like that of Pines’s “terms,” even if Maimonides proceeds to analyze some verbs as well.

Admittedly, Schwarz’s translation faces its own difficulties. For example, he translates *maqāla*—a term that literally means “speech” or “a thing that was said”—as “book.” This choice obscures the fact that the *Guide* serves as the written continuation of the oral discourse between Maimonides and his disciple Joseph ben Judah. This oral dimension has significant consequences for our understanding of the esoteric aspects of the *Guide*.<sup>47</sup> Over-

43. Al-Ḥarizi 1:4.

44. Qafih 1:3 and n4.

45. Pines 5.

46. Schwarz 1:9.

47. See Strauss 1952, 79–84. Schwarz justifies his translation by saying that “in modern Hebrew it is not customary to refer to an entire book with the word ‘speech’” (Schwarz 1:9n7).

all, however, Schwarz's remains the most fluent and grammatically simple of the Hebrew translations and is therefore the most comprehensible for the reader of modern Hebrew.

A second example is Schwarz's translation of a phrase at the end of the third premise in *Guide* I 73, in which Maimonides shows the physical and mathematical absurdities that result from the atomism of the *mutakallimūn*. He argues that the existence of two lines with a rational ratio—that is, with a ratio that can be expressed as a fraction with no remainder—is, according to the *mutakallimūn*, impossible. He writes: *wa-kawn khutūt muntāqa wa-ghayr muntāqa*.<sup>48</sup> Ibn Tibbon translates this phrase as *we-heyot qawwim medubbarim we-qawwim bilti medubbarim* (and the existence of [literally:] spoken lines and unspoken lines). However, in medieval philosophical Hebrew, *dibbur* (corresponding to the Arabic *mantiq*) is also used to refer to logic or reason; *koah ha-dibbur* refers to the rational faculty, so we might translate Ibn Tibbon's translation as "il/logical" or "ir/rational" lines.<sup>49</sup> These two possibilities come closer to expressing Maimonides' intended meaning, but a modern Hebrew speaker would find it difficult to grasp Ibn Tibbon's meaning regardless.<sup>50</sup>

Al-Ḥarizi translates the Arabic as *be-heyot qawwim me'uzarim u-vilti me'uzarim* (and the existence of surrounded lines and unsurrounded). This translation is based on a misunderstanding of Maimonides' intended meaning.<sup>51</sup> Qafih does not translate the Arabic, but instead transliterates it as *we-heyot qawwim muntāqah u-vilti muntāqah* (and the existence of "muntāqah" lines and un-"muntāqah"), adding an obscure explanation of the Arabic word in a note.<sup>52</sup>

Pines translates the phrase as "the existence of rational and irrational lines,"<sup>53</sup> which is clear to the English reader, or at least to the English reader who has the appropriate background in mathematics. Schwarz, like Pines, uses a Latinate English translation: *qawwim rašyonalīyyim we-i-rašyonalīyyim* (rational and irrational lines).<sup>54</sup> This translation is the clearest and most fluent Hebrew translation for modern readers because it does not

48. Munk-Joel 137.

49. Ibn Tibbon 172.

50. Cf. Ibn Tibbon's explanation of *qawwim medubbarim we-qawwim she-enam medubbarim* in his *Perush ha-millot ha-zarot* (Ibn Tibbon 1981, 70).

51. Al-Ḥarizi 1:86; and cf. 86n11 for Scheyer's explanation of this translation.

52. Qafih 1:214–15 and n48.

53. Pines 198.

54. Schwarz 1:210.

try to force the language of the Arabic *Guide* into a rigidly Semitic linguistic mold.

It is always illuminating when Schwarz shares his process of translation with the reader, and it is especially so when he compares his work with other translations, such as the medieval Hebrew ones. I will now turn to several of Schwarz's explanatory comments.

1. My first example is Schwarz's comment on the term *al-jāhiliyya* in *Guide* II 32. In this chapter, Maimonides distinguishes three opinions on the nature of prophecy, which, he hints, parallel three opinions on the question of whether the world is created or eternal (*Guide* II 13). Maimonides says that the first opinion on prophecy is *ra'y jumhūr al-jāhiliyya mimman yuṣaddiqu bi-al-nubuwwa* (the opinion of the multitude among those of *al-jāhiliyya* who consider prophecy as true).<sup>55</sup> What did Maimonides mean by the important Islamic term *al-jāhiliyya*?<sup>56</sup> We have two viable options: either to translate the term as the plural of *jāhil* (ignoramus, fool) or to translate it as "the ancient idol-worshipping people before the revelation."<sup>57</sup> Each option has its own consequences. If we follow the first option for translation, we come to understand that Maimonides is describing a position that is held by the multitude (even a Jewish multitude) of "ignoramuses" who believe in prophecy, that is, the vulgar followers of or believers in prophetic religion. According to the second translation, Maimonides is describing an essentially pagan, nonmonotheistic position.<sup>58</sup> Since Maimonides' analysis here parallels his discussion of creation, one's choice of translation for the word *al-jāhiliyya* may affect one's understanding of the correspondence between the two sets of opinions.<sup>59</sup>

Ibn Tibbon translates the Arabic as *hamon ha-peta'im mi-mi she-ya'amin be-nevu'ah* (the multitude of the fools among those who believe in prophecy).<sup>60</sup> Similarly, al-Ḥarizi translates it as *ha-sekhalim mi-mi she-ya'amin be-nevu'ah* (the ignoramuses among those who believe in prophecy).<sup>61</sup>

55. Munk-Joel 253.

56. On the term *jāhiliyya* when it means "ignorance" (and is an antonym of the term "knowledge"), and on the historic and religious importance of the opposition between *jāhiliyya* and *'ilm*, see Pines 1990.

57. See Blau 2006, 100–101.

58. Although he adds that "part of the multitude of our religion also" hold this opinion, it is clear that the majority of its believers are the *jumhūr al-jāhiliyya*.

59. See the analysis of W. Z. Harvey 1981b, 289–90.

60. Ibn Tibbon 317.

61. Al-Ḥarizi 2:52.

When he comments on al-Ḥarizi's translation, Salomon Munk rejects both al-Ḥarizi's and Ibn Tibbon's translations "because in Arabic, when *al-jāhāliyyah* [*sic*] is found in books of the Ishmaelites, it signifies the Ishmaelites who preceded Muḥamed [*sic*], and if he meant 'fools' or 'ignoramuses,' he should have said *al-juhāl*."<sup>62</sup> And so in his French translation of the *Guide*, Munk translates the Arabic as "La première opinion, professée par ceux d'entre les peuples païens."<sup>63</sup> Following Munk, Pines translates: "the multitude of those among the Pagans who considered prophecy as true."<sup>64</sup> It seems that Qafih's translation goes in the same direction. He offers: *hamon ha-'amim ha-qadmonim me-otam ha-ma'aminim be-nevu'ah* (the multitude of the ancient nations of those who believe in prophecy).<sup>65</sup> Since the expression *ha-'amim ha-qadmonim* refers to historically ancient nations, it is reasonable to assume that Qafih's intention was to allude to pre-Islamic (or premonotheistic) pagans.<sup>66</sup>

Schwarz hearkens back to Ibn Tibbon and al-Ḥarizi when he translates: *hamon ha-burim mi-bein ha-ma'aminim be-nevu'ah* (the multitude of the ignoramuses among those who believe in prophecy). In order to justify his translation, Schwarz refers to *Guide* II 11, note 13 and writes:<sup>67</sup>

Professor Ḥaim (Herbert Allen) Davidson from Los Angeles wrote to me: "I was always certain that the word *jāhiliyya* in the *Guide of the Perplexed*, II 32, Opinion A, meant 'fools' and not 'people of ancient times,' as Munk translated it and, following him, Pines. I have finally

62. Al-Ḥarizi 2:52n2.

63. Munk 2:260; and cf. 260n2.

64. Pines 360.

65. Qafih 2:392.

66. However, see Qafih 3:606nn68–69, where Qafih explains that the term *al-jāhiliyya* is "an expression that signifies wild stupidity of one who lacks rational manners," and then goes on to say that Maimonides uses the term to refer to "the Arabs according to their tribes" (although Qafih may interpret the term only in the context of *Guide* III 39).

67. Schwarz 1:373n3. In a note to *Guide* II 11, Schwarz examines Maimonides' expression *al-milal al-jāhiliyya* (*ha-umot ha-burot* [the ignorant nations], in Schwarz's translation): "The connotations of the expression *al-jāhiliyya* for Arabic readers are: a. people who do not control their urges; b. people who have not been privileged with a revelation and have not heard about the unique religion" (Schwarz 1:292n13). He concludes his note by referring to *Guide* II 32, where, he says, "Maimonides uses the expression *jāhiliyya* to refer to something different." However, in *Guide* II 32, Schwarz translates *al-jāhiliyya* as *ha-burim* (the ignoramuses), which is consistent with his translation of the expression in *Guide* II 11. It is not entirely clear why, according to Schwarz, the meaning of the term in II 32 is different from its meaning in II 11.

encountered the required meaning in [Maimonides'] commentary on m. 'Eruvin I, 5.' . . . Prof. Davidson also alluded to Maimonides' commentary on m. Ḥagigah II, 1. . . . Compare also al-Fārābī, Walzer, p. 452, third paragraph.<sup>68</sup>

However, Davidson's evidence cannot decide the debate conclusively: according to Schwarz himself, Maimonides uses the term *al-jāhiliyya* in *Guide* III 39 to mean "the Arabs before Islam."<sup>69</sup> What Maimonides means by this expression therefore depends on the term's context. In *Guide* II 32, it should be noted, Maimonides attributes the first opinion on prophecy to "the multitude among those of *al-jāhiliyya* who consider prophecy as true" and also to *ba'd 'awāmm sharī'atinā* (some of the common people professing our Law).<sup>70</sup> If "the multitude among those of *al-jāhiliyya* who consider prophecy as true" means "the multitude of ignoramuses who consider prophecy as true," it seems that the "multitude among those of *al-jāhiliyya*" includes the ignoramuses among the Jews. It is therefore senseless to distinguish a separate social group—"the Jewish common people"—from the general "ignoramuses." It would be more convincing to translate *al-jāhiliyya*—as it is used in this context—as *ovde 'avodah zarah* ("the pagans" or "idol worshippers"), as Blau suggests.<sup>71</sup> Still, Davidson's evidence shows us that Maimonides also uses the term *al-jāhiliyya* to refer to "fools" and "ignoramuses," and so this proposal certainly belongs within the framework of a fresh translation of the *Guide*.

2. Some of Schwarz's comments reveal his doubts about certain translations but do not explain his final decisions. One such comment appears with reference to his translation of *Guide* I 65, a chapter in which Maimonides denies that God has speech. In a note, Schwarz fills in the Islamic theological background that a reader would need in order to understand Maimonides' position and terminology.<sup>72</sup> Maimonides is responding to the Islamic theological debate over whether divine speech is an eternal attribute of God or a created "attribute of action." The debate has significant import for the question of whether the Qur'an is eternal (as the Ash'arites claimed) or cre-

68. Walzer 1985, 452.

69. See Schwarz 2:573n49. Although Maimonides does not say explicitly what he means by the word *al-jāhiliyya* in *Guide* III 39, his intention is clear from the context.

70. Munk-Joel 253; Pines 360.

71. Blau 2006, 100–101.

72. Schwarz 1:167n3.

ated (as the Mu'tazilites argued), and Maimonides' position on the corresponding question for the Torah yields a new conception of revelation and of the status of the Hebrew Scriptures. In fact, it reinvents the very status of language in the relation between the individual and God. Over the course of his argument, Maimonides writes: *anna kalāmahu al-mansūb ilayhi makhlūq wa-innama nusiba ilayhi li-kawn dhālika **al-qawl/al-qol** alladhi sama'ahu Mosheh Allah khalaqahu wa-ibtada'ahu* (Literally, "that His speech that is attributed to Him is created. It is attributed to Him only because of that **al-qawl/al-qol** that was heard by Moses, God created it and invented it").<sup>73</sup> The bolded word presents a special challenge to the translator. As it is spelled in Maimonides' Judeo-Arabic, it consists of *al-* (the definite article) and the letters *qaf*, *waw*, and *lamed*. The issue is whether these three letters spell the Arabic *qawl*, meaning "saying" or "speech," or the Hebrew word *qol*, which, in this context, would mean "sound" or "voice." From a philosophical perspective, there is a significant difference between the two possibilities. According to the first, Maimonides says that what Moses heard and what is attributed to God is a semantic unit that consists of a vocal expression and its meaning. According to the second, Maimonides is referring to a bare sound that was created but that has no meaning.

Since the word is found in a chapter that discusses the attribution of speech to God, the most plausible interpretation would be the first. Indeed, most translators understood the word to be the Arabic *al-qawl*. Qafih translates the word according to its Arabic meaning: *mipne she-oto **ha-dibbur** asher shema'o Mosheh* (because of that **speech** that Moses heard). However, he also writes in a note that he is in doubt about whether the word is indeed Arabic; if it were Hebrew, he comments, it would be translated as "sound."<sup>74</sup> Other translators also understand the word to be an Arabic one. Ibn Tibbon writes: *li-hiyot **ha-ma'amar** ha-hu' asher shema'o Mosheh Rabbenu alaw ha-shalom* (because of that **statement** that Moses our teacher, peace be upon him, heard).<sup>75</sup> Al-Ḥarizi has *mipne she-zeh **ha-dibbur** asher shama' Mosheh* (because of that **speech** that Moses heard).<sup>76</sup> Pines offers: "the **words** heard by Moses."<sup>77</sup> Similarly, Munk translates the phrase as "le **discours** entendu par Moïse."<sup>78</sup>

73. Munk-Joel 108.

74. Qafih 1:169 and n5.

75. Ibn Tibbon 135.

76. Al-Ḥarizi 1:68.

77. Pines 158.

78. Munk 1:290.



In contrast, Schwarz decides to translate the word as a Hebrew expression: *mipne she-ha-qol she-oto shama' Mosheh* (because of the **sound** [or “voice”] that Moses heard). In his note in support of his translation, he mentions Qafih’s doubt and adds that Abraham Nuriel and Jacob Levinger remarked that the word can be interpreted as either Hebrew or Arabic.<sup>79</sup> However, he never explains his own choice of translation.

Moreover, as Ibn Tibbon, al-Ḥarizi, Munk, and Pines all recognize, the most plausible choice is to read the word as the Arabic *al-qawl* and to translate accordingly. In *Guide* II 33, a chapter to which Schwarz himself refers, Maimonides distinguishes between what Moses heard at Mount Sinai and what the people heard. Maimonides refers to what Moses heard using the terms *al-khitāb* and *al-kalām*. Ibn Tibbon, Qafih, and al-Ḥarizi all translate the first term as *ha-dibbur* (what was spoken); Pines translates it as “speech.” The second Arabic term, *al-kalām*, Ibn Tibbon, Qafih, and al-Ḥarizi all translate as *ha-devarim* (the things said) while Pines translates it as “words.”<sup>80</sup> On the other hand, when he indicates what the people heard, Maimonides cites verses that contain the biblical word *qol* (he quotes Deut 5:20—*ke-shom'akhem et ha-qol*—and Deut 4:12—*qol devarim atem shome'im*), and uses the Arabic word *ṣawt*, which Pines translates as “voice.” Maimonides explains that while Moses heard a verbal utterance that bears a meaning, the people heard only a voice, that is, a sound that is not a linguistic entity. Now is not the time to elaborate on the philosophical message of *Guide* II 33—a message that involves metaphysics, psychology, and political philosophy—but the very fact that Maimonides distinguishes between the biblical Hebrew word *qol*, which refers to a sound that is not a linguistic entity, and the linguistic entity that Moses heard at Mount Sinai certainly supports the position of most of the translations in *Guide* I 65, according to which Maimonides did not mean the Hebrew term *qol* but the Arabic term *qawl*. It is regrettable that Schwarz did not share with his readers the doubts to which he refers and the considerations that led him to translate the word as the Hebrew term *qol*.

3. Sometimes, when Schwarz *does* discuss his processes of translation, he does not compare other translations to his. Had he done so, it would

79. Schwarz 1:167 and n4.

80. Cf. the eighth of Maimonides’ thirteen principles of faith (Maimonides 1997, 372): *Al-Torah . . . waṣalat lahu* [= to Moses]. . . *al-wuṣūl alladhī yusammihī ‘alā sabīl al-majāz kalām* (The Torah . . . was delivered to him [= to Moses] . . . in a way that He [God; alt. Moses] called metaphorically ‘speech’). Cf. Twersky 1972, 420.

have led to a deeper understanding of the meanings behind Maimonides' words and of the methods underlying his translation practice. One example of such a gap is in Schwarz's notes to his translation of *Guide* I 59. Here, while analyzing the doctrine of negative attributes and the human inability to grasp the essence of God, Maimonides writes: *Wa-ablaghu mā qīla fī hādihā al-gharaḍ qawluhu fī al-tillim "lekha dumiyah tehillah" sharḥuhu al-sukūt 'indaka huwa al-tasbiḥ wa-hādhihi balāgha 'aẓīma jiddan fī hādihā al-ma'nā.*<sup>81</sup> Pines translates this excerpt as "The **most apt phrase** concerning this subject is the dictum occurring in the *Psalms*, *Silence is praise to Thee* [Ps 65:2], which interpreted signifies: silence with regard to You is praise. This is a **most perfectly put phrase** regarding this matter."<sup>82</sup>

The words *ablaghu* and *balāgha* pose a challenge for translators. The meaning of the verb *balagha* varies with its form. In its first form (*wazn fa'ala*), the verb means "to reach a place" or "to increase." Its active participle, *bāligh*, means "very strong" or "severe." In its second form (*wazn fa'ala*), *ballagha* means "to forward (something) to (someone)" or "to inform (someone) of (something)." In its third form (*wazn fā'ala*), *bālāgha*, the verb means "to strive," "to use every possible exertion for," or "to exaggerate in," from which our word *balāgha* (or *'ilm al-balāgha*), meaning "rhetoric" — the art by means of which the speaker conveys his words to the hearer and persuades him — is derived.<sup>83</sup>

Taking this grammatical background into account, it seems that Maimonides' intended meaning for *ablaghu mā qīla* is (roughly) "a phrase that achieves the goal most successfully" or "a phrase that conveys the idea most accurately." Furthermore, it seems from Maimonides' rhetorical pathos that *ablaghu* has the additional meaning of "strength and vigor": "the strongest and most compelling expression." His intention in *balāgha 'aẓīma jiddan* is, similarly, "a most successful rhetorical phrase" or "an expression that most exactly hits the mark," and again, it takes on the additional meaning of "strength and vigor": "a very strong and compelling expression."

Ibn Tibbon translated the original Arabic sentence as *We-ha-muflag she-ne'emar be-zeh ha-'inyan omro be-tillim "lekha dumiyah tehillah" perusho ha-shetiqaḥ ešlekha hi' ha-shevaḥ we-zeh hamraṣat devarim 'ašumah me'od be-zeh ha-'inyan* (And the **utmost [thing]** that was said on this subject is his saying in *Psalms* *To thee silence is praise*. Its interpretation is silence with

81. Munk-Joel 95.

82. Pines 139.

83. See Hava 2013, 45–46; Blau 2006, 50–51; Ayalon and Shinar 1965, 31.

regard to you is praise. And that is a **potent expression**<sup>84</sup> on that subject).<sup>85</sup> Ibn Tibbon understands the word *ablaghu* to be the superlative of “intensified” or “increased,” therefore meaning “the most intense (or consummate) expression,” which emerges in his Hebrew translation as “the utmost [thing] that was said.” Similarly, he translates Maimonides’ term *balāgha* as “potent,” that is, an action or thing that is strong, effective, and persuasively powerful. Ibn Tibbon took it upon himself to add the word *devarim* (*hamraṣat devarim*), which would have been required in order to specify that when Maimonides refers to something as “potent,” “strong,” or “rhetorically powerful” (in the phrasing of the psalmist), what he means are persuasively powerful words.

Al-Ḥarizi’s translation closely resembles Ibn Tibbon’s. *We-takhlit ha-haflagah ha-ne’emeret be-zeh ha-’inyan . . . we-zot ha-meliṣah nimreṣet me’od be-ze ha-’inyan*, he writes, meaning “and the utmost [thing] that is said in this subject . . . and that phrasing is most powerful persuasively on that subject.”<sup>86</sup> Al-Ḥarizi emphasizes that *ablaghu* is a superlative form (*takhlit ha-haflagah*)—a matter that Ibn Tibbon, as we have seen, points out but does not emphasize. Furthermore, when he translates *balāgha* as *meliṣah*, al-Ḥarizi is using a term that is close to the term that is closely related to that which is used to indicate the art of rhetoric.<sup>87</sup>

Schwarz’s translation reads: *Ha-davar ha-qole’a be-yoter she-ne’emar be-’inyan zeh hu’ mah she-hu’ amar be-tillim . . . zeh biṭuy qole’a me’od le-mashma’ut zo’t* (“The most apt thing that was said on this subject is what he said in Psalms . . . that is an expression that is most apt to express that meaning”).<sup>88</sup> In a note, Schwarz refers to *Guide* I 58, notes 27 and 28; he explains that the word *balāgha* is drawn from the language of poetry and rhetoric, where it is understood as “language that is composed in such a way

84. Though in this context it seems that Ibn Tibbon’s intention is “intensification of words”; see Ibn Tibbon’s translation of Maimonides’ words *aṭnabu al-ḥakhamim* (*Guide* II 29; Munk-Joel 243; Pines 347: “the Sages . . . expatiated”): *ha-ḥakhamim mamriṣim meliṣot* (Ibn Tibbon 304). Ibn Tibbon thus used the term *mamriṣim* also in the sense of “to exaggerate” or “to expatiate.” Hence, *hamraṣat devarim* here can mean “expatiation of words.”

85. Ibn Tibbon 119.

86. Al-Ḥarizi 1:60.

87. Aristotle’s *Ars rhetorica* was usually translated into Hebrew as *Sefer ha-halaṣah* (see Rosenberg 1973, 1:164), whereas *Sefer ha-meliṣah* was usually the Hebrew title for Aristotle’s *De interpretatione*. But the terms are very close in form and meaning, both deriving from biblical phrases; see, e.g., Gen 42:23 and Prov 1:6; and cf. Ben-Yehuda 1980, 5:2674, s.v. *liṣ*, *heliṣ*; 6:3057, s.v. *malāṣ*.

88. Schwarz 1:149.

as to **reach** its goal in the best way possible, so that what it wishes to express will **reach** the heart of the hearer most effectively" (Schwarz's emphasis).<sup>89</sup>

Of the four translations, Ibn Tibbon's is the least comprehensible to the modern Hebrew speaker, largely because the words *muflag* and *hamraṣah* are used infrequently in today's Hebrew. The term *ha-muflag* might mean "the utmost" in Ibn Tibbon's language (and the context of the original Arabic would support this reading), but speakers of modern Hebrew would likely (mis)understand it to mean "the distant" or "the exaggerated."<sup>90</sup> Similarly, speakers of modern Hebrew might think that the word *hamraṣah* means "encouragement" or "an incentive."<sup>91</sup>

Al-Ḥarizi's translation is slightly more straightforward than Ibn Tibbon's for readers of modern Hebrew. For instance, readers would comprehend al-Ḥarizi's *melīṣah nimrešet* more easily than they would Ibn Tibbon's *hamraṣat devarim*, but its phrasing still stands at a fair distance from what today's Hebrew readers would consider fluid.

Pines's and Schwarz's translations are the most accessible to readers of English and modern Hebrew, respectively. However, neither preserves the range of meanings that emerges from the root *b.l.gh*. While each of their translations captures the sense of an apt and effective rhetorical expression, neither conveys the aspect of strength and vigor that Maimonides' Arabic words imply.

Qafih presents an intriguing translation of this sentence, and it seems that Schwarz missed an opportunity to discuss it in the notes to his own translation. Qafih writes: *We-ha-yoter bahir be-khol mah she-ne'emar be-'inyan zeh omro be-tillim . . . we-zo behirut 'ašumah me'od be-'inyan zeh* (And the **most lucid** in all that was said on that subject is his saying in Psalms . . . and that is a **great lucidity** concerning that subject). In a note, Qafih refers the reader to *Guide* I 58, where he explains in a note to that chapter that the meaning of the term *balāgha* is "lucid or clear speech."<sup>92</sup> Qafih also refers us to his edition of Isaac Ibn Ghiyāth's commentary on *Ecclesiastes* (which Qafih attributes to Sa'adya Gaon),<sup>93</sup> where he explains the meaning of the term *balāgha* in the sentence *Wajaba 'alā al-mu'allif an yakūna lafṣahu* (read: *lafṣahu*) *muḥkaman qābilan li-ta'diyat al-ma'ānī 'alā*

89. Schwarz 1:146n28.

90. See Ben-Yehuda 1980, 10:4928–29, s.v. *hiflig*.

91. See Ben-Yehuda 1980, 7:3342–43, s.v. *himriṣ*.

92. Qafih 1:147 and n36; 1:144n51.

93. On this commentary and its correct attribution to Ibn Ghiyāth, see Pines 1964, 212–13; Abramson 1977.

*ḥaḳīqatihā bi-balāgha* (It is obligatory on the author that his expression be proper and appropriate to transmitting its meanings according to its truth **with a perfectly put phrase**).<sup>94</sup> Qafih translates the last words (bolded) into the Hebrew *bi-vehirut* (with lucidity). Clearly, he reads the *gimmel* in the word *balāgha* (as both Maimonides and Ibn Ghiyāth have it) as a *ghayn*. In doing so, he may be pointing to the same meaning that Pines and Schwarz did. But it is also possible that Qafih read the word *ablaju* (with a *jīm* instead of a *ghayn*) for *ablaghu*—the two could easily be confused in Judeo-Arabic script—since *ablaju* means “clear” or “lucid,” and, indeed, Qafih translates *balāgha* as “lucidity” (*behirut*).<sup>95</sup> Qafih’s translation of *balāgha* as “lucidity” suggests that Maimonides’ (and Ibn Ghiyāth’s) *balāgha* may mean not only a “perfectly put phrase,” but also a clear or lucid one—an association that medieval readers of Judeo-Arabic might also have made.<sup>96</sup>

4. Schwarz usually chooses modern Hebrew terminology,<sup>97</sup> but he occasionally preserves the medieval Hebrew translations of certain Arabic terms. One example is his translation of Maimonides’ statement *ka-annaka qulta al-insān huwa al-ḥayawān al-nāṭiq*<sup>98</sup>—the sentence appears in *Guide* I 51, at the beginning of Maimonides’ discussion of divine attributes—which Schwarz translates, as do Ibn Tibbon and al-Ḥarizi, as *ke’ilu amarta ha-adam hu’ ha-ḥay ha-medabber* (As if you said: the human is a **speaking living being**).<sup>99</sup> In a note, Schwarz explains that the phrase “speaking living being” (*al-ḥayawān al-nāṭiq*), as a name for humans, serves as a translation of the Greek description of the human as (*d*)*zoon logikon* (a logical animal). He continues:

In Arabic, [speakers] used the words *nuṭq*, *manṭiq* to translate *logos*, and the term (*d*)*zoon logikon* was translated as *al-ḥayawān al-nāṭiq*. . . . When the Jews came to translate the Arabic terms, they translated

94. Qafih 1962, 161 and n5.

95. Ayalon and Shinar 1965, 30.

96. An interesting example of the problem of graphically similar letters occurs in *Guide* I 51; see Leshem 1955, 416–17. I extend my gratitude to Dr. Uri Melammed for referring me to this article.

97. In his translation he also uses words of Greek and Latin origin that have been incorporated into modern Hebrew. See, e.g., Schwarz 1:115, where he uses *aṭom* for the Arabic *juz’*.

98. Munk-Joel 76.

99. Schwarz 1:116; and cf. Ibn Tibbon 95; al-Ḥarizi 1:48. Ibn Tibbon has *tomar*, and al-Ḥarizi has *amarta*. The difference is insignificant for my point here.

*nuṭq, mantiq (logos)* with the word *higgayon* and the term *al-ḥayawān al-nāṭiq ((d)zoon logikon)* with the expression *ha-ḥay ha-medabber* (“the speaking living being”). The source of the adjective *medabber* (speaking) is *logos*, whose two meanings are “intellect” (*śekhel*) and “speech” (*dibbur*).<sup>100</sup>

Schwarz wants us to understand that the expression “speaking living being” means “rational animal.” Indeed, he later explains his use of the term *dibbur* (in this context) as “the ability to think, logic.”<sup>101</sup> Schwarz’s usual mode of translation would have led him to translate *al-ḥayawān al-nāṭiq*, in the sense of “a rational animal,” as *ha-ḥay ha-śikhli*, but he clearly preferred the medieval Hebrew terminology, even if he had to explain it to the modern reader in his notes. Schwarz’s translation diverges from Qafih’s (*ha-ḥay ha-hogeh* [the **thinking\speaking animal**])<sup>102</sup> and Pines’s (“as if you said that man is a **rational living being**”)<sup>103</sup> here. It is easy to imagine Schwarz using more contemporary language to translate this phrase and then explaining the medieval translator’s terminology in his notes. It is unclear why he did not.<sup>104</sup>

### Translation and the Theory of Language

In light of Baneth’s analysis of Maimonides’ method as a translator, it is clear that Schwarz, as a translator, is Maimonides’ faithful disciple. Maimonides’ method of translation is closely related to his philosophical conception of language, according to which speech (or the use of written language) is,

100. Schwarz 1:116n7.

101. Schwarz 1:116n9.

102. Qafih 1:197. This translation conveys the meanings of both mental contemplation and speech, and thereby manages to cover both meanings that the term *mantiq (dibbur)* had in the Middle Ages—“oral utterance” and “thought,” external speech and internal speech. Cf. Maimonides 1966, 38; 1938, 61.

103. Pines 113.

104. Another interesting example is Schwarz’s translation of the word *watad* in *Guide* III 37, where it means “one of the four winds” or “a pole” (Munk-Joel 396; Pines 541: “cardinal point”). Ibn Tibbon translates *watad* as *yated* (Ibn Tibbon 501), which in modern Hebrew means “a piece of wood or metal one of whose ends is sharp” (e.g., a stake), and so his translation is misleading for the contemporary Hebrew reader. Nonetheless, Schwarz follows Ibn Tibbon and also translates *watad* as *yated* (Schwarz 2:559), thereby requiring him to provide an explanation (itself based on Munk’s note, which he cites). According to Schwarz, “the word *yated* in rabbinic Hebrew (like the *watad* that appears here in the Arabic original), signifies each one of the four heavenly winds.” Schwarz refers to Ben-Yehuda 1980, 4:2198–99 and Munk 3:273n2 (Schwarz 2:559n6).

above all, a communicative tool: language makes it possible for a concept that is represented in the mind of a speaker (or writer) to be conveyed to and represented in the mind of his audience (or reader). This theory of language originates in Aristotle's *De interpretatione* and continues in the writings of al-Fārābī. Aristotle states:

Now spoken sounds are symbols of affections in the soul, and written marks symbols of spoken sounds. And just as written marks are not the same for all men, neither are spoken sounds. But what these are in the first place signs of—affections of the soul—are the same for all; and what these affections are likenesses of—actual things—are also the same.<sup>105</sup>

According to this Aristotelian picture, which Maimonides shares,<sup>106</sup> the language of a translation is nothing but another system of symbols that conveys the same concepts that the author expresses in his source language. The thoughts themselves are independent of the rules of grammar, syntax, and terminology of the source language; indeed, they exist entirely apart from the framework of any language. For both Maimonides and Aristotle, the truths that are expressed in our inner thoughts—"the affections of the soul"—are identical for all human beings at all times and places, while the systems of symbols (i.e., languages) that express those truths are conventional and varied. They held that the most central component of language is the concept that the words symbolically represent, and not the symbolic representations (i.e., the words) themselves. And so a successful translation is not one that is faithful to the words of the original language but one that is faithful to the truths that the original language expresses. This idea is what leads Maimonides to support the second method of translation that al-Ṣafadī describes.

However, language is not merely a representation of universally shared truths. One could also think of language as a device that not only preserves but also creates concepts—as a human tool that structures and determines reality. Language creates and reflects a culture at a certain time and place and conveys this culture to later generations, adapting it to new circumstances. It is a communicative medium, but it also constitutes a legacy. And when a language bridges distant and different cultures, it can also highlight the gaps between them. In this sense, a successful translation is an accurate,

105. *De interp.* I.16a3–8; Aristotle 1963, 43.

106. See Ravitsky 2007.

but necessarily different representation of the conceptual content of the original; a translation will always constitute a creative endeavor, and one that is rooted in a new time, place, and culture.

When we take into account the creative dimensions of language, the question arises whether a modern translation of a classical or ancient work should try to embrace its inherent creativity or strive to preserve the linguistic nuances of the original. Admittedly, these two approaches to the translator's task are not mutually exclusive, but they do represent two conceptions of language that are in tension with one another. One would expect a translation to navigate these tensions. Is it appropriate for a work like Maimonides' *Guide* to speak in the Hebrew language of the present, or should it maintain its twelfth-century Arabic through translation into twelfth-century Hebrew—language that would only emphasize to today's Hebrew readers the distances of time and place between their own world and the medieval world of the *Guide*? A modern translator of the *Guide* should acknowledge her dueling aims to create a readable text and to preserve a classical one. If Schwarz's translation presents us with a moral and cultural decision, it is, I believe, to what extent we should turn the classical into modern.





Key Terms in Translations of Maimonides'  
*Guide of the Perplexed*

STEVEN HARVEY

What characterizes a good translation of a philosophical text? More to the point of the subject matter of this volume, is there scholarly consensus as to which translation, medieval or modern, of Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed* is the best? To the extent that scholars, or most of them, can agree as to the best translation, is this also the opinion of students and laymen? In Israel today, some readers prefer for various reasons the 2002 Hebrew translation of Michael Schwarz, some the 1972 Hebrew translation of Rabbi Yosef Qafih, and some the classic early thirteenth-century translation of Samuel Ibn Tibbon.<sup>1</sup> As will be clear to readers of this volume, all are very fine translations. There are arguments to be made for preferring each one of them, and there is no consensus as to which is the best. In English, the situation is somewhat similar, although the "classic" translation by Michael Friedländer dates back only to 1881–85. While Friedländer still has his dev-

1. There are even those who prefer the more eloquent, but less accurate, early thirteenth-century Hebrew translation by Judah al-Ḥarizi. Ibn Tibbon completed his translation of the *Guide* in 1204, and a revised version in 1213, and there were other revisions. On the dating of the translations by Ibn Tibbon and al-Ḥarizi, see James Robinson's and Raymond Scheindlin's contributions to this volume.

otees, for the past half century Shlomo Pines's 1963 translation has been favored as the most reliable and, for some, even authoritative. Yet over the past decade or so, several learned scholars have independently of each other considered translating the *Guide* anew into English, while various arguments have been made in support of the need for a new English translation.<sup>2</sup> Such arguments are relevant to the topic of this essay because they bring to the fore contemporary views on the question, What truly is most desired in a translation of Maimonides' *Guide*? In this essay, I will begin by very briefly considering some of these arguments as well as the very different views of other respected scholars, and I will suggest my own prejudice as to what is most important in such a translation. I will then focus upon one element of my prejudice, to wit, that technical-philosophical terms ought to be translated accurately and consistently. My intention is to illustrate the extent to which certain medieval and modern translators were indeed accurate and consistent, and to what benefit.

### Contemporary Arguments as to What Makes for a Good Translation of the *Guide*

Among the arguments repeatedly made that there is an urgent need for a new English translation of the *Guide*—urgent because the *Guide* is the most important Jewish philosophical book of the medieval period—are the following: (1) The previous translation is wooden. The translator's commitment to "remain as close as is practicable to the original" text of Maimonides has rendered the translation far too literal and rather cumbersome. (2) The translation is overly ambiguous. The translator's explicit desire to preserve the "ambiguity" and "obscurity" of the original text makes it unnecessarily obscure and difficult to understand. (3) The translation is misleading. The translator's insistence on translating "every Arabic technical term . . . by one and the same English term" invariably leads to misunderstanding.<sup>3</sup>

2. A new English translation of the *Guide* is, in fact, being prepared by Lenn E. Goodman and Phillip Ackerman-Lieberman, and is scheduled to be published by Stanford University Press in 2019. Joshua Parens is currently working on an abridged revision of the Pines translation for the University of Chicago Press.

3. Of course, these are only some of the arguments made these days in support of the need for a new translation. One could, for example, also argue that over fifty years have passed since the publication of the translation, and our knowledge and understanding of Maimonides have greatly increased. My interest here, however, is not in whether a new translation is needed, but what constitutes a good translation of the *Guide*. Pines and Strauss explained in their preface (vii) why they believed a new translation was "necessary"

These voices of critique call into question the readability and reliability of the Pines translation. How compelling are these arguments?

It may be recalled that fifty years ago, when the Pines translation was first published, it was repeatedly greeted with high praise and sincere gratitude—often for the same reasons for which scholars criticize it today. For example, Isadore Twersky wrote in his review in *Speculum*:

This thoughtful translation should properly be used for careful study and not casual reading. Its advance over the existing English translation of M. Friedlander is not in over-all intelligibility (which is often deceptive) but in literalist accuracy, in the attempt to capture the heartbeat of the original Maimonidean text, its rhythms and disorders, its shouts and silences, its ambiguities and obscurities. . . . In general, the translator may be seen as following in the steps of Samuel ibn Tibbon, the first translator of the *Guide* into Hebrew, who strenuously strove for fidelity of rendition rather than felicity of presentation.<sup>4</sup>

In a similar vein, Alexander Altmann, in his review, suggests that Pines provides the “precision necessary to convey the exact meaning and flavor of the text.” Altmann adds that the translation will thus “help toward a clearer understanding of the complex nature of [Maimonides’] philosophy.”<sup>5</sup> To cite another example, Marvin Fox, in his review, explains that Pines “has succeeded admirably” in his stated goal to remain as close as practicable to the original. Pines’s translation reproduces Maimonides’ obscurity and ambiguity. Pines “sought accuracy and has achieved it in this splendid translation.”<sup>6</sup>

What these glowing reviews of Pines’s translation by leading scholars of Maimonides’ thought of the previous generation have in common is their recognition of its impressive reliability and accuracy, even at the expense of eloquence or easy reading. In fact, as suggested, what they praised were

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at that time, and what they considered ought to be required of such a translation. The quoted phrases in this paragraph are from p. vii of their preface.

4. Twersky 1966, 555–56.

5. Altmann 1964, 260.

6. Fox 1965, 266, 268. Lawrence Berman, an expert Arabist and critic of editions and translations of Arabic philosophical works, similarly had high praise for Pines’s translation, calling it “extremely important,” and referred to Fox’s “valuable” review for a detailed evaluation (Berman 1976, 246). Berman himself wrote a review, but touched only briefly on the translation; see Berman 1965, 413.

the same traits that trouble the present-day critics of the translation: its literalness, precision, dogged consistency, and its remaining “as close as practicable to the original.” It is not that the present-day scholars who call for a new translation of the *Guide* are against accurate translations that are faithful to the original, but rather that they believe that taking this style of translation too far leads to unintelligibility, a text that is difficult to follow and much less accessible than it needs to be. We cannot know whether the scholars who praised the translation in their reviews would have changed their opinions of the translation a half century later, for they are all no longer with us. I strongly suspect they would not have, for their evaluations were carefully considered and still ring true. My own view is that a translation of an important philosophical text should be as close and faithful to the original as possible. This means, inter alia, that the translator ought to translate technical-philosophical terms accurately and consistently with the same term, to the extent possible. This method seems particularly appropriate for the *Guide*, where Maimonides explicitly writes:

Your intention must be not only to understand the totality of the subject of that chapter, but also to grasp each word that occurs in it in the course of the speech, even if that word does not belong to the intention of the chapter. For the diction of this Treatise has not been chosen at haphazard, but with great exactness and exceeding precision.<sup>7</sup>

If Maimonides indeed chose his words carefully, a translator’s practice of not translating Maimonides’ technical terms accurately and consistently with the same term, but rather with whatever term seemed most fitting to him or her in the context, would seem to impose the translator’s interpretation of the text unnecessarily upon the reader. Insofar as leading scholars cannot agree on how to read Maimonides’ *Guide*, the less the reader is dependent on the interpretations of the translator, whoever he or she may be, the better.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, if the reader wishes to know how Maimonides used a

7. *Guide* I, intro. (15). Citations of the *Guide* are to Pines’s translation, unless indicated otherwise by the name of the translator.

8. This sentiment is expressed in harsher terms by Peter Kreeft in his abridged edition of Thomas Aquinas’s *Summa theologica*, where he explains that he “uses the old, literal Dominican translation . . . rather than the hubristic paraphrases of some subsequent non-literal translators who succumb to the itch to insert their own interpretative mind and style between the author and the reader” (Kreeft 1990, 19). While I would not characterize any of the translators of the *Guide* in this way, there is often the concern that the modern trans-

certain term, he or she will not be able to make even a preliminary inquiry if the terms are not translated consistently. The present study will show that translators of the *Guide* differed in their approaches to the consistency of translation of technical terms, and will argue that those who did not strive for consistency, however competent and well intentioned they may have been, precluded even the serious reader from a critical reading of this most challenging book.

### Univocal, Equivocal, Figurative, and Amphibolous Terms

In my inquiry in the following sections, I shall concern myself only with those translations that translate directly from Maimonides' Judeo-Arabic, and within this subset I shall limit my investigation to the various English translations, Munk's French translation, and the various Hebrew translations, medieval and modern.<sup>9</sup> I begin at the beginning with four of the first technical terms that confront the reader of the *Guide*. Maimonides begins his introduction to part I of the *Guide* by stating that his first purpose in this treatise is to explain the meanings of certain biblical words. He points out that some of them are equivocal, some figurative, and some amphibolous. These three technical terms are used repeatedly and with great precision throughout the *Guide*, but particularly in part I, where Maimonides teaches us how to understand the true meaning of biblical words.<sup>10</sup> Maimonides explains these technical terms as follows:

Some of these terms are equivocal; hence the ignorant attribute to them only one or some of the meanings in which the term in question is used. Others are derivative terms; hence they attribute to them only the

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lator may be presenting the reader with his or her interpretation of the *Guide*, rather than letting Maimonides speak for himself, even when he is ambiguous, obscure, and seemingly awkward.

9. In all I will look at nine translations: the two medieval Hebrew translations by Samuel Ibn Tibbon (1981) and Judah al-Ḥarizi (1851–79); the two modern Hebrew translations by Yosef Qafih (1972) and Michael Schwarz (2002); the French translation by Salomon Munk (1856–66); the two complete English translations by Michael Friedländer (1881–85) and Shlomo Pines (1963); and the two partial English translations by Chaim Rabin (1952) and Lenn E. Goodman (1977). As stated above (n. 7), citations of the *Guide* are to Pines 1963.

10. At the end of his introduction (20), Maimonides tells us that learning how to discern the true meaning of these terms is “a key permitting one to enter places the gates to which were locked.” Later, in *Guide* I 8 (34), he explains that his teaching the reader how to recognize the correct meaning of an equivocal term in a particular passage is “a key to this Treatise and to others.”

original meaning from which the other meaning is derived. Others are amphibolous terms, so that at times they are believed to be univocal and at other times equivocal.<sup>11</sup>

Such is Pines's translation. There are four related key Arabic terms here: *ism bi-tawāṭu'* ("univocal" or, literally, "a word by agreement"), *ism mushtarak* ("equivocal" or, literally, "a shared word"), *ism musta'ār* ("derivative" or, literally, "a borrowed word"),<sup>12</sup> and *ism mushakkak* ("amphibolous" or, literally, "a doubtful word"). As table 11.1 shows, the Hebrew translators are in basic agreement with regard to the translations of these terms. Their translations are literal and accurate.

Table 11.1

|            | <i>ism bi-tawāṭu'</i>      | <i>ism mushtarak</i> | <i>ism musta'ār</i> | <i>ism mushakkak</i> |
|------------|----------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Ibn Tibbon | <i>be-haskamah</i>         | <i>mishtattef</i>    | <i>mush'al</i>      | <i>mesuppaq</i>      |
| al-Ḥarizi  | <i>be-haskamah</i>         | <i>mishtattef</i>    | <i>mush'al</i>      | <i>mesuppaq</i>      |
| Qafih      | <i>mittokh 'i haqpadah</i> | <i>meshuttaf</i>     | <i>mush'al</i>      | <i>mesuppaq</i>      |
| Schwarz    | <i>be-haskamah</i>         | <i>meshuttaf</i>     | <i>mush'al</i>      | <i>mesuppaq</i>      |

Before looking at modern Western translations of these terms, it will be useful to say something more about their meanings. These are all terms appropriated directly from the Islamic *falāsifa*, and learned in the philosophical curriculum in the early stages of the study of logic, although their divisions and descriptions vary.<sup>13</sup> Not surprisingly, Maimonides explains these terms in his *Treatise on the Art of Logic*. Through Hebrew translations of this popular primer—beginning with Moses Ibn Tibbon's mid-thirteenth-century translation of it—medieval philosophically inclined Jews learned these technical terms and their meanings.<sup>14</sup> Here Maimonides divides equivocals in the most general sense into six groups, including the four terms of the *Guide* plus words used in general and in particular and transferred words. The specific sense of the equivocal or shared word (*mushtarak*) is that it is applied to two things that have nothing in common, such as the Ar-

11. *Guide* I, intro. (5).

12. As we shall see, "derivative" is not the best translation.

13. For one detailed discussion, see Avicenna 1959, 9–11. See further the Arabic (and Greek) texts cited in Wolfson 1938 and Treiger 2012.

14. Prior to this translation, the reader of the *Guide* in Hebrew translation could have been informed about the three terms from Samuel Ibn Tibbon's *Perush ha-millot ha-zarot*; see Ibn Tibbon 1981, 85–88.

abic word *'ayn*, which can mean “eye” or “spring (of water).” The univocal word (*mutawāṭī'*) or word said by agreement is applied to things that have the same constitutive essence, such as “animal,” which is applied to man, horse, and other living beings that comprise the species of the genus animal. The amphibolous word (*mushakkak*) is applied to two or more objects because of something they have in common, but which does not constitute the essence of each one of them, such as “man,” which is applied to Zayd, the rational animal, and a dead man, and a carved or painted image of a man, all of which have in common simply the figure and outline of a man (and this does not constitute the essence of man). The figurative word (*musta'ār*) is a word that has a certain known meaning and afterward is applied to something else figuratively, such as the word “lion,” which is also applied figuratively to a man of great strength. The Hebrew translations of this chapter by Moses Ibn Tibbon and, after him, Aḥituv and Joseph Ibn Vivas all employ the same Hebrew terms to translate these Arabic terms, and these translations follow those of Samuel Ibn Tibbon and perhaps also al-Ḥarizi in their translations of the terms in the *Guide*.<sup>15</sup> It seems that the Hebrew translations of these four technical Arabic terms became standardized at an early stage in the Arabic-to-Hebrew translation movement. As for the consistency of the Hebrew translators of the *Guide* in translating these four technical terms, they are very consistent, particularly if we allow for changes in the form of the Hebrew root to accommodate the structure of the sentence or simply to fit changes in the form of the Arabic root. The translations of these four terms by Ibn Tibbon and Schwarz are exceedingly consistent;<sup>16</sup> al-Ḥarizi is consistent for three of the terms, but translates *ism musta'ār* as not only *mush'al*, but in later chapters as *semikhah*, *meliṣah*, and even *shemot mush'alot semikhot*; and Qafih is also consistent for three of the terms, but translates *bi-tawātu'* less accurately as *mittokh 'i haqpadah* and *paḥot 'o yoter*.<sup>17</sup>

15. For the Arabic text of the *Treatise on the Art of Logic*, see Maimonides 1966. Maimonides' explanation of these terms is found in chap. 13, 35–38. See Maimonides 1938, for the Hebrew translations of this passage by Moses Ibn Tibbon (56–59), Aḥituv (93–96), and Joseph Ibn Vivas (124–26); English translation, 59–61. All three translators translate *mushtarak* with *meshuttaf* (and Ibn Tibbon and Aḥituv, a few times, *mishtattef*), *mutawāṭī'* and the like with *muskam* and *bi-haskamah*, *musta'ār* with *mush'al*, and *mushakkak* with *mesuppaq*.

16. Ibn Tibbon moves between *mishtattef* to *meshuttaf* for his translations of *ism mushtarak*, but the root and meaning remain the same. Al-Ḥarizi, to a lesser extent, does the same.

17. See similarly his translation of the term as *derekh 'i haqpadah* in Maimonides' *Treatise on the Art of Logic* (Qafih 1997, 169). The translation with *paḥot 'o yoter* is in *Guide* I 56 (Qafih 1:136). It does not seem he understood fully what Maimonides intended by this term; cf. Qafih 1:136n14; and Qafih 1997, 169n26, where he refers to translations of the term by others. For these terms, at times the translators translate *ism* (“term” or “word”); at times they do not.



In contrast to the general consistency of the Hebrew translations of these terms, the five modern Western translations we have examined exhibit varying interest in consistency. As table 11.2 shows, the translations of Pines and Munk are very consistent,<sup>18</sup> even when the root of the term appears as a verb or adverb, while the translation of Friedländer and the partial translations of Rabin and Goodman are not.

Table 11.2

|             | <i>ism bi-tawāṭu'</i>  | <i>ism mushtarak</i>   | <i>ism musta'ār</i>                                      | <i>ism mushakkak</i>   |
|-------------|--|--|--|--|
| Munk        | employés comme noms appellatifs, s'applique comme nom commun | homonyme   | metaphorique, mots pris au figuré                        | amphibologique   |
| Pines       | univocal   | equivocal  | derivative, figurative                                   | amphibolous  |
| Friedländer | denoting things which are the same, metaphor                 | homonym, denoting things which are different, having different meanings, metaphor        | figurative, apparent homonym, metaphorical               | hybrid, doubtful homonymity, uncertain homonymity, homonymous  |
| Rabin       | conventional sense   | bearing several meanings, homonymous, possessing several meanings, with several meanings | metaphorical   | ambiguous, amphibological, homonymous, amphibological homonymy |
| Goodman     | in the same sense  | equivocal, ambiguous, in different senses  | figurative, derived sense, metaphorical, different sense | in a different sense   |

18. Pines is consistent in his translation of “amphibolous” for *mushakkak*, just as he is consistent in his translation of “equivocal” for *mushtarak* and “univocal” for *ism bi-tawāṭu'*. However, on the first page of the introduction, he employs “derivative” to translate *musta'ār*, and afterward uses “figurative” consistently to translate it. “Figurative” is certainly the preferred translation, and I am not sure why Pines did not change his translation on the first page. In fact, the Islamic *falāsifa* did speak of terms that may literally be translated as “derivative” (*mushtaqq*). Unlike the figurative terms, which involve two different meanings

The problem with the inconsistent translations is not that they are wrong. It is that Maimonides, at the outset of his work, highlights these four terms—or, at least, three of them—and points to their importance for understanding his book. If these terms are not treated by the translator as technical terms, they will not be recognized as such by the reader, and the differences between them—so important for Maimonides—will become blurred. Thus, for example, when Friedländer, at times, translates three of the terms with “homonym,” how can one know which term Maimonides used, and what its meaning is? The same is true when Goodman translates three of the terms with “in a different sense.” Furthermore, when Rabin translates *ism mushtarak* as “with several meanings,” instead of “equivocal” or “homonymous,” what does the translation really tell us about the reason Maimonides employed this term?

The best Western translations of these four terms, like all the Hebrew translations of them, treat them as technical terms, choose their translations carefully, and are consistent in their use. But they can be the most daunting to read. Consider, for example, Pines's translation of *ism mushakkak* as “amphibolous term.” How many beginning readers will know what is meant by this term? A quick glance at the online database *Glossarium Graeco-Arabicum* shows that the Arabic term *mushakkak* translates the Greek *amphibolos*.<sup>19</sup> *Amphibolos* literally means “cast on both sides,” and thus is often translated as “ambiguous.”<sup>20</sup> But “amphibolous” is itself a proper English term, and has become a widely accepted translation for *mushakkak*. It is not only used by Pines, Munk, Rabin, and Efros in his translation of the *Treatise on the Art of Logic*, but also is the German translation in Klatzkin's *Thesaurus philosophicus*,<sup>21</sup> and was made somewhat famous through Wolfson's 1938

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for the same term, derivative terms are two different terms that are derived one from the other. Maimonides refers to such derivative terms in a rather important discussion of God's names in *Guide* I 61–63 (147–48, 152, 155–56), and also in the context of words derived from *šedeq* in III 53 (631). In all these passages, Pines correctly translates *mushtaqq* as “derivative.” Thus, for example, in *Guide* I 63 (155), God's name *Shaddai* derives from *dai*, which means “sufficiency.” Munk is also very consistent in his translation of these terms, although curiously he leaves the term for “figuratively” untranslated at least twice in *Guide* I 46 (101; Munk 1:164); but cf. I 46 (99; Munk 1:160).

19. See <http://telota.bbaw.de/glossga/glossary.php?id=134667>.

20. *Ambiguus* was the medieval Latin term that often translated *mushakkak*, as well as *amphibolos*. It is the term used in the early Latin translation of the *Guide* published by Agostino Giustiniani. See Giustiniani 1520, fols. 1v–2r.

21. See Efros 1938, 59–60 (cf. Efros 1924, 75–76, where he uses “amphibious”); Munk 1:6–7n3; Klatzkin 1928–33, 2:227 (*amphibolisches Nomen*). Similarly, see Zonta (2003, 69), who uses *amfiboli* in his recent Italian translation.

article “The Amphibolous Terms in Aristotle, Arabic Philosophy, and Maimonides.”<sup>22</sup> Pines’s choice of “amphibolous” may be a stumbling block at first for beginning readers of the *Guide*, who are not familiar with this word, but it indicates that Maimonides is setting forth a technical term whose meaning must be learned and recalled when it appears in the rest of the book. It is the relative uncommonness of “amphibolous,” combined with its derivation from the Greek *amphibolos*, that makes it such a good translation.

If these terms are not understood and clearly differentiated, how will one know the difference between a term being said equivocally of man and God, and a term being said figuratively of them? How will one know whether a given term is applied to things that have nothing in common, something unessential in common, or are just employed metaphorically to convey a certain meaning? Without recognizing these technical terms and what they signify, whenever Maimonides employs some form of them, the teachings of the lexicographical chapters will be closed to the reader, and therewithal the valuable key Maimonides has given the reader for understanding the true meaning of the Bible as well as his own *Guide of the Perplexed* will be lost.

### Terms to Describe the Few

One might well expect that any competent translator would translate key terms correctly and do so consistently, but such expectations need to be qualified. For example, Western translators of the *Guide*—including Munk, Pines, Friedländer, Rabin, and Goodman—regularly and consistently translate *kamāl* as “perfection,” but they are not all so consistent with regard to

22. Wolfson 1938. Cf. Treiger’s learned, but hypercritical, attack on Wolfson’s use of “amphibolous” as a translation in this context in Treiger 2012, 328n2, 343–46. Treiger makes a good point when he says that by “*amphibolia* Aristotle means *expressions, sentences, or arguments* whose ambiguity is due to their syntax, not to the equivocality of any particular word, . . . [and t]hat Alexander uses the term *amphibolia* in precisely this meaning” (343). It is the kind of point that Wolfson could have made and certainly would have appreciated. Yet it hardly follows that Wolfson’s “translation [of *ism mushakkak* as ‘amphibolous term’] is highly misleading” (328n2; cf. 344). Wolfson himself wrote that “the meaning of the term amphibolous as used by Aristotle [is not] the same as the meaning given to it by the Arabic philosophers” (Wolfson 1938, 151). It may also be recalled that Wolfson did not coin this translation of “amphibolous” for *ism mushakkak* (see n. 21), and himself preferred the translation “ambiguous” in this article, a translation apparently approved by Treiger (see, e.g., Treiger 2012, 343). “Ambiguous” is a fine translation for *ism mushakkak* in the *Guide*. However, the unusualness of “amphibolous,” which identifies it as a technical term, as well as the literal meaning of the Greek word, and the word’s use in this context in previous translations, make it an excellent translation.

*al-kāmīl* (or *al-insān al-kāmīl*), “the perfect man.” Pines translates *al-kāmīl* consistently as “the perfect” or “the perfect one” or “the perfect man,” and Munk also consistently translates the term as “l’homme parfait.” Similarly, the four Hebrew translators rather consistently translate the term as *ha-shalem* or *ha-adam ha-shalem*.<sup>23</sup> In contrast, Friedländer translates the term inconsistently as “men of culture,” “men of the highest culture,” “one who has attained perfection,” “those capable of understanding,” “educated persons,” “rational persons,” “thinker,” “the intelligent,” as well as “the perfect man.” This variation is striking, particularly if we consider that the term appears only about fifteen times in the *Guide*. Goodman and Rabin, in their abridged translations, do not have occasion to translate the term often and do translate it as “the perfect man,” but they, too, are inconsistent. Rabin also translates it as “one who has attained perfection” and “accomplished person.” Goodman also translates it as “those whose understanding is most perfect,” “perfectly developed man,” and simply “grown man.”<sup>24</sup>

I do not mean to suggest that any of these translations of *al-kāmīl* are indefensible, but I do believe an argument can be made for translating the term consistently and literally as “the perfect one.” It is well known that Maimonides often speaks of the different ranks of mankind. What if *al-kāmīl* denotes such a rank? How could one know anything about this rank if one cannot compare all its uses because it is translated in different ways? What if Maimonides was really as careful an author as he claims? Is the perfect man (*al-kāmīl*), for him, one of the “men of knowledge” (*ahl al-‘ilm*), “men of speculation” (*ahl al-naẓar*), or “philosophers” (*falāsifa*)? Is he, as we might suspect, the one who has attained highest perfection and reached the supreme rank of man? The person reading the *Guide* in translation can try to answer these questions only if he or she can discern when each of these terms appears in the Arabic, and this can be done only when the terms are translated consistently and accurately.

Thus, for example, a precise and consistent translation of *al-kāmīl* with a term reserved only for it, such as “the perfect one,” would enable the reader to gain a clear picture of such an individual. We learn already from the epistle dedicatory at the beginning of the *Guide* that Maimonides believed that Joseph ben Judah, at some point in his studies with him, had reached a level at which he should “have the secrets of the prophetic books revealed to [him] so [he] would consider in them that which perfect men ought to con-

23. Although, on at least once occasion, al-Ḥarīzī translates the term as *ish maškīl*; see *Guide* I 61 (al-Ḥarīzī [I 60] 1:64).

24. On “grown man” as a translation for *al-insān al-kāmīl*, see *Guide* I 61 (Goodman 102).

sider.”<sup>25</sup> In the introduction we learn that the “degrees of the perfect vary,” actually quite widely, according to the image of the lightning flashes, from those who are in unceasing light to those for whom the flashes are in shorter or greater intervals.<sup>26</sup> These perfect ones can guide others to understand something of the secrets according to the degree of their perfection. The perfect man is the one who can understand the secrets through the hints and parables in the Bible. He is the one for whom parables are present in the prophetic books, and he is the one for whom Maimonides wrote the *Guide*. He will comprehend and be the beneficiary of the esoteric writing, while the multitude will understand what they can, according to their capacity. The perfect man, devoted to the Law and perplexed, will benefit from all the chapters of the *Guide*.<sup>27</sup> The secrets were hidden and may be glimpsed through flashes so that the perfect may learn them.<sup>28</sup> If even the perfect man becomes too occupied with the necessities of bodily life—let alone the unnecessary things—his theoretical desires will grow weak, and he will not apprehend what he could have otherwise apprehended.<sup>29</sup> It is the perfect ones—among whom are the authors of Psalms—who teach us that silence and limiting ourselves to the apprehensions of the intellect are more appropriate than meaningless speech.<sup>30</sup> The perfect man will know not to listen to and believe the stupid tales and books and accounts of magical names of God.<sup>31</sup> He will also come to understand the importance of the intellect that overflows toward us, and that it is the bond between man and God, and when he understands this, he will conduct his life accordingly.<sup>32</sup> As the perfect man increases in age and his bodily desires diminish, his apprehension will increase, as will his joy in his apprehension and great love for the object of his apprehension.<sup>33</sup> This highest state of the perfect ones was achieved by Moses, Aaron, and Miriam, a level higher than the other prophets and excellent ones. This, Maimonides tells us, is the state of enduring permanence, the state of intense (noncorporeal) pleasure, which is the end of man. Maimonides uses the term *al-kāmil* (the perfect one) in a

25. *Guide*, epistle dedicatory (3).

26. *Guide* I, intro. (7).

27. *Guide* I, intro. (16).

28. *Guide* I 33 (71).

29. *Guide* I 34 (79).

30. *Guide* I 59 (140). This seems to be the view attributed to the elite (142), and the excellent ones in *Guide* I 50 (112).

31. *Guide* I 61 (149).

32. *Guide* III 52 (629).

33. *Guide* III 51 (627).

consistent way to describe the person for whom the *Guide* was written, his intellectual capabilities, and the path to attaining his goal.

Consider now the expression *ahl al-naẓar*, which Pines translates as “men of speculation.”<sup>34</sup> In the medieval period, *naẓar* regularly translated the Greek *theoria*, and was regularly translated by the Hebrew translators as *‘iyyun*. This is also the consistent Hebrew translation of the modern Hebrew translators.<sup>35</sup> An appealing, quite popular English translation is “speculation,” reflecting the Latin *speculatio*, which was used to translate both the Arabic *naẓar* and the Greek *theoria*. Also popular is “theoretical speculation,” which preserves the Greek and the Latin terms, and, although it is a bit ungainly, it clarifies that “speculation” in these passages does not have the modern denotation of conjecture. Pines translates *naẓar* as “speculation” and occasionally “theoretical speculation,” “philosophic speculation,” “speculative study,” or “theoretical study.” Munk also favors “spéculation,” but also employs “réflexion” and “étude.” In contrast, Friedländer, Rabin, and Goodman use many different terms for *naẓar*, as can be seen in the partial list in table 11.3.

**Table 11.3**

| Representative Translations of <i>naẓar</i> |  |
|---|--|
| Friedländer                                 | philosophical speculation, philosophy, investigation, inquiry, thought, intelligence, reason, reasoning, reflection, research, contemplation |
| Rabin                                       | speculation, speculative thought, philosophy, philosophical reasoning, thinking, consideration   |
| Goodman                                     | thinking, thought, reason, theory, understanding   |

The consistency and lack of consistency of the translators in translating *naẓar* into English is reflected in the translation of *ahl al-naẓar*. The four Hebrew translators consistently employ *ba’ale ha-‘iyyun* or *anshe ha-‘iyyun*.<sup>36</sup> Pines translates *ahl al-naẓar* consistently as “men of speculation”

34. Or, occasionally, “people of speculation” or “people engaged in speculation.”

35. *Naẓar* appears seemingly countless times in the *Guide*, and in almost all instances is translated consistently by all four Hebrew translators with *‘iyyun*. One major exception is in *Guide* I 32, where Maimonides plays with the different meanings of *naẓar* as a theoretical looking-into with the intellect and a physical seeing with the eye, and yet even here Ibn Tibbon tries to use *‘iyyun* and its forms to the extent possible.

36. Schwarz also uses *anashim be-qerev ha-‘osqim ba-‘iyyun*; see *Guide* I 51 (Schwarz 1:117).

or “men [or people] engaged in speculation.” Munk prefers to translate *ahl al-naẓar* as “penseurs.”<sup>37</sup> Friedländer again employs different terms to translate *ahl al-naẓar*, such as “speculative thinkers,” “people engaged in speculation,” “philosophers,” “scholars,” and “intelligent persons.” Rabin and Goodman do not translate *ahl al-naẓar* often in their abridged translations, but both, like Munk, usually translate the term as “thinkers.” It is only with the consistent and literal translations of *ahl al-naẓar* of the Hebrew translators and Pines that the reader can try to determine whether “men of speculation” is a technical term for Maimonides, and, if so, to whom it applies.

It might seem or be assumed at the outset that *ahl al-naẓar* (men of speculation) also represents the philosophical few for whom Maimonides wrote the *Guide*, but an examination of the way Maimonides uses this term—an examination that is possible for the reader who does not know Arabic only if the expression is translated literally and consistently—shows that this is not the case. Maimonides’ first use of *ahl al-naẓar* is in *Guide* I 51, and, as Munk points out, the term as used here does not refer to philosophers, properly speaking, but to the *mutakallimūn*, a target of Maimonides’ critique.<sup>38</sup> These *ahl al-naẓar* say things that “subsist only in words, not in the mind,” which separates them from the perfect ones, the excellent ones, and the elite.<sup>39</sup> Later references also point to the identity of at least some of the *ahl al-naẓar* with the *mutakallimūn*, and Maimonides speaks openly of the “ignorance and presumption” of some of the *ahl al-naẓar* among the *mutakallimūn*.<sup>40</sup> He also refers to Jewish *ahl al-naẓar* who follow the Law (and seem to be influenced by the *mutakallimūn*).<sup>41</sup> But while the *ahl al-naẓar* are contrasted with philosophers and even “those who proceed correctly in speculation (*naẓar*),” there are also scholars (*‘ulamā*) among them.<sup>42</sup> I would not agree that for Maimonides *ahl al-naẓar* is always a

37. Munk notes at Maimonides’ first use of *ahl al-naẓar* that it literally means “gens de la spéculation.” See *Guide* I 51 (Munk 1:184n3).

38. *Guide* I 51 (113); cf. Munk 1:184n3.

39. See above, n. 30. The citation is from *Guide* I 51 (113–14).

40. See *Guide* I 56 (131) (see Schwarz 1:138n13); I 69 (170), where Maimonides speaks of the “ignorance and presumption” of some of the *ahl al-naẓar* among the *mutakallimūn*; III 25 (504) (see Munk 3:198n3; cf. *Guide* III 17 [466–69]); III 15 (460), which explicitly includes the Muʿtazilites; III 18 (477), which certainly includes the *mutakallimūn*.

41. See *Guide* III 20 (481); III 26 (506).

42. On the contrast with the philosophers, see *Guide* III 20 (481); and with “those who proceed correctly in speculation,” see II 15 (291). On the *‘ulamā* among the *ahl al-naẓar*, see II 37 (374).

“derisive term.”<sup>43</sup> Indeed, at times the meaning of the term seems at first thought ambiguous.<sup>44</sup> What really does Maimonides want to say about Job and his friends when he suggests that they too are among the *ahl al-naẓar*?<sup>45</sup> It seems reasonable to suppose that Maimonides uses the term with care, but what he may want to convey cannot be understood or even explored if it is not translated literally and consistently.

The expression *ahl al-‘ilm* is accurately and consistently translated by Pines as “men of knowledge” or “men [or people] of science.” Ibn Tibbon translates it rather consistently as *anshe ha-ḥokhmah*, and twice as *ba‘ale ha-ḥokhmah*. The other translators, as is clear from table 11.4, are not so consistent, even though this expression appears only about ten times in the *Guide*.

Table 11.4

| Translations of <i>ahl al-‘ilm</i> |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| al-Ḥarizi                          | <i>anshe ha-ḥokhmah, anshe ha-mada‘, ba‘ale ha-ḥokhmah</i>  |
| Qafih                              | <i>anshe ha-ḥokhmah, anshe ha-mada‘, ba‘ale ha-ḥokhmah</i>  |
| Schwarz                            | <i>anshe ha-ḥokhmah, anshe ha-mada‘, anshe ha-da‘at, ha-ḥakhamim</i>                                    |
| Munk                               | les hommes de science, les savants  |
| Friedländer                        | men of science, wise men, men, students, thinkers, philosophers   |
| Rabin                              | men of learning, educated persons, scholars, the learned, philosophers                                  |
| Goodman                            | men of knowledge, men of understanding, persons of understanding, thinkers, the knowledgeable, scholars |

For Maimonides, the *ahl al-‘ilm* (men of knowledge) are quite different from the *ahl al-naẓar* (men of speculation), even though some translators employ the same words to translate both terms. *Ahl al-‘ilm* first appears in *Guide* I 8 to refer to the authors of the prophetic books and other great

43. See Efros 1924, 15.

44. See *Guide* III, intro. (415); curiously, Munk here translates the term as “les esprits spéculatifs” (Munk 3:3).

45. See *Guide* III 22 (487). Maimonides explicitly considered the views of at least two and probably three of the friends to be “in keeping” with the doctrines of the *mutakallimūn*; see III 23 (494).



works, who know how to use equivocal terms wisely.<sup>46</sup> Indeed, it is these men who know how to interpret the prophetic books properly.<sup>47</sup> It is they who must set matters straight for the ignorant or those with mistaken views. Among their ranks may be counted Aristotle and the Sages (*hakhamim*) mentioned in the Talmud.<sup>48</sup> Yet even these *ahl al-'ilm* are, at times, preoccupied with the pleasures of the senses. They must learn to renounce the bodily pleasures, and have contempt for them, “for this is the first degree of the *ahl al-'ilm*.”<sup>49</sup> It is these *ahl al-'ilm*, if they follow the regime of spiritual training outlined by Maimonides in *Guide* III 51, who can achieve the highest state of “intellectual worship, consisting in nearness to God and being in His presence.”<sup>50</sup>

Virtually all translators I have checked consistently translate *falāsifa* as “philosophers.” The problem is that if the reader wishes to know to whom Maimonides applies the term *falāsifa*, this will not be possible to determine through those translations that, as has been shown, also employ “philosophers” to translate *ahl al-naẓar*, *ahl al-'ilm*, and other terms.

As we have seen, Maimonides used several terms to describe the few. When one takes care to translate these terms accurately and literally, we are given a translation that seems awkward when we see terms such as “men of speculation,” “men of knowledge,” “perfect ones,” and the like. The *Guide* in translation would probably be more accessible if the translator simply used words like “thinkers” or “scholars,” which, in general, are not incorrect translations. But these translations tell us little about the terms, and do not allow us to recognize them. We have seen that Maimonides employed at least some of these terms intentionally and with great care. There is a significant difference between the learned *ahl al-'ilm* and the misguided *ahl al-naẓar*. Noncasual students of the *Guide* should be given a translation that allows them to discern these differences.

### The External and Internal

The terms *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin* are well known to students of Arabic culture and civilization. Most importantly, they refer respectively to the external or ap-

46. *Guide* I 8 (34). In II 40 (382–83), we are told that the envious and lazy, at times, claim that they composed works by the *ahl al-'ilm*. According to III 25 (503), the *ahl al-'ilm* appreciate the great importance of writing.

47. See *Guide* I 35 (81).

48. See *Guide* I 51 (112); I 62 (150).

49. See *Guide* II 35 (371); II 40 (384).

50. *Guide* III 51 (623). On this state of “intellectual worship, consisting in nearness to God and being in His presence,” see S. Harvey 2013.

parent meaning of Scripture and the internal or concealed meaning of it. But the terms are also used to refer to any distinction between what is manifestly apparent and visible (the outer or external) and what is concealed and hidden (the inner or internal). Maimonides uses these terms often in the *Guide*—and they are technical terms for him—to refer to modes of biblical interpretation as well as philosophical interpretation, and in several other quite different, but related, contexts, such as those of bodily organs, human apprehensions, appearances, and the conduct of perfect men. As table 11.5 shows, a few of our translators make a conscious effort to translate the terms *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin* consistently and literally as “external” and “internal.”

Table 11.5

|             | Meanings of the biblical text   | Bodily organs                       | Apprehensions of the human senses         | Appearances                                | Conduct of the perfect              |
|-------------|---|-------------------------------------|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| Ibn Tibbon  | <i>pashuṭ, nir'eh, mashma', nigleh</i><br>—<br><i>tokh, nistar</i>  | <i>nir'eh</i><br>—<br><i>penimi</i> | <i>nir'eh</i><br>—<br><i>penimi</i>       | <i>nigleh</i><br>—<br><i>tokh, nistar</i>  | <i>nigleh</i><br>—<br><i>ṣafun</i>  |
| al-Ḥarizi   | <i>pashuṭ, pashaṭ</i><br><i>galui we-yadua', ḥiṣoni</i><br>—<br><i>'inyan, 'inyan nistar, ne'lam, penimi</i>          | <i>galui</i><br>—<br><i>penimi</i>  | <i>galui</i><br>—<br><i>penimi ne'lam</i> | <i>ba-ḥuṣ</i><br>—<br><i>bifnim</i>        | <i>ḥiṣoni</i><br>—<br><i>penimi</i> |
| Qafih       | <i>pashaṭ, pashuṭ</i><br>—<br><i>'inyan ne'lam, sod, tokh, 'inyan, ha-'inyan shehu'</i><br><i>nistar be-tokho</i>     | <i>ḥiṣoni</i><br>—<br><i>penimi</i> | <i>galui</i><br>—<br><i>penimi</i>        | <i>ḥiṣoni</i><br>—<br><i>penimi</i>        | <i>nigleh</i><br>—<br><i>seter</i>  |
| Schwarz     | <i>pashuṭ, pashaṭ</i><br>—<br><i>mashma'ut nisteret, mashma'ut ṣefunah</i>  | <i>ḥiṣoni</i><br>—<br><i>penimi</i> | <i>ḥiṣoni</i><br>—<br><i>penimi</i>       | <i>ḥiṣoni</i><br>—<br><i>betokh tokham</i> | <i>pumbi</i><br>—<br><i>ṣin'ah</i>  |
| Munk        | sens extérieur, paroles extérieur, sens littéral<br>—<br>sens ésotérique, intérieur, sens figure                      | extérieurs<br>—<br>intérieurs       | extérieurs<br>—<br>intérieurs             | extérieur<br>—<br>intérieur                | public<br>—<br>intérieur            |
| Pines       | external sense, external meaning, clear sense<br>—<br>internal, internal meaning, inner meaning, inner content        | apparent<br>—<br>hidden             | external<br>—<br>internal                 | outward<br>outer<br>—<br>inner             | public<br>—<br>secret               |
| Friedländer | literal sense, plain, literal interpretation, apparent from<br>—<br>figurative sense, esoteric lesson, hidden meaning | external<br>—<br>internal,<br>inner | external<br>—<br>inner                    | outward<br>—<br>—                          | public<br>—<br>alone                |
| Rabin       | literal sense, simple meaning<br>—  | —                                   | —   | —  | public<br>—<br>private              |
| Goodman     | literal sense<br>—<br>—   | external<br>—<br>internal           | outer<br>—<br>inner                       | outward<br>—<br>—                          | —                                   |

The first use of these terms in the *Guide* occurs in the introduction to describe the two types of biblical interpretation or the two meanings of the biblical text. Maimonides explains that an ignorant person (*jāhil*) might think that obscure parables have only an external sense (*ẓāhir*) and not an internal one (*bāṭin*). As for the one who truly possesses knowledge (*al-‘ālim bi-al-ḥaqīqa*) and who interprets the parables in their external sense, he will become perplexed; but if it is explained to him that they are parables (and perhaps also the meaning of the parables), the perplexity will vanish.<sup>51</sup> A bit later, Maimonides refers to the interpretation of the midrashim by the perfect man (*al-kāmil*). He can either take the external sense of the midrashim and conclude that their author is an ignoramus, or he can attribute an inner meaning to them and think well of their author.<sup>52</sup> Now the parables of the prophets, like the parables of the Sages, have both an external and an internal meaning. On the one hand, Maimonides attributes to the Sages the view that the internal meaning of the parables of the Bible is like a pearl, whereas its external meaning is worth nothing.<sup>53</sup> On the other hand, he tells us that the “external meaning contains wisdom that is useful in many respects, among which is the welfare of human societies. . . . Their internal meaning . . . contains wisdom that is useful for beliefs concerned with the truth as it is.”<sup>54</sup> Not all biblical statements therefore ought to be taken in their external sense, but if one interprets a statement according to its internal sense, the external and internal meanings could contradict each other.<sup>55</sup> And it is not only the ignoramuses who get confused. In *Guide* I 49, in the context of the discussion of angels, Maimonides explains that those who do not distinguish properly between what is cognized by the intellect and what is imagined, and for whom what is not imagined cannot exist, form the majority of those who are engaged in speculation: “The true reality of a notion never becomes known, nor does a difficulty ever become clear to them.” It is for them that the external sense of Scripture may be understood to signify that the angels are corporeal. In a similar way, the external sense of Scripture appears to state that “God is a living, moving body, having the form of a man.”<sup>56</sup> At times, the meaning is most hidden even when one considers the text according to its

51. *Guide* I, intro. (6). The term *al-‘ālim bi-al-ḥaqīqa* appears only once in the *Guide*.

52. *Guide* I, intro. (9–10).

53. *Guide* I, intro. (11).

54. *Guide* I, intro. (12).

55. *Guide* I, intro. (17).

56. *Guide* I 49 (109).

inner meaning and to what was truly intended. Maimonides illustrates this in *Guide* II 30—a chapter with its own unique literary style, with its frequent repetition of the expression “Among the things you ought to know” (*wamimmā yajibu an ta’lim*)<sup>57</sup>—in his explanation of why it does not say of the second day of creation that it was good. He explains that since the goodness is not clear from the external sense with its account of firmament and waters, and very difficult to understand even according to the internal meaning, it was not proper to say that it was good.<sup>58</sup> In short, one can apprehend the truth as it is only through understanding the inner meaning (*bāṭin*) of Scripture. Pines is the only one of our translators who consistently translates *zāhir* and *bāṭin* in this context as “external” and “inner” or “internal.”<sup>59</sup>

In *Guide* I 46, Maimonides introduces another *zāhir/bāṭin* contrast, that of the external organs and the internal ones (*a’ḏā’ zāhira/a’ḏā’ bāṭina*). The context is a discussion of which kinds of organs or body parts are ascribed to God. Surprisingly, Pines translates the former expression rather

57. The style is evident in the Hebrew translations and those of Munk and Pines, but not that of Friedländer.

58. *Guide* II 30 (353–54).

59. The expression *zāhir al-naṣṣ* (the external meaning of the [biblical] text) does not appear in the passages discussed above, but it does appear five times in the *Guide*, in I 2 (23); I 36 (85); I 45 (96) (twice); and III 41 (567). Four times Pines translates *zāhir* as “external sense” or “external meaning,” but on the first appearance, he translates it as “clear sense.” Mordechai Cohen is therefore not completely accurate when he writes that “Pines never uses the term *peshat* or any of its conventional English equivalents . . . to render the term *zāhir*” (M. Z. Cohen 2011, 102n49). The Hebrew translators translate *zāhir* in this expression as either *peshat* or *pashut* (although Ibn Tibbon translates it once as *nir’eh*). Munk translates it as “sens littéral,” and similarly Goodman. Friedländer translates it as “apparent from” or “literal interpretation,” and Rabin as “simple meaning.” On the various senses of *zāhir al-naṣṣ* in the Maimonidean corpus, see M. Z. Cohen 2011, chap. 2, especially 87–105. The term *zāhir* appears numerous other times in the *Guide* in the sense of “external meaning” without mention of the *bāṭin*, and Pines consistently translates it as “external sense” or “external meaning”; see, e.g., *Guide* I 5 (29); I 51 (114); I 53 (119); II 29 (338, 346–47); and III, intro. (416). With regard to *bāṭin*, see Pines’s translation of *bāṭina sū’* as “something bad being hidden” (*Guide* I 33 [71]). Here there is no explicit contrast with *zāhir*. Cf. the translations of Friedländer I:115: “contain some secret evil”; and Munk I:115: “renferment intérieurement quelque chose de mauvais.” In *Guide* II 2, preface (253), Pines translates *ḥaqā’iq bawāṭinihā* as “the true realities of its hidden meanings [i.e., those of the Law].” Cf. Friedländer 2:26: “their hidden and true sense”; and Munk 2:49: “les vrais sens de ses allégories.” In the context of the objections by philosophers to the *mutakallimūn*, Maimonides mentions another sense of the *bawāṭin*, again without an explicit contrast with *zawāhir*. Pines translates *bawāṭin hādhihi al-umūr* as “secrets of these matters” (*Guide* I 73 [207]), and no translator employs here “internal” or *penimi*, apart from Goodman, who has “internal workings of the dialectic” (Goodman 237).

awkwardly as “apparent organs” and the latter as “hidden organs,”<sup>60</sup> where we would have expected him to translate them as “external” and “internal” ones, as the other modern translators do.

Another well-known use of the *zāhir/bāṭin* contrast applies to the distinction between the external and internal senses (*ḥawāss zāhira/ḥawāss bāṭina*).<sup>61</sup> In the *Guide*, as Wolfson has pointed out, Maimonides does not use these expressions, but rather refers, in I 47, to *al-idrākāt al-ḥissiyya al-zāhira* and *al-idrākāt al-bāṭina*, “external sensory apprehensions” and “internal apprehensions.”<sup>62</sup> However, Wolfson is a bit misleading when he states that Maimonides uses these terms to refer to the external and internal senses.<sup>63</sup> Rather, they refer to the apprehensions involving the external and internal senses. Indeed, Maimonides in this chapter carefully distinguishes between the senses and what is apprehended by the senses. Some of the “external sensory apprehensions” and some of the “internal apprehensions” are attributed figuratively to God, while others are not, all in accordance with “the language of the sons of man.”<sup>64</sup> Of course, for Maimonides, from the point of view of the true reality (*al-taḥqīq*), God “has no essential attribute existing in true reality, such as would be superadded to His essence.”<sup>65</sup> As can be seen in table 11.5, all the translators translate *bāṭin* here in the sense of internal, while the modern translators, with the exception of Qafih, similarly translate *zāhir* in the sense of external. Qafih and al-Ḥarizi employ *galui*, while Ibn Tibbon has *nir’eh*.

Maimonides also employs the *zāhir/bāṭin* contrast to distinguish between outward and inner appearances. An example of an outward appearance is the cleansing—even spiritual purification—of the body, while the inner side is the pursuit of desires and the pleasures of the body. The person who concerns himself with the purification of the body, while having “unbridled license in eating and sexual intercourse, merits the utmost blame.” Maimonides explains that this goes counter to the purpose of the Law, which is to restrain desire: “the purification of the outer” (*tanẓīf al-zāhir*) ought to come after “the purification of the inner” (*tanẓīf al-bāṭin*).<sup>66</sup> Here,

60. *Guide* I 46 (101).

61. See Wolfson 1935a.

62. See Wolfson 1935a, 70, 73–74n27; 1935b, 441. Maimonides mentions the “external sensory apprehensions” and “internal apprehensions” in *Guide* I 47 (105).

63. See the references to Wolfson in n. 62.

64. *Guide* I 47 (104–5). The discussion in this chapter focuses on the question whether God “apprehends all the things apprehensible by the five senses.” On the talmudic dictum that the “Torah speaks in the language of the sons of man” (B.T. Yevamot 71a) and Maimonides’ use of it in the *Guide*, see J. Stern 1986, especially 549–50.

65. *Guide* I 47 (105–6).

66. *Guide* III 33 (533).

all the translators, with the exception of Ibn Tibbon, translate *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin* in the sense of external and internal.

One further example of the *ẓāhir/bāṭin* contrast may be found in *Guide* III 52, where Maimonides distinguishes between the outward and inner behavior or conduct of those perfect men who understand that the intellect that overflows toward us is the bond between us and God. Through this intellect, God is constantly with us. As for the perfect ones who understand this, their inner conduct with their wives and in latrines will be like their outward conduct with other people.<sup>67</sup> Al-Ḥarizi is the only translator we have examined who translates *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin*, in this context, in the sense of external and internal, although Munk does translate *bāṭin* with “intérieur.”

The *ẓāhir/bāṭin* contrast is important throughout the *Guide* in its various contexts, and is in all these contexts related to the rank of man and how he sees and understands God and/or the world, be he among the many or the few. Pines and, to a lesser extent, Munk are the most consistent of all the translators in conveying the contrast between the external and the internal, but, as we have seen, they too are not always consistent. Without consistent translations of *ẓāhir* and *bāṭin*, we have no way of knowing when these terms appear in the Arabic text, and therefore we have no way of knowing the possible connections between the various senses.<sup>68</sup>

## Happiness

*Sa'āda* (happiness) is one of the most important terms in al-Fārābī and in medieval Islamic political philosophy. It is the last term we will consider in this study. Most surprisingly, *sa'āda* is used only rarely by Maimonides, even though there are passages where one would have presumed to find it. In fact, Maimonides uses the term *sa'āda* in only five chapters of the *Guide*, and not

67. *Guide* III 52 (629).

68. There may also be a problem of interpretation when we do not translate the terms literally. Mordechai Cohen, for example, has recently explored to what extent *ẓāhir*, in the sense of the external meaning of Scripture, is synonymous with “literal” or *peshat*, words frequently used to translate it in translations of the *Guide*. These translations can be problematic, and Cohen seems to prefer Pines’s rendering of *ẓāhir* as “the external sense,” which often captures Maimonides’ intent, especially where it is contrasted with *bāṭin* (the ‘inner,’ or ‘hidden’ sense)” (M. Z. Cohen 2012, 265n31). Nonetheless, Cohen does not hold that *ẓāhir* should be translated consistently with the same term. Rather, he explains that “the specific coloration this term acquires, however, depends on the context, generating insinuations significant enough to require different translations” (M. Z. Cohen 2011, 87–88; see also 104–5). Cf. J. Stern 2013, 28. Stern prefers to translate *ẓāhir* consistently as “external,” even though (and perhaps precisely because) he appreciates the differences of nuance and meaning the term has for Maimonides in the *Guide*.

in those chapters, such as III 27, 51, and 54, where we would most expect it to appear, as it does in similar contexts in the writings of the *falāsifa*.<sup>69</sup> *Sa'āda* translates Aristotle's *eudaimonia*, and was rather consistently translated by the medieval Hebrew translators as *hašlahah*. All of the modern-day translators of the *Guide* whom I have consulted are certainly aware that the term means "happiness," but only the Hebrew translators and Pines translate it consistently in all its few occurrences in the *Guide*. In contrast, the others are not consistent, with Friedländer the most egregious in this respect, translating *sa'āda* with a different word almost every time it appears. Table 11.6 shows the various ways *sa'āda* is translated in the *Guide* by our translators.

Table 11.6

|             | <i>Guide</i><br>II 29   | <i>Guide</i><br>II 40 | <i>Guide</i><br>III 22 | <i>Guide</i><br>III 23   | <i>Guide</i><br>III 49 |
|-------------|---|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Ibn Tibbon  | <i>hašlahah</i> <sup>1</sup>  | <i>hašlahah</i>       | <i>hašlahah</i>        | <i>hašlahah</i>          | <i>hašlahah</i>        |
| al-Ḥarizi   | <i>ṭovat ha-'olam,</i><br><i>hašlahah</i><br><i>kibbud</i> <sup>2</sup> | <i>hašlahah</i>       | <i>hašlahah</i>        | <i>hašlahah</i>          | <i>hašlahah</i>        |
| Qafih       | <i>osher</i>  | <i>osher</i>          | <i>osher</i>           | <i>osher</i>             | <i>osher</i>           |
| Schwarz     | <i>osher</i>  | <i>osher</i>          | <i>osher</i>           | <i>osher</i>             | <i>osher</i>           |
| Munk        | fortune,<br>prosperité  | félicité              | heureux                | félicité                 | bonheur                |
| Pines       | happiness   | happiness             | happy                  | happiness                | happiness              |
| Friedländer | prosperity,<br>happiness  | well-being            | prosper                | felicity,<br>good        | prosperous             |
| Rabin       | fortunes  | happiness             |                        | happiness                |                        |
| Goodman     |   | happiness             | comfortable            | happiness,<br>felicities |                        |

1. Ibn Tibbon is not as reliable in his translation of *sa'āda* with *hašlahah* in *Guide* II 29 as this table suggests. The first time *sa'āda* appears, he uses *hašlahah* as a translation for two words, *sa'āda* and *iqbāl* (prosperity). A few lines later, he uses *hašlahah* to translate *iqbāl* by itself. Curiously, in this chapter he uses at least two other words to translate *iqbāl*: *ma'alah* and *romemut*.

2. Al-Ḥarizi may have intended to translate *sa'āda* as *hašlahah*, as we would have expected, but simply reversed the order of *iqbāl* and *sa'āda*. He translates *iqbāl* as *hašlahah* in *Guide* III 23.

69. On Maimonides' use of *sa'āda* in the *Guide* and other writings, see S. Harvey 2012; Berzin 2004, 93–102; Lobel 2017; Tirosh-Samuelson 2003, 192–245.

In truth, Maimonides himself uses *sa'āda* in various senses, popular and philosophical, and therefore a translator could perhaps be justified in translating the term differently in the different contexts. Indeed, it is only in *Guide* III 23 that Maimonides distinguishes, following al-Fārābī and the *falāsifa*, between the true happiness (*al-sa'āda al-ḥaqīqiyya*) and the presumed happiness (*al-sa'āda al-maẓnūna*). Friedländer and Goodman translate *sa'āda* in each of these expressions differently. In *Guide* II 40, Maimonides also speaks of the presumed happiness (*al-sa'āda al-maẓnūna*), although, surprisingly, he does not refer there to the true happiness. Curiously, Schwarz and Rabin are the only translators who translate the presumed happiness (*al-sa'āda al-maẓnūna*) the same way in both chapters.

Much has been written about Maimonides' views on happiness in the *Guide*, without realizing that he does not even use the term *sa'āda* in the chapters under discussion.<sup>70</sup> In view of the importance of the term for many of Maimonides' philosophical sources and the fact that Maimonides uses it in only five chapters, it would seem to be desirable to translate it consistently throughout the *Guide*, but, as we have seen, only the Hebrew translators and Pines do so. One can appreciate the importance of *sa'āda* in the *Guide*, and the possible influence of al-Fārābī upon Maimonides' use of the term, only if the term is translated correctly and consistently. A further complication that we have noted elsewhere is the use of "happiness" by certain Hebrew translators to translate other terms, some with quite different connotations.<sup>71</sup> This is true for some English translators as well. For example, just as Friedländer employs many different terms, including "happiness," to translate *sa'āda*, so he uses "happiness" to translate many different Arabic terms, such as *ṭyāb*, *muna'am*, *mustalidhdha*, *khayr*, and *na'ma*.<sup>72</sup> Rabin, in his abridged translation, also uses "happiness" to translate several different Arabic terms in *Guide* III 51, such as *ightibāt*, *ghibṭa*, and *ladhdha*.<sup>73</sup>

70. I have elsewhere discussed and illustrated this point (S. Harvey 2012).

71. See the notes to table 11.6.

72. See *Guide* I 2: *ṭyāb* (Pines 26: "good things"; Friedländer 1:38: "pleasure and happiness"); II 27: *muna'am* (Pines 333: "felicity"; Friedländer 2:124: "happiness"); II 43: *mustalidhdha* (Pines 393: "took pleasure"; Friedländer 2:202: "found happiness"); II 45, III 16: *khayr* (Pines 396, 462: "benefit[s]"; Friedländer 2:206, 3:62: "happiness"); III 19: *na'ma* (Pines 477: "prosperity"; Friedländer 3:82: "happiness"). Friedländer also translates *surūr* in II 29 (Pines 339: "joy") as "happy."

73. See *Guide* III 51: *ightibāt* (Pines 620: "joy"; Rabin 187: "happiness"); *ghibṭa* (Pines 623: "joy"; Rabin 191: "happiness"); *ladhdha* (Pines 627–28: "pleasure"; Rabin 191: "happiness").



As far as I can tell, Pines and the Hebrew translators, apart from the exceptions noted, reserve the word they each use to translate *sa'āda* for that word. Maimonides' restrained use of the philosophical term *sa'āda* in the *Guide* is one of the perplexities of that book. Those translators who employ the same word to translate *sa'āda* consistently, and who reserve that word only to translate that term, alone make possible for non-Arabic readers the understanding of what Maimonides intends to teach us through his use of this important term.

### Conclusion

There are many features of a translation of a carefully written work like Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed* that commend themselves to a potential reader, and different readers will prioritize, whether consciously or subconsciously, which features are most important to them. This, of course, was well known to the first translators of the *Guide*. Al-Ḥarizi tells us in the short introduction to his translation that he was asked by some noble and wise men of Provence to retranslate the *Guide* in “simple, eloquent, and readily-comprehensible” language, and that is what he sought to do, without “revealing any of the secrets of the book or interpreting any of its matters.”<sup>74</sup> Al-Ḥarizi held that the “wise and intelligent” first translator of the *Guide*, Ibn Tibbon, sought to obscure and conceal the book's meaning, and so a new translation was needed. As we have seen at the beginning of this essay, modern scholars make the same claim about the Pines translation in their call for a new English translation, but often without the reservation about not explaining or interpreting the text. However, Maimonides did not write his book for everyone, but for one in ten thousand<sup>75</sup> or, if we allow for literary hyperbole, for the very few. It is an intentionally carefully written book and very difficult to understand. Maimonides explicitly begged the reader not to explain its secrets, but he did leave the *kāmil* keys for understanding the *Guide's* equivocal, amphibolous, and figurative language, and for apprehending its inner meaning, so that his intended reader might attain the desired happiness. I have tried to suggest that one of these keys is Maimonides' careful use of words. The translator's accurate and consistent

74. al-Ḥarizi, translator's intro., 2.

75. *Guide* I, intro. (16).

translation of these words, however awkward it may seem to the common reader, is a *sine qua non* for enabling the uncommon reader to apprehend Maimonides' profound teachings. This study has illustrated the varying degrees to which translators of the *Guide* have succeeded in preparing such a translation.



## **PART II**

# The Impact of the *Guide* in Translation



Maimonides and Aquinas  
on Divine Attributes  
The Importance of Avicenna

RICHARD C. TAYLOR

It is well known that Shlomo Pines's translation of Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed* and Pines's learned, stimulating introduction to the text have long influenced not only students of the rabbi's work but also scholars of the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Abrahamic traditions of medieval philosophical and religious thought. In scholarship on the Latin tradition, the use of the *Guide* by thinkers such as Alexander of Hales, William of Auvergne, Roland of Cremona, Giles of Rome, Albertus Magnus, Meister Eckhart, and other Christian Aristotelians of the thirteenth century has been duly noted. Nonetheless, major studies have focused mainly on the importance of Maimonides for the teachings of Thomas Aquinas, the best-known Latin theologian and philosophical thinker of that period.<sup>1</sup> With few exceptions,<sup>2</sup> the research has also centered on the direct relation between Maimonides and Aquinas without consideration of their wider context, even though recent studies of Aquinas have repeatedly shown the invaluable importance of key

1. Some examples are the following: Dienstag 1975; Haberman 1979; Kluxen 1986; Dobbs-Weinstein 1995; Hasselhoff 2001, 2002, 2004; Rubio 2006.

2. Various boundaries are valuably crossed in Burrell 1986; see also Burrell et al. 2010.

philosophers of the Arabic/Islamic classical rationalist tradition<sup>3</sup> for the development of Aquinas's metaphysics of being and God and for his teachings on the nature of human knowing.<sup>4</sup> The significance of this wider context has become all the more clear with recent studies published by members of the Aquinas and "the Arabs' Project."<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, Maimonides wrote the *Guide* in Arabic and was himself strongly influenced by the Arabic/Islamic tradition, as were many other medieval Jewish thinkers, both those living in the lands of Islam and those in Christian Europe. Thus Aquinas's understanding of Maimonides and their philosophical relation cannot be isolated and abstracted from this broader Arabic context. In this chapter, I offer a detailed case study in order to show the importance of reorienting our approach to take into account the broader Arabic philosophical context in assessing the impact of Maimonides on Scholastic philosophy. In particular, through close philosophical analysis, I focus on the importance of Avicenna, not only for Aquinas in general but specifically for Aquinas's understanding of Maimonides' teachings on divine attributes—negative teachings that Aquinas attacked and countered with a vigorous defense of positive divine attributes that are knowable to human beings.

I also want to propose a second shift in our approach to the impact of Maimonides on Aquinas. What has proven to be most valuable for understanding Aquinas and the Arabic philosophical tradition is intensive study of his earliest writings, in particular his very lengthy *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard* (hereafter *CS*) and his very brief *On Being and*

3. For a work that emphasizes that Arabic/Islamic philosophy is part of the Western tradition and belongs in philosophy classrooms, see Taylor and López-Farjeat 2016.

4. Some examples are Houser 2007, 2013; Wietecha 2016; López-Farjeat 2012; Krause 2015b; Cory 2015; Taylor 2012a, 2013.

5. In 2008 the Aquinas and "the Arabs' Project" (AAP) was founded at Marquette University as an international collaboration of scholars from North America and Europe to further the study of philosophy in Aquinas and the medieval European tradition and in the classical rationalist Arabic/Islamic tradition as an equally integral part of Western philosophy. The AAP particularly encourages and supports studies of the influence of the Arabic/Islamic tradition through Latin translations on the development of European medieval philosophy—an influence that is especially evident in the work of Aquinas. Thinkers such as the Muslim philosophers al-Fārābī, Avicenna, and Averroes and Jewish philosophers such as Maimonides and Ibn Gabirol made many direct and indirect contributions to Aquinas's own theological and philosophical doctrines and to the teachings of other European Latin writers. Since its inception, the AAP's International Working Group has held annual workshop conferences in the fall in North America and in spring or summer in Europe as well as sessions at other conferences. More detailed information is available at <http://www.AquinasAndTheArabs.org>. The scholars referenced in n. 4 are all members of this group.

*Essence (De ente et essentia)*.<sup>6</sup> While it has been common for many modern scholars to focus on his theological *Summa theologiae*—written for novices in theology—or his *Summa contra Gentiles*—a mature work well known for its cogent philosophical reasoning—his early and widely circulated *CS* has proven to be an invaluable source both for evidence of his extensive study and use of Arabic sources in translation and for insight into the initial approaches and analyses that are the foundations for a great many of his later, well-known doctrines.<sup>7</sup> As I shall show, the *CS* is also a rich and precious source for exploring how Aquinas read and interpreted Maimonides’ *Guide*.

In this essay, my focus is on one key issue in the thought of Maimonides as analyzed by Aquinas in the *CS*: human access to knowledge of the nature of God as considered by Aquinas at *CS* 1, d. 2, q. 1, where he deals with the question of whether the plurality of *rationes* or “notions” by which divine attributes differ are only in the human mind or are also present in God. Here Aquinas lays the doctrinal groundwork on the basis of which, later in *CS* 4, d. 49, q. 2, a. 1, he gives a philosophical account of how human beings in heaven are able to see God in His own essence (*per essentiam*) and “face-to-face.” Yet the analysis of the account in book 1 of the *CS*, where Aquinas directly opposes the famous agnosticism of Maimonides, is complicated by the fact that article 3, the most important of the five articles at *CS* 1, d. 2, q. 1, was not present in the original version of the *CS*. Rather, it was added some years after the original composition. Furthermore, the text of Aquinas as we have it mentions as a proponent of agnosticism not only Maimonides but also Avicenna—a major source for Aquinas’s own metaphysics. As we shall see, what is particularly intriguing is that in grouping these two thinkers together, Aquinas implies that Maimonides’ account is based primarily on the rabbi’s understanding of Avicenna’s teachings on the nature of God as the *Wājib al-Wujūd/Necesse Esse/Necessary Existent*.<sup>8</sup>

6. For the Latin texts of Aquinas’s *Commentary on the Sentences*, I use Aquinas 1929a, 1929b, 1933, and 1947 and a superior draft edition of the Latin text of book 4, d. 49, q. 2 provided by Dr. Adriano Oliva of the Commissio Leonina in Paris. References to these are abbreviated as *CS* with book number indicated. Unless otherwise noted, all translations from Arabic and Latin are mine.

7. Three members in this working group, R. E. Houser, Luis López-Farjeat, and myself, have focused on a more methodical project to discover and analyze the importance of the Arabic philosophical tradition for Aquinas, starting with his earliest works. Our goal is to track and critically evaluate the penetrating influence of Arabic philosophy in translation on Aquinas’s philosophy and theology.

8. As will be made clear in what follows, Aquinas’s understanding of Avicenna’s reasoning on the Divine Nature is established earlier in the *CS*. The use of that interpretation a



In what follows, I first list texts of the *CS* in which Aquinas cites the work of Maimonides. This brief survey will suffice to give us a sense of Aquinas's wide and deep familiarity with Maimonides and the points of potential impact. Second, as one case study, I proceed to consider Aquinas's reasoning in the *CS* on the nature of divine attributes. Third, I analyze Aquinas's assertion that Avicenna held an agnostic doctrine regarding divine attributes like that of Maimonides, and consider how Aquinas's metaphysics, in large portion derived from Avicenna, nevertheless undergirds his positive doctrine of analogy. Finally, I conclude with remarks on the metaphysical foundations of the teachings of Maimonides, Avicenna, and Aquinas on divine attributes.

### Maimonides in the *Commentary on the Sentences*

Aquinas cites the work of Rabbi Moses in twenty-eight passages of the *CS*.<sup>9</sup> Among the topics are (i) the notion that God is subsistent being and nothing but being without essence,<sup>10</sup> (ii) that names said of God and creatures are equivocal,<sup>11</sup> (iii) that the name being is the ineffable name of God because of its highest dignity,<sup>12</sup> (iv) that God is the knowing author of the ends and purposes of things,<sup>13</sup> (v) that God has perfect knowledge of singulars with his knowledge being something equivocal with human knowledge,<sup>14</sup> (vi) that God's knowledge, though different from that of humans, equally encompasses both singulars and universals,<sup>15</sup> (vii) the question of the eternity of the world and the difficulty of establishing the nature of the world in the past based on its present state,<sup>16</sup> (viii) reasoning relevant to the non-demonstrative nature of Averroes' view that souls do not remain a pluralia after the death of the body,<sup>17</sup> (ix) that the easiest way (*facillima via*) to

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decade later in the inserted article 3 seems to be for the sake of clarifying Aquinas's analysis of Maimonides' teaching, and grounding it philosophically in Avicenna. In the first version of the *CS*, Aquinas had not mentioned any connection between Maimonides and Avicenna.

9. This is the result of a search using the *Index Thomisticus*, available at <http://www.corpusthomicum.org/it/index.age>.

10. *CS* 1, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3, resp.
11. *CS* 1, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3, resp.
12. *CS* 1, d. 8, q. 1, a. 1, sed contra 1.
13. *CS* 1, d. 35, q. 1, a. 2, resp.
14. *CS* 1, d. 36, q. 1, a. 1, resp.
15. *CS* 1, d. 39, q. 2, a. 2, resp.
16. *CS* 2, d. 1, q. 1, a. 5, resp.
17. *CS* 2, d. 1, q. 1, a. 5, ad contra 6.

show that God exists and is the cause of all things is from the supposition of the *de novo* creation of the world,<sup>18</sup> (x) that the heavens function in the universe as the heart functions in an animal,<sup>19</sup> (xi) that the heavens and the elements do not have a common matter,<sup>20</sup> (xii) that angels mentioned in Scripture are signs of divine power, but the number of separate substances is in accord with the determinations of the philosophers,<sup>21</sup> (xiii) on natural elements and the interpretation of Genesis,<sup>22</sup> (xiv) on the observance of the Sabbath for the sake of inculcating belief in the newness of the world (*novitas mundi*),<sup>23</sup> (xv) explanation of Aristotle's view (*Topics* IV.5.126a34–35) that even God is able to do bad things if He so wishes,<sup>24</sup> (xvi) on the five considerations that make it difficult for all people to understand God through reason, thereby justifying the need for faith,<sup>25</sup> (xvii) on the postponement of circumcision to the eighth day,<sup>26</sup> (xviii) on why earlier offerings to idols were permitted to be offered to God,<sup>27</sup> (xix) on the view that before the time of the law, fornication was not a sin,<sup>28</sup> (xx) on family habitation of those who are unmarried,<sup>29</sup> (xxi) on Maimonides' reasoning against the idea that the world was created for the sake of human beings,<sup>30</sup> and (xxii) on prophecy and its gradations.<sup>31</sup>

Based on the evidence of this limited but still somewhat wide-ranging set of texts, it is clear that the young Aquinas was familiar with substantial parts of the Latin translation of the *Guide of the Perplexed*. Still, it is not clear in the *CS* whether Aquinas fully comprehended the teachings of Maimonides in the *Guide* in fact to be a mixture of two modes of discourse, one religious and anthropomorphic and the other Aristotelian and scientific.<sup>32</sup>

18. *CS* 2, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3, ad 2.

19. *CS* 2, d. 2, q. 2, a. 3, resp.

20. *CS* 2, d. 3, q. 1, a. 1, resp.

21. *CS* 2, d. 3, q. 1, a. 3, resp.

22. *CS* 2, d. 14, q. 1, a. 2, ad 2.

23. *CS* 2, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3, ad 2. See also *CS* 3, d. 37, q. 1, a. 5, qc. 1, sed contra 2; *CS* 3, d. 37, q. 1, a. 5, qc. 1, resp.

24. *CS* 3, d. 12, q. 2, a. 1, ad 4.

25. *CS* 3, d. 24, q. 1, a. 3, qc. 1, resp.

26. *CS* 4, d. 1, q. 2, a. 3, qc. 1, resp.

27. *CS* 4, d. 1, q. 2, a. 5, qc. 2, resp.

28. *CS* 4, d. 33, q. 1, a. 3, qc. 3, resp.

29. *CS* 4, d. 40, q. 1, a. 4, resp.; *CS* 4, d. 42, q. 2, a. 2, resp.

30. *CS* 4, d. 48, q. 2, a. 3, ad 6.

31. *CS* 4, d. 49, q. 2, a. 7, ad 2.

32. An older contemporary of Maimonides, however, was well aware of this issue of diverse discourses. It can be found in the methodology of Averroes, expressed in the *Faṣl*

## CS 1, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3

“Whether the plurality of notions (*rationum*) by which attributes differ is only in the intellect or also in God.”<sup>33</sup>

As indicated above, the issue of teaching the impossibility of predicating positive attributes of God occurs in at least three different passages where Aquinas references the text of Maimonides. This issue is clearly very important for Aquinas, particularly since he famously disagrees with Maimonides, instead insisting on the legitimacy of such predications. Rather than follow the philosophical agnosticism of the rabbi, Aquinas offers his own well-known doctrine of analogy that allows for the assertion of the truth of certain positive predicates of God while denying to human beings full

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*al-maqāl* and confirmed in the opening pages of *Al-kashf‘an al-manāhij*. In contrast to the usual translation of the title *Faṣl al-maqāl* as the *Decisive Treatise*, a more literal rendering of the Arabic title would be *The Book of the Distinction of Discourse and the Establishment of the Connection between the Religious Law and Philosophy* (following El Ghannouchi 2002, 139–45). The discourses distinguished are that of religion (which involves rhetoric and dialectic wherein truth is only *per accidens*) and that of philosophy (wherein the ideal methodology of demonstration attains truth *per se*). That this is a sound rendering of the title is reinforced by Averroes’ reference in the opening pages of the *Kashf* to that earlier work when remarking that religion has two parts, the apparent or external and the interpreted. He writes, “In a separate work we have already made clear the congruity of philosophy with religion (*al-ḥikma li-shar‘*) and the command of religion for [the doing of philosophy]. We said there that religion (*al-shar‘a*) has two parts: [one] evident and [one] interpreted (*zāhir wa-mu‘awwal*). The evident is obligatory for the majority (*al-jumhūr*) and the interpreted obligatory for the learned (*al-ulamā‘*). The obligation of the majority in regard to it is to take it according to its evident sense and to refrain from interpreting it; for the learned it is not permitted to inform the majority of its interpretation” (Averroes 1998a, 99). The apparent or external (*zāhir*) is to be taken literally by the masses without any interpretation permitted, while the interpreted (*mu‘awwal*) is understood with the philosophical tools expounded in the *Faṣl al-maqāl* and reserved for the learned who are forbidden to divulge it to the masses. In contrast to Averroes’ firm prohibition against confusing the majority by displaying apparent contradictions between religious interpretations of Scripture and philosophical and scientific teachings, Maimonides openly displays contradictions between these two distinct methods of discourse and leaves it to his readers to discern their own way through the contradictions. For further discussion of these issues of method in Averroes, see Taylor 2014; see also Taylor 2012c. Both Maimonides and Averroes were working under the influence of al-Fārābī’s conception of representation according to which philosophical truths can be expressed imitatively or by representation in another mode of discourse, as happens in religion; see Vallat 2004, 297ff., especially 297–301, 336–40.

33. Rubio (2006) discusses this article at length and analyzes its context. In what follows here, I provide my own account, focusing on the importance of Avicenna for Aquinas and Maimonides in a manner she does not.

knowledge of the content of those predicates when said of God.<sup>34</sup> Aquinas's critical engagement with the views of Maimonides in this early passage of the *CS* is important for the coherence of his theology, since he needs to open clearly the way to a human vision of God. Later, in the fourth book of the *CS*, Aquinas, explicitly using a philosophical model drawn from Averroes and Alexander of Aphrodisias<sup>35</sup> as recounted by Averroes in the *Long Commentary on the "De Anima" of Aristotle*, provides a rational and clearly philosophical account of the ultimate human end and the religious promise of the vision of God "face-to-face" in knowing God's very essence. Had Aquinas acceded to the reasoning of Maimonides, the vision of God's essence would have been precluded and his Christian teaching undermined. In contrast, Aquinas takes a bold approach, asserting that God can be known in the present life and God's essence can be seen in the next one. With this he sets out with confidence a rationalist philosophical theology that differs radically from the dual methodological approach of Maimonides.<sup>36</sup>

The immediate context of the article examined in detail here is a consideration of Trinity and unity. *CS* 1, d. 2, q. 1 has five articles: (a. 1) Whether God is only one; (a. 2) Whether there are many attributes in God; (a. 3) Whether the plurality of notions (*rationum*) by which attributes differ is only in the intellect or also in God; (a. 4) Whether there are many persons in the Divinity; and (a. 5) Whether the divine persons differ in reality or only by reason. (Since our concern is with philosophical reasoning, I leave aside articles 4 and 5, which are specific to Christian theology.) In article 1, he argues that every multiplicity must be preceded by a unity and that the whole plurality of beings must be reduced to or founded on one first principle of all beings, which is God, something he says faith presupposes and reason demonstrates. In article 2, he reasons that all being and goodness in creatures come from God, yet their imperfection is a result of their natures as created *ex nihilo*. Drawing on the notion discussed by Aristotle (*Physics* III.3.202a12–b29) that the actuality of an agent qua agent consists in the

34. A standard understanding of Maimonides is recounted in Seeskin 2014.

35. See Taylor 2012a; Krause 2015a.

36. For Aquinas, there is a unity of truth that brings together the weakness of human natural reason with the ultimate truth, God. In contrast, Averroes follows and exaggerates a Farabian approach to religion and philosophy—a rationalist account that places philosophy over religious discourse and declares the study of metaphysics the greatest worship that humans can perform. On Averroes' notion of a religious law specific to philosophers, see Taylor 2012c.

actualization of the patient and on the notion that characteristics of a cause can be inferred from characteristics of an effect (*Metaphysics* II.1.993b23–27),<sup>37</sup> Aquinas asserts that “whatever . . . is the cause of something has that [characteristic] in a more excellent and more noble way,” and draws the consequence that “all the excellences (*nobilitates*) of creatures are found in God in the most noble of ways and without any imperfection; and for this reason those [excellences] that are diverse in creatures are one in God owing to [His] highest simplicity.”<sup>38</sup> The various excellences, such as wisdom, goodness, and the like, are all one in the Divine Essence according to the highest reality of each in such a way that they differ only according to reason and not in reality:

And so it is that He is not at all an equivocal cause of things since He produces effects similar to His [own] form, not in a univocal way but in an analogical way . . . according to the teaching of Dionysius. Hence, He is the exemplar form of things, not only for those things in His wisdom, namely, according to ideal reasons, but also for those things that are in His nature, namely, the attributes. Some, however, say that those attributes do not differ except regarding their connotations in creatures, which cannot be the case. For a cause does not have something from the effect, but the converse, and so God is not called wise because wisdom exists as something from Him whereas a created thing is called wise insofar as it imitates divine wisdom. Likewise, because creatures do not exist from eternity, [and] even if they were never to exist in the future, it was true to say that there is [something] wise, good, and the like. Nor does it signify for one and another what is absolutely the same, as [is the case when] the same thing is signified through synonymous names.<sup>39</sup>

37. “Now we do not know a truth without its cause; and a thing has a quality in a higher degree than other things if in virtue of it the similar quality belongs to the other things (e.g. fire is the hottest of things; for it is the cause of the heat of all other things); so that that which causes derivative truths to be true is most true” (Aristotle 1984, 2:1570).

38. *Quod autem est causa alicuius habet illud excellentius et nobilius. Unde oportet quod omnes nobilitates omnium creaturarum inveniantur in Deo nobilissimo modo et sine aliqua imperfectione: et ideo quare in creaturis sunt diversa, in Deo propter summam simplicitatem sunt unum* (CS 1, d. 2, a. 2, resp., p. 62).

39. *Et inde est quod ipse non est causa rerum omnino aequivoca, cum secundum formam suam producat effectus similes, non univoce, sed analogice; sicut a sua sapientia derivatur omnis sapientia, et ita de aliis attributis, secundum doctrinam Dionysii. Unde ipse est exemplaris forma rerum, non tantum quantum ad ea quae sunt in sapientia sua, scilicet secundum rationes ideales, sed etiam quantum ad ea quae sunt in natura sua, scilicet attributa. Quidam autem dicunt, quod ista attributa non differunt nisi penes connotata in creaturis: quod non*

As set out at this stage in the development of the CS, the foundation for Aquinas's view is the account of the Areopagite in *On Divine Names*, chapters 5 and 7. Thirteenth-century thinkers had already found peace and reconciliation with those teachings in an interpretation that turned away from that text's denial of human intellectual knowledge of the Divine Essence Itself to a more positive reading. In 1241, William of Auvergne, in his function as bishop of Paris, condemned the view that the vision of God is unavailable to humans or angels, and it is in accord with that condemnation that both Aquinas and his teacher Albert adopted positive understandings of the knowability of God.<sup>40</sup> William's theological determination of the issue confirmed the attribution of divine names in support of the literal interpretation of 1 Corinthians 13:12: "Now we see darkly as in a mirror, but then face-to-face. Now I know partially, but then I will know even as

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*potest esse: tum quia causa non habet aliquid ab effectu, sed e converso: unde Deus non dicitur sapiens quia ab eo est sapientia, sed potius res creata dicitur sapiens in quantum imitatur divinam sapientiam: tum quia ab aeterno creaturis non existentibus, etiam si nunquam futurae fuissent, fuit verum dicere, quod est sapiens, bonus et hujusmodi. Nec idem omnino significatur per unum et per aliud, sicut idem significatur per nomina synonyma* (CS 1, d. 2, q. 1, a. 2, resp., p. 62). In his later *Commentary on the "On Divine Names" of Dionysius*, Aquinas reads in the Latin: *Omnia quidem in seipsa prae habet secundum unum simplicitatis excessum, omnem duplicitatem refutans; omnia autem eodem modo continet, secundum supersimplificatam ipsius infinitatem et ab omnibus singulariter participatur* (He pre-contains all things in Himself according to one excess of simplicity, refusing all duplication; however, He contains all things in [one and] the same way according to His supersimplified infinity and He is participated by all individually). On this Aquinas writes: *Ratio quare potest esse omnium causa est ista: quia omnia existentia prae habet in sui unitate; et quia ex eo quod habet unumquodque et causat aliquid ad similitudinem sui, sequitur quod ille qui in se habet omnia, subsistere faciat omnia, praesens omnibus rebus et ubique, non secundum diversas sui partes, sed secundum unum et idem et secundum idem est omnia, in quantum in sua simplici essentia, omnia virtualiter prae existunt; et similiter secundum idem procedit ad omnia causative et tamen manet in seipso, immutabilis existens in causando et stans est in quantum non mutatur et motus in quantum diffundit ad alia sui similitudinem* (The reason why He can be the cause of all things is this: He pre-contains all existing things in His unity. And because He holds each thing and causes a thing as His likeness, it follows that He who has all things in Himself makes all things to subsist, being everywhere present to all things, not according to diverse parts of Himself, but as one and the same and as the same He is all things, insofar as all things are virtually pre-contained in His simple essence. Likewise, as the same He proceeds to all things in a causative way while yet remaining in Himself, immutable and existing in the causing and remaining still insofar as He is not changed and moved, He diffuses His likeness to other things). Latin text of Dionysius, chap. 5, sect. 9, #284 (Aquinas 1950, 248); text of Aquinas, #672 (Aquinas 1950, 250).

40. See De Contenson 1959, 1962. An extensive discussion of this can be found in Aquinas's later *Summa theologiae*, prima pars, q. 13. Of particular interest is a. 2, where the views of the CS are repeated.

I am known.”<sup>41</sup> This is important for the philosophically rich explication of human vision of the Divine Essence in heaven that Aquinas presents at CS 4, d. 49, q. 2, a. 1. In light of that, it is not surprising that Aquinas repeatedly rejects the negativity and agnosticism of Maimonides as expressed in the *Guide* at I 51–52 and I 56–58. His firm belief in the truth of the religious doctrine that God will be seen “face-to-face” in the afterlife is clearly a motivating factor for Aquinas to work to provide a philosophically compatible account. However, thus far in the *CS*, Aquinas has not provided or brought together the needed metaphysical underpinnings for this doctrine.

In book 1, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3 of his *CS*, Aquinas deals with the issue of whether the plurality of *rationes* or “notions” by which divine attributes differ are only in the mind or are also in God. This article, however, was not found in the initial version of the *CS*; some scholars have contended that it is a late insertion made perhaps about a decade after the original composition of the *CS*. As A. Dondaine reasoned and Mercedes Rubio worked to confirm in her book-length study,<sup>42</sup> Aquinas might have composed this lengthy article—perhaps from a formal *quaestio*—after having been assigned the task of evaluating Peter of Tarantasia’s *Commentary on the Sentences* for doctrinal error. According to Rubio, after discovering weaknesses in the accounts of Peter, who had based his views on Aquinas’s own account in the *CS*, Aquinas not only returned to reflect on the challenges of Maimonides but even decided to insert a new article, the present article 3, into the already-circulating original version of the *CS*.<sup>43</sup> More recently, however, Adriano Oliva has reasoned convincingly that the insertion of article 3 likely took place in Paris only a few years after the completion of the original version of the first book of the *CS*.<sup>44</sup> But let us return to Aquinas’s reasoning in this article.

41. *Videmus nunc per speculum in aenigmate: tunc autem facie ad faciem. Nunc cognosco ex parte: tunc autem cognoscam sicut et cognitus sum* (Latin Vulgate 2001).

42. Dondaine 1933, 1938; Rubio 2006. See also Lemaigre 1966.

43. According to Rubio, her “study supports the view that what provoked Aquinas’ review of Maimonides’ position on the knowledge of God was not a renewed concern for Maimonides’ controversial answer to the problem, but a much closer concern, that is, the need to criticize and at the same time justify his colleague Peter of Tarantasia’s writings on the matter. It also shows that Aquinas’ review of Maimonides’ *Guide* at this critical stage led him not in the direction of an enhancing of the role of analogy—the notion is paid little attention in the *Quaestio*—but in that of searching for a comprehensive explanation of why our knowledge of God is so scarce in this life, and the hints we find for a future, clear knowledge of God in the world to come” (Rubio 2006, 7–8).

44. See Oliva 2006, 160–61, 130–39. Two recent doctoral dissertations have dealt with the issue of divine names. See Brian Carl, “The Order of the Divine Names in the Writings of

In the course of his response, Aquinas spells out several approaches to the issue with that of Maimonides playing a prominent role in the discussion. The aim of his discussion, however, is to understand how various interpreters understand the *ratio* (notion, nature, character) of an attribute. The importance of this aim must be highlighted, since Aquinas adds the comment that “on this depends nearly all the understanding of the things said in book 1” of his *CS*.

Aquinas addresses the issues of the senses and the use of the term *ratio* under four considerations: (i) what it means when it is said that things differ by *ratio*; (ii) how it is said that a *ratio* in a thing exists or does not exist; (iii) whether or not there exist diverse *rationes* of attributes in God; and (iv) whether the plurality of *rationes* of those attributes exist only in human intellects or in some way in the thing itself (namely, God). He proceeds to consider each of these in detail, expounding the last two at length, since they are so important for his conception of divine attributes.

(i) In its first sense, *ratio* is just the signification of a name that the intellect apprehends. This is the case for definitions as well as other understandable things that do not have strict definitions, since these things, such as quantity, quality, and the like, can be signified even if not defined. In the case of God or God’s wisdom, though we do not have a definition, the notion of wisdom when applied to God is the human intellect’s conception of the signification of the name. Here, what is signified is not the human concept itself but the intended referent of the concept. We use the human concept (*ratio*), but what is signified in this usage is not that concept but the intended referent—namely, the wisdom that is God’s essence.

(ii) Thus, the *ratio* in the soul signifies something in a thing external to the soul as corresponding to the mind’s concept. The concept can be related to that external thing in three ways. First, it may be a likeness of the thing external to the soul founded in the thing and in conformity with what is in the soul so that what is in the soul is true of the thing. Second, it may signify something that is consequent upon the way of understanding the external thing. These things are intentions of the mind, such as genus and species, that have a remote foundation in the external thing but a proximate foundation in the human mind. Third, it may signify fantastic, imagined notions that have no foundation in reality. What is most important to note here

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Thomas Aquinas” (2015) and Garrett Smith, “The Problem of Divine Names from Thomas Aquinas to Duns Scotus” (2013). I am glad to extend my thanks to Brian Carl for calling my attention to the work of Oliva and these two dissertations.



concerns the second, “namely, that a *ratio* is said to be in a thing insofar as the thing signified by the name to which the *ratio* accrues is in the thing; and this happens properly when the concept of the intellect is a likeness of the thing.”

(iii) On the issue of *rationes* of attributes actually being in God, Aquinas distinguishes two options. For the first, he remarks that both Maimonides and Avicenna hold that God is some sort of subsistent being that is nothing other than being—being without essence.<sup>45</sup> Aquinas writes that everything else other than being that is attributed to God is asserted to be true either through the way of negation or through the mode of causality.<sup>46</sup> Negation involves removing defects (such as saying God is wise to remove the defect of lacking wisdom), or it involves eliminating something consequent upon negation (such as describing God as one for the sake of denying plurality, or saying He is immaterial to negate the idea that He is matter or material, yielding by way of negation the common conclusion that God possesses intellectual understanding, since immateriality entails intellectuality). The way of causality is proposed in two ways. The first is, as it were, top down, insofar as something can be said to be in God Himself because it is produced

45. The precise language is worth noting: *Res illa quae Deus est est quoddam esse subsistens nec aliquid aliud nisi esse, in Deo est: unde dicunt quod est esse sine essentia* (The very thing which is God is a certain subsistent being and nothing else but being is in God. Hence, they say that [God] is being without essence). However, the issue is more complex and subtle than Aquinas indicates here. Avicenna, early in book 8 of the *Metaphysics of the Shifā'*, holds that God has an essence (*dhāt*) and this essence is His existence: “Hence, everything except the One—who is one by His essence (*li-dhāti-hi*) and who is the Existent (*al-mawjūd*) who is existent by His essence—acquires existence from something else and is existing through it and is not [existing] in its own essence” (Avicenna 2005, 272; translation modified). Yet later he goes on to explain more fully that God cannot have an essence in the way creatures do, so God properly speaking does not have an essence. He writes, “For the One has no essence (*māhiyya*) and He emanates existence (*al-wujūd*) from Himself onto the things having essence” (Avicenna 2005, 276; my translation). As Bertolacci puts it, “Since the First Principle has no cause, It cannot rely on a cause conferring existence to Its essence and cannot therefore be affected by any distinction of essence and existence” (Bertolacci 2012, 282). Hence, Avicenna ultimately seems to deny essence of God. See Bertolacci 2012 for a more detailed discussion of essence and existence in Avicenna; regarding *Metaphysics*, book 8 in particular, see pp. 282–84. Maimonides, on the other hand, allows that God is a simple essence, not denying essence but asserting that His essence involves existence and also that the Divine Essence Itself is beyond creaturely description except through negation or causality, neither of which positively characterizes the Divine Essence. This is the task of the lengthy discussion in the *Guide* that begins at I 51 and continues through I 65 (Pines 112–60).

46. Here Aquinas follows the metaphysical account of Avicenna; see the next section below, “Avicenna and Aquinas in the Context of Maimonides’ Agnosticism.”

by God in a creature in a less perfect way. (This requires a knowledge of the Divine Essence.) The second is, as it were, bottom up, as it is related to the less perfect way it exists in creatures; God is called willing and pious, since He produces those *rationes* in creatures. Thus, one can use causality to reason from Creator to creature or from creature to Creator. Aquinas then explains:

According to this view [of Avicenna and Maimonides], it follows that all the names that are said of God and creatures are said equivocally and that there is no likeness of the creature to the Creator from the fact that the creature is good or wise or anything of that sort; Rabbi Moses says this explicitly. According to this, what is conceived regarding the names of attributes is not referred to God so that it is a likeness of what is in Him. Hence it follows that the *rationes* of those names are not in God as if they were to have a proximate foundation in Him, but rather He is a remote foundation. . . . In this way, according to this view, the *rationes* of these attributes are only in the mind, not in the reality that is God; and the intellect reaches these from the consideration of creatures, either through negation or through causality.<sup>47</sup>

Aquinas immediately follows this with the Latin tradition's contrasting positive analysis of the predication of attributes based on the common view of Dionysius and Anselm on Divine perfections.<sup>48</sup> Any perfection found in creatures exists preeminently in God with regard to universality (since in God are found all the excellences that could not possibly be gathered in a single creature), plenitude (since wisdom and other attributes are in God without defect), and unity (since God pre-contains all things such that He causes all, knows all, and all things are made like Him analogically). Aquinas writes:

According to this opinion, the conceptions that our intellect conceives from the names of attributes are truly likenesses of the reality (*in re*) that is God, although they are deficient and not in their fullness (*plena*) as is the case concerning other things that are similar to God. Hence

47. *CS* 1, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3, resp., p. 68.

48. Regarding Dionysius, see n. 39. Aquinas merely mentions Anselm as being in accord with Dionysius in holding that God possesses all perfections. The reference is to Anselm's perfect being theology as found detailed in his *Monologion*. For a discussion of this work as well as the *Proslogion*, see Leftow 2004.

notions (*rationes*) of this sort are not just in the intellect because they have a proximate foundation in the reality that is God. And from this it happens that whatever follows on wisdom, insofar as it is of this sort, belongs rightly and properly to God. These opinions, however, although seemingly diverse on the surface, still are not contrary [to one another] if one considers the reasons for the things stated with respect to the grounds for stating them.<sup>49</sup> The first [namely, Avicenna and Maimonides] considered created things themselves on the basis of which the names of attributes are imposed, as when the name “wisdom” is imposed on a certain quality and the name “essence” [is imposed] on a certain thing that does not subsist. These are far from God. And for this reason, they said that God is being without essence and that there is no wisdom as such in Him.<sup>50</sup>

Aquinas’s point here is that if essence can in no way be attributed to God insofar as He is only being or only subsisting being, then, properly speaking, attributions through causality from creatures cannot pertain to Divine Essence at all. Although he is discussing the specific problem of anthropomorphism, Kenneth Seeskin captures the general issue in a clear and succinct way in the conclusion to his *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* article on Maimonides:

How one assesses Maimonides’ philosophy depends on one’s own philosophic view. For a traditional theist like Aquinas, he [Maimonides] is right to say that there are issues, e.g. creation, that cannot be resolved by demonstration and to insist that all attempts to anthropomorphize God are misguided. The problem is that in rejecting anthropomorphism, he may have gone too far. If God bears no likeness to the created order, and if terms like *wise*, *powerful*, or *lives* are completely ambiguous when applied to God and us, the conception of divinity we are left with is too thin for the average worshipper to appreciate. . . . Finally, for an atheist, Maimonides’ philosophy shows us what happens if you remove all anthropomorphic content from your conception of God: you remove all

49. Cf. Rubio’s translation: “These opinions, although they may seem superficially diverse, are nonetheless not opposed to each other, if we base the rationale of their statements on the speakers’ positions” (Rubio 2006, 260n26).

50. *CS* 1, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3, resp., p. 69.

content of any kind. In the end, you are left with a God whose essence is unknowable and indescribable. Of what possible value is such a conception either to philosophy or religion?<sup>51</sup>

Others consider the modes of perfection that are used as the foundation for divine names and hold that because God is simple and perfect in all ways, positive names are applicable to Him. This is true for those with views (i) and (ii). Regarding (iii), we see that it must be the case that *rationes* are attributed to God as truly existing in Him because “the *ratio* of the name holds more on the part of that from which the name is imposed than from the part of that on which it is imposed.” That is, the *ratio* belongs more to God than to that which possesses it as derived from God’s causality.

(iv) Equally important is this final consideration: whether the plurality of notions (*rationes*) of those attributes exist only in human intellects or in some way in the thing itself (namely, God). The requisite task here is clear: Aquinas must provide grounds for the position that these notions as attributes of God are actually in the Divine Essence, which is a complete and simple unity. Aquinas’s view is also evident enough. Since we attribute a plurality of names to God but we also hold that God is a simple unity without essential and per se plurality, the plurality of names must be imposed from the plurality they have in the human intellect. This is explained in light of the deficiency and inability of the finite human intellect to comprehend God in one simple essential notion:

It is clear . . . that the plurality of names comes from the fact that God exceeds our intellect. However, that God exceeds our intellect is on the part of God Himself owing to the plenitude of His perfection and on the part of our intellect that is deficiently related to its comprehension.<sup>52</sup>

The limitation, then, is on the part of the human intellect when faced with the fullness of being and essence in God, who is the unitary ground for human attributions:

It is . . . not from the fact that He makes good things or because He is related to the mode of good things that He is good. Rather, because He is

51. Seeskin 2014.

52. *CS* 1, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3, resp., p. 70.

good He makes good things and other things are related to His mode by participating in His goodness.<sup>53</sup>

In this way, the fourth [consideration of *ratio*] is clear because the plurality of those names is not only on the part of our intellect forming diverse conceptions of God that are said to be diverse in notion (*ratione*), as is evident from the things already said, but [also] on the part of God Himself—that is, insofar as there is something in God corresponding to all those conceptions, namely, His perfection that is full and in all modalities. According to this, it happens that any of the names signifying those conceptions is truly and properly said of God. However, this is not the case in such a way that diversity or multiplicity is asserted to be in the reality that is God on the basis of those attributes.<sup>54</sup>

Aquinas then spells out his position with clarity, here drawing on the assertion that it is simply the case that the nature of which the plurality of attributes is said is the actually existing unitary Divine Nature Itself. This is found in the response to the preceding article, *CS* 1, d. 2, q. 1, a. 2:

I respond that whatever there is of entity (*entitatis*) and goodness is wholly from the Creator. Imperfection, however, is not from Him but occurs on the part of creatures insofar as they are from nothing. *However, what is the cause of something has that in a more excellent and more noble way.* Consequently, it is necessary that all the excellences (*nobilitates*) of all creatures be found in God in the most noble way and without any imperfection. For this reason, what [excellences] are diverse in creatures are one in God owing to [His] highest simplicity. In this way, then, it should be said that there is wisdom, goodness, and the like in God, any of which is the Divine Essence Itself and in such a way that all are one in reality.<sup>55</sup>

In God the attributes have their most perfect *ratio*, while in creatures they exist analogously as less perfect. In creatures these notions are derived from and imitative of their highest reality found in God.

Without a clearly established foundation, the reasoning I have set out

53. *CS* 1, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3, resp., p. 71.

54. *CS* 1, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3, resp., p. 71.

55. *CS* 1, d. 2, q. 1, a. 2, resp., p. 62; my emphasis.

here would remain tenuous even if the concerns of Seeskin are recognized. For that reason, I call attention to Aquinas's reference to the scriptural promise from 1 Corinthians 13:12 that we will see God "face-to-face" in heaven. Aquinas writes in his response as follows:

If . . . our intellect sees God in Himself (*per seipsum*), it could impose one name on that thing, which will take place in heaven. And for this reason, the book of Zechariah [14:9] has, "On that day there will be one Lord and His name [will be] one." That name, however, would not signify just goodness or just wisdom or anything of this sort; rather, it would include all the things signified by all those [names]. But still, if the intellect seeing God in His essence (*per essentiam*) were to impose the name of the thing that it sees and to name through a mediating concept what it has of the thing, it would still be necessary that it impose a plurality of names. This is because it is impossible that a concept belonging to a created intellect represent the whole perfection of the Divine Essence.<sup>56</sup>

Note that while the text of the book of Zechariah references just one name for God, Aquinas interprets the verse so that it fits the religious aspect of his teachings in this article and, in particular, the promise of 1 Corinthians 13:12. To see the essence of God or to see God "face-to-face" is not somehow to see or know pure being or subsisting being without any essence, since there would be no quiddity or essence to see or to know. Created intellects know things and their natures through the essences of things, not through some apprehension or judgment regarding the act of being or existing. This is simply because creatures cannot have *comprehensive* knowledge of the infinite being of God, which is undelimited by finite form. Form or essence is the principle of human knowing in the primary sense, as found in demonstrations *propter quid* or *dioti*, even if an apprehension of the existence of something can be had without apprehending the essence, as is the case in demonstrations *quia* or *hoti*.<sup>57</sup> For Aquinas, following 1 Corin-

56. CS 1, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3, resp., p. 70.

57. Demonstration *quia* is knowledge that God exists and is the extent to which knowledge of God can be had through natural human powers *in via* (i.e., in the present life), though *in patria* (i.e., in the afterlife in heaven) God's essence will be known to human beings through Divine grace. On this point, see Taylor 2012a; Krause 2015b. For Aquinas, when this sort of demonstration is combined with the analysis of God as *ipsum esse* (being itself), a foundation for positive predication of attributes is available. That is, demonstration *quia* does yield knowledge of God as a referent essence and provides a foundation for

thians 13:12, human knowledge of God necessarily implies and includes the reality of the Divine Essence as essence even if such human knowledge is not comprehensive. As we have seen, in this article of the *CS*, Aquinas has interpreted the doctrines of Avicenna and Maimonides as asserting that there can be no knowledge of God in essence, since His pure being or subsistent being itself entails no essence as such. Hence, his attack is precisely against these agnostic teachings, and key to the foundations of his attack is the scriptural confirmation of 1 Corinthians 13:12 that God will be seen “face-to-face,” which is understood to mean God being seen in His very essence in heaven. At this point in his reasoning in the theological account of the *CS*, knowledge of the existence of God is assumed, though it will elsewhere be proven through demonstration *quia*. But knowledge or sight of God in His essence is promised by 1 Corinthians 13:12 and accepted by Aquinas even if such knowledge cannot be comprehensive due to His infinite incomprehensibility.

Were he to use that interpretation and conception of 1 Corinthians 13:12 as a premise in his reasoning, Aquinas would be founding his reasoning mainly on the understanding of that scriptural promise—which is so central to Christian theological teaching—as meaning that in heaven the saints will in fact have intellectual apprehension of God. Aquinas raises this issue later in *CS* 4, d. 49, q. 2, a. 1, where he considers whether seeing God “face-to-face” is the same as the philosophers’ doctrine of knowing separate substances.<sup>58</sup> He recounts in detail the teachings of al-Fārābī, Ibn Bājja, and Avicenna, explaining how each of them had made knowledge of separate substance in some way less than direct and immediate.<sup>59</sup> Aquinas concerns himself in particular with the account of the separate substances or angels

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predication even if the complete meaning of what is predicated is beyond complete human comprehension *in via*. For clear discussions of this, see Porro 2016, 23–24, 129–32. See the classic account in Owens 1963, 353ff.

58. Aquinas does not mention Maimonides in this passage of *CS* 4. Of course, when writing *CS* 4, Aquinas did not have *CS* 1, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3, the text that he later inserted into the original version of the *CS*.

59. Aquinas rejects the natural epistemology of Averroes’ *Long Commentary on the “De Anima”* in which human knowing involves a connection with higher intellectual substances, but he accepts that model for supernatural knowing of the Divine Essence; see Taylor 2012a, 2013. But the case of Averroes is problematic. On the one hand, he indicates that there is no afterlife for individual human beings, but, on the other hand, he seems to hold that ultimate happiness involves some sort of human path to knowledge of the Essence of God. Regarding the former, see Averroes 1938–52, 3:1612.4–1613.4, with English translation in Averroes 1984, 157; see also Taylor 1998b, 2012b. For the latter, see Averroes 1938–52, 1:7.14–8.13; 1966, 55.51–56.67; Steel 2001.

as emanating from individual human rational souls. In the following section, he writes that, according to Avicenna, “the separate substances are understood by us through the intentions of their quiddities, which are certain likenesses of them—not abstracted from them, because they are themselves immaterial, but impressed by these [intellects] on our souls.” The point here is that, in Avicenna’s view, the separate substances are understood through mediating likenesses and not directly.<sup>60</sup> Hence, the same will hold regarding the knowledge of God, with the meaning that He too can be apprehended only through a likeness and not directly. Aquinas rejects this Avicennian approach because of the principle that “everything that is received in something is in this in the mode of the recipient,” which yields the problematic consequence that “the likeness of the Divine Essence impressed by it on our intellect will be through the mode of our intellect.” That is, whatever is in the human intellect will be imperfect and diminished in accord with the mode and nature of our imperfect human intellects, not in accord with the Divine Essence as it is in itself. In this way, even if the *ratio* of the Divine Essence is present to the human intellect, it will be present there not as it is in itself but rather in accord with the recipient’s own incomplete and weaker mode of accidental receptive perfection, as if the human intellect were to have in it a small bit of whiteness in regard to what has in itself a great deal of whiteness.

For Aquinas, then, to see God “face-to-face” or to understand the Divine Essence is to apprehend it immediately in a way that requires no mediating likeness, in contrast to what is found in the epistemology of Avicenna—an epistemology that might be termed a sort of representationalism. Any mediating likeness will, as something created, be a representation and not the Divine Essence Itself. In this article of *CS* 4, Aquinas similarly dismisses the accounts of al-Fārābī and Ibn Bājja. Yet Aquinas—more than a little surprisingly—returns to Averroes and his account of the teaching of Alexander of Aphrodisias, an account found in the *Long Commentary on the “De Anima” of Aristotle*, for the model for supernatural knowing. Averroes had followed Alexander and used the term “form for us” for the Agent Intellect and had written that the two separate substantial intellects (Agent Intellect and Material Intellect) are “in our soul.” In this he was merely following the language of Aristotle at *De anima* III.5.430a13 (*en tē psychē*), who asserts that for a change from not knowing to knowing there must operate in us a certain receptivity and also a certain actuality. Following the model of

60. See Avicenna 2005, 107–9. This issue is discussed in Black 2014.



Averroes in which a supervening intellect brings the lower human being an enhancing power that raises it up to have intellectual knowledge, Aquinas holds that in beatitude in the afterlife, God plays a dual role. God in His very essence is the object known or seen “face-to-face” as the unmediated object of this supernatural understanding, although without complete human comprehension of the infinite totality of what God is. This is to say that God is *quod est*, what is seen or known. And since God is the very agent bringing about this vision in the human knower in heaven, He is *quo est*, that by which a supernatural receptivity comes about in the saintly knower.<sup>61</sup>

The cogency of this account of knowing God in CS 4 relies on that of the earlier reasoning in CS 1 on the very possibility of God being a knowable object. As I have set it out thus far, 1 Corinthians 13:12 functions as an accepted religious premise reinforced by a second, Zechariah 14:19: God will be seen “face-to-face” and God will be known by one true name.<sup>62</sup> Together these premises provide a religious grounding for the vision of God and for the notion that God *in se* will have one name. However, as I remarked earlier, positive philosophical teachings on the names and attributes of God are concerned with what can be known and said regarding God, not with what follows mysteriously from revelation. For Aquinas, the philosophical doctrine of the positive analogical predication of names must be founded on metaphysical grounds about the very nature of God if they are to be properly philosophical and not remain only theological or religious.

### Avicenna and Aquinas in the Context of Maimonides’ Agnosticism

In his solution to CS 1, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3, Aquinas places both Maimonides and Avicenna in the camp of those who

say that . . . the thing that is God is a certain subsistent being (*esse subsistens*), and nothing but being (*esse*) is in God; hence, they say that He is being without essence. All other things that are attributed to God are,

61. See Taylor 2012a; Krause 2015a, 2015b. In CS 4, d. 49, q. 2, a. 6, ad 4, Aquinas notes that God exceeds the powers of human and angelic intellects and that these intellects in themselves are not possessed of a disposition sufficiently capable of union with the Divine Essence.

62. Romans 1:20 is also relevant, since it asserts that God’s invisible qualities of eternal power and divine nature are clearly evident to human beings through consideration of things in the created world.

according to them, established (*verficantur*) regarding God in two ways: either by way of negation or by way of causality.<sup>63</sup>

Again, Aquinas goes on to explain that the way of negation is the basis for attributing wisdom, unity, and intellectual knowledge to God, not as asserting something positive of God but by denying that God lacks wisdom, division, and matter. Moreover, to deny that God is material entails affirming that God is intelligent, as also noted above. The way of causality, says Aquinas, allows, for example, predicating goodness of God in virtue of His being the cause of goodness in creatures (as it were, top down) or in virtue of His being related to creatures by willing or acting as a pious deity (*pius*) who produces willing or piety in the effects (as it were, bottom up). As indicated earlier, Aquinas writes, “According to this view, it follows that all the names that are said of God and creatures are said equivocally and that there is no likeness of the creature to the Creator from the fact that the creature is good or wise or anything of that sort; Rabbi Moses says this explicitly.”<sup>64</sup> Hence, there is no proximate foundation for these names in God, and so the foundational notions (*rationes*) for such attributes are only in the intellect by negation or causality.

In his analysis here, Aquinas brings together Avicenna and Maimonides, implicitly claiming that Maimonides’ account is based on Avicenna’s metaphysical analysis. Could that be the case? Although Avicenna is not cited explicitly in the *Guide*, W. Z. Harvey has pointed out the presence of Avicennian argumentation in *Guide* II 1 (“third speculation”) and I 69, and also in Maimonides’ *Mishneh Torah*, where he describes belief in an Avicennian Necessarily Existent Being in virtue of Itself as “the foundation of foundations.”<sup>65</sup> Regarding this metaphysical issue, Pines points to likely Avicennian influences in the introduction to his 1963 English translation of the *Guide*:

63. *Quidam enim dicunt, ut Avicenna et Rabbi Moyses quod res illa quae Deus est, est quoddam esse subsistens, nec aliquid aliud nisi esse, in Deo est: unde dicunt, quod est esse sine essenti. Omnia autem alia quae Deo attributuuntur, verificantur de Deo dupliciter secundum eos: vel per modum negationis, ver per modum causalitatis* (CS 1, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3, p. 67).

64. *Et secundum hanc opinionem sequitur quod omnia nomina quae dicuntur de Deo et creaturis, dicantur equivoce, et quod nulla similitudo sit creaturae ad Creatorem ex hoc quod creatura est bona vel sapiens vel hujusmodi aliquid; et hoc expresse dicit Rabbi Moyses* (CS 1, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3, resp., p. 68). See above, n. 47.

65. W. Z. Harvey 2008a, 111, 119. See also J. Stern 2001. Avicenna does not play a prominent part in the analyses of Rubio 2006; see also Rubio 1998.

It seems probable that it was Avicenna who conferred upon negative theology the philosophic reputability that made it possible for Maimonides to introduce it as the apparently central part of his, i.e., the philosophic, doctrine of God; in fact he lays even greater stress upon it and uses more radical formulas than Avicenna.<sup>66</sup>

In the *Metaphysics* of the *Shifā'*, Avicenna writes that “the primary attribute of the Necessary Existent consists in His being a ‘that [He is]’ and an existent (*takūn al-ṣifatu al-ūlā li-wājibi al-wujūdi anna-hu innun wamawjūdun*). Then, [respecting] the other attributes, some will include the meaning of this existence with [something] additional, [and] some [will include the meaning] of this existence with a negation. Not one of [the attributes] necessitates at all either multiplicity or difference in His essence.”<sup>67</sup> In a recent account of Avicenna, Peter Adamson explains how this passage provides a rule for understanding divine attributes according to Avicenna. Here Avicenna asserts that the Necessary Existent exists and that what can be said of it consists of negations and relations.<sup>68</sup> Adamson goes on to show how Avicenna argues that, in the case of God, the attributes of uniqueness, simplicity, ineffability, and intellectuality all follow from the meaning of the Necessary Existent. And Avicenna’s reasoning to the existence of a first unique Necessary Existent yields Its nature as simple and free of composition. Regarding ineffability, Adamson remarks:

66. Pines 1963, xciv. Other authors have raised the issue of the importance of Avicenna’s metaphysics for Maimonides’ thought. The late Mauro Zonta did much work on Avicennian and Jewish philosophy; see, e.g., Zonta 2005. See also Freudenthal and Zonta 2012, which is criticized in S. Harvey 2015, to which they responded in Freudenthal and Zonta 2016. Stern discusses Avicenna’s importance for Maimonides in multiple sections of his recent study of the *Guide*; see J. Stern 2013, 142–44, 153–57, 265–69; for Avicenna’s importance for the development of Maimonides’ skepticism in particular, see pp. 198–204. Davidson (2005) has many references to Avicenna, the most relevant of which for present purposes are on pp. 103–6. Classic studies that must be mentioned include Altmann 1953 and 1978.

67. Avicenna 2005, bk. 8, chap. 7, par. 12, p. 296. The vocabulary of being may be another point of contact between Maimonides and Avicenna’s work, though perhaps both knew the terminology of being in the *Plotiniana Arabica*, which I discuss below in connection with the Arabic version of the *Liber de causis*. Cf. J. Stern 2013, 225–26, where *an*, *anna*, and *anniyya*, the related forms expressing being or existence, are discussed.

68. “According to this rule, there are three kinds of thing we can say about the necessary existent. First, that there is indeed a necessary existent; second, that this existence lacks certain features; and third, that this existence enters into certain relations with its effects” (Adamson 2013, 173; Adamson’s emphasis).

This allows Avicenna to exclude both genus and differentia from the necessary existent (VIII.4.14–16), which implies that it has no definition (VIII.4.16). For good measure, he adds that it also has “no demonstration (*burhān*), because it has no cause” (ibid.); he later remarks that we can provide for it a *dalīl*, but not a *burhān* (VIII.5.14).<sup>69</sup>

That is, there may be indications, even to the point of a demonstration *quia*, but not a demonstration *propter quid* of God. As Adamson details, for Avicenna, the nature of God as the Necessary Existent can be known through his famous argument based on the division of all reality into the necessary and the possible, and the attributes that are consequent on that division.

If Aquinas had his eye on *Guide* I 51 and I 56–58, as he surely did, he may well have had good reason to assert the importance of Avicenna. In I 51 and I 57, Maimonides insists that no accidental attributes can be added to the Divine Essence, and in I 52 he asserts, like Avicenna, that “He . . . has no causes anterior to Him that are the cause of His existence and by which, in consequence, He is defined. For this reason it is well known among all people engaged in speculation, who understand what they say, that God cannot be defined.”<sup>70</sup> That, however, is a topic for another study.

Since Aquinas’s *CS* is a commentary on the work of Lombard, it is not a work constructed and wholly conceived with a view to the author’s own ends, as we find in his *Summa contra Gentiles* and *Summa theologiae*; rather, it is largely, albeit not wholly, controlled by the contents and ordered structure of Lombard’s *Sentences*. As such, it is not a systematic treatise, though a systematic treatment of God and creatures can be extracted from it. In Aquinas’s short *De ente et essentia*, written while he was composing the *CS*, the existence of God is established philosophically through a metaphysical account based on Avicenna’s dialectical reasoning in the opening book of the *Metaphysics* of the *Shifa*,<sup>71</sup> not demonstrated in the manner of the famous Five Ways of the late *Summa theologiae* or the proofs in his early to mid-1260s *Summa contra Gentiles*. Still, in book 1 of the *CS*, Aquinas discusses whether the existence of God is something knowable by humans (*CS* 1, d. 3, q. 1, a. 1), whether it is something known *per se* (*CS* 1, d. 3, q. 1, a. 2),

69. Adamson 2013, 182. Adamson’s references are to the book, chapter, and paragraph of the Arabic text found in Avicenna 2005.

70. *Guide* I 52 (Pines 115).

71. For a discussion of Aquinas’s argument for the existence of God in *De ente et essentia*, see Houser 2007; Wietecha 2016.

and whether it is known through creatures (CS 1, d. 3, q. 1, a. 3); whether being (*esse*) is properly said of God, whether God is the very being of all things, and whether “He who is” (*qui est*) is the first of the names of God (CS 1, d. 8, q. 1, a. 1–3); issues such as the nature of eternity (CS 1, d. 8, q. 2, a. 1–2), divine simplicity (CS 1, d. 8, q. 4, a. 1), divine names (CS 1, d. 22), and divine knowledge (CS 1, d. 35–36); as well as other theological topics in later books. As I will discuss below, it is important to keep in mind that teachings on divine attributes and names require a cogent account of how humans use language, but, most importantly, they require a cogent account of the metaphysics underlying any act of naming.

Although Aquinas generally follows the account of the nature of God and the distinction of essence and existence found in Avicenna’s *Metaphysics*, he systematically avoids what was key to the thought of Avicenna: the nature of God as the Necessary Existent. In chapter 4 of *De ente et essentia*, Aquinas follows a simplified version of Avicenna’s view that existence is other than quiddity in all entities except God, and that all other quiddities, even simple substances without matter, must receive existence from God.<sup>72</sup> And in chapter 5, he even recounts the Avicennian teaching that God is without quiddity or essence, since His essence is not different from His existence, though he holds that as existence alone (*esse tantum*) God is perfect and lacks no excellences whatsoever.<sup>73</sup> God is characterized as having all excellences most perfectly together in His unitary nature. Aquinas writes:

Although He is only being (*esse tantum*), it is not necessary that He lack any perfections or excellences. Rather, He has all excellences that exist in all the genera [and] on account of this He is called absolutely perfect, as the Philosopher and the Commentator say in *Metaphysics* book five, but He has them in a way more excellent than all things because in Him they are one, but in other things they have diversity. This is because all those excellences belong to Him according to His simple being (*secundum esse suum simplex*). [This is] just as if someone were able to carry out the activities of all qualities through one quality, then in that one quality he would have all the qualities; so too God in his very being has all the excellences.<sup>74</sup>

72. Aquinas 1976, chap. 4, lines 41–166, pp. 376–77.

73. Aquinas 1976, chap. 5, lines 1–14, p. 378. It should be noted here that the term *esse tantum* is not found in the Latin Avicenna.

74. Aquinas 1976, chap. 5, lines 30–43, p. 378.

For Aquinas, the conception of God as pure being yields the view that God has all perfections in their primary fullness. What we see here is that, rather than choosing to follow Avicenna's account of the Necessary Existent—which, as Adamson indicates, grounds the consideration of divine attributes on the notion of the Necessary Existent and what derives from it—Aquinas instead turns to the denomination of God as “only being,” which he found in the pseudo-Aristotelian *Liber de causis*.<sup>75</sup>

In Arabic proposition 8 (Latin 8 or 9, depending on the version) of the *Kalām fī maḥḍ al-khayr* (*Discourse on the Pure Good*), known to Aquinas as the *Liber de causis*, the author explains that all things except for the First Cause—which is “only being” (*anniyyatun faqat/esse tantum*)—are composed of being and form (*ḥilya*).<sup>76</sup> He then goes on to state that “if someone says: He must have form (*ḥilya*), we say: His form is infinite and His essential nature is the Pure Good pouring forth all goods on the intelligence and on all other things through the mediation of the intelligence.”<sup>77</sup> Unlike nearly all of the others, this proposition has no source in the *Elements of Theology* of Proclus.<sup>78</sup> Rather, the doctrine set out here is derived from the *Plotiniana Arabica*, the selections of Plotinus's *Enneads* that were transformed and explicated by additions on the part of the author-translator.<sup>79</sup> In that material we find it asserted that the First Agent which is also the First Creator is unlike any created things:

75. On the meaning of this denomination in Arabic and Latin, see Taylor 1979. For the relevant texts of the *Plotiniana Arabica*, see Wakelnig 2014, 94–97, 100–101. The teaching of the *Liber de causis* is based on that of the *Plotiniana Arabica*, but neither work has what we find in Aquinas on analogical predication.

76. I take *ḥilya* (decoration, form, formal shape) either to denote the presence of form or to be synonymous with *ṣūra* (“form,” *eidōs*).

77. For the Arabic text, see Taylor 1981, 179–80. The Latin here is the following: *Et intelligentia est habens yliathim quoniam est esse et forma et similiter anima est habens yliathim et natura est habens yliathim. Et causae quidem primae non est yliathim, quoniam ipsa est esse tantum. Quod si dixerit aliquis: necesse est ut sit yliathim, dicemus: yliathim suum est infinitum et individuum suum est bonitas pura, influens super intelligentiam omnes bonitates et super reliquas res mediante intelligentia* (Pattin 1966, 157–58).

78. The Arabic *Liber de causis* is not a simple translation of this Greek work. Rather, the author selected portions of Proclus's book, sometimes transforming them into very different teachings. Its main concerns are the issues of primary and secondary causality and creation. Contrary to Avicenna, who allows for two senses of creation ex nihilo (*ibdā*), one absolute by God alone presupposing nothing and another by intermediate entities presupposing their own creation by God, this work asserts that creation ex nihilo belongs only to God, though He creates first Intellect and through Intellect creates all else.

79. See Adamson 2002. See also Taylor 1998a.

The First Creator never came to resemble any of [the things] because all the things [created] are from Him and because He has no distinctive inherent formal shape or form (*lā ḥilyatun lahā wa-lā šūratun lahā khāṣṣatun lāzimatum*). For the First Creator is one alone, that is, He is only being (*anniyyatun faqaṭ*) without having any attribute (*ṣifatun*) proper to [His being] because all attributes spread from [His being]. Therefore all things came to be from [His being], whereas [His being] is in none of the things except in the manner of a cause.<sup>80</sup>

Furthermore, the author states that while all other things have form, the First Creator has no form (*lā šūratun lahā*) and “is infinite (*ghayra mutanāhin*) in all ways.”<sup>81</sup> Though the author of the *Plotiniana Arabica* explicitly denies attributes of God, that denial is not explicit in this passage of the Arabic or Latin *Liber de causis* on which Aquinas explicitly draws for the term “only being” (*esse tantum*). However, the Arabic and its Latin translation provide concluding remarks that are particularly interesting and worth repeating, since they are distinct from what is found in the *Plotiniana Arabica* and enticingly suggestive for the doctrine of Aquinas. As already noted, the author writes, “So if someone says: He must have form (*ḥilya*), we say: His form (*ḥilya*) is infinite and His individual nature (*shakhsuhā*) is the Pure Good (*al-khayr al-mahḍ*) pouring forth all goodnesses on the intellect and on the rest of things through the mediation of the intellect.” That is, form, if it could in any way be predicated of the First Cause, would have the unique nature of the Pure Good that is the wholly unlimited cause of goodnesses or perfections in the rest of reality. As such, It is itself replete if not infinite with perfections and goodnesses, though It is in Itself the unique True One.

Providing his own understanding of the Latin *Liber de causis* in chapter 4 of *De ente et essentia*, Aquinas considers Divine Being here as what is uniquely the fullness of being in its infinite perfections and in Its very nature and essence as the referent and source of all perfections found in creatures. In this way attributes are not derived from creatures but rather derived to creatures from the First Cause where they are found in their perfection. Here Aquinas draws on the teachings of Dionysius as understood in his historical Latin context and on the thought of Anselm.

In *CS* 1, d. 8, q. 1, a. 1, solution, Aquinas cites three theological author-

80. Wakelnig 2014, 94–97; translation modified.

81. Wakelnig 2014, 100–101.

ities and then provides the metaphysical reasoning founded on the understanding of God's existence that he set out in *De ente et essentia*. He writes:

The fourth reason is taken from the works of Avicenna in this way: Since in the case of everything that is, one considers its quiddity in virtue of which it subsists in a determinate nature and its being (*esse*) in virtue of which one says of it that it is in act, then this word "thing" (*res*) is imposed on a thing from its quiddity. According to Avicenna, this name "he who is" (*qui est*) or "a being" (*ens*) is imposed by the very act of being (*essendi*). However, although in any given created thing its essence differs from its being, that thing is properly denominated from its quiddity and not from the act of being, as a human being [is] denominated from humanity. However, in God His very being is his quiddity. For this reason, the name taken from being (*esse*) properly names Him, and is His proper name, as the proper name of a human being is taken from its quiddity.<sup>82</sup>

The metaphysics for this is spelled out again—and again with attribution to Avicenna—in *CS* 1, d. 8, q. 4, a. 2, solution, where Aquinas reasons that being and quiddity differ in creatures, that being is received in a creature, and that "in God . . . His being is His quiddity, for otherwise it would be accidental to the quiddity. In that way it would have been acquired by Him from something else and He would not have being in virtue of His own essence."<sup>83</sup> These metaphysical foundations allow Aquinas to argue in *De ente et essentia* and in the *CS* for the distinction between essence and existence and to assert the existence of God as *esse tantum*. It also allows him to explain in positive terms that God is an infinite plenum of ultimate perfections or excellences. This is not argued from creatures but rather from the nature of God Himself. With this reasoning arranged in its proper order instead of the sequential order of the *CS*, it becomes clear that Aquinas's foundations for asserting a positive doctrine of analogy are found in his own metaphysical analysis of essence and existence—an analysis that is inspired by, but distinct from, that of Avicenna.<sup>84</sup> In sum, instead of following his reading

82. My translation is quite similar to that of Macierowski in Aquinas 1998, 41–43.

83. My translation. This text is cited in Wietecha 2016, 157–58.

84. Macierowski (1988, 85) notes the importance of Aquinas's Avicennian metaphysical reasoning in *CS* 1, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3, but is unaware that a. 3 is a later insertion. He offers the valuable comment at the end of his article that "*Esse* is more basic than *Necesse Esse*" for



of Avicenna's account of God as the Necessary Existent without knowable essence, Aquinas uses the reasoning on the intrinsic nature of God as the Good (*individuum suum est bonitas pura*) that he finds in the *Liber de causis*—a conception of the pure being of God as an infinite plenitude—and reads it in accord with his understanding of Dionysius and Anselm.

From the discussion presented in this section, several important implications follow. First, Aquinas's suggestion that Avicenna is a source for Maimonides' denial of divine attributes should prompt further reflection on the importance of Avicenna for the thought of Maimonides. Aquinas here seems to have discovered something he had not noticed when composing his first version of *CS* 1, d. 2, q. 1—namely, an identification of the teaching of Maimonides with the metaphysics of Avicenna. Second, Aquinas is critical of Avicenna and clearly rejects what he understands to be Avicenna's (and Maimonides') teaching on divine attributes—a teaching that seems to be grounded in Avicenna's notion of God as the Necessary Existent. Third, while Aquinas is critical of Avicenna with respect to his equation of necessity with ineffability, it is still Avicenna's metaphysical reasoning on essence and existence that is foundational for the development of Aquinas's own distinctive teaching. This is clear in *De ente et essentia* and in the *CS*, though he has modified the metaphysical teaching with his own understanding of the nature of God as pure being under the influence of the *Liber de causis*, Dionysius, and also the perfect being theology of Anselm. For Aquinas, God alone is the sole creator and immediate primary cause of all other beings, containing in Himself all perfections. Fourth, Aquinas's conception of God as pure being or even *ipsum esse per se subsistens* draws on the *Liber de causis*'s notion of the First Cause as *esse tantum*, a notion ultimately drawn from the *Plotiniana Arabica* sources. Aquinas associates this with the Avicennian

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Aquinas. In his dissertation, Macierowski (1979) highlights that, with respect to the metaphysics of Avicenna and Aquinas, “the chief point of divergence is that Aquinas explicitly states that *being* names an act; Avicenna does not, but allows existentially neutral essences to play the central role in his argument.” This quotation is taken from Macierowski's abstract; the arguments grounding the statement are in chaps. 2 and 3. The notion of the First Principle as pure act is found in Plotinus, *Enneads* 6.8, as well as the *Plotiniana Arabica* and the *Liber de causis*/*Kalām fī maḥḍ al-khayr*, works that were likely available to Avicenna; see Taylor 1998a. While it is correct to say that Avicenna's most prominent characterization of God is as the Necessary Existent, it is highly questionable whether he would eschew the description of God as pure act. A more detailed consideration of the metaphysics of Avicenna and Aquinas and the roles played in their reasoning by sources such as the *Plotiniana Arabica*, the *Liber de causis*/*Kalām fī maḥḍ al-khayr*, and the writings of Dionysius and Anselm is beyond the bounds of this essay. I hope to pursue this in greater depth elsewhere.

distinction between essence and existence and with the understanding of God as being or existence itself. In doing so he leaves aside Avicenna's account of the Necessary Existent and its limitations. Instead he provides his own conception of God as "only being" and replete with perfections, and supports this conception by making use of what he found in the *Liber de causis*, where the author of that work writes, "His form is infinite and His essential nature is the Pure Good pouring forth all goods on the intelligence and on all other things through the mediation of the intelligence."<sup>85</sup> Fifth, Dionysius provides the final resource in the formation of Aquinas's revised use of Avicenna, as indicated in CS 1, d. 8, q. 1, a. 1, solution:

The third reason [for the affirmation of He Who Is as the most proper name of God] is taken from the words of Dionysius, who says that, among all the other participations of the divine goodness, such as living, understanding, and the like, being is the first and, as it were, the principle of the others, pre-possessing all the others in a way united within itself; and so too God is the divine principle and all things are one in Him.<sup>86</sup>

In sum, Aquinas grounds his teaching on divine attributes and human naming of God in a novel metaphysics of being that arises from his study of Avicenna but is reformulated through his incorporation of ideas found in his philosophical understanding of the *Liber de causis* and the theological account in the thought of Dionysius, with a nod to the perfect being theology of Anselm.

### Conclusion

In his solution to CS 1, d. 2. q. 1 a. 3, Aquinas remarks that "wisdom and goodness and all things of this sort are altogether one in reality in God," and shortly after adds that "on this depends nearly all the understanding of the things said in book 1." Here his reference is not only to his doctrine

85. See above, n. 77.

86. Aquinas 1998, 41. Later in his *Summa theologiae*, at prima pars, q. 75, a. 5, ad 1, Aquinas refers to God when he writes, "The First act is the universal principle of all acts because it is infinite, pre-containing all things in Himself (*in se omnia prae habens*) virtually, as Dionysius says." This is a reference to Dionysius, *On the Divine Names*, chap. 5, sec. 9. For this text and Aquinas's comments on it, see above, n. 39.

of analogical predication of divine names but also to the metaphysics that underlies that doctrine.

As Avicenna, Maimonides, and Aquinas all knew well, a doctrine of divine attributes involves two modes of consideration, one that reflects the condition of the human intellect and another that follows from the reality to which names are attributed, God. The initial impetus for such a doctrine arises in the context of religious scriptures where names and descriptions of the Creator are set out for general human understanding, thereby permitting the expression of an affective relationship toward the Creator. However, unless those names and expressions are to remain creations of the human mind and impossible to predicate properly of God, as the agnosticism of Maimonides would have it, they must have a foundation in reality grounded in philosophical metaphysics. As I have shown, that grounding is set out in detail by Aquinas in the *CS* and in *De ente et essentia*. On the basis of that metaphysical account, Aquinas reasons that the plurality of *rationes* used in religious scripture and human discourse to express divine attributes truly indicates the divine nature in itself, but as it is reflected in caused creatures. In his view, this is explained by the pure nature of the Deity as only being and infinite being—a reality that transcends human comprehension and therefore compels finite human intellects to express what is in itself a perfect simplicity using a plurality of attributes.

For Aquinas, the challenge of Maimonides' agnosticism to Christian belief was an invaluable prompt to reconsider the metaphysics of Avicenna and to see in it the foundation for Maimonides' own views. In *CS* 1, d. 2, q. 1, a. 3, which he added to his original version of the *CS*, Aquinas provided a new analysis that discovered the basis of Maimonides' teaching in Avicenna's metaphysics of the Necessary Existent. He found in Avicenna just what Maimonides himself found, a doctrine of being and unity that precludes the possibility of human understanding of the Divine Essence that would allow for essential predications denoting real perfections in God. For Aquinas, predications of those perfections take place through negation and causality, as they do for Avicenna and Maimonides, but the new metaphysics of being that Aquinas developed under the influence of Avicenna, Dionysius, and the *Liber de causis* led him to assert a doctrine of analogy and a positive understanding of what can be derived from demonstrative argumentation.<sup>87</sup>

When composing his *CS*, Aquinas was well acquainted with the broad spectrum of religious and philosophical teachings and issues found in Mai-

87. Cf. J. Stern 2013, 162, 198ff.

monides' *Guide*. He was also well acquainted with the purely philosophical writings of Avicenna and Averroes, whose thought also played an important role in the formation of his teaching on divine attributes and in his philosophical explanation of the theological teaching that ultimate human happiness is to be found in heaven in the vision of the Divine Essence "face-to-face" or *per essentiam*. The present study, though focused narrowly on the issue of divine attributes and human knowledge of the nature of God, can serve as a case study of the value of the methodical study of Aquinas's works in the context of his sources from the Arabic tradition, including Judeo-Arabic thinkers like Maimonides.<sup>88</sup>

88. I would like to express my thanks to Professor Josef Stern for valuable comments on this essay and for assistance with bibliographical references to important literature. I also thank Dr. Katja Krause and Mr. Nathaniel Taylor for helpful discussions and comments on an early draft. Editorial suggestions by Yonatan Shemesh improved and clarified the final version a great deal.



*The Guide of the Perplexed*  
in Early Modern Philosophy  
and Spinoza

STEVEN NADLER

It is a welcome sign of the advanced state of affairs in scholarship in early modern philosophy, and especially Spinoza studies, that the title of my essay does not seem too bizarre. After all, someone reading much of mid-twentieth-century Anglo-American, French, Italian, and Dutch scholarship on Spinoza could be forgiven for wondering what Maimonides could possibly have to do with Spinoza's philosophy, and especially with early modern philosophy generally. There are well-known exceptions to this shortsightedness, as we shall see. But for the most part, Maimonides was left to those working in medieval philosophy, especially Jewish medieval philosophy, and Spinoza was, among philosophers at least, in the bailiwick of early modern scholars. In this sense, it can be said that translations of Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*—including Shlomo Pines's now standard 1963 translation—had, for an unjustifiably long time, a relatively minor impact on Spinoza studies.

Before turning to this particular issue, however, I would like to discuss briefly two preliminary matters. The first concerns the impact of Maimonides' *Guide* on early modern philosophy generally (especially seventeenth-century philosophy). The second concerns the impact of Maimonides

on Spinoza research. Then, finally, I will consider the impact of English-language translations of the *Guide* on Anglo-American Spinoza studies.

## I

‘Maimonides’ and ‘early modern philosophy’ do not often occur in the same relative philosophical literary vicinity, much less the same sentence—unlike, say, ‘Augustine,’ ‘Aquinas,’ or ‘Ockham’ and ‘early modern philosophy.’

There is, of course, at least one early modern philosopher who we know for certain had a firsthand familiarity with Maimonides’ works, and that is Spinoza. In the inventory of Spinoza’s possessions made by the Dutch notary Van den Hove after the philosopher’s death, there was a substantial library of 160 items. Among the works of ancient philosophy (including Aristotle’s *Opera* and Epictetus’s *Encheiridion*), Hebrew and Latin Bibles, ancient Greek and Latin poetry and drama (including Homer’s *Iliad*, poems by Ovid, tragedies by Seneca, and comedies by Plautus), a Passover haggadah, and works of contemporary philosophy (including no fewer than seven volumes of Descartes, a copy of Hobbes’s *De cive*, and some treatises by Boyle), there are in fact very few works of Jewish philosophy (as opposed to Torah commentary and other rabbinic writings). Spinoza did own a Spanish translation of Leone Ebreo’s *Dialogues on Love*, but—much to my surprise—no copy of anything by Levi ben Gershom, despite the fact that he was clearly familiar with Gersonides’ works.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, in the inventory, there is one, and only one, book by the most important Jewish philosopher of them all: Maimonides. It is not a volume of the *Mishneh Torah* or of the *Commentary on the Mishnah*. Rather, as we would hope and expect, it is the *Guide of the Perplexed*. And unlike his copy of Leone’s *Dialogues*, what Spinoza owned was not a Spanish translation of the *Guide*—Spanish was the language of high literature among the Portuguese Jews of Amsterdam—but rather Samuel Ibn Tibbon’s original Hebrew text, a translation from the Arabic authorized by Maimonides. Spinoza had the 1515 edition published in Venice by the Bragadin firm. This family was a prominent publisher of Hebrew texts, and in 1550 one of the sons, Alvise, would also bring out an edition of Maimonides’ *Mishneh Torah*.

Of course, the fact that a philosopher owned a book by X does not mean that he or she *read* the book by X. In this case, however, there can be no

1. See, for example, annotation 16 to chap. 9 of the *Theological-Political Treatise*, where Spinoza calls Gersonides *vir eruditissimus*.

doubt, since Spinoza's *Theological-Political Treatise* exhibits an obvious familiarity with, and even a close reading of, Maimonides' *Guide*, various theses of which are explicitly *and* implicitly criticized by Spinoza—for example, in his account of the interpretation of Scripture and his explanation of the role of imagination in prophecy. It is also clear, but less explicit, that Spinoza's engagement with the *Guide* had a profound influence on his *Ethics*. I return below to the issue of Maimonides' influence on Spinoza.

Were there any other early modern philosophers influenced by, or even familiar with, Maimonides? Richard Popkin claims that the Latin translation of the *Guide* “was very widely read,” and he suspects that “it became an acceptable substitute for Saint Thomas Aquinas's writings, since it tried to reconcile science and religion, and was written by a non-Catholic.”<sup>2</sup> I wonder, however, whether it was not the other way around: that early modern philosophers used Aquinas's widely available summaries of what “Rabbi Moses” said as a substitute for a direct acquaintance with the *Guide*.<sup>3</sup> Either way, several philosophers of the seventeenth century clearly knew the *Guide* firsthand, while other philosophers were not familiar with the *Guide* but did know (directly or indirectly, but always in translation) something of the *Mishneh Torah*.

Nicolas Malebranche, the most important Cartesian of the second half of the century, is perhaps best known for his extreme version of the doctrine of occasionalism, according to which God is the sole causal agent in nature. Bodies and minds have no true causal powers. Bodies do not exercise real causal efficacy on other bodies or on minds; nor do human minds exercise any real causal efficacy on bodies or even within their own mental states. Bodily events and mental events serve only as “occasions” on which God directly brings about some effect, ordinarily according to the relevant laws of nature. This doctrine has its immediate roots in the Cartesian metaphysics of matter and in a philosophical analysis of the nature of causation. But in one of the Elucidations appended to his philosophical masterpiece, *De la recherche de la vérité* (*The Search after Truth*), Malebranche expands on his views concerning “the efficacy attributed to secondary causes,” and especially the idolatry encouraged by the belief that finite things are themselves real causes, especially of our pleasures and pains. In this discussion, he refers to “the one esteemed most learned among the Jews” who

2. Popkin 1998, 408.

3. For example, *Summa theologiae*, part I, q. 13, art. 2, in which Aquinas refers to Maimonides' discussion of negative predications with respect to God.



also, Malebranche believes, recognized the “strange errors” and idolatrous practices generated by the belief in natural causes. The reference, though, while certainly to Maimonides, is not to the *Guide*—where Maimonides does address the Ash’arite rejection of natural causation, which basically amounts to occasionalism—but to what Malebranche calls “a treatise on idolatry,” by which he means *Hilkhot ‘avodat kokhavim ve-ḥuqqot ha-goyim* (*Laws Concerning Idolatry and the Ordinances of the Heathens*) in the *Mishneh Torah*. Malebranche presents (in French) an extended quote from the opening chapter of this work. Here is the passage that Malebranche found so interesting and useful:

In the time of Enos men fell into strange errors and the wise men of that age lost their sense and reason. Enos himself was among these deluded people. These were their errors. Because, they said, God created the stars and their heavens to govern the world, placed them in a high place, surrounded them with brilliance and glory, and uses them to carry out his orders, it is right for us to honor them and pay them our homage and respect. It is the will of God that we honor these things He has raised up and covered with glory, just as a prince wishes his ministers to be honored in his presence because the honor paid them reflects on him. . . . After this thought came into their heads, they began to build temples to the stars, make sacrifices to them, speak their encomiums, and even prostrate themselves before them, imagining that they were thereby making themselves pleasing to Him who created them.

This, Malebranche himself adds, “is how one naturally reasons when following the prejudice of the efficacy of secondary causes.” He adds, “This is the origin of idolatry.”<sup>4</sup>

Malebranche’s published source for this quotation is unknown. It is certainly not an edition of the Hebrew original, and there was no French translation at the time. Likely what Malebranche had at hand is the volume *De idolatria*, a Latin translation of Maimonides’ *Laws Concerning Idolatry* published in 1641 in Amsterdam.

Isaac Newton also owned a copy of *De idolatria*, along with four other volumes of Maimonides’ writings, all in seventeenth-century Latin editions. These include three other books from the *Mishneh Torah* and one volume

4. Malebranche, *De la recherche de la vérité*, Elucidation 15, in Malebranche 1958–76, 3:249. The translation is from Malebranche 1980, 683.

from the *Commentary on the Mishnah*.<sup>5</sup> Also among Newton's unpublished papers is an item titled "On Maimonides." Despite its tantalizing title, however, it consists mainly of notes that Newton took when reading not Maimonides himself but a commentary on the *Mishneh Torah* composed by Charles Marie de Veil. While there is no question that, as Popkin has argued, Newton was seriously interested in Maimonides, there is also no real evidence that he read the *Guide of the Perplexed*, although Johannes Buxtorf's Latin translation of 1629 was readily available.

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, on the other hand, explicitly tells us, "I have read the version [of the book of Rabbi Moses Maimonides which is titled *Doctor perplexorum*] published by Johannes Buxtorf of Basel in 1629."<sup>6</sup> We know from his correspondence that Leibniz had an interest in Maimonides from early on, even before his great philosophical awakening during the Paris period (1672–76). A letter to Johann Georg Graevius of February 28, 1671, a year before Leibniz left Mainz for Paris, makes this clear:

When I was recently in Heidelberg, I came across a certain baptized Jew installed as professor of Hebrew. They say that he is from Metz and was baptized in France. He seemed to me well versed in Christian literature beyond what is customary for his people, and he wrote and spoke Latin very elegantly. He plans to translate the whole of Maimonides' works into Latin. I saw two specimens published in Paris, one was his book on fasting, the other his treatise on the Hebrews' way of intercalation.<sup>7</sup>

Eight years later, in another letter to Graevius, he again mentions this "Iudaeus Christianus sane doctus" who "jam quaedam ex Maiemonide non ineleganter versa publicavit."<sup>8</sup>

Leibniz apparently read the *Guide* from cover to cover, and took notes on many chapters in all three parts of the work.<sup>9</sup> We do not know when exactly this reading took place.<sup>10</sup> It is possible that Leibniz was first directed to

5. These are in the Trinity College collection of Newton's library; see Popkin 1990.

6. Leibniz 1923– (henceforth abbreviated as A), 6:4c:2484.

7. To Johann Georg Graevius, 18/28 February 1671, A 1:1:125. He says that the name of the converted Jew is "Louis de Compiègne," who is Louis de Compiègne de Veil, the Latin translator (from the Hebrew) of *R. Mosis Majemonidae De sacrificiis liber, accesserunt Abarbanelis exordium, seu prooemium commentariorum in Leviticum, et Majemonidae Tractatus de consecratione calendarum et de ratione intercalandi* (published in London in 1683).

8. 13/23 May 1679, A 1:2:476.

9. The notes are found in A 6:4c:2484–97.

10. The editors of the Akademie edition date it only as "[1677 bis 1716(?)]."

Maimonides when he was a student at the University of Leipzig in the early 1660s. His teacher Jakob Thomasius, for example, was clearly familiar with Maimonides' writings and impressed by the effort to reconcile Aristotelian philosophy and Abrahamic religious principles. Johann Adam Scherzer was also a prominent professor of philosophy at the university and an accomplished Hebraist; he taught Hebrew, and was responsible for translating a number of kabbalistic texts. Like Thomasius, Scherzer was very interested in reconciling Aristotelian philosophy with Christian truths, and this ecumenical approach to philosophy and religion would have led a scholar with Scherzer's interests directly to Maimonides' *Guide*.<sup>11</sup>

Many of Leibniz's notes on the *Doctor perplexorum* are summaries of the work's chapters, with little critical or editorial comment. In this respect, it is very different from his reading notes on Spinoza's *Ethics* or *Theological-Political Treatise*. Still, he was very impressed by what he found in the *Guide*. He begins his notes by saying that he finds "the book of Rabbi Moses Maimonides to be excellent [*egregium*] and more philosophical than I had supposed, and so it deserves a careful reading." It is hard to tell what in particular he found in the work to be most remarkable and relevant, but some of the items he highlighted must have held a special interest for him, or so we can surmise from what we know of Leibniz's mature philosophical interests. His longest and most detailed notes are on part III of the *Guide*, which is not surprising. One would expect certain aspects of Maimonides' discussion of the problem of evil in part III, which are not unlike Leibniz's own theodicean views, to have made a strong impression on him.

In the *Guide*, Maimonides' preferred solution to the problem of evil involves what might be labeled the "consider the whole" strategy. According to this strategy, any concerns about divine justice generated by evil in the world are due to one's having adopted too narrow and egocentric (or at least anthropocentric) a focus—for example, by looking at only certain features of the world and not others. One can therefore alleviate those concerns by broadening one's perspective and considering more or different aspects of the cosmos. One will then see that the world is, on the whole, good. This strategy can take two forms, depending upon just how one is supposed to broaden one's perspective and regard the world holistically. One variety asks for a quantitative expansion of vision; the other requires a qualitative reorientation.

11. On Thomasius and Scherzer, see Mercer 2001, 32–36, 37–39; Antognazza 2009, 50–59.

Maimonides initially takes up the theodicean challenge by responding to the complaint, “which often occurs to the imagination of the multitude,” that the various species of evil are ubiquitous, that the world created by God is predominantly bad and “there are more evils in the world than there are good things.” Understood in this way, the problem of evil is a quantitative problem, and so its solution is to be found in a proper reckoning of the number of good things vs. the number of evil things. “Consider the whole,” on this reading, means: look at a greater sampling of the world’s phenomena and you will see that, as a matter of fact, the premise of the complaint is false and the number of good things is greater than the number of evil things. Thus, with respect to physical and moral evils, at least, Maimonides argues that a true accounting reveals that they do not occur as often as the multitude believe. The evils that we suffer because of our material nature “are very few and occur only seldom. For you will find cities existing for thousands of years that have never been flooded or burned. Also, thousands of people are born in perfect health whereas the birth of an infirm human being is an anomaly, or at least . . . such an individual is very rare; for they do not form a hundredth or even a thousandth part of those born in good health.” Similarly, with respect to the evils that we inflict upon one another, he argues that while they may be more numerous than those of the first variety, they nonetheless “do not form the majority of occurrences upon the earth taken as a whole”; rather, they become common only in extreme circumstances, such as war.<sup>12</sup>

While this version of the “consider the whole” strategy could, in theory, afford a reply to the charge that the world created by God is *predominantly* evil and that the bad things outnumber the good, it is ultimately an unsatisfying theodicy. Even if the quantitative approach does answer the charge that the world is mostly evil—and this would require agreement in the tally of good vs. evil items—it leaves unanswered the primary question of the problem of evil: Why is there *any* evil at all in a world created by a wise, benevolent, and all-powerful God?

The qualitative version of the “consider the whole” strategy that Maimonides then goes on to present, and which seems to be his more considered approach, is more effective in responding to this challenge. It is not concerned with the relative quantities of good and evil things. Rather, the broadening of perspective demanded is either a kind of utilitarian or aesthetic consideration of the contribution that evils make to the overall good-

12. *Guide* III 12 (Pines 444).

ness of the world, or an acknowledgment of the qualitative (and not merely quantitative) insignificance of the evils that plague human beings. Maimonides asks us to look more broadly at the universe as the overall context in which human sin and suffering occur. What we will then see is the “wisdom manifested in that which exists” and “the excellence and the true reality of the whole,” including the contribution that the so-called evils make to it.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, when one moves beyond the narrow confines of human needs, desires, and expectations, and expands one’s vision to take in the spheres of the heavens and the separate intellects related to them, one will recognize that not everything exists for our own sake. “Man and nothing else is the most perfect and the most noble thing that has been generated from this inferior matter; but if his being is compared to that of the spheres and all the more to that of the separate beings, it is very, very contemptible.”<sup>14</sup> When something is evil or inconvenient for a human being, or even for human beings generally, and regardless of how often it occurs, it does not follow that it holds any significance for the overall qualitative determination of the character of the world. Dropping the anthropocentric perspective will relieve the urge to complain that God’s creation is evil, and will do so without the problematic numbers game generated by the quantitative version of the “consider the whole” strategy.

Thus Maimonides’ general theodicean strategy. Its resemblance to Leibniz’s theodicy, formulated 500 years later, is unmistakable. Leibniz famously argues that this actual world is, on the whole, the best of all possible worlds (the proof of which is that otherwise it would not have been created by an omnibenevolent, omniscient, and omnipotent God). While not every individual being succeeds in thriving in such a world, and even virtuous people sometimes suffer, all such apparent imperfections are essential elements of the identity of this best world and therefore contribute to its divine choiceworthiness. Only by taking this enlarged perspective on the cosmos — “taking a step back,” so to speak — can one come to appreciate the necessary role that “evils” play both in the overall optimality of the world and its place in God’s providential scheme:

God has ordered all things beforehand once for all, having foreseen prayers, good and bad actions, and all the rest; and each thing as an idea has contributed, before its existence, to the resolution that has been

13. *Guide* III 12 (Pines 446).

14. *Guide* III 13 (Pines 455).

made upon the existence of all things; so that nothing can be changed in the universe (any more than in number) save its essence or, if you will, save its numerical individuality. Thus, if the smallest evil that comes to pass in the world were missing in it, it would no longer be this world; which, with nothing omitted and all allowance made, was found the best by the Creator who chose it.<sup>15</sup>

The desirability of the world from God's perspective is determined by its contents. Among those contents are many actions and events that are evils for particular individuals; they involve either the suffering of some creature or the violation of God's commandments. There are infinitely many possible worlds that have fewer such things; but it is, among other reasons, just *because* these worlds have less pain or sin than the actual world that they fall short of being the best world and are therefore unworthy of God's choice: "It is true that one may imagine possible worlds without sin and without unhappiness, and one could make some like Utopian or Sevarambian romances: but these same worlds again would be very inferior to ours in goodness."<sup>16</sup> For God to have chosen for actualization a possible world with even one less instance of evil would mean creating a world with less overall goodness, because all things are connected, and every single aspect of the world makes a contribution to its being the best world.

Similarly, for God to step in, even on one small occasion, to forestall, miraculously, a natural disaster from happening to one person (or to prevent human evil from destroying 6 million people) would represent an abrogation of this world's laws of nature or an interference with human freedom; it would be to change the world, a world whose principles and their results God is committed to sustaining. "Shall God not give the rain, because there are low-lying places that will be thereby incommoded?" Leibniz asks rhetorically. "Shall the sun not shine as much as it should for the world in general, because there are places that will be too much dried up in consequence?"<sup>17</sup> God, foreseeing everything that will unfold over time as a result of His choice, opted to create this world precisely because it includes these items that, from our narrow and egotistic perspective, appear to be imperfections but that, from His eternal and penetrating point of view, are known

15. *Theodicy* §9, Leibniz 1875–90 (henceforth abbreviated as GP), 6:107–8. The translation is from Leibniz 1985 (henceforth abbreviated as H), 128–29.

16. *Theodicy* §10, GP 6:108; H 129.

17. *Theodicy* §134, GP 6:187–88; H 206.

to contribute to making it the very best. For both Maimonides and Leibniz, when we “consider the whole” as if from God’s perspective, we may not be comforted for our own sake, but our philosophical worries about evil are put to rest.

In his reading notes on part III of the *Guide*, Leibniz focuses on Maimonides’ account of divine providence, including his rich analysis of the book of Job. He explicitly takes note of Maimonides’ quantitative theodicean strategy:

C.10. God does not create evils per se, for evils are privations.

C.11. Human evils originate in ignorance or privation of knowledge.

C.12. It is false that there are more evils than good things in the world. . . . These inept men think that the whole nature of things exists for their own sake, even when something happens contrary to their interest. They believe the whole world to be evil.<sup>18</sup>

Several chapters later, he finds in Maimonides something that, to his mind, was well worth recording:

C.25. God does not will every possible, but only that which his wisdom discerns and which is good to the highest degree. [*Deus non vult omne possibile, sed tantum id quod sapientia ejus discerna et bonum est in summum grado.*]<sup>19</sup>

Unfortunately, Leibniz offers no substantive and illuminating commentary about their shared theodicean strategy and agreement on God’s *modus operandi*. He does, however, also remark upon Maimonides’ apparent commitment to the principle of sufficient reason, so central to Leibniz’s own philosophical system and which informs Maimonides’ arguments in favor of the creation, as opposed to the eternity, of the world (much as it does in Leibniz’s case as well). Here is how Leibniz summarizes *Guide* I 74:

For proving the origin of the world there is the way of determination [*apropriationis*], for when a thing has a certain measure and it is pos-

18. A 6:4c:2492.

19. A 6:4c:2494.

sible for it to have another, and so with other accidents, there must be a determiner [*appropriatore*] who selects one of the possibles, and thus the world is made. . . . [For] there was a reason why the existence of the world outweighed its non-existence.<sup>20</sup>

It is not hard to see why this argument appealed to the archrationalist Leibniz and why he felt it was the salient part of that chapter.

From this brief survey, it seems clear that it is extremely difficult to tell how much real and substantive influence, if any, Maimonides had on seventeenth-century philosophy, with (as we shall see) the notable exception of Spinoza. Malebranche, Newton, Leibniz, Pierre Bayle, and others obviously had some familiarity, more or less, with Maimonides' writings, with Leibniz and Bayle showing perhaps the greatest interest in him as a philosopher (as opposed to approaching Maimonides as a theologian, and especially as a Jewish theologian). These two, unlike Malebranche and Newton, also reveal a direct acquaintance with the *Guide*. (Bayle cites Maimonides and the *Guide* several times in the *Dictionnaire historique et critique*; for example, in note F to the article "Leucippus" he discusses "the famous Rabbi Maimonides" and his critique of the atomism of *kalām*.)<sup>21</sup> And the edition of the *Guide* that Leibniz, Bayle, and likely most other seventeenth-century philosophers turned to when they wanted to know what "Rabbi Moses" had to say on a particular philosophical topic was Buxtorf's Latin translation (which, among the cognoscenti, supplanted the Latin translation published by Agostino Giustiniani in Paris in 1520)—again, with the notable exception of Spinoza, who accessed the Hebrew text of the 1515 Venice edition.

But what was it that Leibniz, an extraordinarily well-read and eclectic thinker, found in the *Guide* that really influenced or inspired him? As we have seen, and despite some speculation on this question by Lenn Goodman, the notes that Leibniz left behind do not tell us very much.<sup>22</sup> That Leibniz was interested in what Maimonides had to say is absolutely clear—although, then again, Leibniz was seriously interested in what many, many other philosophers (ancient, medieval, and modern) had to say. But that Leibniz—or any other major philosopher in the seventeenth century—was

20. A 6:4c:2488. The Hebrew term loosely translated into Latin as *appropriatio* is *hityahed*.

21. Popkin goes as far as to call Maimonides one of Bayle's "heroes" (in a letter to the *New York Review of Books*, October 12, 1967).

22. See Goodman 1980.



actually influenced by his reading of Maimonides's *Guide* is much less certain, and probably impossible to determine.

## II

But let us turn, now, to that notable exception: Spinoza. While the mature Spinoza may no longer have thought of himself as a Jew, and while he even had great contempt for Judaism and other organized sectarian religions, it cannot be denied that Jewish texts, history, and thought continued to play an important role in Spinoza's thinking—so much so that Spinoza can, in my opinion, rightfully be considered a Jewish philosopher, both because his ideas exhibit a strong engagement with earlier Jewish philosophy and because in his major works he philosophized about Judaism.<sup>23</sup>

For a long time, however, a reader of the literature on Spinoza would have had little reason for thinking so. Scholarship on Spinoza in the late nineteenth century and much of the twentieth century, especially in the Anglo-American analytic tradition but also to some degree in France, the Netherlands, Italy, and Germany, when it did take account of context, was focused almost exclusively on his seventeenth-century philosophical context: primarily Descartes and Cartesianism, but also Hobbes, Leibniz, and others, including fellow Dutch thinkers of the republican political persuasion. To be sure, this is an extremely important context for understanding Spinoza's thought, and the result of books such as Edwin Curley's *Spinoza's Metaphysics*, Jonathan Bennett's *A Study of Spinoza's Ethics*, and Martial Gueroult's two-volume *Spinoza* and Ferdinand Alquié's *Le rationalisme de Spinoza* was great and influential insights into his philosophy.<sup>24</sup>

Moreover, it would not be fair to say that the Jewish context was completely ignored in this extended period. It is nearly impossible to write about the *Theological-Political Treatise* (henceforth *TTP*) without discussing Maimonides, primarily because major themes of the work obviously involve Maimonides in one way or another. For example, Spinoza explicitly takes the author of the *Guide of the Perplexed* to task for his account of the interpretation of Scripture. Scripture, for Spinoza, is not to be regarded as a source of philosophical, scientific, or historical truth. Contrary to

23. Thus it seems perfectly right that Spinoza should appear in most recent histories of and "companions" to Jewish philosophy, either as the culmination of the medieval tradition or the beginning of the modern. See, for example, Frank and Leaman 2003.

24. Curley 1969; Bennett 1984; Gueroult 1968; Alquié 1981.

what Maimonides claims, the “meaning” of any scriptural passage is not necessarily what is philosophically true. Rather, Spinoza insists, the Hebrew Bible, like any work of human literature, is to be read for the content that its prophetic authors—who, he insists, were not philosophers, and often uneducated—intended to express in their writings. Therefore, it is with good reason that studies such as (Rabbi) Manuel Joël’s *Spinoza’s Theologisch-politischer Traktat auf seine Quellen geprüft* and Leo Strauss’s *Die Religionskritik Spinozas als Grundlage seiner Bibelwissenschaft* include comparative analyses of Maimonides and Spinoza on biblical hermeneutics, the relationship between reason and revelation, and other issues.<sup>25</sup> There is also an influential 1968 article by Shlomo Pines, “Spinoza’s *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, Maimonides, and Kant,”<sup>26</sup> and Leon Roth’s short but valuable 1924 book *Spinoza, Descartes, and Maimonides*, which recognized Maimonides’ influence upon Spinoza in matters beyond merely the theologico-political; indeed, at one point Roth suggests that on certain topics “Maimonides and Spinoza speak . . . with one voice.”<sup>27</sup>

And then, of course, there is the magisterial work of Harry Wolfson, who offers an even deeper picture of Spinoza’s relationship to Maimonides (as well as to earlier Jewish thought and other philosophical traditions). In his two-volume *The Philosophy of Spinoza*,<sup>28</sup> Wolfson insisted on connections between the ideas in Spinoza’s *Ethics* and the doctrines of medieval Jewish rationalists, such as Maimonides and Gersonides, and many other figures. It was never any secret that Spinoza had studied the *Guide of the Perplexed* closely. But to claim that the highly opaque, extraordinarily difficult *Ethics*, which (unlike the *TTP*) does not once mention any other thinker by name, was also influenced by what Spinoza read in Maimonides was a bold and original thesis. One need not accept all of Wolfson’s conclusions, particularly when he suggests that most of Spinoza’s philosophy is nothing but a kind of pastiche of earlier Jewish, Arabic, and Scholastic thought, or when he claims that Spinoza was concerned to defend what Wolfson regards as certain traditional rabbinic doctrines (such as the immortality of the soul). But it can be said that Wolfson’s study opened the door to seeing Spinoza as

25. Joël 1870; Strauss 1930. More recent studies of the *TTP* that take due note of Maimonides include Preus 2001; Verbeek 2003; Levene 2004; Chalier 2006.

26. Pines 1968.

27. L. Roth 1924, 143–44. Likewise, Pines has claimed that Maimonides’ God is “perilously close to Spinoza’s attribute of thought (or to his Intellect of God)” (1963, xcvi).

28. Wolfson 1934.

a thinker in the Jewish philosophical tradition, and not just because Spinoza engaged Maimonides head-on in the *TTP*.

Unfortunately, few took up the challenge over the intervening decades, since analytically oriented philosophers were more interested in dissecting Spinoza's theses and arguments in a Cartesian context (often with great results, to be sure) than in considering any properly Jewish philosophical framework for them. Thus it was that something always seemed to be missing. This was particularly evident when scholars expressed frustration over their inability to make sense of one or another important but apparently mystifying feature of Spinoza's metaphysics, epistemology, and moral philosophy—for example, Spinoza's notion of the “intellectual love of God” or the doctrine of the eternity of the mind in part 5 of the *Ethics*, a doctrine that, I have argued elsewhere, can be understood only in the light of the views of Maimonides and Gersonides.<sup>29</sup> In the philosophical literature on Spinoza in the first three-quarters of the last century, studies like those of Strauss, Roth, Joël, and Wolfson were the exception rather than the rule, and it was rare to find discussion of any kind—much less deep, systematic, and substantive discussion, and even less discussion focused on the *Ethics*—of Spinoza in relationship to Maimonides.

Things began to change in the final decades of the twentieth century, especially after a well-known and oft-cited 1981 article by Warren Zev Harvey, in which he attempts “to sketch a portrait of Spinoza as a Maimonidean, as the last major representative of a tradition that mightily dominated Jewish philosophy for almost five centuries following the appearance of the *Guide of the Perplexed*.”<sup>30</sup> Harvey covers a limited number of topics on which the two thinkers can be fruitfully compared—the distinction between intellect and imagination, a shared contempt for anthropomorphism in the depiction of God, and the intellectual love of God as our *summum bonum*—and he really only outlines a program for further research. But nonetheless, fifty years after Wolfson, he took seriously the spirit of the former's program and began the process of looking closely at what could in fact be said justifiably about Spinoza's relationship to Maimonides. While Wolfson's study was all over the place, throwing around passages helter-skelter (often without explanation), Harvey called for a more selective approach and more careful and critical scrutiny.

The situation when Harvey was writing was such that he could still say

29. Nadler 2002.

30. W. Z. Harvey 1981a, 151.

that portraying Spinoza as a Maimonidean “is admittedly controversial. . . . It generally has not been held that there was a *distinctive* Maimonidean influence on Spinoza’s philosophy.”<sup>31</sup> It is hard to imagine anyone now being worried about making this kind of claim. In recent articles, Heidi Ravven,<sup>32</sup> Carlos Fraenkel,<sup>33</sup> Idit Dobbs-Weinstein,<sup>34</sup> and others have rightly taken for granted that there is much to be gained by reading Spinoza in a Maimonidean context and have followed Harvey’s lead by pursuing a deeper and more rigorous investigation of Spinoza’s relationship to Maimonides on such topics as the nature of prophecy and the proper conception of God. Ravven, for example, has argued that while Spinoza certainly rejects Maimonides’ view that the prophets were philosophers and that the Bible offers insights into central philosophical doctrines (particularly those of Aristotle), he nonetheless was greatly influenced by the Maimonidean account of the imaginative character and political utility of the prophetic writings in the Bible. And Fraenkel has drawn our attention to important parallels between Maimonides’ God as “the *causa immanens* of all existents” and Spinoza’s *Deus sive Natura*, despite Spinoza’s apparent break (because of his monism) with central features of the conception of God in the medieval Jewish philosophical tradition.

I should also mention Catherine Chalièr’s *Spinoza lecteur de Maïmonide: La question théologico-politique*, which as far as I know is the first book-length and philosophically probing study devoted exclusively to Spinoza’s relationship to Maimonides.<sup>35</sup> Chalièr goes much further than previous works on the *TTP*, all of which employ the relationship to Maimonides only tangentially. Her stated goal is to examine the political dimensions of Spinoza’s critique of Maimonides in the *TTP*, and especially the question of freedom of thought in a state that owes no fealty to any religious authority. Spinoza’s argument for a complete separation of the political and the theological (but not the political and the religious), she insists, provides the necessary context for a proper understanding of the criticisms that he

31. W. Z. Harvey 1981a, 151; Harvey’s emphasis. There is still some strong resistance to the attempt to draw Spinoza and Maimonides together—for example, most recently, Parens 2012. Parens claims that “it is difficult to say exactly what drives such an interpretation [of the two philosophers],” and insists that “the putative theoretical similarities between Maimonides and Spinoza are superficial” (3–4).

32. Ravven 2001a, 2001b.

33. Fraenkel 2006.

34. Dobbs-Weinstein 1994.

35. Chalièr 2006.

directs at Maimonides. At the same time, she argues that Spinoza's "rude" dismissal of Maimonides' *Guide*, especially its views on the interpretation of Scripture, should not lead us to ignore the profound importance of Maimonides to Spinoza.

We are now at the interesting point in time when even monographs on this or that aspect of Spinoza's philosophy, as well as more broadly conceived studies, feel obliged to at least pay lip service to his relationship to Maimonides, and sometimes see fit to go even further. This is true not just of studies on Spinoza's account of the interpretation of Scripture or philosophy of religion, but also studies of his political philosophy, his metaphysics, and his moral philosophy.<sup>36</sup> And this is exactly as it should be. It does not take much to see that not only the *TTP* but also the *Ethics* is deeply informed by Spinoza's confrontation with Maimonides. Anyone well versed in the *Ethics* who then reads the *Guide* cannot but be struck by the echoes of the latter in the former. The moral doctrines of parts 4 and 5, especially, are greatly illuminated when seen as engaged in dialogue with the philosophy of the *Guide*. Spinoza's views on the relationship between reason, virtue, and knowledge; his account of the path to true happiness or well-being; his enigmatic propositions on the eternity of the mind; the doctrine of the "intellectual love of God" (*amor Dei intellectualis*); even his understanding of what we can call "divine providence"—all of these need to be seen in a Maimonidean context. To ignore that context is to risk being completely baffled by or grossly misunderstanding what Spinoza is saying.

To take just one example that seems not to have received any attention in the literature: Spinoza's naturalistic and intellectualist solution in the *Ethics* to the problem of moral luck (although this is not a term that Spinoza uses) bears a stronger connection to the views of Maimonides than it does to the Stoic doctrines with which it is often (and rightfully) compared. As it is for Maimonides, virtue, for Spinoza, is an achievement of the intellect: human perfection consists in the actualization of our highest cognitive faculty, reason, through the attainment of intellectual understanding. Notice that what is important here is not merely *what* one knows (for example, to take the Stoic case, that there are some things that are under my control, and there are other things that are not).<sup>37</sup> In fact, *what* one knows appears

36. S. B. Smith 1997; Garrett 2003; LeBuffe 2010.

37. Epictetus, for example, insists (in the first line of his *Encheiridion*) that the most important thing to know is that "some things are up to us (*eph' hemin*), and other things are not up to us."

to differ, at least in part, between Maimonides, on the one hand, and Spinoza, on the other hand. Of greater importance, and what really seems to unite these two thinkers, is the moral value of rational knowledge itself as a secure and nontransitory good and as an essential achievement for flourishing in this life by minimizing the influence of luck. The happiness of the intellectually virtuous person is safeguarded from chance, from “the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,” both because he is better able to navigate his way through the world and avoid evil circumstances and because he has a truer sense of the relative value of transitory, mundane goods. The virtuous person, for Maimonides and for Spinoza, suffers fewer harms in his lifetime and is less deeply moved by those that do happen to reach him. This is the rationalist way to wisdom, joy, and blessedness. Spinoza says that “blessedness consists in Love of God, a Love which arises from the third kind of knowledge. So this Love must be related to the Mind insofar as it acts. Therefore, it is virtue itself.”<sup>38</sup> Spinoza’s love of God is not a passion but an intellectual love in which the mind takes cognizance of the eternal object of its understanding.

Spinoza’s bold move, however—a move that constitutes his transformation of Maimonidean rationalism—is twofold. First, he identifies God with Nature, and thereby explicitly makes Nature itself the supreme object of our cognitive quest. Reason no longer binds us to a transcendent deity but, rather, provides our intellectual connection to the cosmos of which we are a part. Second, he argues much more explicitly than Maimonides does that while the pursuit of rational knowledge constitutes our supreme perfection and the true path to happiness, its “rewards” and benefits (to return to the question of “divine providence”) are merely the natural effects that such understanding brings to a person and are limited solely to this life. Maimonides laid the philosophical groundwork for both of these conclusions, but it took a thinker as audacious as Spinoza to bring it all to a stunning logical conclusion.

### III

Let me now turn, briefly, to my final topic: the role of English-language translations of the *Guide of the Perplexed* in Spinoza studies.

Both before and after 1963, there were three options for Anglo-

38. *Ethics* Vp42, in Spinoza 1985, 616.

American philosophers—or any scholars writing in English—who wanted to take account of Maimonides' importance for the study of Spinoza.

First, they could simply read the original Arabic and Hebrew texts of the *Guide*.

However, my guess is that most Anglo-American Spinoza scholars doing history of early modern philosophy in the analytic tradition do not read rabbinic or medieval Hebrew, and even fewer read Arabic. Therefore, their appreciation of Spinoza's relationship to Maimonides needs to be mediated by a translation.

And so there was the second option: reading Maimonides' *Guide* in translation in some modern European language. As of 1866, the work was accessible in French through Salomon Munk's translation, *Le guide des égarés*. But beginning in 1885, the complete *Guide* was accessible in English, in Michael Friedländer's translation, and readily available throughout the second half of the twentieth century in a Dover paperback edition (1956). This is the translation used by practically all Spinoza scholars writing in English before 1963. Wolfson, in his Spinoza volume, while working with the Hebrew text of the *Guide*, nonetheless used "whenever possible" (his terms) Friedländer's "phraseology" in quoted passages.<sup>39</sup> Roth, in his chapters on Maimonides and Spinoza, also used the Friedländer translation (although he also suggests that "modern students" consult "the great French version of Munk").<sup>40</sup> The Friedländer translation continues to be used by scholars of early modern philosophy, even after the publication of Pines's translation, although this is more likely because it happens to be the one readily at hand rather than some principled preference of one translation over the other. For the most part, however, since 1963, much of the English-language scholarship on Spinoza that seeks to go beyond merely acknowledging a Maimonidean connection and to consider his philosophical relationship to the *Guide* in a serious and sustained way has relied on Pines's rendering.

The third option, which I am afraid not just a few scholars have taken advantage of, is not to consult the *Guide* itself in any complete translation, but simply to take a translation of the relevant passage from a compendium or from some other scholarly work—very often from Wolfson, whose book is chock-full of extended quotations from the *Guide* (thus indirectly extending the influence of Friedländer's translation).

While Pines's translation of the *Guide* is not without its shortcomings, it

39. Wolfson 1934, 363.

40. L. Roth 1924, 65.

has rightfully earned its place as the standard text for studying (and teaching) Maimonides in English. The translation is a magisterial accomplishment that has served well those who do not read Arabic or Hebrew, including, as I have mentioned, most scholars who come to Maimonides through their work in early modern philosophy (as opposed to scholars who, working in the other direction and with a knowledge of the relevant languages, are primarily focused on Maimonides and medieval Jewish philosophy and then seek to trace the denouement of this tradition in Spinoza).

To take one prominent example, Edwin Curley, a leading scholar of seventeenth-century philosophy and the author of important studies on Spinoza, Descartes, and Hobbes, published an essay titled “Maimonides, Spinoza, and the Book of Job.” In this piece, he invites the reader to reflect with him “on the meaning of the Book of Job and of Maimonides’ comments on it in the *Guide of the Perplexed*.” This, he suggests, can pay dividends for the study of Spinoza insofar as “it seems likely that in reflecting on the Book of Job and on Maimonides’ analysis of Job we will be engaging in the kind of reflection Spinoza” — with his own study of Maimonides’ commentary — “went through at a critical stage of his development.”<sup>41</sup> This truly is taking seriously the Maimonidean background to Spinoza’s thought. Curley, following those who, he admits, know more about Maimonides than he does, puts most of his faith in Pines’s translation. It is, however, a matter of “trust but verify,” with the translations by Friedländer and Munk serving as backup:

In citing *The Guide of the Perplexed* I generally follow the highly regarded translation by Shlomo Pines (University of Chicago Press, 1963). . . . Occasionally I suspect that Pines may be misleading. In such cases, lacking Arabic, I consult and cite as possible alternatives the renderings of M. Friedländer (Mineola, NY: Dover, 1956), S. Munk (*Le guide des égarés*, Paris: A. Franck, 1866), and Lenn Goodman, in *Rambam: Readings in the Philosophy of Moses Maimonides* (New York: Viking, 1975).<sup>42</sup>

In a number of subsequent notes in his essay, Curley does, indeed, remark on differences among the three translations. He notes that where Pines has Maimonides referring pejoratively to the “‘ignoramuses who observe the commandments,’ that is, someone who is scrupulous in his observance of

41. Curley 2002, 147–48.

42. Curley 2002, 177n8.



the Law,” Friedländer’s translation “seems less disparaging of those who observe the commandments: ‘the multitude that observe the divine commandments but are ignorant,’” while Munk has the even more neutral “les ignorants qui s’occupent des pratiques religieuses.”<sup>43</sup>

Pines’s translation obviously plays the central role in Curley’s study, as it does in other recent examples of early modern philosophy scholarship that look at the Maimonidean background to Spinoza. But Curley’s secondary recourse to Friedländer and even Munk raises the following question: Has Pines’s translation inspired a greater sensitivity in Spinoza studies in general to the Maimonidean context? My sense is that the answer to this question is probably no. Friedländer’s perfectly adequate translation was readily available for a long time, well before it became de rigueur in Spinoza scholarship to mention Maimonides at all, so it is not as if a certain text suddenly became accessible. Nor did the appearance of Pines’s translation bring about a sudden change; it was not for a good twenty years after the publication of his two volumes that it became relatively unproblematic to claim that there was, as Harvey puts it, “a *distinctive* Maimonidean influence on Spinoza’s philosophy.” My guess is that this blossoming of interest in Spinoza’s relationship to Maimonides simply had to happen in its own good time, the way in which most welcome developments in scholarship in early modern philosophy happen—witness, for example, the maturation of Descartes studies over the last thirty years from an almost obsessive concentration on the *Meditations* alone to a broader understanding of his metaphysics, his science, and even his moral philosophy, as well as his relationship to late medieval and seventeenth-century Scholasticism.

However, what we *can* say about the role that Pines’s translation has played in the study of the relationship between Spinoza and Maimonides is that the excellence and fluidity of his translation (not to mention the kinder and gentler size of its font and the imprimatur of the University of Chicago Press) have made it easier and more user-friendly for early modern scholars—who regularly access medieval Latin texts but are not generally accustomed to consulting texts of medieval *Jewish* philosophy—to make the connections that need to be made.

43. Curley 2002, 157, 181n29.

Shlomo Pines and  
the Rediscovery of Maimonides  
in Contemporary Philosophy

KENNETH SEESKIN

Let me begin with some background. The first complete English translation of the *Guide of the Perplexed* was published by Michael Friedländer in 1885 and revised in 1904.<sup>1</sup> When the 1904 edition came out, the notes that had accompanied the 1885 edition were removed in order to make the final product suitable for a single volume. It is undeniable that when Shlomo Pines's translation appeared in 1963, more was known about Maimonides than was the case in Friedländer's day.<sup>2</sup> But the success of the Pines translation was due to more than the knowledge accumulated over an eighty-year period. With the rise of analytic philosophy in the Anglo-American world, the philosophical climate changed as well. Increased attention to logic, language, and the precise reconstruction of arguments meant that Pines's translation had to meet a higher standard of rigor than what came before it.

As anyone who has worked with the Friedländer translation soon learns, he often uses multiple English words to express one Arabic word—sometimes in the space of a single passage and without telling the reader

1. Friedländer 1881–85, 1904.

2. For immediate reactions to the Pines translation, see Berman 1965; Fox 1965.

what he is doing. Thus the Arabic *i'tiqād* is rendered both “faith” and “belief” at *Guide* I 50. Later, at II 4, *mabda'* is rendered “inherent principle,” “principle,” “cause,” “source,” “origin,” and, for the plural, “*principia*.”<sup>3</sup> A person who had Friedländer’s translation in one hand and the original text in the other could always check back to see what is happening. But a philosopher who had nothing but Friedländer’s translation might easily conclude that Maimonides chose his words in a random or sloppy manner—in sharp contrast to Maimonides’ own remarks in the introduction.<sup>4</sup>

## I

Although Maimonides himself opposed literal, one-for-one translation and what he called “slavish” adherence to the order of words and sentences in the original, we should keep in mind that he was talking about translation from Arabic into Hebrew rather than medieval Arabic into modern English.<sup>5</sup> The result is that Pines had no choice but to strive for a degree of literalness that would make his audience respect Maimonides’ choice of words and the clarity of his thought. Accordingly, every Arabic philosophical term is rendered by the same English term and listed in a glossary that appears at the end of the book. Where the original text is ambiguous or obscure, Pines tried to make the English just as ambiguous and obscure. Before long, Pines’s translation became the standard one not only for English speakers but for modern-language speakers in general. Although part of this success was due to a methodological decision regarding translation, this should not prevent us from seeing that much of it was due to Pines’s extraordinary command of Greek, Arabic, Hebrew, the history of philosophy, and the history of science.

Just how extraordinary can also be seen from Pines’s introductory essay, “The Philosophic Sources of *The Guide of the Perplexed*.” Although Salomon Munk’s notes had been available for some time, the standard way of approaching Maimonides was still through his Jewish sources. This is ironic given that Maimonides does not mention any of his Jewish philosophical predecessors by name. Pines changed the way Maimonides was read by directing attention to the Greek and Arabic sources that influenced his

3. For more examples of Friedländer’s inconsistent translations of key terms, see Steven Harvey’s contribution to this volume.

4. *Guide* I, intro. (Pines 15): “For the diction of this Treatise has not been chosen at haphazard, but with great exactness and exceeding precision.”

5. See Maimonides’ letter to Samuel Ibn Tibbon in Maimonides 1988, 2:532–33.

thought and arguing that the *Guide* could not be understood apart from its historical context. With respect to Maimonides' Jewish sources, Pines took what was in its time a controversial view:

The fact that, relatively speaking, Maimonides had so little recourse to Jewish philosophic literature is significant. It implies *inter alia* that he had no use for a specific Jewish philosophic tradition. In spite of the convenient fiction, which he repeats, that the philosophic sciences flourished among the Jews of antiquity, he evidently considered that philosophy transcended religious or national distinction.<sup>6</sup>

If one were to consider the major approaches to the study of Maimonides today, one would soon discover that Pines played an important role in shaping them. The first such approach is mainly centered in Israel and includes such figures as Steven Harvey, Warren Zev Harvey, Sara Klein-Braslavy, Alfred Ivry, and Sarah Stroumsa.<sup>7</sup> According to this school, Maimonides is best understood as a representative of the Judeo-Arabic culture that flourished in the Mediterranean basin in the High Middle Ages.

The second approach, also centered in Israel, situates Maimonides' thought more broadly in the history of ideas and includes such figures as David Hartman, Moshe Halbertal, Menachem Kellner, and Howard Kreisel.<sup>8</sup> While these people are mostly interested in Maimonides vis-à-vis his Jewish context, they follow Pines in recognizing his debt to non-Jewish sources and are perfectly willing to admit that his standing in the Jewish world was and remains controversial. In Kellner's words, Maimonides found the Judaism of his day "debased and paganized" and sought to replace it with something that was deeply elitist, universalist, and rationalistic.<sup>9</sup> Whether Maimonides' version of Judaism remained true to the religion's central core or introduced new and foreign elements is still debated.

The third approach, which constitutes the dominant trend in North America, focuses on Maimonides' metaphysical and epistemological arguments in light of wider trends in the history of philosophy and includes

6. Pines 1963, cxxxiii–cxxxiv. Cf. Pines 1967, 1.

7. Spatial limitations prevent me from listing all the works by these people. But see, for example, S. Harvey 1992a, 2003; W. Z. Harvey 1980, 1981b; Klein-Braslavy 2011; Ivry 2005; Stroumsa 2009.

8. Hartman 1976; Halbertal 2014; Kellner 2006; Kreisel 1999.

9. Kellner 2006, 1.

Josef Stern, Lenn Goodman, Charles Manekin, James Diamond, and me.<sup>10</sup> This is the group most heavily indebted to Pines, not because they studied under him, but because the quality of his English translation helped to create an audience for their work. Similar remarks apply to the recent biographies of Maimonides written by Herbert Davidson and Joel Kraemer.<sup>11</sup> While neither required a translation to do his research, it is safe to say that the distribution and scholarly reception of both books would have been impeded without an English-speaking audience able to access Maimonides' magnum opus in their mother tongue.

We can understand the size of this audience by turning to bibliographies published by David Lachterman, Batya Ben-Shammai, and Menachem Kellner.<sup>12</sup> The first two contributions cover 1950–91. In that period, about 675 pieces on Maimonides were published, slightly more than half of which are in English. Kellner's bibliography, which covers 1991–2004, contains 600 items, of which 420 are in English. Simple math tells us that the rate of publication in the latter period is almost three times greater than that of the former, with English publications growing much faster than Hebrew. There is every reason to think that this trend has continued up to the present day.

Another factor responsible for renewed interest in Maimonides is the teaching of medieval philosophy. There was a time when this subject was largely a study of Christian thinkers with a few Jews and Muslims thrown in for good measure. Today, if one looks at one of the leading textbooks in the field, Arthur Hyman and James J. Walsh's *Philosophy in the Middle Ages: The Christian, Islamic, and Jewish Traditions*, one will find long sections of the *Guide* taken from the Pines translation. To this, we should add the publication of a *Cambridge Companion to Maimonides* and the inclusion of Maimonides in numerous anthologies on the philosophy of religion.<sup>13</sup> Although it is impossible to prove a contrary-to-fact conditional, one has to ask whether all of this would have happened if the only English translation available were that of Friedländer.

To be sure, Pines is not the only one responsible for renewed interest

10. J. Stern 2013; Goodman 1996; Manekin 2005; Diamond 2014; Seeskin 2000. As of this writing, Goodman is at work on a new English translation of the *Guide*.

11. Davidson 2005; Kraemer 2008. In some ways it is misleading to say that Davidson owes a debt to Pines, since part of the former's argument is that Maimonides was less familiar with and therefore not nearly as influenced by Greek and Islamic sources as Pines and his followers claim.

12. Lachterman 1990; Ben-Shammai 1991; Kellner 2004.

13. Seeskin 2005a.

in Maimonides. It can be explained in part by the abandonment of Jewish quotas in private universities in America and the rise of Jewish studies programs. It can also be explained by the fact that by the 1970s, the history of philosophy had become a more respectable subject than it was before. It was W. V. O. Quine who said that there is philosophy and then there is the history of philosophy. Fortunately, this view began to lose favor, and in today's climate, the history of philosophy plays a role in leading departments. While it would be unfair to attribute all of these developments to Pines alone, it can hardly be questioned that his translation of the *Guide* played an important role.

This does not mean that Maimonides has become a central figure for philosophers of all descriptions. Yosef Yerushalmi was right when he said that while a profound intellectual synthesis took place between Jewish and Gentile cultures in the realm of philosophy during the medieval period, in our age things are different; the primary encounter between Jewish and Gentile cultures is in the realm of history.<sup>14</sup> Even in Jewish studies, historians outnumber philosophers by a considerable margin. The reasons behind this phenomenon are too numerous to be discussed in this essay and have little bearing on the work of Pines. Suffice it to say that within the field of Jewish philosophy, Pines helped restore Maimonides to the position of prominence he once held and raised scholarship on Maimonides to a level of rigor it had not seen for centuries.

## II

Turning from Pines's translation to his introductory essay, one finds that he raises what may well be *the* central issue of Maimonides' metaphysics: how to reconcile the negative theology asserted in I 51–59 with the theory of intellection set forth at I 68. In the former section, Maimonides argues that all words like “wise” and “lives” that are applied both to God and to humans are completely equivocal, so that there is nothing in common between their use in one context and their use in another. This goes hand in hand with the claim that God has no positive attributes that pertain to His essence, so that saying that God is wise or that God lives does not ascribe to God anything we can recognize as life or intelligence. As Pines remarks, this is a radical doctrine that was not part of the traditional Aristotelian system.<sup>15</sup> What was

14. Yerushalmi 1982, 85–86.

15. Pines 1963, xcv.

part of the Aristotelian system is the view that when the intellect is active, the knower is identical with the intelligible form that is known. Because God's intellect is always active, and God is nothing *but* intellect, it follows that God is at one and the same time the subject, the object, and the activity of His thinking.

Trying to reconcile these passages creates two problems. First, *Guide* I 68 makes God the subject of true metaphysical statements that purport to tell us something positive about His essence. Second, at I 68 Maimonides goes on to say that the same theory of intellection applies to human beings. While there would still be vast differences in the scope and efficacy of God's knowledge and ours, if the same theory of intellection applies to both, there would have to be at least one point of similarity. This contradicts the negative theology chapters, which say that there is no point of similarity.

Although Pines tries to present a balanced view of these alternatives, before long he shows his true colors by referring to negative theology as "mere quibbling" and a "smoke screen" that may not hold up to scrutiny.<sup>16</sup> By suggesting that negative theology may not stand up to scrutiny, he set the tone for what many came to regard as the standard way to read the *Guide*. In 1986, David Burrell wrote:

The clean alternative is simply to assert God to be *other than* the world, holding on quite firmly to the reality of the world in which we live. This can be considered Maimonides' position . . . , but one always feels in such cases that one's religious self holds one's mind captive. For it takes but a little reflection to realize that God cannot be *that* neatly other if we are to use the name *creator*, or if divinity is to be in any way accessible to our discourse.<sup>17</sup>

Somewhat later, Hilary Putnam argued, in the spirit of Thomas Aquinas, that negative theology does not explain why we say certain things about God rather than others.<sup>18</sup>

So Pines was in good company. As he rightly sees, the view expressed at I 68 means that God is self-thinking thought that enjoys perfect awareness of itself. But if we add to this—as Maimonides clearly would—that God is also aware of the order and structure of the universe, it would follow that

16. Pines 1963, xcvi, cxxviii.

17. Burrell 1986, 17.

18. Putnam 1997b. See also Putnam 1997a for a more detailed account of his position.

God is identical with the order and structure of the universe, exactly what humans investigate when they study the universe scientifically. If this is true, then, as Pines concludes, it makes Maimonides' God "something perilously close to Spinoza's attribute of thought."<sup>19</sup> Spinoza's attribute of thought, it will be remembered, is an infinite system of ideas linked in causal order. In fact, as students of Spinoza will recognize, there is an obvious reference to *Guide* I 68 at Book II, proposition 7 of the *Ethics*, where Spinoza presents the famous doctrine of parallelism. Again, Pines's intuitions gave rise to a school of thought whose contemporary representatives include Warren Zev Harvey and Carlos Fraenkel.<sup>20</sup>

Pines reached a similar impasse with respect to Maimonides' criticism of Aristotelian celestial physics. The problem, which has been much discussed in the last twenty-five years, is the incompatibility between Aristotle's theory of natural motion and Ptolemy's use of epicycles and eccentric orbits.<sup>21</sup> No one denied that Ptolemy's predictions were better; the problem is that it strained credibility to suppose that something could have an orbit whose central point was outside the center of the earth. It is well known that Maimonides, who was an empiricist at heart, expressed perplexity on how to resolve this conflict and went so far as to say that science might never be able to resolve it.

With this conflict in mind, Pines asks:

Does this mean that Maimonides was incurably skeptical about the possibility of working out a satisfactory comprehensive and unified physical theory in which the explanations of the celestial phenomena would be methodologically as valid as those of sublunar phenomena?<sup>22</sup>

Pines's first reply is to say that the question is not easy to answer. Though he later concedes that skepticism might be the only consistent and logical position given the evidence at Maimonides' disposal, he concludes by saying that "such agnosticism would stultify all that Maimonides set out to accomplish in the *Guide*."<sup>23</sup> Would it?

It does not take a leap of faith to hold that Maimonides was perfectly serious when he said that medieval astronomy had no credible explanation

19. Pines 1963, xcvi.

20. See W. Z. Harvey 1981a; Fraenkel 2006.

21. For further discussion, see Seeskin 2005b, chap. 5.

22. Pines 1963, cxi.

23. Pines 1963, cxi.



for planetary orbits and that “regarding all that is in the heavens, man grasps nothing but a small measure of what is mathematical” because the heavenly bodies are too far away and too high in place and rank.<sup>24</sup> He could admit this and still maintain, as he does several times, that with regard to earthly phenomena, science does provide us with reliable knowledge.

It is interesting to note that in a later essay published in 1979, Pines embraced the very skepticism he rejected in 1963.<sup>25</sup> Others, including Josef Stern and me, followed suit, claiming that negative theology could stand up to critical scrutiny and represents Maimonides’ considered view of theological language.<sup>26</sup> I will have more to say about negative theology in the next section.

For the present, it is worth noting that on the skeptical reading of Maimonides, one of the purposes of the *Guide* is to show that substantial portions of what passed for knowledge of God and the heavenly realm in the Middle Ages is in fact conjecture—or, worse, a mass of incoherence. Beyond the obvious question of how to account for planetary orbits, there are deeper questions involving the essences and identity conditions for being a heavenly body in the first place. With respect to God, there is the question of how something that is one from whatever angle one views it admitting no complexity whatever can be the subject of multiple predicates.<sup>27</sup>

If the skeptical reading is correct, then, while we may need to read Maimonides in the historical context in which he wrote, his main contribution may be the extent to which he departed from that context or exposed its shortcomings. My purpose at this point is not to argue that any one school of thought has carried the day but rather to suggest that many of the trends we see in recent scholarship were initiated or at least adumbrated in Pines’s original essay.

### III

To return to negative theology, Moshe Halbertal and Avishai Margalit argued in their influential book *Idolatry* that a link can be discerned between Maimonides’ negative theology and Saul Kripke’s theory of reference.<sup>28</sup> This suggestion was taken up and developed further by Michael Fagenblat in

24. *Guide* II 25 (Pines 326–27).

25. Pines 1979.

26. See J. Stern 2013, chap. 6; Seeskin 2005c.

27. *Guide* I 51 (Pines 113).

28. See Halbertal and Margalit 1992, 149–52; Kripke 1980.

*A Covenant of Creatures*.<sup>29</sup> To understand the connection, let us go back to the basic claim of negative theology: that words like “wise” and “lives” do not offer any positive knowledge of God’s essence. There are two reasons for this. First, as Maimonides says several times, and insists must be taught even to the unlearned masses, words like “wise” and “lives” are completely equivocal as applied to God and humans. Even the wisest human being cannot give existence to something merely by thinking about it, and even the healthiest cannot be viewed as the source of life for everything else. So it is not just that God’s knowledge and life contain more perfection than ours but that they are of a completely different kind. At *Guide* I 56, Maimonides takes up the view that the difference between God’s attributes and ours is that the former are greater, more perfect, more permanent, or more durable than ours. His rejection of this view is decisive: “The matter is not so in any respect.”<sup>30</sup> This means that we cannot start with an understanding of our knowledge and life and extrapolate to an understanding of what they are like in God.

Second, Maimonides goes to some length to argue that God has no attributes that are superadded (i.e., external) to His essence. So it is not true that God is wise *through* (i.e., by means of) knowledge or lives *through* (i.e., by means of) life. The reason for this is that if something were added to God’s essence, there would have to be an agent other than God responsible for the addition, which is clearly absurd. Another way of seeing this point is to recognize that if something were added to God’s essence, that essence would be a composite. This contradicts Maimonides’ explicit assertion that God’s essence is one from whatever angle you view it.

It follows that when applied to God in a sense in which we can understand, words like “wise” and “lives,” which refer to attributes and introduce complexity, are not only false but categorically so—analogous to Maimonides’ example of a wall that does not see.<sup>31</sup> We can, of course, talk about the consequences or effects that follow from God, but Maimonides is careful to point out that when we do, we are not talking about God himself but the nature of the created order for which God is responsible.

Putting all this together and shifting from medieval terminology to modern, we can say that because no attribute is true of God, there can be no definite description such as “The Just One” or “The Powerful One” that

29. Fagenblat 2010, 123–25.

30. *Guide* I 56 (Pines 130).

31. *Guide* I 58 (Pines 136).

uniquely refers to or denotes God. That is why by I 59, Maimonides admits that the highest tribute we can pay to God is a studied silence.

Still, a perceptive reader knows that silence is not necessarily the final answer. At I 63–65, Maimonides allows an exception for the Tetragrammaton by saying that it is the proper name of God because it is the only name that is used exclusively for God and gives a clear indication of His essence. Unlike “The Merciful One” or “The Powerful One,” it contains no expression that can be applied to creatures even if we grant that it is being applied to them in a derivative sense. So there is no suggestion that God and creatures can be lumped together in a single category—for example, the class of all merciful things. Nor does the Tetragrammaton contain anything that has to be attached to the essence of God in the way that an accident like “musical” is attached to the essence of man. It is a name borne by one thing and nothing else.

At first, Maimonides suggests that the Tetragrammaton is indicative of necessary (i.e., uncaused) existence, but does not completely commit himself. His suggestion is based on the fact that the Tetragrammaton is derived from the verb *hayah*, so that when Moses asks God the name of the one who has sent him, God says: “I AM THAT I AM” (Exod 3:14). The text continues with God using the first-person form of the verb: “Tell the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” Immediately afterward God shifts to the third-person form, saying: “You shall say this to the children of Israel: ‘YHWH, your fathers’ God . . . has sent me to you’” (Exod 3:15).

What are we to make of this? At *Guide* I 63, Maimonides argues that the use of the same word as both subject and predicate in “I AM THAT I AM” means that in the case of God, existence is not something external to God that has to be attributed to Him, but something identical with God. By the end of the discussion, he concludes: “This name is not indicative of an attribute but of simple existence and nothing else.”<sup>32</sup>

One might think that Maimonides is saying that because God’s name indicates necessary existence, the names YHWH, I AM, and I AM THAT I AM are functioning as referring expressions like the definite description “The One who exists necessarily,” which secures its reference in virtue of being that whose existence is necessary. But in *The Matter and Form of Maimonides’ “Guide,”* Josef Stern argues that this cannot be the case.<sup>33</sup> Maimonides points out on two occasions that even a term like “exists” is

32. *Guide* I 63 (Pines 156).

33. J. Stern 2013, 218–26.

completely equivocal when applied to God and everything else.<sup>34</sup> We can see this by recognizing that, for us, “exists” is an accident. Like “unicorn” or “triangle,” there is nothing in the essence of “humanity” that guarantees that such a thing must be realized. It follows that if we exist, we must derive our existence from an external source. But nothing like this is true of God, for whom existence and essence are one.

If there is nothing in common between our existence and God’s, then “The One who exists necessarily” has no positive content that we can understand. To paraphrase Thomas Aquinas, though the expression “The One who exists necessarily” may be meaningful to God, for us it is anything but.<sup>35</sup> Beyond this there is the fact that the expression “The One who exists necessarily” seems to turn necessary existence into an attribute again, implying that necessary existence is something that has to be attached to God as an accident. We may conclude that there is no cognitive state by which we can secure reference to God. How, then, do we refer to God, and how should we understand the Tetragrammaton? How can it refer to God without describing Him?

The answer would seem to be that the purpose of Exodus 3:14, to use Kripke’s expression, is to establish an initial baptism (or dubbing) for the name so that the referent of the Tetragrammaton is fixed. The dubbing occurs when God uses the Tetragrammaton to refer to himself. Unlike parents naming a child or a donor naming a building, this is a case where reference is secured by the referent himself. As long as there is a causal chain between the use of the Tetragrammaton at Exodus 3:14 and its use today, we can know that it picks out the same thing every time. In Jewish tradition, that chain is secured by the passing of the Torah from Moses to succeeding generations in an unbroken line of transmission.

Is this what Kripke had in mind in *Naming and Necessity*, when he introduced his theory of reference? The comparison is inexact for two reasons. First, we cannot witness God’s naming of himself and can only read about it in a book that derives from a prophetic encounter with God. Second, it treats the initial dubbing or baptism as a distinctively human activity. To attribute it to God is to introduce a measure of anthropomorphism. Nonetheless, the obvious points of similarity have caught the attention of scholars seeking to explicate Maimonides’ philosophy of language.

34. *Guide* I 35, 56 (Pines 80, 131).

35. *Summa theologiae*, part I, q. 2, art. 1.

## IV

Last but not least, there is Leo Strauss, who also contributed an introductory essay to the Pines translation.<sup>36</sup> That Maimonides played a decisive role in Strauss's intellectual development is beyond question.<sup>37</sup> It was, after all, Strauss's reading of Maimonides that made him question whether Enlightenment philosophers like Spinoza were justified in thinking that they had disposed of the assumptions that lay behind ancient and medieval philosophy. In Strauss's opinion, they had not, and this led him to ask whether what passes for wisdom in our age is an appropriate standard by which to measure the thought of a previous one.

In addition, Strauss emphasized that we must take account of everything Maimonides said as well as the way he said it, and that whatever Maimonides' accomplishments as a metaphysician, we should not lose sight of the political dimension of his thought. Finally, it was Maimonides who made Strauss see the necessity of hiding one's true thoughts from the great mass of humanity lest they come to believe that the beliefs on which their whole way of life is based are false. Should this happen, the result would be chaotic and lead to a condition in which not even the learned few could ply their trade.

That the *Guide* is esoteric in some sense of the word, no one doubts. According to Pines, "The Introduction is avowedly to a large extent a study in the art of *suppressio veri* and *suggestio falsi*."<sup>38</sup> The question is *how* esoteric, and what is the nature of the doctrine that Maimonides is trying to conceal? Is it (1) that the beliefs the mass of humanity hold dear are false, or (2) that they cannot be known with certainty to be true, or (3) that while true, they need to be rethought and reformulated, or (4) that the surest guide we have to truth is the philosophical tradition that derives from Aristotle?

We saw that at times Pines himself expressed ambivalence on some of these points. We also saw that both Burrell and Putnam questioned whether Maimonides' negative theology could stand up to critical scrutiny. As a brief review of the secondary literature will show, we have Maimonides the student and defender of the naturalistic philosophy that preceded him, Maimonides the skeptic, Maimonides the rational mystic, Maimonides the archenemy of mysticism, Maimonides the defender of traditional religion,

36. Strauss 1963; see also 1952, 38–94.

37. For a study of Maimonides' impact on the thought of Leo Strauss, see Green 2013.

38. Pines 1963, lviii.

Maimonides the demythologizer of traditional religion, Maimonides the proto-Spinozist, proto-Kantian, or proto-Levinasian, and, of course, Maimonides the iconoclast. An old saying has it that there is “Your”-monides and “My”-monides.

The problem with a simple esoteric reading is that while we might expect the unlearned masses to misinterpret his thought, we also would expect the learned few to reach general agreement. The fact that this is not and never has been the case may give rise to an interesting and ever-expanding secondary literature, but it also makes one wonder whether a simple esoteric reading can be right. Why go to such lengths to conceal your beliefs if, after centuries of commentary and criticism, even the best minds have difficulty identifying them?

One way to approach this question is to see, as Lawrence Berman put it in his review of the Pines translation, that the *Guide* is no ordinary book—or, as Pines said in his introductory essay, that it “belongs to a very peculiar literary genre, of which it is the unique specimen.”<sup>39</sup> It is not just that the author says he intends to contradict himself but that he gives the reader the impression that he has doubts about writing the book at all.

First, there is the talmudic prohibition against discussing esoteric subjects in public. Second, there is the fact that even if Maimonides were permitted to discuss these matters publicly, the inherent difficulty of the subject matter would prevent him from doing so adequately because “you should not think that these great *secrets* are fully and completely known to anyone among us.”<sup>40</sup> Third, there is the fact that even for that portion of the truth that can be known, there are problems of how to communicate it: “Know that whenever one of the perfect wishes to mention, either orally or in writing, something that he understands of these *secrets* . . . he is unable to explain with complete clarity and coherence even the portion that he has apprehended.”<sup>41</sup>

Maimonides’ description of his intentions stands in sharp contrast to that of Thomas Aquinas. At the beginning of the *Summa theologiae*, a book to which the *Guide* is often compared, Aquinas tells us that Christian doctrine has been hampered by the multiplication of useless questions, the order in which issues have been presented, and the weariness and confusion brought on by undue repetition. His purpose, then, is to “set forth whatever

39. See Berman 1965; Pines 1963, lxxix.

40. *Guide* I, intro. (Pines 7).

41. *Guide* I, intro. (Pines 8).

is included in this sacred doctrine as briefly and clearly as the matter itself may allow.” While Aquinas does embrace skeptical themes in his exposition of sacred doctrine, there is nothing like the qualifications one finds in Maimonides and no admission that he intends to contradict himself. To repeat: his purpose is to reveal the truth as simply and as clearly as he can. By contrast, Maimonides says that his purpose is that “the truths be glimpsed and then again concealed.”<sup>42</sup>

My suggestion is that we take seriously the warnings articulated in the introduction. The whole truth is never completely known to anyone. Even those who are lucky enough to receive a few momentary flashes of insight will have difficulty communicating those insights to others. To this we should add that it is far from clear that Maimonides thought that he was the recipient of such flashes. As he says at the beginning of part III, his method in composing the book was to proceed by way of conjecture and supposition.<sup>43</sup>

What I am recommending is that we give up the idea that Maimonides had a store of fixed positions either that he put forward in an explicit manner or that he tried to conceal from the general public. True, he is committed to the existence and unity of God, the fact that perfection of the intellect is the true measure of human perfection, and the belief that love of God will culminate in a life of justice, loving kindness, and sound judgment. The point is that beyond these very broad commitments lay a host of questions, problems, conjectures, and honest perplexities. There is no reason to think that Maimonides thought he had resolved all or even most of the questions he addresses. On this view, his greatness consists as much in the depth and precision with which he raised questions as it does in his ability to answer them once and for all.

It will come as no surprise that I am taking Maimonides’ treatment of creation as a paradigm with which to view his whole book. I take Maimonides at his word that he tipped the balance in favor of creation; but even if one believes, as many do, that he tipped it in favor of eternity, the fact remains that he presents powerful arguments on both sides of the issue.<sup>44</sup>

In favor of creation, there is the Argument from Particularity, which asks why observable facts are this way rather than another. To answer this question, one would have to show either that the alternatives to what we

42. *Guide* I, intro. (Pines 6).

43. *Guide* III, intro. (Pines 415–16).

44. *Guide* II 16 (Pines 294).

observe are impossible or that some purpose is served by having things arranged the way they are. If the question cannot be answered, then proponents of the argument maintain that the only plausible explanation is that God has exercised free choice in choosing one alternative over the other. At *Guide* I 73, Maimonides attacks the *mutakallimūn* for exaggerating the scope of the argument and for asking what he considered silly questions—for example, Why is the sun not triangular? Why do elephants not fly? In his opinion, there are perfectly good scientific reasons for why such things are impossible. In short, the *mutakallimūn* appeal more to imagination than to reason and in so doing fail to demonstrate their point.

We saw, however, that Maimonides thought that there were no good scientific explanations for the specifics of planetary motion. To repeat: this does not mean that Maimonides is throwing out all of natural science, only that he is skeptical of that part of it that does not and may never live up to its goal of telling us what things are, why they are the way they are, and why they cannot be otherwise than what they are. If there is reason to believe that there are phenomena that are at bottom contingent, that God exercised free choice in creating them the way he did, then creation becomes a real possibility.

In favor of eternity, there is the familiar claim that God is one from whatever angle you view Him and cannot admit complexity in any respect. If He cannot admit any form of complexity, then, as Spinoza argued, God's will must be identical with His intellect.<sup>45</sup> It follows that God must desire everything that He knows and know everything that He desires. This rules out any possibility of spontaneous action and is the position that Maimonides connects with the eternity of the world.

Unfortunately Maimonides is not always consistent about the relation between will and wisdom in God. When he wants to separate himself from Aristotle, he says that the world is the product of will.<sup>46</sup> When he wants to defend the idea of order and causal connection, he says that it is the product of wisdom.<sup>47</sup> Sometimes he says that will is *consequent* on wisdom, and sometimes that the distinction between them is unimportant.<sup>48</sup> At *Guide* III 25, he claims that God wills only some of what is possible, indicating that he is aware of possibilities that are never realized. Despite all of this, strict

45. *Ethics* 1P17s.

46. For example, *Guide* II 21 (Pines 316) and III 13 (Pines 452–54).

47. For example, *Guide* III 25 (Pines 505–6).

48. For the former, see *Guide* II 18 (Pines 302); for the latter, see *Guide* II 25 (Pines 329), II 27 (Pines 332–33), and III 14 (Pines 456).



adherence to divine unity as expressed at *Guide* I 51 would require that will and wisdom are the same. As for the age-old debate between creation and eternity, neither side has an airtight demonstration against the other, which is one reason that it still goes on not only among scholars working on Maimonides but among cosmologists and theologians trying to make sense of why our universe appears to be “fine-tuned” to allow for the formation of life.<sup>49</sup>

## V

The picture that I am painting of Maimonides is very different from the one that is presented to introductory students who read *Pereq ḥeleq* and nothing more. There, Maimonides comes across as a dogmatist ready to excommunicate anyone who does not profess agreement with his thirteen principles. In an age of religious tolerance—not only between religious traditions but within such traditions themselves—this seems excessive. In some cases—for example, that God rewards virtue and punishes vice or that the dead will be resurrected—people have long wondered whether or to what extent Maimonides himself believed them.

No doubt *Pereq ḥeleq* was written at an early stage in Maimonides’ career, when skeptical doubts like those expressed in the *Guide* had not had time to set in. Beyond that, I suggest that our reaction to *Pereq ḥeleq* may be different from what he intended. Where we see him erecting an unreasonably high barrier to salvation, he saw himself lowering it to include as many people as possible, as if to say: “Here is the minimum you have to believe to be considered a Jew.” For him, the first four principles, which deal with the unity and existence of God, are hardly debatable. While no demonstration exists for the others, in his opinion, they are so well established in Jewish tradition that debate is only likely to result from ignorance.

By the time he wrote the *Guide*, he was able to see that the issues were

49. For the current status of the debate among Maimonides scholars, see the relevant articles in Jospe and Schwartz 2012. For the problem of fine-tuning, see Hawking 2002, 104: “If the rate of expansion one second after the big bang had been smaller by even one part in a hundred thousand million million, the universe would have recollapsed before it ever reached its present size. On the other hand, if the expansion rate at one second had been larger by the same amount, the universe would have expanded so much that it would be effectively empty now.” From a medieval perspective, this gives new life to the question, Why this rather than that? In sum, Maimonides’ conviction that there is no possibility of a demonstration on such matters seems as valid today as it did 800 years ago.

more complex and that intellectual honesty required him to admit that reasonable doubts could arise. What, then, was Maimonides' purpose in writing the *Guide*? I suggest that after setting forth his guiding commitments and doing away with literal interpretation of Scripture, he wanted to show that on questions like creation, one can raise questions, entertain doubts, see legitimate points on opposite sides of an argument, and still remain faithful to Judaism. While Judaism may demand total conviction on issues like the unity and incorporeality of God, it does not demand conviction on all. On the contrary, Maimonides tells us:

For if you stay your progress because of a dubious point; if you do not deceive yourself into believing that there is a demonstration with regard to matters that have not been demonstrated; if you do not hasten to reject and categorically to pronounce false any assertions whose contradictories have not been demonstrated; if, finally, you do not aspire to apprehend that which you are unable to apprehend—you will have achieved human perfection and attained the rank of *Rabbi Aqiba*.<sup>50</sup>

Simply put, if you recognize your limits and stay within them, you will achieve the same status as one of Israel's greatest sages. Far from a recommendation to seek certainty on every issue, this sounds like a recommendation to proportion one's belief to the weight of the evidence in a context where the evidence is not always compelling.

In some respects, Strauss is right to say that the message of the *Guide* is dangerous. Many people embrace religion because they think it offers a beacon of certainty in what is obviously an uncertain world. If Maimonides were to tell such people that the beacon transmits only occasional flashes of light, and even then it is not clear how to describe them, the people would no doubt despair. So there is a degree of esotericism here. The book is written to an advanced student whose commitment to Judaism is beyond question. Overall, it is a study in how to cope with limited knowledge without succumbing to nihilism or quietude. To return to Pines, let me conclude by saying that far from criticizing him for his ambivalence on major issues, I am praising him for getting the point exactly right: in some cases, ambivalence may be the best we can do.

50. *Guide* I 32 (Pines 68).



**Maimonides as a Student  
of Islamic Religious Thought  
Revisiting Shlomo Pines's  
"Translator's Introduction"  
and Its Comments on al-Ghazālī**

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Shlomo Pines was a true cosmopolite. The son of a Jewish family of traders and scholars, Pines spent his early childhood in France, Lithuania, and Russia. The Bolshevik revolution brought the nine-year-old Pines from Russia first to London and then to Berlin. By the time he arrived in Berlin, Pines had already mastered five languages. In Berlin, where he arrived with his family in 1921, Pines added first German and then Arabic to his repertoire. Even before the catastrophic events of the 1930s and 1940s that would forever change a Jew's attitude to Germany and its culture, Pines never seemed to have liked writing in German. His dissertation, printed in 1936, remains his only significant publication in German, a language that he undoubtedly mastered. The "Translator's Introduction" to Pines's English translation of the *Guide*, however, shows the extent to which he truly was a student of German scholarship. Educated first at Heidelberg University and later in Geneva, Berlin, and Paris, Pines's academic work is deeply influenced by the tradition of German philological studies. That tradition developed in the nineteenth century as an academic branch of the movement of classicism. In the German philological tradition, documenting a work's sources and the earlier texts that informed its author and that show themselves within

the book is seen as the key to understanding it and its position within the history of human literature and thought. Today, we read with bewilderment PhD dissertations produced at German universities in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century that offer meticulous editions of texts based on the careful study of manuscripts. Then, in the part of the dissertation where the PhD candidate is expected to show his (and it is mostly “his” and almost never “her”) analytic skills, he lists references to earlier works or prints parallel texts in a second or even third column to the edition he prepared. There are, of course, better and worse examples of this genre, but, as a whole, German philological studies—with all the merits of producing critical editions—puzzle us contemporary readers because of their unwillingness to engage critically and philosophically with the texts’ teachings. It is as if—to use a provocative comparison—one were to find an incunabulum in the attic and were only to admire its binding, the typeface, and the quality of the paper, but were never to read the book, meaning that one would not be doing what the author wanted to be done.

Pines’s higher education fell into the 1920s at a time when the limitations of German philological studies began to be understood and a new and fresher wind started to blow through the seminars of German, Swiss, and French universities. In Paris, Pines made the acquaintance of Louis Massignon (1883–1962), who was at the height of his career and whose perspective on intellectual traditions in Islam was different from that of German philology. His *grand oeuvre* on the life and ideas of the tenth-century Muslim mystic al-Ḥallāj came out in 1922. It is a book that aims at documenting not only the sources of and influences on this Sufi but also his whole cultural atmosphere.<sup>1</sup> Massignon’s inquiry into the intellectual roots of al-Ḥallāj goes way beyond those references that the Sufi himself provides.

Among Pines’s earliest academic works are his German dissertation on atomist cosmologies in Muslim *kalām* and an English-language article, “Some Problems of Islamic Philosophy,” that came out in 1937 in a journal in Hyderabad.<sup>2</sup> Both show a much deeper influence of the academic attitude of scholars such as Massignon, for instance, than of the German philological tradition that still characterized the less inspiring academic work done at the Friederich-Wilhelms Universität in Berlin, where Pines submitted his

1. Massignon 1922.

2. Pines 1936, 1937.

doctoral thesis in 1934. Pines's "Beiträge zur islamischen Atomenlehre"<sup>3</sup> is a pathbreaking work of intellectual history. In the first of three parts, Pines reconstructs atomist theories in *kalām* based entirely on Arabic sources, the most important of which were the two recently published reports of al-Ash'arī (d. ca. 935) and al-Khayyāt (d. ca. 912).<sup>4</sup> In this first part of his dissertation, Pines makes only cursory attempts to connect *kalām* teachings on the atom with earlier Greek atomist theories.<sup>5</sup> This part of Pines's dissertation is ahead of its time as he tries to understand *kalām* atomism on its own terms, without forcing a comparison with Greek atomism or trying to show that it had derived from that.

Pines, however, was not entirely free from the desire to show that atomism, like many significant philosophical ideas, must have its roots in Greek thinking. This becomes evident in the third part of his dissertation, titled "The Origins of Kalām Atomism."<sup>6</sup> This last part, however, seems to be more of a concession to the method of German philology than a true expression of it. After comparing *kalām* atomism with that of Democritus and Epicurus, Pines notes more differences than similarities. He concludes that *kalām* atomism cannot have simply derived from Greek theories without a significant development and transformation of the latter that may have happened in late antiquity but that would be unknown to us.<sup>7</sup> Although he admits the speculative character of the argument, Pines maintains that such a transformation of classical Greek atomist theory in late antiquity, meaning a period where these theories would still have been expressed in Greek, is likely. The key evidence, for Pines, is an assumed unlikelihood of the development of *kalām* atomism independent of its Greek predecessor.

Pines's position on the murky origins of *kalām* atomism in earlier Greek theories of the atom is, by and large, still the last word on this question and has been adapted in more recent studies by Josef van Ess and Alnoor Dhanani.<sup>8</sup> There has been, however, a significant shift of emphasis. Whereas most earlier German-style philology up to the 1960s tended to focus on

3. An English translation titled *Studies in Islamic Atomism*, by Michael Schwarz, edited by Tzvi Langermann, appeared in 1997 (Pines 1997).

4. Al-Ash'arī 1929–30; al-Khayyāt 1925.

5. He does so in Pines 1936, 13–14, where he compares an argument in favor of atomism with one found in the Roman philosopher Lucretius (d. 55 BCE).

6. "Die Ursprünge der Atomenlehre des Kalām," Pines 1936, 94–123.

7. Pines 1936, 99, 101.

8. Van Ess 1991–97, 4:459–67; Dhanani 1994, 97–101.

showing that all of Arabic philosophy depended on Greek predecessors, these later studies became less and less interested in the question of its origin. Van Ess—himself a representative of German philology—discusses the origins of *kalām* atomism on fewer than ten of his almost 2,500-page magnum opus on early *kalām*. And while he repeats Pines’s conclusions about likely developments in late antiquity that remain unrecorded,<sup>9</sup> he begins his concluding chapter on atomism in early *kalām* with the clear statement that “Islamic atomism is an accomplishment of the Mu’tazila, and was produced in Baṣra.”<sup>10</sup> Van Ess closely follows Pines’s pathbreaking dissertation by studying *kalām* atomism without regarding it as a continuation of Greek theories on the atom. The modern reader is most impressed by the first part of Pines’s dissertation, with its thorough use of manuscript texts from Berlin and Paris libraries. This part is a novel attempt to explain the emergence of *kalām* atomism based on concerns in Islamic theology. Because it is mostly speculative, the third part, about the origins of *kalām* theories, falls behind. It almost seems like an appendix demanded by the tradition of scholarship in which Pines produced his dissertation.

Pines’s article of 1937, “Some Problems of Islamic Philosophy,” shows even greater independence from the tradition of German philology. This article is the first piece of Western secondary literature that breaks with the narrative of intellectual decline in Islam after its classical period. Earlier historians of philosophy in Islam, the most important of whom were Tjitze J. de Boer (1866–1942) and Ignaz Goldziher (1850–1921), presented Averroes as the last significant philosopher of Islam, after whom the tradition of critical thinking moved from Islam to medieval Europe.<sup>11</sup> The twenty-nine-year-old Pines was the first to offer a different kind of narrative. Born out of the remark that it is a widespread but hasty generalization to assume that al-Ghazālī’s (d. 1111) polemics against *falsafa* and his condemnation of three teachings dealt a death blow to philosophy in Islam, Pines writes a novel history of philosophy in Islam.<sup>12</sup> In his view, there was no decline after al-Ghazālī. There was no lack of new ideas under Islam, Pines wrote, although the tendency to maintain old systems of thought and the stability of the scientific environment led to a more gradual development of ideas

9. Van Ess 1991–97, 4:463: “In der Spätantike war das System einigen Veränderungen unterworfen worden, die den Übergang in das islamische Model leichter verständlich machen.” Van Ess, however, does not explain those transformations either.

10. Van Ess 1991–97, 4:459.

11. Boer 1901; Goldziher 1913, 327.

12. Pines 1937, 80n2.

than in Europe, where fundamental conceptions were periodically revised and sometimes discarded. Science in Islam included a large number of elements of diverse origin, Pines maintained, and it integrated Oriental, Persian, Indian, and Greek influences. “In its further development, it did not, as a rule, eliminate one of them; it led them to subsist side by side—or on different planes.”<sup>13</sup> In Islam, there was a trend toward syncretism, where elements of *kalām*, *falsafa*, and Sufism would appear within one and the same thinker.

The famous Jewish convert to Islam Muhammad Asad (1900–1992), who was born as Leopold Weiss in the Austro-Hungarian city of Lemberg (today Lviv in Ukraine), and who was the editor of the Indian journal *Islamic Culture*, which published Pines’s article in 1937, certainly understood the novelty of this approach. In the introduction to the volume, he describes Pines as a “young scholar, who has recently produced a remarkable book, in German, *Beiträge zur islamischen Atomenlehre*, [and who] seems to be well on the way of becoming one of the outstanding personalities among the present generation of orientalists.”<sup>14</sup> Such praise was certainly warranted. Pines’s early works are markedly different from earlier “Orientalist”—here a cipher for the tradition of German philology—contributions to the history of Islamic philosophy, and they show great methodological promise.

Pines’s “Translator’s Introduction” to his English rendering of Maimonides’ *Guide of the Perplexed* appeared more than twenty-five years after his dissertation and the interpretive article on Islamic philosophy and science. A direct comparison of these works reveals that the earlier ones are significantly more innovative than the introduction. The subtitle to the introduction is “The Philosophic Sources of *The Guide of the Perplexed*,” and it reveals that here Pines adopted a method that springs directly from the tradition of German philology. Pines was well aware of this. At one point, while comparing Maimonides’ thought with that of al-Fārābī, he admits that his introduction pursues only very limited goals. “Charting these similarities and these differences,” he writes, referring to the similarities and differences between Maimonides and al-Fārābī, “would involve a detailed exposition of the whole of Maimonides’ practical philosophy. In most cases, however, such an exact and extensive comparison would not result in the discovery of more or less certain, or at least very probable, sources of Maimonides (which is the philological task with which the present Introduction

13. Pines 1937, 80.

14. Asad-Weiss 1937, 5–6.



is mainly concerned).<sup>15</sup> In short, a thorough understanding of Maimonides' practical philosophy might prove to be a meritorious achievement, and it would certainly elucidate his relationship with al-Fārābī, but it is not something that Pines aims to achieve in his introduction, which is merely concerned with the philological goal of enumerating what Maimonides had read and how these readings are manifest in his *Guide*.

Yet why is the inquiry into the sources of an Arabic philosopher so important in the tradition of German philology? The answer lies in the emergence of philological studies as an offshoot of European, and particularly German, classicism. Classicism sought a timeless aesthetic and intellectual ideal derived from an origin that was considered pure of all temporal circumstances. In philosophy, Greek antique thinkers created the standard not only of what good philosophy is but also of what philosophy itself is. When Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770–1831) held his “Lectures on the History of Philosophy” in 1817, he treated Arabic philosophy not as an independent tradition but merely as a bridge between the Greeks and the Scholasticism of the Latin Middle Ages. Hegel does not discuss the history of Arabic philosophy in any detail, and he justifies his neglect by saying: “Partly [Arabic philosophy] is of only limited interest, partly its principal aims are the same as in Scholastic philosophy.”<sup>16</sup> Arabic philosophy, Hegel adds, “has no content of any interest [for us] and it does not merit to be spent time with; it is not philosophy but mere manner.”<sup>17</sup> For Hegel, Arabic philosophy is only the “formal conservation and reproduction” (*äußerliche Erhaltung und Fortpflanzung*)<sup>18</sup> of Greek philosophy, and has worth only insofar as it is connected to the latter. The Arabs made no progress in the history of philosophy, and there is simply not much to gain from them (*aber es ist nicht viel daraus zu holen*).<sup>19</sup>

Hegel, of course, wrote all this with only a very sparse knowledge of Arabic philosophy, based mostly on his readings of the Latin translation of Maimonides' *Guide*, particularly his report on the history of Jewish philosophy and of *kalām* in *Guide* I 71 and on the teachings of the *loquentes*

15. Pines 1963, lxxxvi.

16. Hegel 1971, 517: “Eine besondere Beschreibung der arabischen Philosophie hat teils wenig Interesse, teils hat sie mit der scholastischen Philosophie die Hauptsache gemeinschaftlich.”

17. Hegel 1971, 517: “Sie ist nicht durch ihren Inhalt interessant, bei diesem kann man nicht stehenbleiben; es ist keine Philosophie, sondern eigentliche Manier.”

18. Hegel 1971, 514.

19. Hegel 1971, 517–18, 522.

(= *mutakallimūn/medabberim*) in the five subsequent chapters.<sup>20</sup> Hegel expressed the general attitude in German and European scholarship to which those who studied Arabic philosophy had to respond. Whoever valued the philosophy of the Arabs had to show a close connection between Arabic and Greek philosophy. The situation, however, was paradoxical: from a Hegelian perspective, Arabic philosophy was interesting only insofar as it was closely connected to Greek philosophy. At the same time, any original accomplishments were denied under the assumption that they only reproduced Greek learning and contributed nothing original. Wherever it was original, such as in *kalām*, for instance, it was not considered philosophy. Underlying this paradox is, of course, a Eurocentric perspective on the history of philosophy. The historical value of Arabic philosophy lies in its role as mediator and transmitter of Greek philosophy to Latin Scholasticism. In itself, as Hegel says quite explicitly, it has no value. Strictly speaking, the Hegelian perspective does not deny originality on the part of Arabic philosophy—Hegel’s account of Ash‘arite metaphysics based on Maimonides’ report illustrates that—but it deems such originality irrelevant because it is marginal to the historical role of Arabic philosophy—namely, the transmission of Greek science to the Latin Middle Ages.

It took quite some time before German scholarship would overcome the Hegelian attitude. Works like Pines’s dissertation or his article of 1937 are, in fact, among the first that try to liberate the study of Arabic philosophy from the question of relevance to the history of European philosophy. Whereas these two early pieces of Pines’s career challenge the Hegelian perspective on Arabic philosophy, his introduction to his translation of the *Guide* is less innovative; it even reinforces such an attitude. When Pines writes that he is mainly concerned “with the philological task,”<sup>21</sup> he implicitly refers to the Hegelian perspective on Arabic philosophy. The goal of Pines’s introduction is to establish Maimonides as a respectable authority in the history of philosophy. Maimonides, of course, had long been regarded as an authority among Jews. His *Guide* was also respected as a source on the history of philosophy in Islam, as the example of Hegel and the much earlier examples of Albert the Great (d. 1280) and Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274)

20. Pines 175–231. On the role of these chapters for the European knowledge of Arabic philosophy, see Niewöhner 1974. For an analysis of whether Maimonides’ report of the twelve premises of *kalām* in *Guide* I 73 is accurate, see Schwarz 1991–93.

21. Pines 1963, lxxxvi.

show.<sup>22</sup> Pines's English translation of Maimonides' *Guide*, however, tried to achieve something different; it tried to take Maimonides' *Guide* out of the niche of Jewish scholarship and into the mainstream of the history of philosophy. Pines's Maimonides is not only an authority on halakhah and on the history of Arabic philosophy; he is a philosopher in his own right, on a par with Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, Descartes, and Spinoza. To show that this is the case, Pines chose the method of philology, meaning that he chose to enumerate Maimonides' connections with earlier, already established philosophical authorities.

This, I think, explains the structure of Pines's introduction. It is a very straightforward discussion of passages in the *Guide* that show the influences of earlier thinkers in the tradition of Greek and Arabic philosophy. Part of its straightforwardness is that it begins with the most important philosophical authority with whom Maimonides' philosophy can be connected, namely, Aristotle. The sequence of philosophers discussed in the introduction, however, is not historical but, rather, dictated by the expectations produced in the Hegelian view of Arabic philosophy. Aristotle is discussed before Plato and the Pythagoreans—who make less suitable case studies for a close connection between Maimonidean and Greek philosophy. After the Greek authorities (i.e., Aristotle, Alexander of Aphrodisias, Plato, Epicurus, Galen, and Proclus) follow those Muslim authors who are most respected in the Western history of philosophy, meaning al-Fārābī (d. 950–51), Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā, d. 1037), Ibn Bājjā (Avempace, d. 1138), and Averroes (Ibn Rushd, d. 1198). These four were all Aristotelians, were all translated into Latin, and were all authorities among European philosophers of the Middle Ages. Only at the very end of the introduction, on a mere dozen of its eighty pages, do we find those philosophical influences that are least respected in the Hegelian view of the history of philosophy. The last twelve pages include a brief one-page chapter discussing the so-called Sabeans—meaning Mesopotamian idolaters of early antiquity and, as such, historically the earliest thinkers that would have had an influence on Maimonides. Then there are seven pages on the *mutakallimūn* of Islam, one page on the non-Aristotelian Arabic philosopher Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (d. 925 or 932), and a mere two pages at the end on “the Jewish authors.” Al-Ghazālī, who plays an important role in the argument that I am making below, does not get his own chapter but is the main focus of the one on the *mutakallimūn*, oc-

22. See Hasselhoff 2004 on Maimonides' influence and the impression he left on European Latin literature of the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries.

cupying five of its seven pages. The discussion of al-Ghazālī is dwarfed by what Pines says about Aristotle and al-Fārābī (fifteen pages each), Averroes (thirteen pages), and Avicenna (eleven pages).

I don't think it goes too far to say that Pines's goal in the introduction to his translation is apologetic. While the order of discussion seems to be determined by historical precedence, it is, in fact, a crude mixture of precedence superseded by considerations of respectability in the eyes of a Western historian of philosophy. But Pines does not choose this order entirely by himself. He begins his introduction by quoting Maimonides' famous letter to Samuel Ibn Tibbon (d. ca. 1232). There, Maimonides gives quite detailed reading recommendations of authors that might help Samuel in understanding the *Guide* and in producing its Hebrew translation. He recommends Aristotle, Alexander of Aphrodisias, Themistius, al-Fārābī, Ibn Bājja, and Averroes. He mentions other philosophers connected with the movement of *falsafa* in Arabic literature but dismisses all of them with the exception of Avicenna, on whom his judgment remains reservedly positive.<sup>23</sup> Maimonides' own view of the history of philosophy bears, in fact, a remarkable resemblance to the Hegelian view of Arabic philosophy, a fact that also helps explain Pines's choice of presentation. This is no coincidence because Maimonides is one of Hegel's prime sources for the chapter on the Arabs in his "Lectures on the History of Philosophy." Like Hegel, Maimonides focuses on the Greek origins of the movement and on closeness to the Greek tradition as the criteria of quality for all writers who write in Arabic. Both Maimonides and Hegel, as well as Pines, understand "philosophy" as a textual tradition. What is or is not philosophy is determined by the study of Greek philosophical texts, their Arabic translations, or Arabic texts that make ample references to the Greek origins of this tradition. This is what the Arabic word *falsafa* refers to. By the twelfth century, however, Arabic philosophy can no longer be simply equated with *falsafa*. In Maimonides' time, the *falāsifa* are no longer the only game of philosophy in town. Rather, the *falāsifa* represent just one particular movement of philosophers—namely, the heavily Neoplatonized tradition of studying the works of Aristotle and its continuation in the writings of Avicenna.

If someone were to write, say, seven centuries from now, about any philosopher of the recent past, say, Martin Heidegger (1889–1976), and the sources that nourished his thinking, would we expect that future author to begin with Plato, Aristotle, and Augustine? Probably not, even though

23. Pines 1963, lix–lx.

Heidegger himself saw much affinity between his way of thinking and Greek philosophy. We would expect that historian of philosophy to begin with Husserl, Kierkegaard, Hölderlin, and maybe Nietzsche. These were thinkers much closer to Heidegger's lifetime, and their influence explains his thought much better than does any reference to the Greeks. When we look at Maimonides, we should do the same: first of all, we should contextualize him within the twelfth century and within the intellectual movements that dominated his environment.

Much of the secondary literature that was produced after Pines's translation has done precisely that. Pines's introduction of 1963 was not a path-breaking study like his own earlier work of the 1930s, which introduced new perspectives and pursued new avenues of inquiry. Rather, the introduction of 1963 takes stock of the field of Maimonides studies and is written in an expert way by the greatest authority in that field at the time. It still reads like a superb introduction to the intellectual origins, principal assumptions, debates, and philosophical disputes that characterize the movement of *falsafa*. Pines neglects Maimonides' intellectual environment of the twelfth century because, among other reasons, little was known about it in 1963.

There is no doubt that today, more than fifty years after Pines's introduction, we know much more about the twelfth century in the Islamic world and its intellectual history. If Pines knew what we know today, maybe he would have written his introduction differently. The fact remains, however, that in his introduction, Pines does not show much interest in the twelfth century and in Maimonides' immediate intellectual environment. Pines focuses on those names in the history of philosophy that are considered big in Western scholarship—Aristotle, al-Fārābī, Avicenna, and Averroes. Of these, only one, Averroes, was part of his immediate environment. Pines's relative ignorance of the twelfth century appears, for instance, wherever he comments on the movement of Almohadism, under which Maimonides spent the early years of his life in Cordoba and Fez. Triggered by their oppression of Jews and by a short period of persecution in Averroes' life, Pines regards them as religious despots pursuing “an official policy of intolerance” and being “a source of danger for the philosophers.”<sup>24</sup> This overlooks the rationalist character of the Almohad movement that, despite its oppression of Jews, was, during most of its rule, a promoter of the study of philosophy. Pines must have known that both Ibn Ṭufayl (d. 1185) and Averroes were high-ranking officials in the Almohad hierarchy. At the end of his life,

24. Pines 1963, cix, cxvii, cxix.

Averroes suffered for roughly a year from an official policy of persecution.<sup>25</sup> That, however, should not distract from the fact that both he and Ibn Ṭufayl benefited from the support of Almohad rulers. Whereas Almohad policy could indeed turn into “a source of danger for the philosophers,” its overall characterization as such has never been true.

Today’s scholarship on Almohadism stresses the rationalizing elements of the movement and the way it adopted philosophical teachings even in its most popular writings.<sup>26</sup> This was, in fact, unknown to Pines. Recently, in a monograph study, Sarah Stroumsa showed Maimonides’ intellectual indebtedness to the Almohads and their rationalist approach.<sup>27</sup> This was equally unknown to Pines. Yet even the limited evidence available to Pines should have led to a more nuanced presentation than portraying the Almohads as intolerant enemies of philosophy. Here, Pines reproduces a view of the Almohads that goes back to Ernest Renan’s influential study *Averroès et l’averroïsme*, which was first published in 1852, but already outdated by 1963.<sup>28</sup>

The Almohads bring us to what I would call the most severe shortcoming in Pines’s introduction. Pines understood that the Almohad movement was at least partly a product of al-Ghazālī’s teachings, or, as he put it, that al-Ghazālī “exercised a dominant influence on the theology of the Almohads.”<sup>29</sup> He identifies al-Ghazālī as “the most outstanding Mutakallim of the period before Maimonides.” Following Maimonides’ view of philosophy in Islam, al-Ghazālī was, for Pines, first of all a *mutakallim*, although he also describes him as “a mystic and occasionally perhaps a philosopher.”<sup>30</sup> That latter characterization—although well intended—reads today almost like an insult. For us today, al-Ghazālī was, together with Avicenna, one of the most important philosophers in Maimonides’ intellectual environment, be that in the Maghrib or in Egypt. Arabic philosophical literature of the twelfth century can be characterized to a large degree by the conflict between two opposing views of God—meaning two opposing metaphysics—that are well described by Pines in his introduction. In the first view, God acts out of necessity. Here, He does not choose between alternatives when He creates. This is the view of the *falāsifa*, and in the twelfth century it was

25. For a discussion of the sources for Ibn Rushd’s *miḥna*, see Griffel 2010, 83–89.

26. See, e.g., Griffel 2005, 770–93.

27. Stroumsa 2009, 53–83.

28. Renan 1866, 23–24, 31–35.

29. Pines 1963, cxxvii.

30. Pines 1963, cxxvi.

mostly expressed in the works of Avicenna and his followers. Al-Ghazālī wrote his *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* (*The Precipitance of the Philosophers*) to counter this idea of God with philosophical arguments that mostly stem from the tradition of *kalām*. His epistemological critique of Avicenna concludes that there is no demonstrative proof (*burhān*) that God acts out of necessity, a question that hinges much on whether or not there is proof for a pre-eternal world. Given the absence of any proof for what God is, al-Ghazālī concludes, in accordance with his “rule of allegorical interpretation” (*qānūn al-ta’wīl*), that the Muslim scholar should resort to revealed information about God.<sup>31</sup> Revelation, according to al-Ghazālī, assumes quite clearly that God has a proper will and chooses between alternatives. Starting with his *Tahāfut*, al-Ghazālī frames the conflict between philosophy and revelation in epistemological terms. Both those who defend *falsafa* and those who defend revelation have strong arguments. Both sides argue as philosophers. The dispute over whether God acts out of necessity or not is a philosophical conflict between two parties of philosophers (*falāsifa* and *mutakallimūn*) about the bounds of human reason.

Pines saw that differently. For him, al-Ghazālī’s position was that of religion, while his adversaries were “the philosophers,” meaning that they were the only philosophers involved in this conflict. He credits al-Ghazālī with clarifying the “antithetical” character of these two positions about God’s will. Yet by saying that the one represents “the God of religion” and the other “the God of the Aristotelians,” Pines blurs the real conflict, which lies in the field of epistemology. I should also say that I do not understand why Avicenna’s God is less a “God of religion” than al-Ghazālī’s. Isn’t any position on God religion?

Pines understood that the conflict between these two views about one of God’s key attributes—namely, whether He has a proper will or not—existed in the twelfth century, but, lacking more detailed information on that century, he did not understand that it indeed dominated philosophical debates. This is evident not only in the introduction to his translation of the *Guide* but also in his earlier work on Abū al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī (d. ca. 1165). In contextualizing this Jewish convert to Islam of the early and mid-twelfth century, Pines again looked closely at the tradition of *falsafa*, at Avicenna, al-Fārābī, and, ultimately, Aristotle, and he simply overlooked al-Ghazālī, who was just a generation older than Abū al-Barakāt. Even after 1960, when

31. On al-Ghazālī’s “rule of allegorical interpretation” (*qānūn al-ta’wīl*), see Griffel 2009, 111–16.

he became aware of a marginal note in one of the manuscripts of Abū al-Barakāt's *Kitāb al-Mu'tabar*, suggesting that he followed al-Ghazālī in his position about God as the only true existent in the world, Pines did not compare the former's key ideas with the latter's.<sup>32</sup> Such comparison would have led Pines to see the great degree of overlap in their philosophical projects. But al-Ghazālī, and this is quite clear from Pines's introduction to his translation of the *Guide*, was not a figure of authority in philosophy. Therefore such comparison forbade itself on the grounds that Pines considered Abū al-Barakāt a serious philosopher, but al-Ghazālī not.

Something similar is at work in the introduction to Pines's translation of the *Guide*. One of the most interesting questions in Maimonidean studies is, I think, whether Maimonides knew al-Ghazālī. At the same time, it is hard to explain why this question is still with us. Why hasn't it been answered decisively? There are two reasons that this question is still lingering in Maimonidean studies. One is the fact that Maimonides never mentions the name of al-Ghazālī, and the second is, I think, that Pines gave this subject such a brief and unsatisfactory treatment. Behind both reasons is Maimonides' and Pines's shared view that al-Ghazālī is not part of the textual corpus that makes up the tradition of philosophy. If Maimonides wished to hide any influence he received from the philosophy of al-Ghazālī, he found in Pines a willing accomplice. Pines's conclusions on the possible influence of al-Ghazālī read:

No absolute certain answer can be given to it; however, the probabilities are that at the time of the writing of the *Guide* Maimonides had read the celebrated work [of al-Ghazālī]. No philosopher who wished to keep abreast of the intellectual debate of this period could have afforded not to have done so; and such a lacuna in Maimonides' knowledge of Arabic theological literature would have been most uncharacteristic.<sup>33</sup>

That judgment has often been repeated—most recently by Alfred Ivry in his contribution to *The Cambridge Companion to Maimonides*.<sup>34</sup> It appears balanced and sober, reluctantly in line with the scant evidence in the text. Yet it misses an important source: the text of Maimonides' *Guide*. While it is true that Maimonides, in his *Guide*, passed over al-Ghazālī's name in

32. Pines 1960, 162–63n136.

33. Pines 1963, cxxvii.

34. Ivry 2005, 68–70.



silence, the text includes numerous pieces of evidence that al-Ghazālī is, in fact, present in it, even if his name is not. Pines’s judgment is true to the text only if the text consists of its very upper layer. Pines himself presents strong evidence for al-Ghazālī’s presence from within the fabric of the text. The strongest is Maimonides’ awareness about the conflict between the two competing views about God’s will and their mutual exclusiveness. In his introduction, Pines quotes two important passages from the *Guide* where Maimonides sides with al-Ghazālī’s view against the position of the *falāsifa*.<sup>35</sup> Pines concludes from these passages that there is “a probability” that through al-Ghazālī, Maimonides “realized the true issue between philosophy and religion,”—namely, whether God’s actions follow His nature or a proper will on His part. Yet this does not mean, according to Pines, that Maimonides, like al-Ghazālī, chose religion over philosophy. There are statements in the *Guide*, says Pines—in particular, those that say God’s will follows His wisdom—that allow the opposite view—namely, that Maimonides chose the position of the *falāsifa* over that of al-Ghazālī.<sup>36</sup>

Pines wrote his introduction to the *Guide*’s English translation when he was in close contact with Leo Strauss (1899–1973). Strauss had initiated the project of translating the *Guide* in 1954–55 when he reconnected with Pines in Jerusalem. Writing the introduction was the capstone of a long undertaking that finally came to an end in 1963. Throughout the work, Pines and Strauss exchanged letters about how certain Arabic terms should be translated. In their analysis of these letters, Joel Kraemer and Josef Stern concluded that Pines never follows the detailed directives Strauss gave him on how to translate certain terms from Arabic to English.<sup>37</sup> Yet through their close contact, Strauss exercised a different kind of influence on Pines. A number of passages in the introduction reveal a distinctly Straussian influence.<sup>38</sup> By assuming that Maimonides sided with Avicenna and the *falāsifa* rather than al-Ghazālī, Pines followed Strauss, who, in his *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, had argued—albeit through the voice of irony—that since Maimonides was a philosopher, we should also assume that he held

35. Pines 1963, cxxvii–cxxviii. The passages are from *Guide* II 18 and II 22.

36. Pines 1963, cxxviii.

37. Kraemer and Stern 1998, 15–20.

38. See, for instance, Pines’s comments on contradictions in al-Fārābī’s oeuvre and the explanation that he employed them “in order to ward off dangers from himself and from the community, which might be jeopardized by the indiscriminate dissemination of knowledge” (Pines 1963, lxxix). At another place, Pines speaks of “the perils inherent in the study and the propagation of philosophic knowledge” (lxxxvi), and again at another of “an unresolved conflict between religious tradition and nonreligious knowledge” (lvii).

“the philosophical position” on the world’s creation—namely, that it is pre-eternal.<sup>39</sup> We should take this to be the case despite Maimonides’ outward admission in the *Guide*,<sup>40</sup> says Strauss, that his intentions are “in perfect harmony” with that of the *mutakallimūn*—a group that includes al-Ghazālī. Strauss understood that outwardly the *Guide* “is devoted to the defense of the principal root of the law, the belief in creation, against the contention of the philosophers that the visible world is eternal.”<sup>41</sup>

Pines’s neglect in portraying al-Ghazālī as a major influence on Maimonides is, in the end, a result of his (temporary) Straussianism. Like Strauss, the Pines of 1963 saw in Maimonides first of all one of the *falāsifa*. That is why he is keen to connect him with Aristotle, al-Fārābī, Avicenna, and Averroes. Like Strauss, Pines dismissed Maimonides’ own words according to which he follows “the *mutakallimūn*” and their program to defend revelation. “The most outstanding Mutakallim,” says Pines, “was al-Ghazālī,”<sup>42</sup> and while there is mounting evidence in the text of the *Guide* that Maimonides was not only influenced by but followed him in his response to *falsafa*, Pines downplays those testimonies with Straussian hermeneutics: “While for practical reasons, out of public spirit, Maimonides chose to aid and abet the faithful adherents of religion through the act of will referred to above, he belonged as far as his overriding intellectual convictions were concerned in the opposite camp.”<sup>43</sup> Or, to put it in clearer words, while saying he sided with al-Ghazālī, he sided in reality with the *falāsifa*.

Fifty years later, the debate over whether Maimonides secretly sided with Avicenna on the eternity of the world—and hence that God does not have a will that chooses between equally possible creations—seems to be settled. Today’s secondary literature on Maimonides agrees that there is not enough evidence in the *Guide* to assume he took the *falāsifa*’s side.<sup>44</sup> Most of the contemporary contributions on the subject of Maimonides’ po-

39. Strauss 1952, 43.

40. Strauss points to *Guide* I 71, 73 and II 19.

41. Strauss 1952, 40.

42. Pines 1963, cxxvi.

43. Pines 1963, cxxviii–cxxxix.

44. Davidson (2005, 391–400) reviews the literature that argues in favor of Maimonides having a secret position on the world’s creation. The voices span from Moses Narboni (d. after 1362) to the 1990s, and Strauss, as well as Pines, features very prominently among them. As early as 1979, Davidson employed Strauss’s own method of looking closely at the contradictions in the *Guide* and concluded that according to this kind of interpretation, Maimonides did not “secretly” teach the pre-eternity of the world but, rather, a creation from eternal matter (see Davidson 1979). Ravitzky (2005, 314–17) makes the valid point that Pines himself, in his later writing, took the lead in overcoming the Straussian dichotomy of Athens versus Jerusalem.

sition on the world's eternity agree that he indeed sided with al-Ghazālī.<sup>45</sup> Strauss's misunderstanding is, first of all, rooted in his own hermeneutic strategy of prioritizing his expectations of what the text should say over the textual evidence. In addition, it is the result of a common mistake among his generation of researchers in Arabic philosophy. In this generation we should include Ignaz Goldziher as well as Shlomo Pines. They mistakenly equated *falsafa* with what we understand as "philosophy." Because Strauss considered Maimonides a true philosopher, he expected him to be much more in the camp of the *falāsifa* than in that of the *mutakallimūn*. In reality, the *falāsifa* were only one group among those whom we should identify as philosophers in Arabic and Islamic society, and there is no doubt that a prominent *mutakallim* such as al-Ghazālī was equally a philosopher.

Despite his fundamental denial that Maimonides followed al-Ghazālī, Pines unwillingly provides strong evidence for the latter's influence on Maimonides' *Guide*. When discussing Maimonides' sources for his report on the teachings of the *mutakallimūn* at the end of the first part of the *Guide*, Pines concludes: "It is a pretty safe assumption that generally he drew upon the same sources as Averroes, who also attempted to formulate some of the first principles of the Mutakallimūn."<sup>46</sup> We now know that Averroes relied heavily on al-Ghazālī and his teacher al-Juwaynī (d. 1085), the two theological godfathers of the Almohad movement. In fact, students of Muslim theology in Almohad Spain first studied al-Ghazālī and al-Juwaynī.<sup>47</sup> It is no coincidence that every scholar who chose to pick a theological or philosophical bone with the Almohads—scholars such as Averroes or Ibn Sab'īn (d. 1271)—also picked one with al-Ghazālī.

In fact, I would go so far as to say that the whole project of writing the *Guide* owes its inspiration to the work of al-Ghazālī. Pines already observed that Maimonides was not the only authority who wrote a work that tried to bring the need for figurative interpretation (*ta'wīl*) of revelation to the general or, rather, the intellectual readership. Pines notes that Averroes states the same intention, even if he never accomplished such a project.<sup>48</sup> Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1210), another Muslim authority of the same generation, was engaged in the very same endeavor. In 1200, four years before Maimon-

45. Seeskin 2005b, 179–81; Manekin 2005, 52–53. The "late" Pines also preferred the view that, with regard to the eternity of the world, "Maimonides endeavors to prove in the *Guide* at great length, that the human reason is incapable of discovering the truth of the matter" (Pines 1979, 97).

46. Pines 1963, cxxv.

47. Griffel 2005, 764–65, 799.

48. Pines 1963, cxx, referring to Averroes 1969, 252.

ides passed away, he wrote the work *Ta'sīs al-taqdīs*, which may be translated as “Setting the Foundation for Understanding God’s Transcendence.” It is a textbook for madrasa education commissioned by the Ayyubid ruler in Damascus.<sup>49</sup> Fakhr al-Dīn himself resided in Herat in eastern Khorasan (in present-day Afghanistan), where he would write his major Qur’an commentary devoted to the very same task as Maimonides’ *Guide*: the rational explanation of revelation’s figurative language. Both Averroes and Fakhr al-Dīn leave no doubt as to whose teachings triggered their projects. Roughly a hundred years earlier, al-Ghazālī had come up with the so-called rule of allegorical interpretation (*qānūn al-ta’wīl*) according to which the literal sense of revelation (*ẓāhir*) can only be valid as long as it is not contradicted by the results of a demonstrative argument (*burhān*). Or, to put it positively, if the conclusion of a valid demonstration contradicts the outward sense of revelation, then that outward sense needs to be rejected and figuratively interpreted. Note, however, that only a valid demonstration (*burhān*)—in the sense of Aristotle’s *Second Analytics*—has that power and not any lesser type of argument. Al-Ghazālī practices this rule in all of his books from the *Tahāfut* on. He most clearly expresses it in his *Fayṣal al-tafrīqa bayna al-Islām wa-al-zandaqa* (*The Distinctive Criterion between Islam and Clandestine Apostasy*) where he says:

Hear now the rule of allegorical interpretation (*qānūn al-ta’wīl*): You learned that with regard to allegorical interpretation (*ta’wīl*) the different groups [of Islam] agree upon these five levels of being. . . . They also agree that allowing [a reading that deviates from the literal meaning] depends on the production of a demonstration (*burhān*) that the literal meaning (*al-ẓāhir*) is impossible.<sup>50</sup>

Al-Ghazālī’s rule of allegorical interpretation is a combination of earlier Ash‘arite principles about how to interpret revelation combined with the Aristotelian notion of *apodeixis* (*burhān*) from the *Second Analytics*.<sup>51</sup> Al-Ghazālī adopts the Aristotelian distinction between demonstrative arguments that “produce conclusions that are certain, universal, always true, and necessary”<sup>52</sup> and other kinds of reasonable and convincing arguments whose conclusions are not as firmly established as demonstrative ones.

49. Griffel 2007, 339.

50. Al-Ghazālī 1993, 47; English trans.: 2002, 101.

51. Griffel 2000, 466–67.

52. Al-Ghazālī 1927, 166–67.

Al-Ghazālī stresses the distinction between demonstrative and nondemonstrative in his two textbooks of logic *Miʿyār al-ʿilm* and *Miḥakk al-naẓar* and makes it a cornerstone of his rule of interpretation.<sup>53</sup> While this rule was controversial at first, the examples of Averroes and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, both of whom apply it, show that three generations after al-Ghazālī, it was widely accepted among the rationalist scholars of the twelfth century. Al-Ghazālī’s rule puts philosophical epistemology—the production of a valid demonstrative argument—at the heart of any reading of revelation. Once it is proven, for instance, that God is not a body, our understanding of revelation must follow suit. Maimonides also followed this line of reasoning. In 2008, Charles H. Manekin already made a connection between Maimonides’ approach to allegorical interpretation and that of al-Ghazālī. Manekin observed that “a similar argument is advanced by Maimonides when he distinguishes between the need to interpret figuratively terms implying divine corporeality, which has been demonstrated as false, as opposed to interpreting the verses that require the truth of creation, e.g., miracle reports.”<sup>54</sup>

It is evident to me that in his *Guide*, Maimonides follows al-Ghazālī’s rule of allegorical interpretation just as Averroes and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī did. The question of whether the world is pre-eternal or created in time—and, with it, the question of whether God has a free will or acts out of necessity—hinges, for Maimonides, on the successful production of a demonstration in favor of pre-eternity. Short of that, Maimonides implies, one should side with revelation, since its authority, which is considered to speak in favor of temporal origination, trumps all arguments that are less convincing than demonstrations. In *Guide* II 25, Maimonides explains the distinction that he draws between passages in revelation that describe God as a body and those that describe the world as being created in time. The former he interprets figuratively, the latter not, because God’s incorporeality is demonstratively proven and the world’s pre-eternity is not.<sup>55</sup> He explains his position on the pre-eternity of the world in the following way:

53. Al-Ghazālī 1927, 1925.

54. Manekin 2008, 209. Manekin’s comparison between Maimonides and al-Ghazālī, however, suffers from an outdated knowledge of al-Ghazālī’s teachings. Manekin assumes, for instance, that for al-Ghazālī prophetic miracles are supernatural events. They are, in fact, not. Al-Ghazālī teaches that God could break the natural order of events but never does so (Griffel 2009, 194–201). In his position on prophetic miracles, al-Ghazālī appears to follow the *falāsifa* even closer than Maimonides does.

55. W. Z. Harvey (2000) analyzes Maimonides’ principles for when a biblical text should be interpreted allegorically. Harvey points to the similarity with Ibn Rushd’s teachings in his *Ḥaṣṣ al-maḳāl* and remarks that “it is quite possible that they influenced Maimonides

The eternity of the world has not been demonstrated (*lam yatabarhan*). Consequently in this case the text ought not to be rejected and figuratively interpreted in order to make prevail an opinion whose contrary can be made to prevail by means of various sorts of arguments.<sup>56</sup>

This passage has an almost direct parallel in the twentieth discussion of al-Ghazālī's *Tahāfut*. Here, al-Ghazālī argues that revelation's predictions about what will happen in the afterlife are not open to figurative interpretation. An interlocutor, however, asks him why he is so strict against *ta'wīl* of passages on the afterlife since he himself allows and even demands that all anthropomorphic descriptions of God are to be understood figuratively. Al-Ghazālī responds:

Rational proofs have shown the impossibility of [attributing] place, direction, visage, physical hand, physical eye, the possibility of transfer, and rest to God, praise be to Him. Figurative interpretation (*ta'wīl*) has become obligatory here due to rational argument. What He has promised in the hereafter, however, is not impossible in terms of the power of God, exalted be He. Hence one must follow the apparent text (*ẓāhir al-kalām*).<sup>57</sup>

Any reader of the *Tahāfut* understands that the same rule that prohibits figurative interpretation of predictions about the afterlife in revelation applies equally to the discussion of the world's eternity at the beginning of the *Tahāfut*—although that case is complicated by the fact that Muslim revelation, unlike the Hebrew Bible in its first sentence, lacks a passage that explicitly speaks in favor of the world's creation in time.

All this shows the deep influence of al-Ghazālī on Maimonides, first, in that he adopts his rule of allegorical interpretation and, second, in that he adopts his position about the nondemonstrative character of arguments for the pre-eternity of the world. In fact, among all of the scholars discussed by Pines in his introduction, al-Ghazālī is the only one who presents arguments against the demonstrative character of knowledge about the world's pre-eternity. Galen and Plato were known to have rejected the world's pre-

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formulation in *Guide* II 25<sup>o</sup> (182). Ibn Rushd's *Faṣl al-maqāl* is, however, itself heavily influenced by al-Ghazālī's teachings on *ta'wīl*. On Ibn Rushd's adaptation of al-Ghazālī's rule of interpretation, see Griffel 2000, 442–60.

56. Munk-Joel 229, lines 16–18 (Pines 328).

57. Al-Ghazālī 2000b, 214–15 (translation modified).

eternity, but they did not scrutinize it epistemologically. Similarly, Maimonides' position on knowledge about the arrangements of the heavenly spheres should be regarded as an influence of al-Ghazālī. In his logical textbook *Mi'yār al-'ilm*, al-Ghazālī explains that knowledge of the configuration of the heavens is demonstrative for whoever thinks that the heavens are eternal and unchanging—in line with the teaching that all demonstrative knowledge is “always true, and necessary”—and it is not demonstrative if one thinks that the heavens are subject to temporal creation and subject to change.<sup>58</sup> Given that Maimonides, like al-Ghazālī, believes that the heavens are created in time, he, like al-Ghazālī, holds that existing human knowledge about the arrangements of the heavens is nondemonstrative.<sup>59</sup>

In light of this mounting evidence, it seems almost irrelevant to ask whether Maimonides knew al-Ghazālī. In 2009, I concluded that al-Ghazālī “was by far the most influential religious figure during the sixth/twelfth century, and he left his traces in all kinds of religious writing of this period.”<sup>60</sup> After I spent a few more years researching Arabic philosophy in the twelfth century, I am even more certain that al-Ghazālī was the author that everybody in that century had to come to terms with. His teachings on the relationship between religion and the pursuit of reason hovered over Arabic philosophy during the twelfth century, even if they are not often alluded to directly. His *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* was a book that everybody knew and reacted to, even if it is not mentioned very often.

Would we ask whether a contemporary French writer who had just produced a staunch critique of modernity had ever read Michel Foucault? Would he even need to? Today, Foucault's arguments on modernity are so

58. Al-Ghazālī 1927, 167, lines 2–7.

59. For Maimonides' position on whether humans can achieve apodictic knowledge about the heavens and their movers, see Pines 1979, 96–97 and the numerous contributions that discuss a passage in *Guide* II 24 and Samuel Ibn Tibbon's Hebrew translation in *Aleph* 8 (2008), particularly Freudenthal 2008 and W. Z. Harvey 2008b. On al-Ghazālī's denial of apodictic knowledge about the heavens, see the fourteenth discussion in his *Tahāfut*, particularly its beginning, and the fifteenth discussion, particularly its end (al-Ghazālī 2000b, 144, 152). Al-Ghazālī believed that all human knowledge of the configuration of the heavens, including knowledge on this subject claimed by the *falāsifa*, goes back to revelation (Griffel 2009, 100). One of his oft-repeated arguments is that some celestial events are so rare that they cannot be observed “within the span of a thousand years.” Hence they cannot be achieved from or even be triggered by experience (*tajriba*), which is repeated sense perception. Rather, these events are known to occur through suprarational inspiration (*ilhām*) or revelation. See, e.g., al-Ghazālī 1969, 42; English trans.: 2000a, 85.

60. Griffel 2009, 95.

omnipresent in academic works on that subject that one does not even need to have heard his name—unlikely as that may be—to have been deeply affected by him. The same is true, I would say, for the twelfth century and al-Ghazālī. Whether Maimonides personally read al-Ghazālī or studied his works is not even relevant here. A contemporary scholar might adopt Foucault’s perspective on modernity without ever having read the French author. Similarly, al-Ghazālī’s influence on Maimonides may have been mediated by other authors who adopted a Ghazalian perspective. Judah Halevi (d. 1141), Abraham Ibn Ezra (d. 1167), and Averroes are, like other authors of the twelfth century, possible mediators of Ghazalian influence.<sup>61</sup>

Pines acknowledges the importance of al-Ghazālī for the twelfth century when he writes that “no philosopher who wished to keep abreast of the intellectual debate of this period could have afforded not [to have read al-Ghazālī’s *Tahāfut*]; and such a lacuna in Maimonides’ knowledge of Arabic theological literature would have been most uncharacteristic.” He did not, however, think of al-Ghazālī as someone whose influence in the twelfth century was so daunting that Maimonides could not escape him. In the sentence that precedes the one just quoted, Pines preemptively writes his conclusion regarding the debate over whether Maimonides knew al-Ghazālī, and says: “No absolutely certain answer can be given to it.”<sup>62</sup>

Today, we must disagree and answer that question affirmatively. In the past twenty years, scholars of Maimonides and al-Ghazālī produced much evidence for such an influence. In 1997, Hava Lazarus-Yafeh discussed that question and gave a clear affirmative answer.<sup>63</sup> In 2001, Amira Eran showed that Maimonides’ examples for the superiority of intellectual pleasures over those of the body come from al-Ghazālī rather than from Avicenna.<sup>64</sup> Based on an observation by Franz Rosenthal, Steven Harvey compared the first book of al-Ghazālī’s *Revival of the Religious Sciences* with *The Book of Knowledge* (*Sefer ha-madda*) in Maimonides’ *Mishneh Torah* and found numerous similarities.<sup>65</sup> In 1979, Avner Gil’adi had already pointed out that the title *Guide of the Perplexed* (*Dalālat al-ḥā’irīn*) may stem from a passage in al-Ghazālī’s ethical work *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*, where he

61. On the rule of interpretation in Averroes’ works, see p. 420. On Judah Halevi’s reception of al-Ghazālī’s rule, see Griffel 2000, 442.

62. Pines 1963, cxxvii.

63. Lazarus-Yafeh 1997.

64. Eran 2001.

65. S. Harvey 2005; Rosenthal 1970, 94–96.



describes God as *dalīl al-mutaḥayyirīn*.<sup>66</sup> Joel Kraemer and Sarah Stroumsa added the observation that in his *Epistle to Yemen*, Maimonides uses the phrase *al-munqidh lanā min al-ḍalāla* (he, who delivers us from error), which is an allusion to the title of al-Ghazālī's widely read autobiography, *Al-munqidh min al-ḍalāl* (*The Deliverer from Error*).<sup>67</sup>

Here, at the end of my chapter, I would like to point to even more evidence for al-Ghazālī's influence on Maimonides. There are at least three passages from the *Guide* where Maimonides implicitly refers to al-Ghazālī or to his work. The first has been pointed out by Alexander Treiger in his book, *Inspired Knowledge in Islamic Thought*. At the end of the above-quoted chapter, *Guide* II 25, where Maimonides explains his application of the rule of figurative interpretation, he includes the following sentence:

For if creation in time were demonstrated . . . all the overhasty claims made to us on this point by the philosophers would become void.<sup>68</sup>

The “overhasty claims made to us on this point by the philosophers” is in Arabic: *mā tahāfatat bihi lanā al-falāsifa*. This is an implicit reference to al-Ghazālī's *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* (*The Precipitance [or Overhasty Claims] of the Philosophers*). In that book, the pre-eternity of the world is discussed in great detail and takes center stage. Here we have not only a reference to al-Ghazālī but also an implicit nod to him. It is an expression of Maimonides' intellectual appreciation of al-Ghazālī's book and the arguments made therein.

The second passage also appears in the context of Maimonides' discussion of the world's pre-eternity. In *Guide* II 14, where Maimonides explains the Aristotelian arguments for why the world is indeed pre-eternal, he reports Avicenna's reasoning that possibility always needs a substratum (*maḥall* or *ḥāmil*) in which to reside. In the case of the possibility of the whole world, this substratum is unformed prime matter (Arabic *hayūlī*,

66. Gil'adi 1979. See al-Ghazālī 1967–68, 4:136 (book 31, end of *bayān ḥāqiqat al-ni'ma*). The phrase *dalīl al-mutaḥayyirīn*, however, appears already two generations before al-Ghazālī as the title of a book by the Ismā'īlī theologian, poet, and *dā'ī* Nāṣir-i Khusraw (d. ca. 1077). The book is not extant but mentioned in Abū al-Ma'ālī al-'Alawī's Persian heresiography *Bayān al-adyān*, written in 1092 (Abū al-Ma'ālī al-'Alawī 1964, 40; see Van Ess 2011, 2:801, 812). Al-Ghazālī's interest in Ismā'īlism might have led him to Nāṣir-i Khusraw's oeuvre. Of course, Maimonides himself may have adopted his book title from that of Nāṣir-i Khusraw's.

67. See Kraemer's note in Maimonides 2000, 122, 211n16; Stroumsa 2009, 25. For the original Arabic, see Maimonides 1988, 103.

68. Munk-Joel 230, lines 21–25 (Pines 330).

Greek *hylē*). Given that the world has been possible to exist from past eternity, the substratum of that possibility—namely, prime matter—must also have existed eternally. Maimonides takes this argument very seriously, remarking that “this is a very powerful way (*ṭarīq qawīyya jiddan*) for establishing the pre-eternity of the world.”<sup>69</sup> He continues with a comment that, I believe, refers to an original point al-Ghazālī makes in the first discussion of his *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, where the Ash‘arite theologian addresses and aims to refute Avicenna’s argument. Maimonides writes:

One of the intelligent people [or the skillful ones, *ḥudhdhāq*] from among the later *mutakallimūn* claimed that he had solved this difficulty. He said: Possibility resides in the agent (*fā’il*) and not in the thing that is the object of action (*munfa’il*).<sup>70</sup>

This objection does not fully solve the problem, Maimonides believes, but the report of al-Ghazālī’s position—since his position is, I believe, what Maimonides intends to report here—is accurate insofar as al-Ghazālī fundamentally criticizes Avicenna’s understanding of possibility. In the first discussion of his *Tahāfut*, al-Ghazālī confronts the “statistical” understanding of the modalities that has up to then reigned supreme among Aristotelian philosophers with the understanding of the modalities as it has been developed in *kalām* literature. The *mutakallimūn* understood “possible” as a synchronic alternative; that is, something is possible if we can mentally conceive of it as an alternative to what exists in actuality or what will exist.<sup>71</sup> From an Aristotelian point of view, this understanding of “possibility” is a radical objection, and because of its radical character Maimonides may not have fully appreciated or completely understood it. But Maimonides’ report does reflect how a critical Aristotelian could have conceptualized al-Ghazālī’s point. I know of no other passage in Arabic literature before Maimonides where a *mutakallim* comments on this argument of Avicenna, hence the phrase “one of the intelligent people from among the later *mutakallimūn*” almost certainly refers to al-Ghazālī.

A third, much briefer passage appears within Maimonides’ report of the teachings of the Ash‘arite *mutakallimūn*. There, he talks about the *mutakallimūn*’s denial of causality and ends his exposition by saying:

69. Munk-Joel 200, line 17 (Pines 287).

70. Munk-Joel 200, lines 17–19 (Pines 287; translation modified).

71. Al-Ghazālī 2000b, 41–42. On al-Ghazālī’s objection, see Griffel 2009, 167–72.

To sum up: it should not be said in any respect that this is the cause of that. This is the opinion of the multitude [of the *mutakallimūn*]. One of them, however, maintained the doctrine of causality and in consequence was regarded as abhorrent by them (*wa-ba'ḍuhum qāla bi-al-sababiyya fa-istashna'ūhu*).<sup>72</sup>

This I also read as an implicit reference to al-Ghazālī, who did indeed break with the occasionalist ontology of earlier Ash'arite *kalām* and who had to endure much adversity from his colleagues in that school.<sup>73</sup> And again Maimonides' reference is appreciative and, far from being critical, singles out al-Ghazālī from the hoi polloi, the “multitude” (*jumhūr*) of the *mutakallimūn*. Maimonides' text continues and discusses whether Ash'arites believe that God causes human actions directly or through chains of secondary causes. His example is “when a pen is put into motion,” mirroring a well-known passage in the thirty-fifth book of al-Ghazālī's *Revival of the Religious Sciences*. There, al-Ghazālī makes the case that human actions are the effects of chains of secondary causes. He begins his relatively long discussion with the example of an “inquiring wayfarer” (*al-sālik al-sā'il*) who investigates the cause of a certain written text—a writ of amnesty granted by a king—and what cause put the pen into motion.<sup>74</sup>

Evaluating the role of al-Ghazālī in Maimonides' *Guide* leads us to contextualize this book within the twelfth century. Critical work on the history of Arabic philosophy in that century is, even today, scarce. We have flashes but as of yet we have no clear picture. I admit that fifty years ago, when Shlomo Pines wrote his introduction, he had far less to work with. His introduction, however, never attempted to contextualize the *Guide* in its own environment of twelfth-century Arabic philosophy. Rooted in a perspective nourished by German philology, Pines wrote an introduction that contextualizes the *Guide* within the history of Western philosophy, in which the Arabic branch of that tradition is more relevant the more it is

72. Munk-Joel 141, lines 10–11 (Pines 202). This passage is discussed in Schwarz 1991–93, 205–7.

73. Frank 1994, 76–85; Garden 2014, 143–68; Griffel 2009, 275–81.

74. Al-Ghazālī 1967–68, 4:307–314; English trans.: 2013, 16–29. One other literary influence of al-Ghazālī may be found in Maimonides' famous parable (*mathal*) of the palace in *Guide* III 51, where those “who have plunged into speculation concerning the fundamental principles of religion [*uṣūl al-dīn* = theology], have entered the antechambers (*dahālīz*)” (Munk-Joel 455, line 24; Pines 619). On “antechamber” (*dihlīz*) as an important stage of theological speculation in al-Ghazālī, see Moosa 2005, index.

connected to Greek thought and the more it is seen to have contributed to Latin philosophy. Much has been done in the past fifty years to complement Pines's introduction with studies that look at Maimonides' closer intellectual environment, at the influence from Almohadism, or at his reactions to the work of Abū al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī. Still, much more needs to be done, I think, because the role of al-Ghazālī in Maimonides' thinking is still not well understood. I believe that this can be one of the most fertile directions of future studies on Maimonides, which might dig up more passages like those I presented here. More important, however, would be to show other examples of philosophical influence where Maimonides' ideas and his intellectual strategies follow those of al-Ghazālī.<sup>75</sup> In order to promote the future study of al-Ghazālī's and Maimonides' relationship, we should come clean and express unambiguously that the former definitely had an influence on the latter. With Amira Eran, I would go so far as to say that "textual comparison proves the dependence of Maimonides on al-Ghazali."<sup>76</sup> Al-Ghazālī is the most important authority in the *Guide* not mentioned by name. I am already looking forward to future monograph studies that will analyze and illustrate the relationship between the two.<sup>77</sup>

75. More than ten years ago Sarah Stroumsa had already noted another benefit of accepting that Maimonides knew al-Ghazālī: "The assumption that Maimonides knew Muslim theological literature can assist us to understand or to explain curious or vague statements in his words" (Stroumsa 1992/93, 174).

76. Eran 2001, 165.

77. A promising example of al-Ghazālī's influence on Maimonides' son and follower Abraham ben Moses ben Maimon (d. 1237) is Avtalion 2010. I am grateful to Carlos Fraenkel, who pointed me to this work.



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