

JOSEF STERN, JAMES T. ROBINSON, YONATAN SHEMESH (EDS.),
*MAIMONIDES' 'GUIDE OF THE PERPLEXED' IN TRANSLATION. A HISTORY FROM THE
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INTERPRETING MEANINGS

In the last decades, research and publications on Maimonides's *Guide of the Perplexed* have grown exponentially, due in part to the influence that Shlomo Pines's translation has exerted on academics. Yet it is unusual and great news to find a history that revolves around the transmission of the text through the most relevant translations and translators.

Josef Stern has noted (p. 5) that throughout its history the *Guide* has been read, commented on and criticized mostly in translation, not in its original Judeo-Arabic, that is, not the original Arabic *Dalālat al-hār'irīn* but the Hebrew *Moreh ha-nevukhim*, Old Spanish *Mostrador e enseñador de los turbados* and translations into modern languages. Despite the abundant scholarly literature on a vast range of topics of study linked to the *Guide*, there has been virtually no discussion of the fact that the texts that have generally been read are translations. In this sense, the volume under review tells a reception story which focuses on the translators' understanding of the book, their choice of lexicon and syntactical formulations, the desirability of consistency in translation, and the ways in which the translated text fosters the enhancement of a philosophical vocabulary in the target languages.

The volume is divided into two parts: « The History of Translations of the *Guide* » (chapters 1 to 11) and « The Impact of the *Guide* in Translation » (chapters 12 to 15) – my review is divided accordingly into two sections. In the first, I summarise the content of the chapters, for which I am indebted to the wonderful « Introduction » and the « Appendix – A Note on the Publication of Pines's Translation of the *Guide* », written by Josef Stern. Although mainly descriptive, the first section of the review enters one of the problems raised by the volume – guiding us to a particularly interesting discussion: the translation and the problems derived from the interpretation of meanings concealed in the pages of

substantial texts. In the second section of the review, I look into a question arising from that topic, for which Stern's « Introduction » acted as a 'guide'.

In *Maimonides's Guide of the Perplexed in Translation*, once again we confront the discussion about philological accuracy, consistency of translation, efforts to understand and transmit the meanings of the text, and the alibis that lie behind naïve searching for meanings: the dichotomy between extreme philological consistency – which can turn into inscrutable the content of the text – versus the need to convey and illuminate its meanings. Thus posed, the dichotomy could become an unattainable conflict. In addition to the volume's thorough analysis of the history of translations, process of transmission, reception and influence that the *Guide* had on thinkers, the reader will encounter an issue that runs across substantial sections: in translating a text, how far should philological rigour and coherence go? That is, is it legitimate to adjust accuracy in pursuit of meaning? Answering this question is certainly not the essential aim of the volume, but the content of some of its chapters will be of great help to those who are interested in addressing it. In this context, the chapters which deal with Shlomo Pines's translation and introduction to the *Guide* are particularly illuminating.¹

The first part of the volume presents a chronological survey of the translations of the *Guide*. The second examines the impact of early Latin translations on scholastic and Early Modern philosophy, as well as the impact of more recent modern-language translations on contemporary research on scholastic philosophy, medieval Islamic philosophy and modern philosophy – particularly the English translation promoted by Leo Strauss and carried out by Shlomo Pines.

I. Chapters 1-11

It was Samuel ibn Tibbon who made the first translation of the *Guide* into Hebrew (c. 1204), and who was the first thinker to carry out Maimonides exegetical, scientific and philosophical programme. His work and the recognition of his contribution as translator allow us to look into one of the great issues that the authors and editors of the volume present to us: translation as interpretation of meanings. For although I fully agree with Stern when he considers a truism to state that all translation is an interpretation (p. 15), this does not prevent us from reflecting on the process of appropriation involved in the translation of meaningful works of exceptional historical relevance.

In a famous letter to Maimonides, Ibn Tibbon asked for advice on how to approach the translation of the *Guide*. In his reply (September 1199), Rambam advised him not to translate literally, not to correlate every Arabic word and expression with a corresponding Hebrew expression, and not to keep strictly to

¹ MAIMONIDES, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, ed. SHLOMO PINES, 2 vol., University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1963.

the Arabic syntax. He was to translate according to meaning, sacrificing syntactic and semantic accuracy in favour of a translation that conveyed clearly and legibly the overall meaning:

I shall explain to you everything presently, after I shall premise one rule: 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 with much difficulty and the result will be doubtful and corrupt. This is not the right method. The translator should first try to grasp the meaning of the subject, and then state the theme with perfect clarity in the other language. This, however, cannot be done without changing the order of words, putting many words for one word, and vice versa, so that the subject be perfectly intelligible in the language into which he translates. This is the method Honein ben Ishak followed with the books of Galen, and his son Ishak with Aristotle's books, and for this reason their commentaries are clear.²

James T. Robinson has explained in the first chapter of the volume (« *Moreh ha-nevukhim*. The First Hebrew Translation of the *Guide of the Perplexed* ») that in fact Ibn Tibbon followed not the directions of the master but the methods of his father (Saul ibn Tibbon), which brought about consequences already anticipated by Maimonides: while Ibn Tibbon succeeded in establishing a Hebrew vocabulary perfectly consistent with the Arabic original, the enormous difficulty in understanding the content of the original text was not reduced by the Hebrew translation. To make the original text more comprehensible to the reader, a second Hebrew version of the *Guide* was entrusted to Judah al-Ḥarizi.³ Unfamiliar with the subtleties and philosophical terminology that Ibn Tibbon knew, al-Ḥarizi produced a work much closer to the Hebrew literary tradition, but his attempt to avoid syntax and vocabulary full of Arabisms was unevenly applied.

In chapter 2, « Al-Ḥarizi's Translation of the *Guide of the Perplexed* in Its Cultural Moment », Raymond Scheindlin presents the view that al-Ḥarizi's translation as a revision of Ibn Tibbon's which still echoes the intellectual atmosphere of al-Andalus when the literary values of the best period of Judeo-Arabic culture flourished. As new generations of readers unfamiliar with Arabic emerged but were deeply interested in the thought derived from Maimonides's work, Hebrew versions were in great demand. In turn, al-Ḥarizi's translation would serve as the basis for the first Latin and vernacular translations of the *Guide*.

In chapter 3, « *Dux neutrorum* and the Jewish Tradition of the *Guide of the Perplexed* », Caterina Rigo focuses on the Latin translations circulating with the

² MAIMONIDES, « Letter to Ibn Tibbon », in LEON D. STITSKIN (ed.), *Letters of Maimonides*, Yeshiva University Press, New York 1977, p. 93.

³ JUDAH AL-ḤARIZI, trans. *Moreh ha-nevukhim*, ed. ARYEH LEIB (LEON) SCHLOSBERG, notes by SIMON SCHEYER and SALOMON MUNK, 3 vol., Samuel Bagster & Sons, London 1851–1979.

titles *Dux neutrorum* (before 1243)⁴ and *Doctor perplexorum* (1629), based on Ibn Tibbon's Hebrew translation,⁵ the *Liber de parabola* (c. 1223) and *Liber de uno deo benedicto* (1520), both of which were partial translations.

The earliest translation in the vernacular was written in Old Castilian by Pedro de Toledo: *Mostrador e enseñador de los turbados* (completed in 1432, it combines the versions of Ibn Tibbon and al-Ḥarizi).⁶ This topic is analysed at length in Luis Manuel Girón Negrón's chapter 4 « Pedro de Toledo's *Mostrador e enseñador de los turbados*: The Christian Reception of Maimonides's *Guide* in Fifteenth-Century Spain ». As stressed by Stern:

[...] 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. (p. 9)

The intellectual environment that made it possible for Gómez Suárez de Figueroa to undertake such a translation commission in the late Middle Ages reveals circumstances of particular interest. Between the fifteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries, only three new versions were translated into modern languages, almost always based on Ibn Tibbon's translation: the Italian *Erudizione de' confusi or Precettore de' confusi* (1583) by Amadeo de Musetto Recanati (Yedidya ben Moshe Recanati);⁷ the first (partial) English version, by James Townley (1827); and the French translation of by Salomon Munk (*Le guide des égarés*, 1856–66), which promoted renewed interest in Judeo-Arabic and its cultural, intellectual and linguistic context.⁸

Paul B. Fenton's chapter 5, « The Second Ibn Tibbon: Salomon Munk and His Translation of the *Guide* », focuses on Munk and his translation. In his commentary on this chapter, Stern returns to one of the fundamental issues involved in the volume (we will get back to the topic later this review): one of the consequences that Munk's translation and his critical study of the Arabic and Hebrew

⁴ See DIANA DI SEGNI, « Moses Maimonides and the Latin Middle Ages: Critical Edition of *Dux neutrorum* I, 1–59 », Ph.D. Diss., University of Cologne 2013.

⁵ For a recent analysis, see SAVERIO CAMPANINI, « *Perspicue et fideliter conversus*: Johannes Buxtorf the Younger's Translation of the *Guide of the Perplexed* », *Yod. Revue des études hébraïques et juives*, 22 (2019), p. 133–154.

⁶ JOSÉ ANTONIO FERNÁNDEZ LÓPEZ (ed.), *Mostrador e enseñador de los turbados. Traducción cuatrocentista de Pedro de Toledo*, Riopiedras Ediciones, Zaragoza 2016.

⁷ See ALESSANDRO GUETTA, « *Erudizione de' confusi* by Yedidya ben Moshe Recanati, a Late Renaissance Italian Translation of Maimonides's *Guide of the Perplexed* », *Yod. Revue des études hébraïques et juives*, 22 (2019), p. 107–132.

⁸ MAIMONIDES, *Le guide des égarés: Traité de théologie et de philosophie*, ed. SALOMON MUNK, 3 vol., A. Franck, Paris 1856–1866.

manuscripts revealed was an extraordinary reaction against a Hegelian view of the history of philosophy that had always disregarded Arabic and Jewish philosophy. Munk was motivated by great interest in attaining a better knowledge of Arabic philosophy and of Maimonides's extraordinary familiarity with Islamic religion and theology.

In continuity with the philological rigour undertaken by Munk, the first complete English translation was produced by Michael Friedländer. Warren Zev Harvey devotes to his translation the sixth chapter of the volume « Michael Friedländer's Pioneering English Translation of the *Guide* ». He explores in depth the first version of Friedländer's translation (1881–85) and the second version published some years later (1904).⁹ Although the second version was published as an abridged one without introduction and notes, it became the most widely circulated version among the English-speaking readers, even after the appearance of the most influential and controversial modern translation by Shlomo Pines (1963).

Chapters 7 and 8 – as well as the above-mentioned « Appendix » by Stern – are devoted to Pines's translation. Written respectively by Sarah Stroumsa (« The Elegance of Precision: On Pines's Translation of the Literary Parts of the *Guide* ») and Alfred Ivry (« Pines's Translation of the *Guide*: Alternative Possibilities »), both chapters approach the topic from different perspectives. Before his translation was published, Shlomo Pines was recognised as an eminent historian of Arabic thought and science, yet it is after his translation that he became an academic celebrity. However, his translation has not been received without controversy, and has been the subject of deep analysis. Among the questions raised in analysing Pines's translation, one of them has been proved of particular relevance: does his translation suggest an interpretation of the text that is indebted to Leo Strauss, or does Pines reproduce Maimonides's own perspective?

In my opinion, that question holds a misconception that the volume under review can help to overcome: as such, Maimonides's perspective will not arise if in our effort to understand his work we do not try to discover the interpretations assumed in the translations. Without a proper approach to his intellectual context – the last chapter of the volume focuses on it – and a more accurate knowledge of the process of transmission and reception of his work, it is almost impossible to reach Maimonides's perspective. Although Stern believes that Stroumsa's and Ivry's approaches take opposing sides on the question, in fact, they analyse the problem from different perspectives which can be considered complementary.

⁹ MAIMONIDES, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, trans. MICHAEL FRIEDLANDER, 3 vol., Trübner & Co.–Hebrew Publishing Co., London 1881–1885 (revised edition G. Routledge & Sons–E. P. Dutton, London–New York 1904.

In Stroumsa's view, the nature of Pines's perspective was already accomplished by his introduction to the translation. However, as translator, Pines helps Maimonides's text to speak for itself, without imposing his own interpretation on the Arabic original. Thus, Pines's linguistic, syntactic and lexical choices enable rather than obstruct a recognition of the text in its linguistic and intellectual context. It is these decisions that best contribute to strengthening the factors that Stroumsa most admires in Pines's translation: the scientific character of his project and the elegance in the way he executes his work. A 'character' which, in addition to an undoubted philological accuracy, it is clear – if we assume that, in a certain sense, his translation can be taken as a 'work in progress':

As a result of this rigorous method, Pines's translation allows us to verify, and at times to criticize, Pines's own analysis [...] 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. (p. 238)

The elegance of Pines's translation, Stroumsa writes, is perceived in his ability to gather not only the Aristotelian, technical and scientific Maimonides, but also the poetic Maimonides, the Sufi Maimonides, and a well versed connoisseur of the tradition of the metaphysical schools, but also a discouraged and hesitant Maimonides. Is Pines's translation letting Maimonides to speak without editing him, avoiding making him more coherent in the eyes of his readers? Stroumsa thinks so.

In his analysis of Pines's translation Alfred Ivry notes that, in the course of reading Pines's brilliant translation, he soon found himself missing a more ample critical apparatus that would allow him to grasp the choices of terminology and syntactical construction. Ivry believes that the absence of a real apparatus was not so much an editorial constraint as a deliberate strategy to allow Maimonides's work to express itself and each reader to grasp the text in accordance with his own philosophical level. In Ivry's opinion, elucidations on Pines's terminological decisions are much better found in his introduction to the translation than in a critical apparatus. However, Ivry is convinced that Pines favours a certain interpretation of the Guide which, despite the reservations that Maimonides expressed against it, stresses a notion of God and his relationship with the world in personal terms:

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's secret as he would have wished it kept, although it does not grant the English reader full awareness of the text's ambiguity. (p. 242)

Ivry's view is that Pines is trying to uphold Maimonides's own intention to speak exoterically, expressing the pious views of the community, while trusting that a philosophically trained reader to pick up a more subtle, less conclusive message in his work.

Tzvi Langermann's chapter 9, « Rabbi Yosef Qafih's Modern Medieval Translation of the *Guide* », focuses on one of the two most recent complete Hebrew translations of the *Guide* since the Middle Ages: Rabbi Yosef Qafih's translation of 1972.¹⁰ Langermann interprets this translation as representing an exceptional cultural and religious tradition of studies on Maimonides in Arabic that has survived for centuries – Qafih's native language was Arabic.

Aviran Ravitsky devotes chapter 10, « Michael Schwarz's Hebrew Translation of Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed* », to this translation of the *Guide* into Hebrew.¹¹ Schwarz's motivation is his conviction that the older versions are inaccessible to speakers of modern Hebrew. Hence, Schwarz does not accurately reproduce the use of the Arabic philosophical terminology employed by Maimonides but follows Maimonides's original advice: to grasp the essential meaning of the text above all else without losing philosophical precision.

The first part of the volume closes with chapter 11, Steven Harvey's « Key Terms in Translations of Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed* ». In distinguishing between the weakness and strength of medieval and modern translations, Harvey has used a landmark of particular interest to us, especially in relation to the second part of my review. As Harvey and several other contributors of this volume have stressed, the *Guide* challenges us with the dilemma that arises by deliberating between translations that are more literal in their quest for accuracy, and those that search for a better understanding of the text. Whether to hold a rigorous level of consistency of the Arabic philosophical terms employed by Maimonides at the expense of a potentially better understanding of the substance of the arguments. Harvey makes an analysis of the consistency of translation applied to some terms, both within the *Guide* and by comparison with some of the most relevant translations. His conclusion does not deviate from some of those already exhibited by other contributors to the volume:

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. [...] Maimonides did not write his book for everyone, but for one in ten thousand 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

¹⁰ MAIMONIDES, *Moreh ha-nevukhim*, ed. YOSEF QAFIH, 3 vol., Mossad ha-Rav Kook, Jerusalem 1972.

¹¹ MAIMONIDES, *Moreh nevukhim*, trans. MICHAEL SCHWARZ, Tel Aviv University Press, Tel Aviv 1996.

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. (p. 328)

For Steven Harvey, in Maimonides's consistent and precise use of vocabulary there is a key function helping the well-educated reader to understand the thoughtful teachings held in the *Guide* – even if may be detrimental to a more common reader.

Before closing the first section of my review, I must return to Stern's « Introduction » where in addition to already quoted and analysed versions of Maimonides's *Guide* through several chapters of the volume, Stern opens a digression referring to eighteen complete or partial translations in different vernacular languages produced since the mid-nineteenth century – two of them from the Judeo-Arabic text: the Italian translation by Mauro Zonta¹² and the Spanish translation by David Gonzalo Maeso.¹³

II. Chapters 12-15

The second part of the volume focuses on the reception of the *Guide* among eminent philosophers beyond Jewish thought, and on the impact of the work on great readers and interpreters of medieval Latin thought, medieval Islamic or Islamicate philosophy, early modern philosophy and Anglo-American philosophy. Richard Taylor's chapter 12, « Maimonides and Aquinas on Divine Attributes: The Importance of Avicenna », offers an original investigation into Thomas Aquinas's reception of Maimonides. Analysing the intellectual context of Aquinas, Taylor incorporates an actor of extraordinary relevance: Avicenna. In his analysis of Aquinas's *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*, Taylor reinterprets some key features of Maimonides's thought, stressing the influence of Arabic thought on Aquinas, Avicenna in particular. Taylor's analysis encourages us « to study Aquinas's works in the context of his sources from the Arabic tradition, including Judeo-Arabic thinkers like Maimonides » (p. 363). For Taylor, what is especially relevant is not only that Aquinas reads Maimonides from the background of Avicenna but also that he reinterprets Avicenna from Maimonides or, as Josef Stern puts it: that he 'Maimonidizes' Avicenna.

The three sections of Steven Nadler's chapter 13, « *The Guide of the Perplexed* in Early Modern Philosophy and Spinoza », deals with a group of recognised readers of Maimonides. In analysing the reception of Maimonides's work in Early Modern Philosophy (Nadler focuses especially on the seventeenth century), he exhibits no doubts about the importance that Maimonides exerts on Spinoza, even though until very recently most Spinozists have overlooked and dismissed this intellectual

¹² MAIMONIDES, *La guida dei perplessi*, trans. MAURO ZONTA, UTET, Turin 2005.

¹³ MAIMONIDES, *Guía de perplejos*, trans. DAVID GONZALO MAESO, Editora Nacional, Madrid 1983.

relationship. In that sense, Nadler dwells on the influence that the improved knowledge of Maimonides provided by Shlomo Pines's translation may have had on English-speaking Spinozists. While acknowledging that Pines's influence has been of particular relevance, it was not the only and most important one among such Spinozists as Edwin Curley –¹⁴ who also draws on the translations by Friedländer –, Munk and Goodman: « 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 » (p. 384). To Nadler, if contemporary research has begun to assess and deepen the influence of Maimonides's work on Spinoza, it is not – at least not exclusively – due to the appearance of Pines's translation but, in general, to the new impulse that research in modern philosophy is achieving.

In chapter 14, « Shlomo Pines and the Rediscovery of Maimonides in Contemporary Philosophy », Kenneth Seeskin brings back the debate on Pines's translation in the context of contemporary thought. Interestingly, in contrast to Steven Nadler, Seeskin evaluates Friedländer's translation in a quite different manner: he often uses different words in English to express the same term in Arabic, even in the same passage and without explanation or justification. Pines's translation would have conveyed a much more rigorous reading of the *Guide*, becoming the standard for a diverse range of approaches, such as: those produced by researchers who have encouraged a reading of Maimonides from the context of the Judeo-Arabic culture in the Mediterranean basin; those who interpret him as a key link in the history of thought and within the Jewish context; and American scholars more interested in Maimonides's metaphysical and epistemological arguments within the general context of a history of thought. In general, Seeskin argues, Pines's translation is responsible for the interest that Maimonides's reading has achieved in fields as diverse as Anglo-Saxon analytical philosophy, in part due to the attention paid by Maimonides to the problems of language.

Among Seeskin's five headings of his chapter, he has devoted two to the controversy over the exotericism and esotericism of Maimonides's work – the problem of how to interpret the *Guide* raised by Leo Strauss, who addresses it in his own introduction to the translation. For Seeskin, the translation itself clearly expresses the ambivalence of Maimonides's position. Strauss's reading of Maimonides would have prompted him to ask himself a crucial question: is it possible that what in our time is assumed to be *wisdom* could be an appropriate model for measuring the thought of an earlier age?

Strauss's question allows us to get back to a fundamental thread of the volume: if assessing the translation, transmission and reception of a concept is already an

¹⁴ EDWIN M. CURLEY, *Spinoza's Metaphysics: An Essay in Interpretation*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA1969.

enormous challenge when we look across distant historical periods, what can it be said for a work such as the *Guide*? A work so deeply determined by the possibility of being interpreted in the double aspect of its projection – given the double exoteric and esoteric characters attached in the text. Seeskin states: « 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 » (p. 396). While it may be possible to leave to the common reader the idea of Maimonides as holding a fixed set of positions which he either explicitly stated or tried to conceal, this is not the case, says Seeskin, with the works Maimonides composed for mature Talmudic readers initiated into philosophy.

Chapter 15, the last chapter of the volume, caps the wide range of perspectives offered in the volume. After reading Frank Griffel's « Maimonides as a Student of Islamic Religious Thought: Revisiting Shlomo Pines's 'Translator's Introduction' and Its Comments on al-Ghazali », one has the impression that this is the icing on the cake – something which really makes sense.

A connoisseur of Islamic thought, Griffel is also a researcher in topics that cover very specific and not widely known fields – something that can be seen in precise and well-documented studies such as his research on the roots and intellectual repercussions of Almohad doctrine.¹⁵

Frank Griffel evaluates the intellectual attitude of early Pines as nuancedly different from that of the « Introduction to the translation of the *Guide* ». In his doctoral thesis on the atomism of the *kalam*, Pines hinted at an attitude divergent from the research approach of classical German philology, a style that Griffel evaluates this way: « 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 » (p. 404).

In Griffel's view, already in the 1930s¹⁶ Pines seemed more in tune with the work of masters such as Louis Massignon and the new trends that began to spread across Europe: not only to look for sources and influences but to analyse contents and to study the cultural environment of the texts. As an example: Pines did not follow the tradition of old masters such as Ignaz Goldziher who defended the idea of a final decline of an Islamic philosophy after Averroes. For Pines, there was not such a decline: one of the best examples that clearly contradicts a hypothetical crisis was the impetus of science from twelfth century onwards, a development

¹⁵ See FRANK GRIFFEL, « Ibn Tūmart's Rational Proof for God's Existence and Unity, and His Connection to the Nizāmiyya Madrasa in Baghdad », in MARIBEL FIERRO, et al. (eds.), *Los almohades: problemas y perspectivas*, CSIC, Madrid 2005, p. 753–813.

¹⁶ See SHLOMO PINES, « Some Problems of Islamic Philosophy », *Islamic Culture* (Hyderabad), 11 (1937), p. 66–80. See also SHLOMO PINES, « Beiträge zur islamischen Atomenlehre Gräfenhainichen », Ph.D. Diss., Heine, Gräfenhainichen 1936.

unthinkable without the Arab contribution and the integration of Eastern and Greek elements.

To Griffel's surprise, when he read Pines's « Introduction » he discovered a style much closer to old the German philological tradition than to his earlier works: when he compares Maimonides with al-Fārābī, he makes an effort to find similarities and differences between the sources, something that would be laudable if, Griffel says, it was not because the aim of his « Introduction » is purely philological, bent on detecting and enumerating what Maimonides has read. A Shlomo Pines much closer to classic German tradition well rooted in Hegel.

Why, in what sense is the research into the sources of al-Fārābī so relevant to the tradition of German philology? For Griffel, this attitude makes sense if we place it in the context of a revival of German classicism and its search for an aesthetic and intellectual ideal anchored in a model of the history of philosophy as something strictly Greek linked to the immutable value of the original. Whatever hypothetically valuable Arabic philosophy might harbour it would only be so as much as it is closely linked to a Greek philosophical tradition which could display signs of originality. And indeed, this is something that Hegel denies to Arabic thought, Griffel remarks: « 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 » (p. 409).

But does Pines adopt such position? Griffel has no doubt that Pines's intention was to place Maimonides as a respectable authority among the greats in the history of philosophy, as a philosopher in his own right, on a par with Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas, Spinoza and Descartes – Maimonides as a well established chain among philosophical authorities. In this sense, the structure of Pines's « Introduction » follows a strategy that seeks to demonstrate Maimonides's connection to an intellectual tradition that ultimately goes back to Aristotle. Thus, when Pines dwells on the analysis of Arabic philosophy, he does not hesitate to comment on al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Bājja and Ibn Rushd – all of them connected to an Aristotelian tradition translated into Latin.

It is only at the end of Pines's « Introduction » that we find a few pages devoted to other authors who for different reasons would be less respectable within the philosophical tradition rooted in Hegel – al-Ghazālī as one of them. It is interesting to see how Pines includes the author of the *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* into a short chapter devoted to the *mutakallimūn* of Islam. A curious paradox is revealed here, says Griffel. Pines is following the tradition of German classicism in two senses: on the one hand, he accepts an intellectual tradition that goes back to Aristotle – the great Arab thinkers being means of transmission and commentary; on the other hand, he only focuses on textual traditions.

Yet, where is the paradox? Some scholars could ask. For Maimonides himself acted that way, that is, he thinks of a philosophical textual tradition going back to Aristotle.

Almost nine centuries later, if we are seeking a comprehensive study of the *Guide*, including its sources and references, we have to explore a complementary panorama, and trace sources not declared by Maimonides, along with some non-textual traditions. Griffel illustrates this way: in a few centuries' time a scholar researching on the sources that nourished the thought of a relatively recent philosopher like Martin Heidegger could certainly go back to Plato and Aristotle, but he could not contextualise him or approach his thought in depth without reference to, among others, Husserl or Nietzsche.

We need to contextualise Maimonides's *Guide* in the context of the twelfth-century intellectual environment. Fifty years later than Pines's extraordinary work of introduction and translation, we know Maimonides's milieu much better. However, we may complement Pines's « with studies that look at Maimonides's closer intellectual environment, at the influence from Almohadism, or at his reactions to the work of Abū al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī » (p. 427), as well as the crucial role exerted by al-Ghazālī in Maimonides's thought and his way of interpreting other thinkers – while Maimonides didn't cite al-Ghazālī, he did draw on this thought, particularly on the relationship between philosophy and scripture.

Maimonides' Guide of the Perplexed in Translation combines a twofold quality. It is without doubt a reference manual for researchers in the field of the transmission and reception of knowledge – a masterly lesson on the problems of translation as interpretation of meanings from complementary perspectives. At the same time, focusing on such a masterpiece as the *Guide* is, this lesson plunges us into the inexhaustible debate between philology and philosophy, between the paramount difficulties undertaken in the quest for accuracy while uncovering the meanings of a text.

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