Yod

Revue des études hébraïques et juives

22 | 2019

**Medieval and Early Modern Translations of
Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed***

Notes on Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera as a Translator of the *Guide of the Perplexed*

*Remarques sur Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera en tant que traducteur du Guide des
égarés*

הערות על שם טוב אבן פלקירה כמתרגם מורה נבוכים

Silvia Di Donato

Electronic version

URL: <https://journals.openedition.org/yod/3813>

DOI: 10.4000/yod.3813

ISSN: 2261-0200

Publisher

INALCO

Printed version

Date of publication: 25 September 2019

Number of pages: 155-182

ISBN: 978-2-85831-317-4

ISSN: 0338-9316

Electronic reference

Silvia Di Donato, "Notes on Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera as a Translator of the *Guide of the Perplexed*", *Yod* [Online], 22 | 2019, Online since 20 September 2019, connection on 08 July 2021. URL: <http://journals.openedition.org/yod/3813> ; DOI: <https://doi.org/10.4000/yod.3813>

Yod est mis à disposition selon les termes de la Licence Creative Commons Attribution - Pas d'Utilisation Commerciale 4.0 International.

Notes on Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera as a Translator of the *Guide of the Perplexed*

*Remarques sur Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera en
tant que traducteur du Guide des égarés*

הערות על שם טוב אבן פלקירה כמתרגם מורה נבוכים

Silvia DI DONATO
CNRS

Introduction¹

There is no need to reaffirm the importance of Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera's writings as a necessary reference for history and philology of medieval Arabic and Hebrew philosophical texts and doctrines. Citations, abridgements, paraphrases and commentaries from a rich corpus of medieval Arabic and Hebrew books make Ibn Falaquera not only a primary source—as an important translator, even if he never translated any entire book, but also, as a result, a major interpreter and teacher of philosophy of late antiquity and the Middle Age. Ibn Falaquera must be included among the translators of Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*: his commentary on the *Guide*, *Moreh ha-Moreh* (*Guide to the Guide*), which includes his translation of many passages of the *Guide*, is the principal source for

1. I would like to thank the editors and the reviewers for their remarks and efforts to improve the paper; I am grateful to Professor Steven Harvey who accepted to read the paper, for his helpful comments and suggestions.

the *dossier* (Ibn Falaquera commented on 47 of the 178 chapters of the *Guide*).² It is an indispensable philological evidence for studying Maimonides' work. Analysis of Ibn Falaquera's translation would be critically important for any future comparative edition of the *Guide*'s Hebrew translations.

However, when considering Ibn Falaquera as a translator of the *Guide of the Perplexed*, taking into account his writings as mere textual indirect evidence of Maimonides' text, this does not complete the investigation on this topic and allows but a partial understanding of his activity as a translator. A significant element to focus on, through the analysis of his translations, is Ibn Falaquera's attitude towards the *Guide*, among his sources, by contextualizing it within the general purpose and the doctrinal perspective that distinguish his production. In order to point out distinct approaches in the use and in references to Maimonides' work, one shall then take into consideration Ibn Falaquera's production as a whole, and not only the *Moreh ha-Moreh*. Quotations from the *Guide* occurring in all Ibn Falaquera's writings are indeed the crucial items to take into account in order to examine which passages he selected and translated, in which kind of texts the quotations are found and in which period of his production, and finally, which are his aims and methodological assumptions, while rendering, interpreting and teaching the Master's great book. Concerning in particular the *Moreh ha-Moreh*, its quotations will not be the subject of a systematic textual comparison here, but its use will be limited to a few examples supporting the specific purpose of this paper and the remarks that it suggests.

Ibn Falaquera's works can be roughly classified in three groups: educational treatises, commentaries and apologetic writings. Hence, I will take into consideration three types of textual objects, that is texts ascribable to these three distinguishable groups. Chronological perspective, combined to the literary one, will be the filter to analyze Ibn Falaquera's quotations from the *Guide* and to interpret the value of these textual evidence.

2. I refer to the synopsis of the chapters of the *Guide* commented in *Moreh ha-Moreh*, and of the cross-references within the *Moreh ha-Moreh*, to specific points and arguments discussed in different chapters of the *Guide* in JOSPE, 1988, pp. 64-66. The precise correspondence of chapters and lines can be followed in the second apparatus of the critical edition in IBN FALAQUERA, 2001.

The *Guide* in early works

Let us consider Ibn Falaquera's early introductory philosophical works.³ These writings can be described as the rich product of a pedagogical program that aims at attracting a wide audience to philosophy and providing those who search for wisdom with the requisite scientific tools. These works reveal Ibn Falaquera's great erudition and command of texts, as well as his method in using and transmitting his sources as a populariser, paraphraser and encyclopedist.⁴ The trilogy composed of *Reshit hokhmah* (*Beginning of Wisdom*), *Sefer ha-ma'alot* (*Book of Degrees*) and *De'ot ha-filosofim* (*The Opinions of the Philosophers*); then *Sefer ha-nefesh* (*Book of the Soul*), *Sefer ha-mevaqqesh* (*Book of the Seeker*, 1263) and *Shlemut ha-ma'asim* (*The Perfection of the Actions*) are included in this group of works.⁵ *Iggeret ha-halom* (*Treatise of the Dream*), a short text probably composed in a later period dedicated to conduct, perfection of body and soul, and truth (truth in speech and actions, and speculative truth)⁶ may be added to this list.

When searching in Ibn Falaquera's vast literary output for evidence of direct textual influence of the *Guide* through explicit references, and in particular through literal quotations, the picture that emerges could be disappointing. His introductory works aim to instruct people in science, to transmit useful references for the seeker of wisdom, in its different fields, on the basis of the Greek and Arabic philosophical sources and of their contemporary authoritative

3. An attempt to estimate the chronology of Ibn Falaquera's writings on the basis of cross-references, and the descriptions of each work, has been done by JOSPE, 1988, pp. 31-76; see as well the list focusing on Ibn Falaquera's sources and quotations established by ZONTA, 2004, pp. 121-137.

4. For a general presentation of Ibn Falaquera's works, see HARVEY, 2014, and JOSPE, 1988.

5. Within this list, I could not carry out a systematic investigation on Ibn Falaquera's encyclopedic treatise *De'ot ha-filosofim*. The analysis of this large source could enrich the interpretation that I propose. Cf. IBN FALAQUERA, 1902; *id.*, 1894. *De'ot ha-filosofim* is extant in two manuscripts: Leiden, Bibliotheek der Rijksuniversiteit, ms. Or. 4758/3 (Warn. 20) (IMHM 17368), ff. 104r-343v and Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, ms. 3156 (De Rossi 164) (IMHM 13897), ff. 1r-291r (parts of the introduction are edited and translated in ZONTA, 2004, pp. 24-49. Other parts of the introduction are translated by GATTI, 2003, pp. 161-172. The edition and the translation of the part on plants [*De'ot* I, 4] have been published in NICOLAUS DAMASCENUS, 1989, pp. 388-405); IBN FALAQUERA, 1988; *id.*, 1778 (part I has been translated in HERSCHEL LEVINE, 1976); IBN FALAQUERA, 1998.

6. MALTER, 1910-1911.

interpreters. Actually, these works contain extremely few quotations from the *Guide*. This does not mean that the *Guide* is absent from this group of writings; Ibn Falaquera was undoubtedly a disciple of Maimonides, and the Master and his writings figure among the recognisable texts that he draws from, notably from a doctrinal point of view. This is the case, for example, of the classification of sciences found in Maimonides' *Millot ha-bigayon* (*Treatise on the Art of Logic*) or the ethics of *Shmonah pera'iqim* (*Eight Chapters*) that have partially inspired respectively Ibn Falaquera's *Reshit hokhma* and *Shlemut ha-ma'asim*; nevertheless, the primary quoted sources of these texts are those of Al-Fārābī, Averroes (his commentaries) and Aristotle.⁷ If one intends to establish which sources of science, which books and which authors Ibn Falaquera relies on for these introductory compositions, through distinguishable references and quotations, one can argue that Ibn Falaquera does not employ Maimonides' writings to attain his goal. The *Guide of the Perplexed*, in particular, does not figure among his primary direct sources, while works of Averroes, Ibn Bājja, Al-Fārābī and Aristotle are those which are widely quoted.

The list of citations from the *Guide* is short. Three quotations can be found in *Sefer ha-ma'alot*, a philosophical anthology on ethics and psychology, describing the grades of men in perfection. The first two quotations are in the first chapter, where the qualities of the highest degree of men, that of the Patriarchs, are described. These quotations are taken from two consecutive chapters of the *Guide*, belonging to a group of chapters dealing with prophecy.⁸ The third quotation is found in the last chapter, devoted to the third and lowest degree of men. Let us analyse the three quotations in detail:

Guide II, 37 (Sefer ha-ma'alot, I)

At the beginning of *Sefer ha-ma'alot*, in the chapter devoted to the first and highest degree, the quotation concerns the classes of men according to the emanation of the active intellect either on the imaginative faculty, or on the rational, or on both. Accordingly, the first class includes the governors of the cities and the augurs,

7. Scholars have drawn the multifaceted contours of Ibn Falaquera's philosophical figure and of his discussing method, particularly his use of the sources. The analysis of specific texts or arguments shows how he draws upon sources, either quoted literally (sometimes by mentioning the philosophers by name), or through paraphrases, or putting them together to convey a proper and coherent interpretation of a doctrine or a philosophical tradition. See in particular HARVEY, 2000; FREUDENTHAL, 2000; ZONTA, 2000, pp. 422-425; FONTAINE, 1995.

8. It is useful to recall that *Guide II* are devoted to prophecy.

whose rational faculty is defective because of its “original natural disposition,” or because of the “insufficiency of training.” The second one comprehends the men of science and speculation, while the third one is the class of prophets whose rational and imaginative faculty is in a state of ultimate perfection:

Our Master Moshe—may the memory of the righteous be a blessing—said. When the intellectual overflow overflows only toward the rational faculty and does not overflow at all toward the imaginative faculty—either because of the scantiness of what overflows or because of some deficiency existing in the imaginative faculty in its natural disposition, so that it is impossible for it to receive the overflow of the intellect—, this is the class of men of science engaged in speculation. If, on the other hand, this overflow overflows toward both faculties—that are the rational and the imaginative in a state of ultimate perfection owing to their natural disposition, this is the class of prophets. If again the overflow only reaches the imaginative faculty, the defect of the rational faculty deriving either from its original natural disposition or from insufficiency of custom in those sciences, this is the class of those who govern cities, the legislators, the soothsayers, and the dreamers of veridical dreams, and those who are able to do extraordinary things by means of strange devices and secret arts, withal they are not men of science.⁹

9. Cf. IBN FALAQUERA, 1894, p. 13, l. 21/p. 14, l. 7:

“אמר רבינו משה זצ”ל והשפע השכלי כשיפוז על הכח המדבר בלבד ולא יפוז ממנו דבר על הכח המדמה או למעוט השפע או לחסרון היה בכח המדמה מעקר היצירה ולא יוכל לקבל שפע השכל זו היא כת החכמים בעלי העיון וכשיפוז זה השפע על שתי הכחות והם המדבר והמדמה על תכלית שלמותם היצירי זו היא כת הנביאים ואם היה השפע על המדמה בלבד ויהיה חסרון במדבר או מפני היצירה או למעוט רגילות בחכמות אלה הם כת מנהיגי המדינות ובעלי הנימוסים והקוסמים ובעלי החלומות האמתיים והיודעים לעשות נפלאות בתחבולות עמוקות ומלאכות נעלמות ואע”פ שאינם חכמים.”

Cf. MOSES MAIMONIDES, 1969, p. 374 (as in the following quotations, the sections omitted by Ibn Falaquera are put into brackets): “The case in which the intellectual overflow overflows only toward the rational faculty and does not overflow at all toward the imaginative faculty—either because of the scantiness of what overflows or because of some deficiency existing in the imaginative faculty in its natural disposition, a deficiency that makes impossible for it to receive the overflow of the intellect—is characteristic of the class of men of science engaged in speculation. If, on the other hand, this overflow reaches both faculties—I mean both the rational and the imaginative [—as we and others among the philosophers have explained, and if the imaginative faculty is] in a state of ultimate perfection owing to its natural disposition, this is characteristic of the class of

Guide II, 36 (Sefer ha-ma'alot, I)

The second quotation concerns the holiest and most perfect man within the third, higher degree, and it describes the qualities of the prophet who represents “the ultimate term of perfection that can exist for his (*i.e.* man’s) species,” as Maimonides states in the *Guide*.¹⁰ The prophet has reached “the perfection of the imaginative faculty through natural disposition, and the perfection of moral habit through the turning-away of thoughts from all bodily pleasures and the putting an end to the desire for the various kinds of ignorant and evil glorification.” His desires will all be “directed to acquiring the science of the secrets of what exists and knowledge of its causes.”¹¹ Ibn Falaquera, then, quotes:

Our Master Moshe—may the memory of the righteous be a blessing—said. It is likewise necessary that the thought of that man, that is to say the prophet, and his desire should be detached from the spurious kinds of rulership, as the wish to dominate or to be held noble by the common people. He should rather recognise all people according to their various states with respect to which they are indubitably either domestic animals or like beasts of prey. If the perfect man who lives in solitude thinks of them, he does so only with a view to saving himself from the harm that may be caused by those among them who are harmful if he happens to associate with them, or to obtaining an advantage from them, if he is forced to it by some of his needs. Now there is no doubt that whenever—in an individual of this conduct—his imaginative faculty, which is as perfect as possible, acts and receives from the intellect an overflow corresponding to his speculative perfection, he will only apprehend divine and very extraordinary matters, he will see only God and His angel, and will only achieve knowledge (תעֲדָ) of matters that are correct opinions and general directives for

prophets. If again the overflow only reaches the imaginative faculty, the defect of the rational faculty deriving either from its original natural disposition or from insufficiency of training, this is characteristic of the class of those who govern cities, [while being] the legislators, the soothsayers, [the augurs], and the dreamers of veridical dreams. All those who do extraordinary things by means of strange devices and secret arts and withal are not men of science.”

10. Cf. MOSES MAIMONIDES, 1969, II, 36, p. 369.

11. Cf. MOSES MAIMONIDES, 1969, II, 36, p. 371.

the well-being of men one with another. With regard to these three conditions set forth by us—namely, the perfection of the rational faculty through study, the perfection of the imaginative faculty through natural disposition, and the perfection of moral habit through the turning-away of thought from all bodily pleasures and the putting an end to the desire for the various kinds of ignorant and evil glorification—there is among those who are perfect a big difference in rank; and on the different in rank according to these conditions depends the difference in rank that subsists between the degree of all the prophets.¹²

12. Cf. IBN FALAQUERA, 1894, p. 20, l. 22/p. 21, l. 10:

”ואמר רבינו משה זצ”ל וזה האיש ר”ל הנביא יתחייב בהכרח שתתבטל מחשבתו ותשוקתו אל הגדולות שאינם אמיתיות כמו בקשת הנצח או שיכבדוהו בני אדם אלא יבינו בני אדם כפי עניניהם אשר הם בלא ספק בפייהם או כבהמות או כחיות המזיקות אשר לא יחשב המתיחד השלם כשיחשוב בהם אלא היאך ינצל מנוק המזיק מהם אם יודמן לו עמהם שותפות או להשיג מהם תועלת אם יצטרך להם בצורך מצרכיו והאדם אשר זו מנהגו אין ספק בו כשיפעל כחו המדמה אשר הוא בתכלית השלמות ויפוך עליו מהשכל כפי שלמותו העיוני לא ישיג אלא דברים אלהיים חיים נפלאים מאד ולא יראה אלא האל ומלאכיו ולא תגיע לו [a. corr. לא] דעה אלא בדברים הם עצות נכונות [a. corr. נכונות] ומנהיגים כוללים לתקון בני אדם קצתם עם קצתם ואליהו שלשה ענינים אשר זכרנו והם שלמות הכח המדבר בלמוד ושלמות הכח המדמה ביצירה ושלמות המדות בבטול המחשבה בכל התענוגות הגופניות וחסרת התשוקה בכל מיני הכבודים הסכלים הרעים. יש יתרון לשלמים זה על זה יתרון גדול וכפי היתרון בכל ענין מאילו הענינים יהיה יתרון מעלת הנביאים כולם.”

Cf. MOSES MAIMONIDES, 1969, pp. 371-372: “It is likewise necessary that the thought of that individual should be detached from the spurious kinds of rulership and that his desire for them should be abolished—I mean the wish [to dominate or] to be held great by the common people and to obtain from them honour [and obedience for its own sake]. He should rather regard all people according to their various states with respect to which they are indubitably either domestic animals or like beasts of prey. If the perfect man who lives in solitude thinks to them at all, he does so only with a view to saving himself from the harm that may be caused by those among them who are harmful if he happens to associate with them, or to obtaining an advantage [...] from them if he is forced to it by some of his needs.

Now there is no doubt that whenever—in an individual of this description—his imaginative faculty, which is as perfect as possible, acts and receives from the intellect an overflow corresponding to his speculative perfection, this individual will only apprehend divine and most extraordinary matters, will see only God and His angel, and will only be aware and achieve knowledge (דעת) of matters that constitute true opinions and general directives for well-being of men in their relations with one another. It is known that with regard to these three aims set forth by us—namely, the perfection of the rational faculty through study, the perfection of the imaginative faculty through natural disposition, and the perfection of moral habit through the turning-away of thoughts from all bodily pleasures and the putting an end to the desire for the various kinds of ignorant and evil glorification—there are among those who are perfect very many differences in rank;

Guide III, 8 (Sefer ha-ma'alot, III)

The third, longest, quotation is found in the last chapter of *Sefer ha-ma'alot*, which is dedicated to the third and lowest degree of men, namely: “the multitude of the people who have no intellectual reflection, and they are the majority,” as stated by Ibn Falaquera at the beginning of this chapter.¹³ It deals with the cause for imperfection and any corruption affecting bodies that are subject to generation and corruption. All deficiencies occur “because of matter—not because of form—,”¹⁴ and the quotation ranks men according to their aspirations: the perfect men will seek what “is required by their noble form,” namely necessary things, speculation and representation of the intelligibles. The others, those who proceed in the darkness all their life, will take corporal and material desires as their end:

It has become clear that all passing away and corruption or deficiency are due solely to matter and not because of form. All man's acts of disobedience and sins and all vices are consequent upon his matter and not upon his form, whereas all his virtues are consequent upon his form. Inasmuch as it is clear that this is so and it is impossible for matter to exist without form, and as consequently it was necessary that man's very noble form, which, as we have explained, is the image of God and His likeness, should be bound to this dirty, turbid and dark matter which calls down upon him every imperfection and corruption, He granted this human form power on matter to subjugate it and bring it back to the middle state. In this respect, the ranks of men differ. Among them, there are individuals who aspire always to seek that which is most noble and perpetual life according to what is required by their noble form. They only reflect on the mental representation of an intelligible, on the grasp of a true belief regarding everything, and on union with the divine intellect, which lets overflow toward them that through which that form exists. Whenever they are led by the needs of the matter to that which is dirtying and an avowedly shame, they feel painful and ashamed to have failed and feel ashamed to have

and on the differences in rank with regard to these aims there depend the differences in rank that subsist between the degrees of all the prophets.”

13. Cf. IBN FALAQUERA, 1894, p. 67, l. 5-6.

14. Cf. IBN FALAQUERA, 1894, p. 68, l. 18-19 (cf. *infra*).

touched on it; they make efforts to limit that shame with all his power and to be preserved from it in every way. [...] So are the states of men, for there are individuals who consider all material faculties in them as shame and disgrace, and particularly the sense of touch, which is a shame for us, as states Aristotle that it is the cause of our desire for eating and drinking and sexual intercourse. And therefore it is appropriate to all intelligent person to reduce them as much as possible and to disregard them, and he should take as his end that which is the end of man qua man: namely, solely the mental representation of the intelligibles, the most certain and the noblest of which being the apprehension, as far as this is possible, of the deity, of the angels and of His other works. Those individuals are those who are permanently with God, and they are those of whom it is said: "I said: Ye are elohim and all of you are children of the Most High" (Ps. 82, 6). This is what is required of man. As far as the others are concerned—those who are separated from God by a veil, being the multitude of the ignorant—the opposite is true: They refrain from all thought and speculation about any intelligible thing and take as their end the sense of touch that is our greatest shame. Accordingly, they have no thought and no speculation except only in relation to eating and copulation, as has been stated: "But these also have erred through wine and stagger through strong drink; the priest and the prophet reel through strong drink, they are confused because of wine" [Is. 28, 7].¹⁵

15. Cf. IBN FALAQUERA, 1894, p. 68, l. 18/p.69, l.6:

"ורבינו משה ז"ל אמר בספרו המורה [במרה] וכבר התבאר כי כל הפסד או חסרון או כל מקרה שיקרה לאדם הוא מצד החומר לא מצד הצורה וכל עבירות האדם ועונותיו וכל מדה רעה הם נמשכות אחר חומרו לא אחר צורתו ומדותיו הטובות כולם הם נמשכות אחר צורתו ואחר אשר התבאר כי הדבר כן ולא היה אפשר שתמצא צורה בלי חומר ויתחייב להיות קשורה זו הצורה האנושית הנכבדת מאד אשר כבר בארנו כי היה צלם אלהים ודמותו בזה החומר העפרי העכור והאפל המביא אותו לכל חסרון ולכל הפסד נתן האל ית' לזו הצורה האנושית יכולת על החומר עד אשר יכניעוהו וישיבוהו אל הדבר האמצעי. ועל כן נחלקו מעלות בני אדם כי יש אנשים שהשתדלותם תמיד לבקש הדבר הנכבד והחיים התמידים כפי חיוב צורתם הנכבדת ולא יחשוב אלא בציור מושכל והשגת אמונה אמיתית בכל דבר ולהדבק בשכל האלחי הנאצל עליו אשר ממנו נמצאה זו הצורה וכל מה שיצריכוהו צרכי החומר לסנופם ולחרפתם הגלויה הוא כואב ודואג מפני שנכשל בו ומתבייש מפני שנוגע בו והוא משתדל להמעיט זו החרפה בכל מאודו ולהשמר ממנו מכל צד. כאדם שקצף עליו המלך וצוהו להוליך הזבל ממקום למקום כדי להבוותו כי זה האדם ישתדל שיתעלם בזה הקלון ואפשר שיוליך ממנו מעט למקום קרוב מפני שלא ילכלך ידיו ורגליו ולא יראנו אדם כן יעשו בני חורין אבל העבד הוא שמח בזה ומראה שלא הטריוהו בזה טורח גדול וילכלך כל גופו בזה הזבל ויוליכוהו בפרסום והוא שוחק וסופק בפיו. וכן עניני בני אדם כי יש מבני אדם אנשים כל כחות החומר אצלם חרפה ובושת ובלבד הרגש המשוש אשר הם חרפה עליו כאשר אומר אריסטו אשר בו נתאוו אל האכילה והשתיה והמשגל ועל כן ראוי לכל משכיל להמעיט מזה כפי מה שאפשר ולהתעלם

The comparison of these citations with Ibn Tibbon's translation allows some remarks on the use of his source by Ibn Falaquera in particular, in the framework

ממנו וישים תכליתו תכלית האדם מצד שהוא אדם והוא ציור המושכלות בלבד והנבחר בהם והנכבד השגת האל ית' והמלאכים ושאר פעולותיו כפי היכולת ואלו האנשים הם עם האל תמיד והם אשר נאמר בעדם אני אמרתי אלהים אתם ובני עליון כולכם וזהו המבוקש מהאדם. אבל האחרים הנסתרים מהאל ית' והם עדת הסכלים הם הפך מאילו בטלו כל מחשבה ועיון במושכל ושמנו תכליתם הרגש המשוש אשר הוא חרפתו הגדולה ואין להם מחשבה ולא עיון אלא באכילה ומשגל בלבד כמו שאמר וגם אליו בין שגו ובשכר תעו כהן ונביא שגו בשכר נבלעו מן היין וכו'.

Cf. MOSES MAIMONIDES, 1969, pp. 431-433 (The passage is not entirely reported for reasons of length, but the crucial parts of the argument are preserved): "It has become clear that all passing away and corruption or deficiency are due solely to matter. [Thus in the case of a man, for instance, it is clear that the deformity of his form, the fact that his limbs do not conform to their nature, [...]] that all this is consequent upon his corrupt matter and not upon his form. Similarly, every living being dies and becomes ill solely because of its matter] and not because of its form. All man's acts of disobedience and sins are consequent upon his matter and not upon his form, whereas all his virtues are consequent upon his form. [For example, man's apprehension of his Creator, his mental representation of every intelligible, his control of his desire and his anger [...]] are all of them consequent upon his form. On the other hand, his eating and drinking and copulation and his passionate desire for these things, [...] are all of them consequent upon his matter]. Inasmuch as it is clear that this is so, and [as according to what has been laid down by divine wisdom] it is impossible for matter to exist without form [and for any of the forms in question to exist without matter,] and as consequently it was necessary that man's very noble form, which, as we have explained, is the image of God and His likeness, should be bound to [earthy], turbid and dark matter which calls down upon man every imperfection and corruption, He granted this human form power, [dominion, rule and control] over matter, in order that it subjugate it, [quell its impulses,] and bring it back to the best and most harmonious state that is possible. In this respect the ranks of the Adamites differ. Among them, there are individuals who aspire always to prefer that which is most noble and to seek a state of perpetual permanence according to what is required by their noble form. They 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, which lets overflow toward them that through which that form exists. [...] A man [...] should take as his end that which is the end of man qua man: namely, solely the mental representation of the intelligibles, the most certain and the noblest of which being the apprehension, in as far as this is possible, of the deity, of the angels and of His other works. Those individuals are those who are permanently with God. [...] This is what is required of man; [I mean to say that this is his end]. As far as the others are concerned—those who are separated from God by a veil, being the multitude of the ignorant—the opposite is true: They refrain from all thought and speculation (עיון; cf. MOSES MAIMONIDES, 1969: perception) about any intelligible thing and take as their end the sense that is our greatest shame, [I mean the sense of touch]. Accordingly, they have no thought and no reflection except only in relation to eating and copulation, as has been stated [clearly with regard to these wretched people wholly given over the eating, drinking, and copulating. It says]: "But these also have erred through wine, [and through strong drink are out of the way]" (Is. 28, 7).

of his educational purpose, namely through his presentation of the text and his terminological choices. The analysis confirms some specific traits of Ibn Falaquera as a translator,¹⁶ notably the consistency of his terminological choices¹⁷ and the quality of his literal translations, even if he does not hesitate in adapting and simplifying his source, by adding elements to the text, and omitting some words or some parts considered redundant or useless. This last aspect is not just a stylistic feature, but it reveals the author purpose and has doctrinal consequences. Notably, it has to be understood by recalling that Ibn Falaquera's translation is not made for its own sake, but it is primarily intended to lead to the comprehension and the interpretation of the *Guide's* text.

The first quotation contains an interesting example of Ibn Falaquera's interpretation and clarification of Maimonides' text that brings him to set aside the literal translation. Among the people who are reached by the overflow (of the agent intellect), that determines different qualities in more or less perfect men, the class of the governors, the legislators and the augurs is characterised—Ibn Falaquera quotes—by the fact that the overflow reaches only the imaginative faculty, and not the rational one. This is due to a lack of the rational faculty, either in its natural disposition or deriving from the “insufficiency of training.”¹⁸ This latter locution corresponds to the Arabic *qilla al-irtiyād*, which means “insufficiency of training/frequentation/seek.”¹⁹ Ibn Tibbon translated it as *מעוט התלמודות* (“insufficiency of learning”). Ibn Falaquera, for his part, interprets the text and makes it explicit, thus slightly modifying his model by adding an element; he translates it as “insufficiency of custom in those sciences” (*מעוט רגילות בחכמות האלה*). By this minor modification, Ibn Falaquera intends to make clear and to underline that Maimonides here refers to the training in speculative sciences, with which man should be acquainted to attain perfection. He implicitly refers to the beginning of the chapter, where these sciences are mentioned

16. Cf. SHIFFMAN, 1999. Several aspects of Ibn Falaquera's language, his translation style and his terminology have been analysed by JOSPE, 1988, pp. 18-29.

17. The translation of the Arabic term *ḡibla* (“nature, natural constitution of the body”), in the first two citations, can be an example. Ibn Falaquera always renders it as *yetsirah* (“creation”); this term renders also the Arabic *fiṭra*, designating all human inborn dispositions from the nature of a man's creation. Ibn Tibbon is less consistent and translates it as *bri'ah* (“creation”), more general, or *yetsirah*. See Ibn Falaquera's critique of Ibn Tibbon's translation of *fiṭra* in IBN FALAQUERA, 2001, p. 56. Cf. KLATZKIN, I, p. 56.

18. Cf. *supra*.

19. Cf. the French translation in MOÏSE MAÏMONIDE, 2004, II, 37, p. 291: « peu d'exercice. »

among the ways through which man can attain the highest degree of perfection and excellence, as well as proximity to the Creator. "Man can attain this excellent degree only after his intellect has passed from potentiality to actuality, he has acquired the knowledge of sciences as far as men can know, and he has apprehended God—may He be exalted—and the separate intellects and the rest of the created beings as far as man can perceive."²⁰

Ibn Falaquera's source undoubtedly allows this interpretation: in fact, a close cross-reference can be pointed out at the beginning of *Guide* II, 36 concerning the essence of prophecy.²¹ Here, Maimonides clearly mentions the perfection in the speculative sciences as a necessary factor for man's ultimate perfection, namely prophecy. Moreover, two further requirements are mentioned in the same chapter, and Ibn Falaquera recalls them through his second quotation. These are: "The perfection of the imaginative faculty through natural disposition (*yetsirah*) and the perfection of moral habits through the turning-away of thought from all body pleasures."²² An additional remark concerns an omission in the quotation, that can be explained by Ibn Falaquera's wish to make his source unambiguous. In the passage dealing with the degree of prophets, whose both imaginative and rational faculties receive the overflow of the agent intellect, Maimonides' text reiterates the necessary condition that makes the receiving possible: a characteristic of the class of prophets is that "the imaginative faculty is in a state of ultimate perfection."²³ For Ibn Falaquera, it is necessary for the reader to understand that this absolute perfection must concern both faculties—imaginative and rational, and not only the imaginative one—, while Maimonides' text could be ambiguous and contradicting since it seems to underline just the ultimate perfection of the imaginative faculty. For this reason, he omits a part of the original statement, so that the quotation coherently affirms that: "this overflow reaches both

20. Cf. IBN FALAQUERA, 1894, p. 13, l. 6-9.

21. MOSES MAIMONIDES, 1969, p. 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. This is the highest degree of man and the ultimate term of perfection that can exist for his species [...]. And it is not something that may be attained solely through perfection in the speculative sciences and through improvement of moral habits, even if all of them have become as fine and good as can be. There still is needed in addition the highest possible degree of perfection of the imaginative faculty in respect of its original natural disposition."

22. Cf. IBN FALAQUERA, 1894, p. 21, l. 6-8.

23. Cf. *supra*.

faculties—I mean both the rational and the imaginative—in a state of ultimate perfection.”

The second quotation completes the argument, and allows some more remarks on Ibn Falaquera’s terminology and interpretation. The perfect individual would perceive only necessary matters, namely the secrets of the existent and its causes, God and his angels. The object of his science (דעת “knowledge”; Ibn Tibbon translates ידיעה; Arabic *‘ilm*) “would only be correct opinions (עצות נכונות; Arabic *arā’ ṣaḥīḥa*, ‘correct views, opinions’) and general conducts for the well-being of men with one another.” Ibn Falaquera correctly interprets the passage and understands that Maimonides here distinguishes between the knowledge and the perception that derive from man’s speculative perfection, and the perfection of moral habits and rules of conduct. The second kind of perfection allows man to acquire the science of *correct* opinions or intellectual conceptions (עצות נכונות).²⁴ Ibn Falaquera’s translation renders more precisely the Arabic original (*arā’ ṣaḥīḥa*) than Ibn Tibbon’s one. In fact, the latter’s rendering “true opinions” (דעות אמיתיות) is confusing: true and false relate to necessary intellectual knowledge, while correct and wrong, as well as good and evil (טוב ורע), relate to another faculty of the intellect, which deals with practical intellect, generally accepted things, ethics and social life.²⁵

In the third quotation, the Maimonidean text is widely abbreviated and adapted: Ibn Falaquera skips words and parts that he considers negligible or redundant in regard to the intention of the passage, pointing out that matter is the cause of deficiency and corruption, as well as transgression and vice, whereas the form is what causes the man to be disposed to his end *qua* man, and because of the form he is the “image of God and His likeness.”²⁶ Biblical citations supporting Maimonides’ argument from a scriptural point of view are largely

24. On the term עצה for Falaquera, see JOSPE, 1988, p. 24, n. 147. The author translates it as “contemplation,” on the basis of *Moreh ha-Moreh* III, 51 (cf. IBN FALAQUERA, 2001, p. 323), where Ibn Falaquera describes the term עצה as the “employment of thought for intellectual things, which is *ra’y* in Arabic, which is intellectual conception (ציר).”

25. Cf. MOSES MAIMONIDES, 1969, I, 2, pp. 23-26. On the distinction between necessary and intelligible things and possible ones, both on textual and doctrinal bases, see SIRAT & DI DONATO (dir.), 2011, pp. 91-97; 204-210. See also IBN FALAQUERA, 2001, I, 2, pp. 124-125, where in his own commentary to *Guide* I, 2 Ibn Falaquera distinguishes between speculative intellect, through which man knows necessary things that do not change, and practical intellect, dealing with general accepted things, good and bad, correct and wrong.

26. Cf. *supra*.

cut too: Ibn Falaquera keeps only the first one. The intervention in the text is also observable through minor additions and elucidations, notably at the beginning of the quotation, where its main content is stated. This shows once again how Ibn Falaquera uses his source to interpret it for the sake of his readers' education. Corruption and deficiency are due to matter and not to form—as it has been said—and Ibn Falaquera explains that notion by adding that this is the case also for “any accidents that occur to man.”²⁷ This minor addition underlines the doctrinal distinction between all necessary things, that pertain to form and perfection—*i.e.* the domain of reason and intelligible things—, and accidents and possible things that pertain to matter,²⁸ corporality and to the animal nature of man hindering the perception of separate intellects.²⁹

To the list of literal quotations from the *Guide*, one occurrence taken from *Iggeret ha-ḥalom* should be added. Together with the *Eight Chapters*, the short ethical essay that serves as an introduction to the treatise *Avot* of the *Commentary to the Mishnah*, the *Guide* is among the sources that clearly inspired Ibn Falaquera's arguments in his ethical treatise *Iggeret ha-ḥalom*. Despite that, the book does not contain as many literal quotations from the *Guide* as one would expect. Nonetheless, at least one can be recorded. The quotation is taken from *Guide* I, 34, where Maimonides insists on the reasons why one should not begin his study with metaphysics, on the necessity of learning sciences in a proper order and on the importance of preliminary studies. The short quotation does not raise significant remarks in comparison to the original Arabic text and to Ibn Tibbon's translation. The branches of science are listed, as well as the order that should be respected in studying them: “Ha-Rambam wrote. He who wishes to attain the limit of human perfection, must necessarily first occupy himself with the art of Logic, next with Mathematics in their proper order, then Physics, and then Metaphysics.”³⁰

27. Cf. IBN FALAQUERA, 1894, p. 68.

28. Cf. MOSES MAIMONIDES, 1969, II, p. 239, Introduction, twenty-fourth premise: “Whatsoever is something in potential is necessarily endowed with matter, for possibility is always in matter.”

29. Cf. MOSES MAIMONIDES, 1969, III, 9, pp. 436-437: “Matter is a strong veil preventing the apprehension of that which is separate from matter [...]. Hence whenever our intellect aspires to apprehend the deity or one of the intellects, there subsists this great veil interposed between the two.”

30. Cf. the presentation and the reference to sources by MALTER, 1910-1911, p. 491, l. 13-16: “וכתב הרמב”ם והצורה להשיג תכלית השלמות האנושי יצטרך בהכרח להתעסק תחלה במלאכת ההגיון ואחר כך בלמודיות על הסדר ואחר כך בטבעיות ואחר כך באלהיות עד כאן.”

The *Guide* in late works

We shall now consider the two works whose content directly and explicitly concerns the *Guide*: the *Moreh ha-Moreh* and the *Letter regarding the Guide* (*Mikhtav 'al devar ha-Moreh*).³¹ We expect to find more and different kinds of evidence to enrich the description of Ibn Falaquera's use of this source, using its translation as a first analytical criterion.

The first, preliminary and general, remark that can be formulated concerns Ibn Falaquera's point of view on translation, and in particular on the translation of the *Guide*. In these two compositions, the author comments on the way the reader should approach Maimonides' text in order to understand it properly, by referring explicitly to the quality of the two already made Hebrew translations. The first explicit comment occurs in the *Letter regarding the Guide*.³² While replying to the accusers of Maimonides and recalling the Master's clear designation of "those for whom reading his book is appropriate and those for whom it is not," because of their education in the principles of sciences,³³ Ibn Falaquera underlines that "since most of the books of science are written in Arabic, the one who reads that book (*i.e.* the *Guide*) in Arabic is not confused as the one who reads it according to the translation, notably the second one."³⁴ The *Guide* is a book of science and as the majority of the books of science it has been composed in Arabic: in order to correctly understand the author's intention, one should read it either in the original Arabic text, or as an alternative only in Samuel Ibn Tibbon's Hebrew translation. In fact, the first translation (Ibn Tibbon's), although it contains some

Cf. MOSES MAIMONIDES, 1969, p. 75.

31. Cf. respectively the editions of IBN FALAQUERA, 2001 and LEMLER, 2012. Cf. the first publication of the *Letter in the editio princeps* of Abba Mari ben Moses ha-Yarhi, in IBN FALAQUERA, 1838. See also the presentation by JOSPE, 1988, pp. 62-67, 75-76.

32. Cf. LEMLER, 2012, pp. 48-50.

33. Cf. LEMLER, 2012, pp. 48-49. A passage where Maimonides refers to the addressees of his treatise is found in MOSES MAIMONIDES, 1969, I, 68, p. 166: "As this treatise has been composed only for the benefit of those who have philosophized and have acquired knowledge of what has become clear with reference to the soul and all its faculties (*cf. infra*, p. 18). Accordingly, in the following paragraph, Ibn Falaquera affirms that if the wise man expects to know the very intention of Our master in this book (*i.e.* the *Guide*) through a repetitive reading, without a great speculation, he would be disappointed in his expectation [...] because his (*i.e.* Maimonides') intention can be understood only through the reading of other books which are the principles (*'iqqarim*) of books of science."

34. Cf. LEMLER, 2012, p. 50.

“mistakes in a few places, which the translator could have amended,”³⁵ can still be accepted and read, while the second one (Al-Ḥarizi’s) should be ignored, because it is detestable and unreliable, full of mistakes and misinterpretations that cannot be corrected.

The importance of respecting the intention of the text and of the notions meant to be transmitted is a fundamental aspect of Ibn Falaquera’s relationship to sources and of his conception of translation. This topic occurs very clearly also in another passage dealing explicitly with the question of the translation of the *Guide*, this time in the *Moreh ha-Moreh*. At the end of the commentary, Ibn Falaquera devotes the last of the three annexed conclusive chapters—the *Third Chapter*³⁶—to correct and comment on “the words that haven’t been properly translated and do not convey the notion that was intended by them. This book has been composed with a great precision (קדקד) and defense from errors, so it is necessary for the translation to be erudite and clean from errors so that the intention of the author will not be lost, since a lot of words in this book convey an interior notion that can only be understood by the wise man who is familiar with the books of science where those words are explained. And if they are not translated properly, the notion indicated by those words would be lost.”³⁷ According to this perspective, following the *Guide*’s internal division—and sometimes even including sections that he did not comment on in the main commentary—Ibn Falaquera explains some words and locutions, showing why Ibn Tibbon’s translation is wrong, defective or misinterpreting Maimonides’ intent; then, he discusses the reasons for his own different terminological choices.³⁸

35. *Ibid.*

36. IBN FALAQUERA, 2001, pp. 341-365. Some of the discussions that Ibn Falaquera devotes to terminology and to the translation of terms in this chapter have been taken as basis by Y. Shiffman in his analysis of the relation between Ibn Falaquera’s translation and the ones of Ibn Tibbon and Al-Ḥarizi, cf. SHIFFMAN, 1999, pp. 47-61.

37. IBN FALAQUERA, 2001, p. 341.

38. The “question of language,” that is to say the *leitmotiv* of the language of science and philosophy, of the reading of Arabic texts and of the utility of their Hebrew translations, occurs in many of Ibn Falaquera’s writings, where he expresses the purpose for his compositions. In the introduction to the *Opinions of philosophers* (*De’ot ha-filosofim*), he writes: “I have translated these opinions from the Arabic language into the Hebrew language, and composed them from books that are widely distributed, so that one who wants to know them can find them all collected in one book, and will not need to weary himself by reading all [those] books [...]. The second reason is that most of what has been translated of these books into our language has been corrupted, and they are not clear

A further remark concerns two elements of these two works that are particularly relevant and have to be taken into consideration, compared to the previous group of texts: their literary genre and the chronology of their composition.

One of the most valuable characteristic of the commentary on the *Guide* is to be a third, partial translation of Maimonides' treatise, because of the quotations contained in it. Of course, the practice of citing the *lemmata* of the commented text is not specific of Ibn Falaquera, but belongs to the genre of the extensive commentary, best represented in the Arabic philosophical tradition by Al-Fārābī and Averroes. However, this methodological and literary feature can be regarded as a coherent consequence of Ibn Falaquera's purpose in writing his work and of his conception of translation. He intends to comment on some sections of Maimonides' *Guide*, notably to discuss the philosophical matters contained in the book.³⁹ Accordingly, the primary aim of ensuring that Maimonides' intent and the meaning of the text are correctly understood by the reader is strictly related to the accessibility of the text: it explains the importance Ibn Falaquera confers on the accuracy of translation, as well as his critique towards the flaws of the two existing Hebrew versions. Therefore, quoting the *Guide* in a new and original Hebrew version is not a mere literal exercise, but is a necessity and acquires a particular doctrinal relevance.

as they should be, so that one who studies these translated books cannot [understand] them in their true meaning" (cf. JOSPE, 1988, p. 50). The second part of *The beginning of wisdom* (*Reshit ḥokhma*) contains a description of sciences, focusing on the specific object matter and intention of each one of them and on the sections that they are composed of. In the first chapter, dealing with the utility of this part, Ibn Falaquera justifies his choice of writing it in Hebrew: he describes his book as "an introduction to sciences for those who have the leisure to occupy themselves with these sciences by [reading] books which have been translated into Hebrew (*leshon ha-qodesh*) [...]. His intention has been to compose [books] on these sciences in Hebrew because it is good that one studies them in our language instead of studying them in another language" (cf. IBN FALAQUERA, 1902, p. 21). A similar argument, according to which writing the treatise in Hebrew responded to the need to make its benefit greater and more universal, is also affirmed in the *Book of degrees* (*Sefer ha-ma'alot*) and in the introduction to the *Guide to the Guide* (*Moreh ha-Moreh*): "The intention has been to compose (I intended to compose, in the *Moreh ha-Moreh*) it in the Holy language so that its benefit would be more general" (cf. IBN FALAQUERA, 1984, p. 11; *id.*, 2001, p. 117). The philosophical dictionary introducing the *De'ot ha-filosofim* can be added as a further example of Ibn Falaquera's carefulness in regard to terminology and of the methodological importance he accorded to explaining his lexical choices; cf. ZONTA, 2004, pp. 24-49.

39. Cf. IBN FALAQUERA, 2001, p. 112.

In explaining Maimonides' teachings, Ibn Falaquera's commentary contains references and literal citations of other philosophers' writings and opinions, with the collateral result of offering a wide collection for the study, explanation and interpretation of Maimonides' sources, as well as of his doctrinal background. This literal feature is in fact a methodological one: Maimonides' *Guide* must be read by means of other sources that contain the foundations of sciences. This necessity is affirmed in his *Letter regarding the Guide*, where Ibn Falaquera criticises those pretending to read and correctly understand the book on their own, just through a repetitive reading, without a deep speculation and the study of sciences. Maimonides' intention, according to Ibn Falaquera, can be understood only "through the reading of other books which are the principles (*'iqqarim*) of the books of science."

On the other hand, quoting other sources shows the close connection between the commentary and the general purpose, outcome and method characterising Ibn Falaquera's compositions, despite the differences of specific subject matters and goals. I refer in particular to the educational aim of his production, to his attitude as an historian of philosophy conveying and interpreting opinions of different authors on specific topics, and finally to his encyclopedic perspective.

Concerning the purpose of the *Moreh ha-Moreh*, an additional aspect shall be noted, that can be considered as a further evidence of the coherence, in motives and aims, of Ibn Falaquera's production. Apologetics characterises some of Ibn Falaquera's writings, and notably the defence of the study and the teaching of philosophy in his coreligionists' hostile eyes. The *Iggeret ha-wikkuaḥ* (*The Epistle of the Debate*) is certainly the clearest example. The author's purpose is formulated at the beginning of the text, consisting in: "Explaining that the study of the true sciences, by whoever is worthy of them and whom God in his mercy has favoured with an intellect to discover their depths, is not prohibited from the point of view of our Law, and that the truth hidden in them does not contradict a word of our belief."⁴⁰

The defence of philosophy, as an implicit or explicit affirmation of its legitimacy and of the necessity of studying science—in order to complete the education of the seeker of wisdom and to attain the truth as it is—, is a motive recurring in many of

40. HARVEY, 1987, pp. 14-15. The book belongs to the first part of Ibn Falaquera's production and has been inspired by the 1230s Maimonidean controversy. It has been composed after the second stage of the controversy facing anti-rationalists against philosophy in general and against Maimonides' books in particular, which took place in the first half of the 13th century. See HARVEY, 1992.

Ibn Falaquera's compositions. This peculiar element can be remarked even in the treatises qualified as introductory works—as well as in the encyclopedic ones—whose primary goal is to teach and to provide the reader with philosophical sources that could make science and Aristotelian doctrines accessible.⁴¹ This can be in some way assumed also in the case of the *Moreh ha-Moreh*, especially when taking into account the chronological and cultural circumstances of its redaction.

The *Moreh ha-Moreh* belongs to the last works of Ibn Falaquera's production—at the end, a colophon by the author states that the book has been completed in the year 5040/1280.⁴² A decade and very few other writings divide the commentary and the *Letter regarding the Guide*, Ibn Falaquera's last work. Although Maimonides lies in the background of Ibn Falaquera's entire production, the *Guide of the Perplexed* emerges as the explicit object of these two works—a commentary and an apologetic epistle, composed at the end of our author's activity. Exactly this period is influenced by the contemporary polemics around philosophy and science.

The *Letter regarding the Guide*, in particular, shows a manifest implication of Ibn Falaquera in the Maimonidean controversy, in its third phase.⁴³ The epistle, which is Ibn Falaquera's last work and must have been written in 1290 or in the immediately following years, was composed as a defence of Maimonides, in reaction to the accusations of Shlomo Petit urging the burning of Maimonides' writings, and in particular the *Guide*.⁴⁴ Given its literary genre, the *Letter regarding the Guide* is not particularly relevant as a philological evidence for an overview on Ibn Falaquera as a translator of the *Guide*, despite the fact that Maimonides' book is the subject matter of the epistle. However, it offers interesting elements for our interpretation. It contains three short quotations inserted by Ibn Falaquera to support his reasoning, particularly through two key arguments.

One of Ibn Falaquera's defensive arguments consists in affirming that the critiques and the condemnations of the *Guide* have no ground: Maimonides' purpose is to prevent heresy and perplexity among Jews, and to contradict the doctrines of philosophers that could cause them. A highly representative

41. Cf. IVRY, 2000, p. 393 (in addition to *The Epistle of the Debate*, the *Beginning of Wisdom*, the *Book of Degrees* and the *Book of the Seeker* are qualified as writings showing an apologetic character). Cf. JOSPE, 1988, pp. 80-92; HARVEY, 1998.

42. Cf. IBN FALAQUERA, 2001, p. 365.

43. Cf. BEN-SASSON, JOSPE, & SCHWARTZ, 2008. See also RIBERA-FLORIT, 2009; JOSPE, 1993.

44. Cf. LEMLER, 2012, p. 28.

example concerns one of the most problematic philosophical subjects from a religious point of view: the question of the creation or eternity of the world. It is noteworthy that the two quotations mentioned by Ibn Falaquera as textual evidences to reinforce his argument are taken from two of the chapters dealing with this difficult doctrine (*Guide* II, 13-31). The author wants his reader to be aware of the context, even if the citations serve a general purpose: both quotations are introduced by the precise cross-reference to Maimonides' text. Through these citations, Ibn Falaquera shows that the Master's account clearly does not demolish or contradict the Law, on the contrary it serves as "a great wall" around it, to defend it against those who threaten it. This metaphor is contained in the second quotation (*Guide* II, 17):

You ought to keep this notion. For it is a great wall that I have built around the Law, that surrounds it warding off the stones of all those who throw them against it.⁴⁵

The harmony between Maimonides' words and the scriptural assertion is testified through the first quotation (*Guide* II, 23), dealing with the perplexity that that can be derived by the arguments on the eternity of the world:

He said: I have drawn your attention to this in order that you should not be enticed. For someone may lead you into error through setting forth a doubt concerning the creation of the world in time, and you may be very prompt to let yourself be tempted. For the opinion of the eternity contains the destruction of the Law and a false assertion with regard to deity—blessed He be. Be therefore always suspicious in your mind and accept the authority of the prophets who are the foundation of the well-being of the human species.⁴⁶

45. Cf. LEMLER, 2012, p. 42:

"צריך שתשמור בזה הענין כי הוא חומה עצומה בניתיה סביב התורה מקיף בה ימנע אבן כל משכיל אליה ע"כ."
 Cf. MOSES MAIMONIDES, 1969, p. 298: "You ought to memorize this notion. For it is a great wall that I have built around the Law, a wall that surrounds it warding off the stones of all those who project these missiles against it" (Cf. MOÏSE MAÏMONIDE, 2004, II, p. 137: « pour la protéger contre les pierres qu'on lui lance »).

46. Cf. LEMLER, 2012, p. 41:

"אמר: ואמנם העירותיך על זה מפני שלא תתפתה, כי איפשר שיטען אחד מבני אדם בספק יספיקוהו בחדוש העולם, ותמהר להתפתות. כי באמונת הקדמות בכללה, סתירת התורה ודבור כזב בחק האלוה ית'. והיה תמיד חושד שכלך ומקבל מהנביאים שהם יסוד תיקון המין האנושי ע"כ."

It is interesting to remark that this passage is cited also in the *Moreh ha-Moreh*,⁴⁷ but Ibn Falaquera's rendering does not entirely coincide. Some differences probably depend on textual transmission, being variants of terms having similar orthography.⁴⁸ Other differences are due to terminological variants and Ibn Falaquera's modifications to the text. For instance, the translation of the term *opinion* (*ra'y*, "point of view, opinion") that occurs in the penultimate sentence is not rigorous. Ibn Falaquera's quotation contains אמונת הקדמות ("the belief of the eternity").⁴⁹ The choice of אמונה in the epistle is singular. A consistent translation of the Arabic would have altered the meaning of the text.⁵⁰ Ibn Falaquera seems to interpret Maimonides' purpose suggesting that, since the eternity of the world cannot be demonstrated,⁵¹ it can be considered as a "belief"—and not a speculative opinion, an intellectual conception. This kind

Cf. MOSES MAIMONIDES, 1969, p. 321: "I have drawn your attention to this in order that you should not be deceived. For someone may someday lead you into vain imaginings (cf. MAÏMONIDE, 2004, II, p. 182: « t'induire en erreur », יסעך) through setting forth a doubt concerning the creation of the world in time, and you may be very quick to let yourself be deceived. For this opinion contains the destruction of the foundation of the Law and a presumptuous assertion (cf. MOÏSE MAÏMONIDE, 2004, II, p. 182: « et proclame une hérésie », סרה) with regard to deity. Be therefore always suspicious in your mind as to this point and accept the authority of the two prophets who are the pillars of the well-being of the human species."

47. IBN FALAQUERA, 2001, p. 283, l. 12-15.

48. For example: יסעך, in the edition of the *Letter*, should be probably be read יסעך* ("lead you to error, deceive you") which correspond to the *Moreh ha-Moreh* יסעך > יסעך* and to the Arabic *yuwahhimuka* ("make you wrongly think, lead you to error"). A similar case certainly concerns כזב ("falsehood") in the edition of the *Letter*, whose orthography is closed to סרה ("odious, bad thing") which occurs in the *Moreh ha-Moreh* and in the translations of Ibn Tibbon and Al-Ḥarizi. About this latter term, see the commentary on the Arabic term *'iftiyāt* ("transgression, offense", from the 8th form of the verb meaning "to transgress, to act contrary to a law"), and on the expression דבר סרה in MUNK, 1857, p. 269, n. 3. In the next line, the Arabic term *'umda* ("base, support, pillar") has been translated in the *Moreh ha-Moreh*—and by Ibn Tibbon—as עמוד ("pillar"), keeping the same root of the Arabic. Nonetheless, in the *Letter* Ibn Falaquera has chosen the more interpretative term יסוד ("foundation"). However, the two terms are orthographically similar and this second reading could be a graphic corruption.

49. The term is translated as דעת in the *Moreh ha-Moreh*—and in Ibn Tibbon's translation—and also in other chapters, like MOSES MAIMONIDES, 1969, III, 17, and in one of the quotations from IBN FALAQUERA, 1894, (cf. *supra*, n. 10).

50. Cf. *supra*, n. 21, on the translation of the Arabic *ra'y*.

51. Cf. MOSES MAIMONIDES, 1969, II, 23, p. 322.

of belief is like the one coming from the Torah, according to which the world has been produced in time. The addition specifying which opinion is concerned, *i. e.* “the belief of the eternity,” that is “the destruction of the Law,” aims to avoid any possible confusion in the interpretation of the passage. Since it is extrapolated from its context, one could infer that it refers to the opinion arguing the creation of the world, which is the only one mentioned in the passage.

The last argument of Ibn Falaquera’s defence states—to sum it up—that it is not surprising that the *Guide* has been misinterpreted, since it has been read by people lacking the necessary knowledge to study it. As already noticed, this part of the text deals with the necessity of a deep speculation in order to read the *Guide*, and with the related questions of the access to sources and of language. The *Guide*’s very intention is misunderstood by the opponents to philosophy because of their ignorance of the truth contained in the Arabic scientific books, on which one must rely in order to correctly interpret Maimonides’ text. In addition, the opponents get confused since they depend on sometimes wrong and misleading Hebrew translations, since they do not know Arabic. It would be better, for them and for people for whom the *Guide* is not appropriate, not to read that book at all. To support this point, Ibn Falaquera cites a short representative text alluding to the recipient of Maimonides’ work:

I have composed this treatise only for those who have philosophized and have acquired knowledge of what has become clear with reference to the soul and its faculties.⁵²

This *ad hoc* quotation has been accurately chosen: it is drawn from a chapter where Maimonides explains the assertion according to which God is the intellect, the intelligent subject and the intelligible object; he remarks that this difficult notion will be obscure and incomprehensible for “anyone who has not studied the books that have been composed concerning the intellect.”⁵³ In fact, according to Ibn Falaquera, his treatise “has been composed only for those who have philosophized.” Hence, in the *Letter* the specific comments on the language and on the Hebrew translations of the *Guide* are closely related to the general—and to

52. Cf. LEMLER, 2012, p. 48:

“זה המאמר לא חברתיו אלא למי שהתפלסף וידע מה שהתבאר מדבר הנפש וכוחותיה.”

Cf. MOSES MAIMONIDES, 1969, I, 68, p. 166: “As this treatise has been composed only for (the benefit of) those who have philosophized and have acquired knowledge of what has become clear with reference to the soul and all its faculties.”

53. MOSES MAIMONIDES, 1969, p. 166.

a certain extent apologetic—question of the necessity of education in sciences and philosophy, through their Arabic sources. This argument, in turn, echoes the topic of the defence of philosophy and of its legitimacy.

Although the *Moreh ha-Moreh* is not a strictly apologetic work, these themes and motives characterize it and represent a link between the commentary and the *Letter*. The commentary appears as a suitable instrument to study Maimonides' text in the convenient and appropriate way; the principles upon which Ibn Falaquera's method and aim lie seem to be reaffirmed in the *Letter*. Ibn Falaquera comments upon the philosophical parts of the *Guide* by offering an accurate reading through a reliable Hebrew translation and by conveying the selected Arabic sources, whose knowledge is necessary to correctly interpret and understand it. This strategy not only responds coherently to Ibn Falaquera's intention of teaching and transmitting philosophy, but actually applies the indispensable textual and speculative tools serving as a defence of Maimonides' fundamental philosophical treatise against its opponents.

Conclusion

A wide perspective into Falaquera's production shows that, when instructing his coreligionists in philosophy and sciences to make them acquainted with Greco-Arabic wisdom and doctrines—by means of quotes, paraphrases or abridgments of philosophical sources—he does not include significantly Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*. This is surprising. However, the analysis of the occurrences of the quotations from the *Guide* allows some comments that highlight the coherence of the purpose and method of Ibn Falaquera's writings.

One can remark that the educational and encyclopedic aim characterizing Ibn Falaquera's work does not concern the *Guide* in the very same way as other writings. In his view, the *Guide* did not serve as a source of introductory philosophical knowledge nor needed it to be made available to Jews who did not know Arabic, since it was already accessible through two Hebrew translations. Nevertheless, the great philosophical work of the Master *did* need to be correctly read, interpreted and studied, in particular to prevent the misunderstandings and the critiques by the opponents to philosophy. As it has been observed for the other texts partially translated by Ibn Falaquera, the Hebrew translation is not the purpose in itself; this is even clearer for the *Guide*. The quotations from the *Guide* occurring in early educational writings, because of their content, Ibn Falaquera's occasional textual interventions, as well as his terminological choices, all reveal the author's primary intention to lead the reader to the correct comprehension of the text. Additionally, the *Guide* is not a preparatory writing, a book that the

“seeker of wisdom” can start his education with. On the contrary, it has been “composed only for those who have philosophized,” who have already studied the books of science on logic, physics and metaphysics. These same sources must be used to read it and to understand its intent.

The methodological and theoretical features supporting this point of view are discussed in the *Letter regarding the Guide*, in order to contradict the arguments of Maimonides’ detractors and to defend his great philosophical work against them. Their practical application can be observed in the commentary to the *Guide*. As for the *Moreh ha-Moreh*, in particular, it has been remarked that the defence of Maimonides and of philosophy can undoubtedly be included among the proper intentions of the text, despite its literary genre. The apologetic perspective, then, confers a specific meaning on Ibn Falaquera’s new translation, his discussion of language, his textual and terminological choices, and his use of other philosophical sources to explain Maimonides arguments and doctrines.

Bibliography

BEN-SASSON Haim Hillel, JOSPE Raphael & SCHWARTZ Dov, 2008, “Maimonidean Controversy” in SKOLNIK Fred (ed.), *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 13, 2nd edition, Macmillan Reference USA in association with the Keter Publishing House, Detroit, pp. 371-381.

NICOLAUS DAMASCENUS, 1989, *De Plantis: Five Translations*, ed. DROSSAART LULOFS Hendrik Joan & POORTMAN Emilie L. J., Brill, Leiden, 732 p.

FONTAINE Resianne, 1995, “Why is the Sea Salty? The Discussion of Salinity in Hebrew texts of the Thirteenth Century” in *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, n° 2, vol. 5, pp. 195-218, DOI : 10.1017/S0957423900002022.

FREUDENTHAL Gad, 2000, “Providence, Astrology, and Celestial Influences on the Sublunar World in Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera’s *De’ot ha Filosofim*” in HARVEY Steven (ed.), *The Medieval Hebrew Encyclopedias of Science and Philosophy*, Kluwer Academic Publisher, Dordrecht, pp. 335-370.

GATTI Roberto, 2003, *Ermeneutica e filosofia. Introduzione al pensiero ebraico medioevale (secoli XII-XIV)*, Il melangolo, Genova, 227 p.

- HARVEY Steven, 1987, *Falaquera's Epistle of the Debate. An Introduction to Jewish Philosophy*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 155 p.
- HARVEY Steven, 1992, "Falaquera's Epistle of the Debate and the Maimonidean Controversy of the 1230s" in LINK-SALINGER Ruth (ed.), *Torah and Wisdom. Essays in Honor of Arthur Hyman*, Shengold, New York, pp. 75-86.
- HARVEY Steven, 1998, "The Quiddity of Philosophy According to Averroes and Falaquera, a Muslim Philosopher and his Jewish Interpreter" in AERTSEN Jan A. & SPEER Andreas (hrsg. v.), *Was ist Philosophie im Mittelalter*, de Gruyter (coll. *Miscellanea Medievalia*, n° 26), Berlin, pp. 904-913.
- HARVEY Steven, 2000, "Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera's *De'ot ha-filosofim*: Its Sources and Use of Sources" in HARVEY Steven (ed.), *The Medieval Hebrew Encyclopedias of Science and Philosophy*, Kluwer Academic Publisher, Dordrecht, pp. 211-247.
- HARVEY Steven, 2014, "Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera" in ZALTA Edward N. (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Fall, Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, Stanford, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2014/entries/falaquera/>.
- HERSCHEL LEVINE Mordecai (ed.), 1976, *Falaquera's Book of the Seeker*, Yeshiva University Press, New York, 118 p.
- SHEM TOV BEN JOSEPH IBN FALAQUERA, 1778, *Sefer ha-mevaqqesh* [Hebrew], Den Haag, 104 p.
- SHEM TOV BEN JOSEPH IBN FALAQUERA, 1838, "Mikhtav 'al devar ha Moreh" in ABBA MARI BEN MOSES HA YARHI, *Minhat qena'ot* [Hebrew], ed. BISLICHES Mordecai, Anton Schmid, Pressburg, pp. 182-185.
- SHEM TOV BEN JOSEPH IBN FALAQUERA, 1894, *Sefer ha-ma'alot* [Hebrew], ed. VENETIANER Ludwik Calvary, Berlin, 103 p.
- SHEM TOV BEN JOSEPH IBN FALAQUERA, 1902, *Reshit hokhmah* [Hebrew], ed. DAVID Moritz, Poppelauer, Berlin, 92 p.
- SHEM TOV BEN JOSEPH IBN FALAQUERA, 1988a, "Sefer ha-nefesh" in JOSPE Raphael (ed.), *Torah and Sophia, The Life and Thought of*

Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera, Hebrew Union College Press, Cincinnati, pp. 275-409.

SHEM TOV BEN JOSEPH IBN FALAQUERA, 1988b, "Shlemut ha-ma'asim" in JOSPE Raphael (ed.), *Torah and Sophia, The Life and Thought of Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera*, Hebrew Union College Press, Cincinnati, pp. 411-454.

SHEM TOV BEN JOSEPH IBN FALAQUERA, 2001, *Moreh ha-Moreh* [Hebrew], ed. SHIFFMAN Yair, World Union for Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, 389 p.

IVRY Alfred, 2000, "The Soul of the Hebrew Encyclopedists" in HARVEY Steven (ed.), *The Medieval Hebrew Encyclopedias of Science and Philosophy*, Kluwer Academic Publisher, Dordrecht, pp. 390-413.

JOSPE Raphael (ed.), 1988, *Torah and Sophia: The Life and Thought of Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera*, Hebrew Union College Press, Cincinnati, 520 p.

JOSPE Raphael, 1993, "Faith and Reason: The Controversy over Philosophy in Jewish History" in KAJON Irene (a cura di), *La Storia della Filosofia Ebraica*, CEDAM, Padova, pp. 99-135.

KLATZKIN Jacob, 1928-1933, *Thesaurus philosophicus linguae hebraicae*, Eschkol, Berlin, 338 + 329 p.

LEMLER David, 2012, "Shem Tov Falaquera's *Letter regarding the Guide* – Critical Edition" in *Zutot*, n° 1, vol. 9, pp. 27-50, DOI : 10.1163/18750214-12341246.

MOSES MAIMONIDES, 1969, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, transl. PINES Shlomo, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 658 p.

MOÏSE MAÏMONIDE, 2004, *Le Guide des égarés*, trad. MUNK Salomon, [1^{ère} ed. 1861], Vrin, Paris.

MALTER Henry, 1911, "Shem Tob Ben Joseph Palquera: *His Treatise of the Dream*" in *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, vol. 1, pp. 451-501, DOI : 10.2307/1450946.

MUNK Salomon, 1857, *Mélanges de philosophie juive et arabe*, A. Franck, Paris, 536 p.

RIBERA-FLORIT Josep, 2009, « La controverse maïmonidienne en Provence et Catalogne » in IANCU-AGOU Danièle & NICOLAS Élie (dir.), *Des Tibbonides à Maïmonide*, Les Éditions du Cerf, Paris, p. 193-211.

SHIFFMAN Yair, 1999, “The Differences between the Translations of Maimonides’ *Guide of the Perplexed* by Falaquera, Ibn Tibbon and Al Harizi, and Their Textual and Philosophical Implications” in *Journal of Semitic Studies*, n° 1, vol. XLIV, pp. 47-61, DOI : 10.1093/jss/XLIV.1.47.

SIRAT Colette & DI DONATO Silvia (dir.), 2011, *Maïmonide et les autographes du Dalālat al Ḥā’irīn*, Vrin, Paris, 297 p.

ZONTA Mauro, 2000, “The Place of Aristotelian Metaphysics in the Thirteenth Century Encyclopaedias” in HARVEY Steven (ed.), *The Medieval Hebrew Encyclopedias of Science and Philosophy*, Kluwer Academic Publisher, Dordrecht, pp. 414-426.

ZONTA Mauro, 2004a, “Hebrew Transmission of Arabic Philosophy and Science: A Reconstruction of Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera’s ‘Arabic Library’” in PERANI Mauro (a cura di), *L’interculturalità dell’ebraismo*, Longo Editore, Ravenna, pp. 121-137.

ZONTA Mauro, 2004b, “Un dizionario filosofico ebraico” in PERANI Mauro (a cura di), *L’interculturalità dell’ebraismo*, Longo Editore, Ravenna, pp. 24-49.

Abstract: Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera must be considered among the translators of Maimonides’ *Guide of the Perplexed* because of the Hebrew translation of many passages of the *Guide* that is included in his works. These quotations are not only textual indirect witnesses of Maimonides’ text. The present article suggests a perspective that takes them into account as evidence for Ibn Falaquera’s use of sources, showing distinct ways, aims and methodological assumptions through which Ibn Falaquera chooses to render, to interpret and to teach Maimonides’ work. Ibn Falaquera’s early educational writings, where the author intends to instruct his coreligionists in philosophy and sciences and to make them acquainted with Greco-Arabic wisdom and its doctrines, contain few quotations taken from the *Guide*. Their limited number reveals Ibn Falaquera’s attitude towards this source. They are analysed and interpreted, as well as the quotations occurring in the late works, namely the commentary *Moreh ha-Moreh* and the apologetic *Letter regarding the Guide*, showing a different approach and aim.

Keywords: Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera, translator, quotations, *Sefer ha-ma'alot*, *Iggeret ha-ḥalom*, *Moreh ha-Moreh*, Letter regarding the *Guide*.

Résumé : Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera peut être compté parmi les traducteurs du Guide des égarés de Maïmonide en raison des nombreux passages du Guide traduits en hébreu qu'il inclut dans ses œuvres. Ces citations ne sont pas uniquement des témoignages indirects du texte de Maïmonide. Le présent article tâche de les prendre en compte en tant qu'éléments montrant les objectifs et les présupposés méthodologiques d'Ibn Falaquera dans sa traduction, son interprétation et son enseignement de l'œuvre de Maïmonide. Les citations du Guide contenues dans les premiers écrits pédagogiques d'Ibn Falaquera, où ce dernier se propose d'enseigner à ses coreligionnaires la philosophie et les sciences et de leur faire connaître la sagesse gréco-arabe et ses doctrines, sont très peu nombreuses. Leur nombre limité révèle l'attitude d'Ibn Falaquera à l'égard de cette source. Elles sont analysées et interprétées, de même que les citations se trouvant dans des ouvrages plus tardifs, notamment le commentaire Moreh ha-Moreh et la Lettre concernant le Guide, qui répondent à une approche et un but différents.

Mots-clefs : Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera, traducteur, citations, Sefer ha-ma'alot, Iggeret ha-ḥalom, Moreh ha-Moreh, Lettre concernant le Guide.

תקציר: ריבוי הקטעים המתורגמים מ"מורה נבוכים" המצויים בכתביו של אבן פלקירה מצדיקים את הגדרתו כאחד ממתרגמי היצירה. מובאות אלו אינן רק בחינת עדויות עקיפות לטקסט של הרמב"ם. המאמר הנוכחי בוחן אותן כאלמנטים המראים את מטרותיו של אבן פלקירה ואת ההנחות המתודולוגיות שהדריכו אותו במלאכת התרגום והאינטרפרטציה של היצירה. בכתביו הפדגוגיים הראשונים, בהם הוא מנסה לקרב את בני דתו לפילוסופיה ולמדעים ולהפגישם עם החוכמה היוונית-ערבית, קטעים אלו מועטים. מספרם המוגבל זה הוא פועל יוצא מן האופן בו אבן פלקירה רואה את המורה. הקטעים מנותחים ומפורשים ממש כמו אלו המצויים בכתבים מאוחרים יותר ובמיוחד בפירושו "מורה המורה" וב"מכתב על דבר המורה" שגישותיהם שונות.

מלות מפתח: שם טוב אבן פלקירה, מתרגם, ספר המעלות, איגרת החלום, מורה המורה, מכתב על דבר המורה.