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The Second Ibn Tibbon Salomon Munk and His Translation of the *Guide*

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A little over a century before Shlomo Pines's translation of the *Guide*, another Solomon had rendered Maimonides' philosophical masterpiece into a modern European language, but in a very different spirit and using a very different methodology.¹ The French rendition by Salomon Munk (1803–67) is not only a work of scholarship in itself, but it also became a model for subsequent translations into various languages. The present study will first examine how it was possible for an early nineteenth-century German Jew who was initially destined for a rabbinical vocation to acquire the intimate knowledge of Arabic and Islamic philosophy necessary for such an undertaking. Second, it will examine why Munk chose to translate Maimonides' *Guide* specifically.

To answer this double inquiry, it is essential to examine both Munk's educational background and the intellectual climate of his time. The following sketch will discuss Munk's biography and the light it sheds on the choice and genesis of his translation of the *Guide*.

1. I have greatly benefited from the numerous suggestions made by the editor Yonatan Shemesh, whom I would like to thank.

For Munk's life we are fortunate to have at our disposal the excellent biography by the famous French Judaic scholar and librarian Moïse Schwab (1839–1918).² Better known as the author of the French translation of the Jerusalem Talmud, Schwab was also Munk's secretary during the precise period in which the *Guide* was completed and published, that is, from 1856 to 1866.³ In addition, Munk's correspondence with his widowed mother, which contained over 200 letters in German, provides a glimpse into his inner life.⁴

Salomon (Shelomo b. Eliezer) Munk was born in Gross-Glogau (Prussian Silesia), a relatively poor region that, in the nineteenth century, produced a disproportionate number of Jewish students and scholars.⁵ His father, Lippman Samuel Munk, a community official, taught him the rudiments of Hebrew, and his mother provided him with instruction in French. Having lost his father when he was barely eight years of age, he furthered his Jewish studies at the rabbinical school in his native town under the local rabbi, Jacob Joseph Oettinger (b. Glogau 1780, d. Berlin 1860).⁶ Upon Oettinger's appointment in 1820 as rabbi and head of the Veitel Heine Ephraim-schen Lehrinstitut in Berlin, Munk followed him to the Prussian capital in order to complete his rabbinical diploma.

Oettinger was to have an enduring influence on Munk. The following pithy quip with which Oettinger is credited reflects how he encouraged his students to be curious about history: "A Rabbi should not only know what Rashi said, but also what brand of snuff he used." No wonder then that, besides Munk, he was to count among his pupils Eliezer Landshuth (1817–87), who later became a liturgical scholar and historian, and Michael Friedländer (1833–1910), who later authored the first English translation of the *Guide* and who, like Munk, studied Arabic and Persian in Berlin.⁷ Apparently, Munk also gave Arabic lessons in Berlin.⁸ The intellectual atmosphere of the Lehrinstitut under Oettinger's guidance may have helped

2. Schwab 1900.

3. For a biography of Schwab, see Sidersky 1919.

4. Parts of this correspondence were published in Brann 1899.

5. David Kassel, Eduard Munk, Michael Sachs, Meir Wiener, Joseph Zedner, and our author himself, to name just a few.

6. On Oettinger, see Herlitz and Kirschner 1927–30, 4:641–42.

7. Friedländer 1881–85. In 1904 he published a revised one-volume edition of his translation without the notes, which was the standard English version of the *Guide* until Pines's 1963 translation. On Friedländer's translation, see W. Z. Harvey's contribution to this volume.

8. One of his students may have been Ber Goldberg. See below, n. 28.

induce the two future translators to take a special interest in Maimonides' Arabic text.

However, the impetus also came from the struggle of Jewish scholarship to achieve integration into German academics. Having obtained his Abiturienten-Examination in 1824, Munk registered in linguistics and classics at Berlin University, where he attended lectures by Hegel. He became aware of Hegel's disregard for Judaism's and Islam's contributions to Western thought. The German philosopher saw Judaism as an antiquated religion and antagonistic to true philosophy, which was the proprium of Greek and German civilization. Under the influence of Leopold Zunz (1794–1886), who became his lifelong friend, and Zunz's mentor, August Böckh (1785–1867), Munk abandoned speculative philosophy and turned to the tools of philology as a means to reconstruct the history of Jewish thought and establish its relevance to the humanistic study of Western philosophy.

Meanwhile, Munk began cataloguing the Hebrew manuscripts in the Berlin Royal Library, where he may have first encountered Judeo-Arabic texts that epitomized the interconnection between Jewish and Islamic thought. Realizing that the university's discriminatory laws left him little prospect as a Jew for obtaining a post in Prussia, he decided, in 1827, to abandon his doctoral diploma and to make his way to Paris. Before leaving German soil, he spent a term at Bonn University studying Arabic with Georg Freytag (1788–1861) and Sanskrit with Christian Lassen (1800–1872).

Munk arrived in Paris in 1828 and pursued his Arabic studies with the famed Orientalist Antoine Silvestre de Sacy (1758–1838) at the Collège de France, as well as Persian with Etienne Quatremère (1782–1857) and Sanskrit with Antoine-Leonard de Chézy (1773–1832). When he was not supporting himself as a Hebrew teacher, he spent most of his time in the Royal Library in Paris deepening his knowledge of Arabic and Hebrew manuscripts. The editors of the *Encyclopédie nouvelle*, Pierre Leroux and Jean Reynaud, noticed Munk's precocious erudition and, in 1832, approached him to write the articles on Arabic literature and the Muslim philosophers al-Kindī, al-Fārābī, Avicenna, al-Ghazālī, and Averroes.

Eventually, after ten years sojourn in France, Munk was appointed custodian of Oriental manuscripts at the Royal Library in 1838 and given the task of composing a catalogue of the library's Sanskrit manuscripts. At the same time, he would spend long hours poring over ancient Arabic, Hebrew, and Latin manuscripts to gather information about their authors and schools. He had described this activity in an earlier letter (1832) to the French minister of education:

I was struck by the following instance . . . : a great number of scientific writings of the Muslims, which are to be sought in vain among the Arabic manuscripts, have been preserved by the rabbis. They either copied the originals into Hebrew characters or translated them into Hebrew. Besides many medical and mathematical works, this is especially the case for works on philosophy, to which the medieval rabbis devoted themselves with astounding zeal and success. Our notions about Arabic philosophy are still imperfect, and in this respect there is a lack to be filled in all works dealing with the history of philosophy. Having the ambition to cultivate the study of philosophy as well as Oriental literature, I have begun research into Arabic philosophy.⁹

Before proceeding, it is worth pausing to appreciate both the fact that Munk had this realization long before Steinschneider's *Hebräische Übersetzungen* and the degree to which this passage legitimizes the study of Hebrew sources in order to obtain a better grasp of Islamic philosophy.

At this time, the study of Islamic thought was still in the cradle. Historians such as Johann Brücker (1696–1770) in his *Historia critica philosophiae* (Leipzig, 1742–44), Heinrich Ritter (1791–1869) in his *Geschichte der Philosophie* (Hamburg, 1829–53), and Franz August Schmölders (1809–80)¹⁰ in his *Essai sur les écoles philosophiques chez les Arabes et notamment sur la doctrine d'Algazzali* (Paris, 1842) were still using “Leo Africanus’ fables” or Latin translations of Arabic works simply because the originals were unavailable to them. Furthermore, Edward Pococke had published a Latin translation of Ibn Tufayl in his *Philosophus Autodidactus sive Epistola Abi Jafaar Ebn Tophail de Hai Ebn Yokdhan* (Oxford, 1671),¹¹ later translated into English by Simon Ockley as *The Improvement of Human Reason* (London, 1708). It will be recalled that in his *Porta Mosis* (Oxford, 1655), Pococke also published extracts from Maimonides’ Arabic commentary on

9. Schwab 1900, 33 (my translation). Unless otherwise stated, all translations from Arabic, French, German, and Hebrew are mine.

10. Schmölders, who was not Jewish, had studied at Bonn shortly after Munk; he studied the same subjects and under the same teachers before moving to Paris to further his Arabic with Silvestre de Sacy. Perhaps Munk had Schmölders’s imperfect treatment of Ibn Rushd in mind when he remarked: “For anyone who desires to undertake a serious study of Arabic philosophy, a profound knowledge of rabbinical Hebrew is indispensable” (Munk 1857–59, 335). Nonetheless, Munk often quotes him in his notes; see, e.g., Munk 1:208n3, 209n1, 383n2, 386n1, 392n2, 400–401n2, 428–29n4.

11. Which is quoted by Munk; e.g., Munk 1:12n1.

the Mishnah, with a facing Latin translation and learned notes.¹² The results of Munk's labors came to fruition in his *Mélanges de philosophie juive et arabe* (Paris, 1857–59), a coherent history of Jewish and Islamic thought in which his unequaled mastery of the Arabic speculative schools enabled him to contextualize and systematize them with ease.¹³

His intellectual curiosity and his journey into philosophy inevitably brought him to Maimonides, the champion of the Haskalah scholars. We shall soon see that our scholar—unlike his Jewish contemporaries—considered the *Guide* to be primarily a philosophical rather than a theological work. As Munk himself claims, Maimonides' *Guide* was practically the only source from which scholars had derived their impressions of the schools of Arabic philosophy, but faulty Hebrew and Latin versions of the work had led to a number of misapprehensions on their parts. Not content with reading the *Guide* in the Hebrew renditions of Ibn Tibbon and al-Ḥarizi, Munk was determined to restore the Arabic original, manuscripts of which he had discovered in the Royal Library in Paris.

As early as 1834, he expressed in writing his intention to publish, translate, and annotate the entire text of the Arabic *Guide*. As it turns out, he had a predecessor: the English Orientalist Thomas Hyde (1636–1703), Regius Professor of Hebrew at the University of Oxford, who also succeeded Edward Pococke as Laudian Professor of Arabic in 1691. At the time of his succession, Hyde was the curator of Oriental manuscripts at the Bodleian Library. As early as 1690, he had recommended the publication of the original Arabic text of the *Guide*, which was in the library's holdings. He even published a prospectus of the Arabic accompanied by an annotated Latin

12. Quoted by Munk; e.g., Munk 1:400n2. Munk also takes Pococke to task; see, e.g., 1:232–33n2.

13. Munk 1857–59. See Ivry 2000; see also Ivry's short but most apposite article "Salomon Munk and the Science of Judaism Meet Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed*" (2004). Previously, Munk had given a historical sketch of Jewish thought in his essay "Juifs (Philosophie chez les)," published in the *Dictionnaire des sciences philosophiques*, edited by Adolphe Franck (Munk 1847). (Munk also wrote the entries for all the principal Muslim philosophers in the *Dictionnaire*.) This essay was subsequently republished with supplementary notes in the *Archives Israélites* (Munk 1848) and also as a separate forty-page pamphlet (Munk, n.d.). The essay, later included in his *Mélanges*, proved quite popular and was translated into German with additional notes by Bernard Beer as *Philosophie und philosophische Schriftsteller der Juden: Eine historische Skizze* (Munk 1852) and into English by Isidor Kalisch as *Philosophy and Philosophical Authors of the Jews: A Historical Sketch* (Munk 1881). Incidentally, a manuscript of Munk's notes in French and Hebrew on various philosophers is found in JTS MS 2244; see Jewish Theological Seminary 1974, 1.

translation.¹⁴ Having received little encouragement, he subsequently abandoned the project, and no further installments appeared.

While waiting to realize his project, Munk published two samples of his future translation in Samuel Cahen's (1798–1862) French translation of the Bible.¹⁵ The first two chapters (*Guide* III 27 and 31), which were based on two hitherto unidentified Judeo-Arabic manuscripts that had been housed in the Royal Library in Paris,¹⁶ were appended to his introductory essay on the book of Leviticus.¹⁷ The eleven-page appendix bore the title “Deux chapitres de la troisième partie de la *Direction* [*sic*] *des Égarés*, par le Réis de la nation israélite Mousa Ibn-Maïmoun de Cordoue.” The layout prefigures Munk's later (full) edition: the Arabic original faces the French translation, which is accompanied by copious footnotes of philological and philosophical observations.¹⁸

In the first note, Munk writes:

As soon as a complete copy of the Arabic original becomes available to me, I propose to publish Maimonides' chef d'oeuvre in its entirety. It will be accompanied by a translation and commentary, in which I shall endeavor to throw some light on the philosophy of the Arabs, about which we still have rather imperfect notions. I have already begun to gather material for this work, although I must confess that this requires deep study and extensive research, which remain to be carried out. Until now, Maimonides' work has been almost the only source from which notions about the philosophical studies of the Arabs had been drawn, but by using the Hebrew translation, or the two Latin versions derived from it, scholars have committed many errors. Had space not been lacking, I could have quoted numerous examples. Perhaps I will have the

14. G. Sharpe published Hyde's prospectus as an appendix to his edition of the latter's papers, *Syntagma dissertationum* (Hyde 1767, 2:433–38). Munk was aware of this publication and quotes it in a note to *Guide* I 2 (Munk 1:38n1). Among Hyde's other achievements is his Arabic transcription of Joseph Tavus's Persian translation of the Pentateuch (which had previously been published in Hebrew characters in Constantinople in 1546) for Walton's *Polyglott Bible* (London, 1657). On Hyde, see Marshall 1986.

15. Cahen 1831–39, vols. 4 and 9.

16. MSS 229 and 230 Ancien fonds; Zotenberg 1866, nos. 760 and 761.

17. Munk 1833, 1–56.

18. Munk 1833, 79–89. It is interesting to point out that this text is preceded by his French translation of book 5 of the Sanskrit work *The Laws of Manu* (Munk 1833, 57–78). Here Munk shows himself to be a veritable disciple of Maimonides, adopting his approach to comparative religion in order to explain Jewish custom.

opportunity to revert to this in an extract from part III, which I propose to publish. I think it necessary to warn the reader that in the translation of these two chapters, I had faithfulness foremost in mind, and so I have rendered the Arabic text almost literally.¹⁹

The second extract, derived from *Guide* II 29,²⁰ appeared five years later as an appendix to his “Notice sur Rabbi Saadia Gaon, et sa version arabe d’Isaïe.”²¹ The twenty-five-page appendix bore the title “Extrait du livre Dalalat al-hayirin de Mousa Ben-Maimon, sur les métaphors employées par Isaïe et par quelques autres prophètes,” and was originally published in the ninth volume of Cahen’s *Bible*.

Munk points out that these extracts represent the very first publications that were based on the Arabic original.²² They constitute a preview of the method that he would employ in his later edition. Embedded within brackets in the meticulous French translation are explanatory terms and numerous philological notes, including comparisons of Arabic philosophical terms with their Latin Scholastic interpretations, all of which were almost exclusively derived from manuscript sources.

Munk envisioned his proposed edition “as a work which will be of the greatest importance for Oriental studies in general and for Judaism in particular,” and in the ensuing years, he was constantly preoccupied with establishing the textual basis for its translation.²³ In order to broaden the scope of

19. Munk 1833, 80–81n1: “Je me propose de publier en entier le chef-d’oeuvre de Maimonides, dès que j’aurai pu me mettre en possession d’une copie complète de l’original arabe. Je l’accompagnerai d’une traduction et d’un commentaire, où je tâcherai de jeter quelque lumière sur la philosophie des Arabes, sur laquelle on n’a encore que des notions très-imparfaites. J’ai déjà commencé à recueillir des matériaux pour ce travail, mais je ne me cache pas qu’il exige des études profondes et des recherches immenses qu’il me reste encore à faire. L’ouvrage de Maimonides a été jusqu’ici presque la seule source où l’on ait puisé des notions sur les études philosophiques des Arabes, mais les savans, en se servant de la traduction hébraïque, ou des deux versions latines qu’on a faites de cette traduction, ont commis bien des erreurs. Je pourrais en citer de nombreux exemples, si l’espace ne me manquait. Peut-être aurai-je l’occasion d’y revenir dans un extrait que je me propose de publier de la troisième partie. Je crois devoir avertir le lecteur que dans la traduction de ces deux chapitres j’ai visé surtout la fidélité, et que j’ai rendu le texte arabe presque mot pour mot.”

20. Munk does not specify the manuscript source for this textual extract, but I surmise it is based on MS Ancien fonds 237, which contains precisely the concluding chapters of part II of the *Guide*. See Zotenberg 1866, no. 759.

21. Munk 1838a, 160–84. It was also printed separately; see Munk 1838b, 88–112.

22. Munk 1838a, 160.

23. Schwab 1900, 65.

his research, he set out to look for further remnants of the original Arabic texts and to compare them with the Hebrew and Latin translations.

Initially, he did not have much to go on. Until his time, only four full translations of the *Guide* into European languages (other than Munk's) had been recorded: two into Latin, one into Castilian, and one into Italian. Both Hebrew versions of the *Guide* were translated into Latin: that of al-Ḥarizi, the work of an anonymous translator, was published by Agostino Giustiniani (1470–1530?) in Paris (1520),²⁴ while that of Ibn Tibbon was translated and published by Johannes Buxtorf II (1599–1664) in Basel (1629).²⁵ There was also a medieval Castilian translation by Pedro de Toledo²⁶ and an Italian translation, titled *Erudizione de' confusi*, which had been made by Amadeo di Musetto (Yedidya ben Moshe) Recanati in 1583, and which was dedicated to the kabbalist Menahem Azariah da Fano.²⁷

From Hyde's prospectus, Munk had learned of a manuscript of the original Arabic version of the *Guide* in Oxford; he deemed a study trip to the Bodleian Library indispensable. One of his former pupils from Berlin, who was a librarian in Oxford at the time,²⁸ informed him of the enormous repository of Judeo-Arabic manuscripts housed there. I suspect that the very same student sent him a transcript of some of the essential manuscripts in January 1835, thus reducing Munk's need for a prolonged stay in Oxford.

It is sobering for modern-day researchers to read the circumstances under which yesterday's scholars had to toil. In a letter dated December 26, 1834, Munk explains to his anxious mother the necessity of a voyage overseas:

I have not yet made any firm decision about the trip to England, though it is quite clear to me that I must make it sooner or later. . . . For it is

24. Giustiniani, who was versed in philosophy, theology, Arabic, Greek, Hebrew, and Syriac, was bishop of Nebbio in Corsica. In 1515, he published the famous Polyglot Psaltium in Genova and was working on a Polyglot Bible when he was captured by Barbary pirates in 1530 and never heard from again. On him, see Bayle 1969, 8:542–45. This translation, which is the object of Caterina Rigo's contribution to this volume, is being critically edited by Diana Di Segni at the University of Cologne.

25. M. Kayserling reports that in 1633, Jacob Roman had prepared an edition of al-Ḥarizi's Hebrew translation with facing Arabic, accompanied by a third column containing the Latin version (Kayserling 1884, 89, 94). Since this proposed edition is not recorded by any Hebrew bibliography, I assume that it never saw the light of day.

26. See Luis M. Girón Negrón's contribution to this volume.

27. See Kaufmann 1981, 240–41. Recanati also translated Maimonides' *Maqāla fī šinā'at al-manṭiq* (*Treatise on the Art of Logic*).

28. Despite much effort, I have been unsuccessful in uncovering his identity.

unthinkable that they would allow the manuscripts to come to Paris. It would already be an enormous favor if, in Oxford, they permit me to work on the manuscripts outside of the library. In this respect, in England and Germany they are much less liberal than in France. In Paris, I can continuously borrow manuscripts that are of particular interest to me and take them home to consult and copy them at my leisure.²⁹

In another letter to his mother, dated May 24, 1835, he says the following about his proposed expedition:

These past few days, I have succeeded in greatly extending my literary corpus and henceforth a brief stay in Oxford would be sufficient to complete the material for a work that will have great importance for Oriental studies in general and Judaism in particular. I would not fulfill a pressing duty if I were not to make this small sacrifice for the sake of my own future and that of knowledge.³⁰

Munk finally set out for Oxford in August 1835. In a way, his quest for Maimonides marks the point of departure of the modern discipline of Judeo-Arabic studies (although, strictly speaking, he was not the founder of the field). He was principally motivated by the prospect of copying the Arabic manuscripts of Maimonides' *Guide*, but once he was in Oxford, Munk was able to examine numerous Judeo-Arabic literary treasures that had been preserved in the collections acquired by Robert Huntingdon and Edward Pococke in the eighteenth century—extracts from which he would later incorporate into his groundbreaking studies. He also read Islamic works that related to the social and intellectual history of the Jews.

29. Brann 1899, 182–83: “Ueber diese Reise nach England habe ich noch keinen festen Entschluss gefasst, obgleich mir soviel klar ist, dass ich sie früher oder später doch unternehmen muss. . . . Es ist garnicht daran zu denken, die Handschriften nach Paris kommen zu lassen. Es wäre schon eine grosse Begünstigung, wenn ich sie in Oxford selbst ausserhalb der Bibliothek benutzen könnte; dann man ist in dieser Beziehung in England und in Deutschland weit weniger liberal als in Paris, wo ich fortwährend die Handschriften, die mich besonders interessiren, mit nach meiner Wohnung nehmen und nach Bequemlichkeit durchblättern oder abschreiben kann.”

30. Brann 1899, 184: “Da es mir in den letzten Tagen gelungen ist, meine litterarischen Sammlungen sehr zu erweitern, und nunmehr ein sehr kurzer Aufenthalt in Oxford genügen würde, um meine Materialien zu einem Werke zu vervollständigen, welches für die orientalischen Studien im Allgemeinen und besonders für das Judenthum vor der grössten Wichtigkeit sein wird, so würde ich eine grosse Pflicht verletzen, wenn ich meiner eigenen Zukunft und der Wissenschaft nicht dieses kleine Opfer brächte.”

Like many of the German Orientalists who were his contemporaries, Munk was initially a student of biblical exegesis and theology; as such, he was the first scholar to establish his discipline on solidly philological and historical foundations.

The first fruits of his labors materialized in his pioneering study “Notice sur Rabbi Saadia Gaon, et sa version arabe d’Isaïe,” which appeared in Paris in 1838. It was a model monograph. Although it was mainly devoted to Sa’adya’s exegesis, Munk also states triumphantly:

In volume 4 of S. Cahen’s *Bible*, I announced my intention of publishing the Arabic text of the *Moreh nevukhim* along with a translation and notes, of which I supplied a sample. I now possess the entire text, principally based on the superior manuscripts in Oxford. . . . But in order to contribute toward diffusing these studies as soon as circumstances allow, I intend to publish extracts from the *Moreh*, or even a chrestomathy of rabbinical writings in Arabic for which I have gathered a certain amount of material, and which will include several Arabic writings of the rabbis, of which no Hebrew version even exists.³¹

While Munk was immersed in the depths of Maimonides’ thought, an unexpected and dramatic occurrence interrupted his labors and transported him to the very landscape where Maimonides had composed his philosophical masterpiece. We lack the space for a discussion of the heroic role that Munk played in the Damascus Affair (1840) in his capacity as secretary and interpreter to Adolphe Crémieux (1796–1880) and Moses Montefiore (1784–1885), whom he accompanied on a dangerous mission to the East,³² but the point here is that unlike many European Orientalists, Munk experienced the Islamic world directly. The journey took him to Egypt and Syria, where he came into contact with the living tradition of Judeo-Arabic culture.

31. Munk 1838a, 74–75: “J’ai annoncé moi-même, dans le quatrième volume de la Bible de M. Cahen, que j’avais l’intention de publier le texte arabe du *Moré Nebouchim*, accompagné d’une traduction et de notes, et j’en ai donné un *spécimen*. Je possède maintenant le texte tout entier, tiré, en grande partie, des meilleurs manuscrits d’Oxford. . . . Mais pour contribuer à répandre ces études, je compte publier, aussitôt que les circonstances le permettront, des extraits du *Moré*, ou bien même une *Chrestomathie arabe-rabbinique*, pour laquelle j’ai recueilli un certain nombre de matériaux, et où trouveront place plusieurs écrits de rabbins arabes, dont il n’existe pas même de version hébraïque.”

32. On this affair, see Florence 2004.

In his correspondence, he described his visit to Old Cairo, where “Maimonides lived and practiced medicine”³³ and where Munk was able to acquire many Judeo-Arabic manuscripts. His acquisitions included two Maimonidean compositions: the commentary on *Rosh ha-hashana* that was attributed to Rambam, and the Arabic homilies that had been ascribed to R. David Maimonides.³⁴

Munk had not lost sight of his cherished project. In 1842, shortly after his return from the East, he published his “Notice sur Joseph ben-Iehouda ou Aboul’hadjâdj Yousouf ben-Ya’hya al-Sabti al-Maghrebi, disciple de Maimonide,” which was the first historical study on this medieval scholar for whom Maimonides had composed the *Guide*.³⁵ This publication was followed by his “Notice sur Abou’l-walid Merwan Ibn-Djana’h et sur quelques autres grammairiens hébreux du Xe et du XIe siècle,”³⁶ which earned him the Prix Volney from the Institut de France. These two essays were major contributions to the as yet uncharted field of Judeo-Arabic studies. Indeed, apart from Johannes Uri’s woefully incomplete catalogue of 1787, there was no detailed conspectus of the Oxford holdings at the time. Steinschneider’s appeared only in 1857, while Neubauer’s was published in 1886—half a century after Munk’s visit to Oxford.

Eventually, the long hours that Munk had spent poring over manuscripts in the Royal Library took their toll. In 1850, he lost the sight of one eye; he was stricken with total blindness a year later. Others would have been discouraged by this physical impairment, but Munk courageously continued to pursue his scholarship in spite of this new challenge.³⁷

Establishing the Text

It is no exaggeration to state that Munk’s methodology in his translation of the *Guide* set the standard for subsequent scholarship. The necessary preliminary to the translation, he maintained, was to establish a reliable text—

33. Schwab 1900, 108. It is noteworthy that before his return, Munk was instrumental in opening a European-type school in Cairo.

34. The list is given in Schwab 1900, 103.

35. Munk 1842.

36. Munk 1850.

37. In the preface to the first volume of his translation of the *Guide*, Munk movingly declares (1:iv): “Unfortunately, I was unable to undertake this task before the very time Providence chose to inflict me with the harshest ordeal that is capable of paralyzing an author’s efforts, for which the most careful reading and research are both an imperious necessity and duty.”

not Ibn Tibbon's Hebrew translation, but Maimonides' original Arabic text. The task was easier said than done, since, despite the work's reputation, no complete Arabic version of the *Guide* could be found in the major manuscript collections of the time. It was therefore necessary to assemble the various available segments.

Throughout his misfortune, Munk worked toward his masterpiece, spending his mornings on his edition of Maimonides' *Guide* and his afternoons working as secretary of the Consistoire Central des Israélites de France. He was assisted by a young student named Isidor Stillmann, who helped establish the text of the first volume. Unfortunately, he passed away prematurely. Munk laments his death in his preface to volume 1. His place was taken by Joseph Mistowski, who in turn was replaced by the future librarian of the Bodleian, the Hungarian-born Adolf Neubauer (1831–1907). The greatest assistance, however, was lent by Albert Cohn, to whom we will return.

The first volume finally appeared in April 1856—twenty years after Munk had first conceived of the project. In addition to the Hebrew and Latin translations, in the comparison of which he benefited from the assistance of a certain Rabbi Trenel, Munk had at his disposal in Paris two incomplete fragments, which were later supplemented by the Oxford manuscripts that Hyde had already used. Munk regretted that he had not prolonged his stay in Oxford so as to “definitively fix all the parts of the text.”³⁸ Later, Hendrik Engelinus Weyers (1805–44), a professor and librarian at Leiden, generously sent two manuscripts to Paris for Munk's perusal, upon which Munk primarily relied.³⁹ He also made use of the Arabic text that was written in the outer margin of a manuscript of Ibn Tibbon's Hebrew version, which belonged to the L. Loewe collection.⁴⁰

For the second volume, which appeared five years later in 1861, our translator benefited from an early manuscript that the English Orientalist Rev. William Cureton (1808–64) had lent from his personal collection.⁴¹

Finally, for the third volume, which appeared in 1866, Munk had at

38. Munk 1:iii–iv.

39. These are certainly cod. 18 and 221, both described in *Catal. Leiden* (Senguerdus, Gronovius, and Heyman 1716, 410), and later by Steinschneider (1858, 380–82). On Weyers, see Molhuysen and Kossmann 1937, 10:1191–92.

40. Cf. Hirschfeld 1894, 409; Munk 1:iii.

41. Cureton was known above all as a scholar of Syriac, but he also published Tanḥum's Judeo-Arabic commentary on Lamentations (Cureton 1843) as well as an edition and English translation of al-Shahrestāni's *Kitāb al-milal wa-al-niḥal* (Cureton 1846), to which Munk often refers in his notes (see, e.g., Munk 1:207n1).

his disposal the following: two Leiden manuscripts, sent by Weyers, and MS Cureton, Royal Library Paris 237, Paris Suppl. 63—in addition to the Bodleian manuscripts. Moreover, he benefited from the joint assistance of his secretary (who would later become his biographer) Moïse Schwab, who dictated the proofs to him, and a young rabbinical student, Zadoc Kahn (1839–1905), who went on to become the founder of the Société des études juives and the Chief Rabbi of France.

Particularly valuable was the collaboration of Albert Cohn (b. Presburg 1814, d. Paris 1877). A scholar and philanthropist, Cohn had been the tutor of the Rothschild family and had taught in an honorary capacity at the Paris Rabbinical Seminary. In 1833 and 1834, he studied Arabic, Syriac, Persian, and Sanskrit at Vienna University with the professor for Protestant theology Johann Georg Wenrich (1787–1847); he then moved to Paris to study Arabic with Silvestre de Sacy. As a member of the Jewish Consistoire of France, Cohn undertook journeys to Palestine, Algeria, and Morocco, where he helped to establish educational and community institutions. A close friend of Munk's, he took on the revision of the Judeo-Arabic text. For this purpose and at Munk's behest, Cohn, while on a journey to Rome in 1838, visited the Vatican in order to copy the *Ma'amar ha-yihud*, attributed to Maimonides. Despite his blossoming friendship with the clergy, he was not authorized to copy it and, according to his biography, resorted to memorizing the text.⁴²

The Translation

In the title of this chapter, I describe Munk as “the second Ibn Tibbon.” The two translators, who toiled on French soil 600 years apart, worked in similarly pioneering conditions. Like Samuel Ibn Tibbon before him, Munk had few models to emulate or reference works on which to rely when preparing his translation. A limited number of Arabic philosophical texts had been published and translated into Latin at that point—one example is the *Epistola de Hai Ebn-Yokdhan*, which was edited by Edward Pococke (1671)—but none, as far as I am aware, had appeared in French, and there were certainly no specialized lexicons of philosophical terminology. Certain historical and geographical works had been translated into French, but the same could not be said of speculative works.

In his translation, Munk does not rely exclusively on Arabic manuscripts (some of which were copied centuries after Maimonides' lifetime) but in-

42. Loeb 1878, 13.

stead proposes textual improvements based on variant readings from Hebrew translations and commentaries. He systematically refers to the translations of both al-Ḥarizi and Ibn Tibbon and the readings that they reflect in an effort to restore and piece together a text that is as close to the original as possible.⁴³ He occasionally points out where the translators had misunderstood Maimonides.⁴⁴ He also refers to the wordings of the classical commentators on the *Guide*, such as Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera, Efodi (Profayt Duran), Joseph Ibn Kaspi, and Moses of Narbonne, as well as supracommentators and secondary sources such as Samuel Zarza's *Meqor hayyim* and Abarbanel's commentary on the Pentateuch. Interestingly, Munk quotes from the commentary of Moses of Salerno, which is unpublished to this day.⁴⁵ Munk was the very first scholar to apply the criteria of philology in its fullest sense (Arabic, Hebrew, Latin, and, to some extent, Greek) to a work of Jewish philosophy.

Had Munk produced only his elegant and precise translation, it would have been enough. (*Dayyenu!*) But he also supplemented his translation with notes that would prove invaluable for understanding the *Guide*. Often, in the body of the translation, Munk will offer a metaphorical or literary rendering of a phrase; he then supplies its literal meaning in the notes. In this essay we can only gesture toward the abundant textual and contextual clarifications that Munk grants his readers as he enables them to follow Maimonides' thought. Munk furnishes the kind of literary and historical information that a reader would need in order to comprehend the text; he makes a point of stating that not even the lengthiest of his notes have any superfluous digressions.⁴⁶ The notes were to be a sort of repository of Jewish theology and Arabic philosophy: Munk intended for readers of the planned *Prolegomena* to the *Guide* (which never materialized) to refer to them.⁴⁷

43. It is relevant here to recall that Munk also composed the notes for vols. 2 and 3 of Schlosberg's edition of al-Ḥarizi's translation (Schlosberg 1851–79; vol. 2, 1876; vol. 3, 1879).

44. See, e.g., Munk 2:260n2, where he points out that both translators misconstrued the Islamic concept of *al-jāhiliyya*, "paganism." See below, n. 61.

45. Munk 2:233n2. For Moses of Salerno's commentary on the preface to the *Guide*, see De Souza 2014, 305–59, 484–504; for his commentary on the chapters on prophecy (II 32–48), see Binyamin 2005.

46. Munk 1:viii.

47. Munk gives an outline of the proposed companion volume in his preface (Munk 1:ii). It was to have contained a biography of Maimonides, a study of his times, his works, the existing manuscripts and editions, and an essay on the importance of the *Guide* as one of the "monuments of Arabic literature." Ivry (2004) elaborates on Munk's methodology in his commentary.

When Munk sets out to explain certain aspects of Maimonides' thought, he bases his analysis on biblical exegesis and Jewish theology (both Rabbanite and Karaite⁴⁸) and Aristotelian philosophy—including that of its Jewish and Muslim adepts, such as Ibn Tibbon,⁴⁹ al-Fārābī, and Avicenna. Where possible, he identifies references to rabbinic and classical sources, which often include lengthy quotations from unpublished manuscripts. He quotes from the Greek originals or their commentators, especially Albertus Magnus, who had incorporated entire sections of the *Guide* into his works. Sometimes he resorts to the Hebrew translations of Arabic sources that were unavailable in the original in his time.⁵⁰ Interestingly, he quotes Adolf Jellinek's edition of Ibn Ṣaddīq's *Olam qaṭan*, which appeared in Leipzig in 1854, only two years before Munk published his work.⁵¹

In the preface to the first volume, our French translator confesses that three of Maimonides' references, including one to Alexander of Aphrodisias, escaped him.⁵² When it came to everything else, he informs us, he relied solely on his memory of what he had read before he went blind. Munk's numerous cross-references stand as similar testaments to his extraordinary ability.

Munk supplemented the first volume with a list of variant readings from Ibn Tibbon's and al-Ḥarīzī's translations; he included an alphabetical subject index to both the text and the notes and a very useful list of the Arabic and Hebrew terms explained therein.

The final pages of volume 2 (1861) contain additions and corrections to volume 1. Of particular interest here are some extracts from Leibniz's notes (dating from 1672) on the Latin *Guide*.⁵³ Munk also adds a long note ex-

48. Notably, Aaron ben Eli's *Eṣ ḥayyim* (cf. Munk 1:238n1, 286–87n3, 448n4; 3:106n1, 123n1, 129n4), Yefet ben 'Ali (1:286–87n3), and Joseph al-Baṣīr (3:129n4).

49. Munk includes several of Ibn Tibbon's unpublished glosses that he culled from MS Sorbonne no. 108, which were recently studied by Carlos Fraenkel (2007). As Munk points out (1:102–3n2), this manuscript once belonged to Azariah de Rossi and carries his marginal notes. For examples of Ibn Tibbon's glosses, see Munk 1:102–3n2, 330n5, 425n3.

50. For example, in a note to *Guide* I 53 (Munk 1:208n3), he quotes a medieval Hebrew translation of al-Ghazālī's *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*. His quotations also served to demonstrate that it was the Jews, in large part, who had preserved the corpus of Islamic philosophy.

51. Munk 1:354n1. Similarly, in order to substantiate Maimonides' citation of al-Fārābī's *Kūṭab al-'aql* in *Guide* II 18, he quotes (2:139n1) M. Rosenstein's dissertation (1858) on the medieval Hebrew translation.

52. Munk 1:viii.

53. In 1:186n3, Munk wonders whether Leibniz's concept of monads was inspired by Maimonides.

plaining why he chose to translate *al-ḥā'irīn*, which figures in Maimonides' title, as "égarés" rather than as "perplexes."

Munk's meticulousness left little room for improvement. Nonetheless, the critical remarks and variants that Hartwig Hirschfeld offered in his review article were an additional contribution to the textual basis of the *Arabic Guide*.⁵⁴

An attempt at evaluating Munk's consummate skill as a translator would far exceed the limits of the present study. We shall content ourselves with a few chosen examples.

Islamic Expressions

Munk's mastery of Islamic thought and culture enabled him to identify in Maimonides' lexicon a certain number of terms that have a distinctly Islamic taste. Some had been misconstrued and incorrectly rendered by the classical translators, whose knowledge of Islamic culture Munk considered deficient. Here are a few examples.

When describing God's enthronement in *Guide* I 28, Maimonides uses the verb *istawā*. Munk, in a note, draws attention to the fact that this term is a Qur'anic locution (1:95n1; cf. Q 7:54). He observes that the verb had already been noticed by Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera in his *Moreh ha-moreh*, who quoted the relevant verse from the Qur'an.⁵⁵

In *Guide* I 51 (1:188–89n5), Munk correctly points out that the Arabic word *dark* signifies "bottom," "depth," or "infinite degree," and that it also belongs to the Qur'anic lexicon (cf. Q 4:145).⁵⁶ Ibn Falaquera had already remarked that both translators had misunderstood its purport: Ibn Tibbon had taken it to be Hebrew and translated it as *derekh* (path), whereas al-Ḥarizi understood it to be a synonym of *idrāk* (apprehension) and translated it as *haśśagah*.⁵⁷ Pines (114) uses the word "consequence" in his translation; Friedländer (1:177) uses the term "theory." The same misunderstanding occurs once more when the word is used in *Guide* III 8 (3:52 and n4). Again, the medieval translators understand it as *haśśagah*.⁵⁸ Friedländer (3:29)

54. Hirschfeld 1895. In particular, he made use of Codex Loewe (now Sassoon 1240), which had belonged to Haim Farhi, the Jewish minister whom Ibrahim Pasha put to death.

55. See Falaquera 2001, 345.

56. Munk's remarks parallel those of Scheyer in vol. 1 of Schlosberg's edition (al-Ḥarizi 1:49n5), which may indicate that he had benefited from Scheyer's notes.

57. Falaquera 2001, 347–48.

58. Falaquera 2001, 348.

translates the phrase in which it appears as “reach the lower creatures,” and Pines (435) gives “descending to the lowest degree.”

In *Guide* II 4 (2:60 and n3), Munk recognizes the Qur’anic phrase *al-malā’ika al-muqarrabūn*⁵⁹ and translates it as “[Les Intelligences sont donc] les anges qui approchent (de Dieu).” Friedländer (2:33) translates it as “[the Intelligences . . . , which are identical with] the angels, and act by direct influence.”⁶⁰ Pines (258) offers as a translation “[For the intellects are] the angels, which are near to Him.”

In Maimonides’ discussion of the categories of prophecy in *Guide* II 32, the first opinion he presents is that of the *jumhūr al-jāhiliyya*. As Munk points out in a note (2:260n2), both Ibn Tibbon and al-Ḥarizi translate the word as “the multitude of fools,” although they use different Hebrew terms for it. Ibn Tibbon translates *hamon ha-peta’im* (the multitude of simpletons), whereas al-Ḥarizi gives *ha-sekhalim* (the ignorant). Munk (2:260) translates it as “les peuples païens” (pagan peoples)—a nod to the Muslim thinkers for whom the term referred to humankind’s state of “ignorance” before the Muḥammadan revelation. As for Friedländer, he flatly translates “ignorant people” (2:161), whereas Pines follows Munk and gives “the multitude of those among the Pagans” (360). Munk corrects the medieval translations on this point again in *Guide* III 39 (3:305 and n1), translating *akhlāq al-jāhiliyya* as “moeurs des païens.” Friedländer keeps to “the ways of the fools,” adding in a note that others translate the term as “heathens” (3:188 and n1), while Pines has it both ways, for he proposes “moral qualities pertaining to the Pagans,” but adds in a note: “Or: ignorant” (554 and n39).⁶¹

To his translation in *Guide* III 41 (3:327–28 and n3)—“selon sa doctrine personnelle”—Munk appends a note explaining the meaning of the term *ijtihad* in Islamic judicial writings. His explanation is adopted in the translations of both Friedländer (“guided by his own reasoning,” 3:202) and Pines (“in accordance with a doctrine established by his own efforts,” 564).

In a note on *Guide* III 45 (3:349n1), Munk explains Maimonides’ use of the term *qibla* to designate Mount Moriah. It was an Islamic technical term, initially indicating the direction of Jerusalem to which Muslims would

59. Cf. Q 4:170. See also Munk’s additional note on p. 368, where he shows that Sa’adya already uses this expression.

60. Friedländer adds a rather significant note to his unusual translation: “Lit., ‘that approach,’ viz., the spheres; that is, which influence them. Actual approach cannot be meant here, as the relations of space do not apply to the Intelligences.”

61. In his notes to al-Ḥarizi’s version, Munk also comments on the translation of *jumhūr al-jāhiliyya* in II 32 (al-Ḥarizi 2:52n2).

turn in prayer, but which later came to refer to the direction of Mecca.⁶² Ibn Tibbon dodges the issue and gives simply *ha-ma'arav* (the West), whereas al-Ḥarizi paraphrases the term as *we-sam kawwanat tefillato mugbelet li-fe'at ma'arav* (he directed the intention of his prayer to the West). Friedländer writes, “He selected the west of the mount as the place toward which he turned during his prayers,” and supplies the following note: “Kiblah in the original. Ibn Tibbon has not translated this word” (3:217 and n3). Pines uses similar terminology in his translation: he “determined and defined the direction toward which one would turn in prayer, fixing it exactly in the West” (575).

Sufi Terms

A certain number of words belonging to the technical terminology of Sufism are part of Maimonides' Islamic vocabulary. In connection with the theme of prophetic experience that comes up in his translation of *Guide* I 46, Munk (1:161n1) provides a long note on his understanding of the term *maqām*, which Ibn Tibbon had rendered as *ma'amar* (statement).⁶³ Munk believes that Ibn Tibbon had misread the Arabic word *maqām* as *maqāl* (statement) and proposes that the Arabic word parallels the Hebrew *ma'amad* (al-Ḥarizi's choice of translation), which refers to the traditional designation of the Sinaitic revelation as *ma'amad har sinai*. Friedländer (“although the passage also contains the description of a prophetic vision,” 1:155 and n3),⁶⁴ Pines (“although this station also constituted a *vision of prophecy*,” 100), and Qafih (*'im heyot oto ha-ma'amad gam mar'eh nevu'ah*, 1:102 and n38) all adopt this interpretation. However, “standing before Sinai” is generally called *wuqūf* in Judeo-Arabic texts; the term parallels the designation for the halt on Mount 'Arafah that is performed during the ceremonies of the Islamic pilgrimage.⁶⁵ In my opinion, Maimonides is using the term *maqām* in its technical sense of a “spiritual station” or “state.” Indeed, it is in this sense that Maimonides' younger contemporary and fellow countryman Rabbi Abraham he-Ḥasid (d. 1224) employs the term when

62. See also al-Ḥarizi 3:68n1. However, the term—which may reflect pre-Islamic Jewish or Christian Arabic usage—had already been appropriated by Jews during the Geonic period to refer to Jerusalem; see Blau 1981, 160; 2006, 526.

63. Scheyer also comments on this word; see al-Ḥarizi 1:43n5.

64. However, he takes issue with Munk's interpretation and suggests that *maqām* can mean “passage,” which he suggests is Ibn Tibbon's approach.

65. See Fenton 1981, 65n50. See also Septimus 2007, 179–81.

he uses it to reference the spiritual elevation of the Children of Israel at the revelation at Sinai.⁶⁶

This is not Maimonides' only use of Sufi terminology. *Guide* II 36 features the expression *al-kāmil al-mutawahhid*, which Munk (2:286) translates as "l'homme parfait et solitaire," explaining in a note that the author intended to evoke the "sage who isolates himself from human society in order not to be disturbed by their vices in his meditation." He is followed by both Friedländer ("the perfect and distinguished man," 2:176) and Pines ("the perfect man who lives in solitude," 372). Munk discusses the occurrence of these terms in the philosophical tradition and refers to Ibn Bājja's *Governance of the Solitary* (*Tadbīr al-mutawahhid*). While it is true that these terms can have a philosophical connotation, it is also true that both "the perfect man" (*al-insān al-kāmil*) and the "solitary devotee" (*al-mutawahhid*) are key concepts in Sufi doctrine.⁶⁷

Furthermore, in *Guide* II 39, in connection with prophecy, while discussing certain forms of religious behavior that he considers excessive, Maimonides mentions alongside monasticism (*ruhbāniyya*) the practice of *siyāha*, which Munk translates as *la vie de pèlerin*, "the life of a pilgrim" (2:304 and n2; cf. Friedländer 2:187: "the service of a hermit or pilgrim"; Pines 380: "monastic life and pilgrimage.") In a note, Munk simply refers to Ibn Tibbon's (nonsensical) rendition of *siyāha* as *ṭīlṭul le-'avodah*. However, the word could refer to the devotional practice of "wandering," a spiritual discipline that was widespread among Sufis of Maimonides' time. Moreover, Maimonides' son Abraham is well aware of this practice; he claims that the Hebrew patriarchs themselves engaged in it.⁶⁸

Another Sufi idea that Munk draws out in his translation is that of the "veil"—the material obstacles that prevent humans from witnessing the

66. Fenton 1981, 61, line 8: *u-ma'amad har sinai huwa al-maqām al-kashfī*. See also lines 5, 15, 16; 62, lines 13, 1, 10; 63, line 5. The term is also to be found with this sense concerning the Sinaitic revelation in Abraham Maimonides' *Commentary on Genesis and Exodus*; see A. Maimonides 1958, 315, line 13; 325, lines 15 and (especially) 20, where it is synonymous with *al-wuṣūl al-nabawī* (the prophetic attainment); and cf. 379, line 20: *maqām ibrahīmī* (Abrahamic station). Cf. also 'O. Maimonides 1981, fol. 3a, line 10 (Arabic text).

67. On the perfect man, see Nicholson 1921, 77–142; Fenton 1987, 188n166. Maimonides also employs this expression in *Guide* III 51 (Munk 3:444: *al-shakḥ al-kāmil* [*al-idrāk*]; 445: *al-kāmil*), a chapter absolutely replete with Sufi terms, such as *al-ḥaqā'iq al-khaṣṣa*, *al-qāṣidīn*, *al-yaqīn*, *al-maqām al-muqaddas*, *al-'ibāda al-khāṣṣa bi-al-mudrikīn li-al-ḥaqā'iq*, *dhikr Allah*, *al-inqītā'*, *al-wuṣṣla*, *ifrāt al-mahabba*, *infirād*, *'ishq*, *khalwa*, *riyāda*, *sarīr*, *al-ittiḥād bi-Allah*, *inkishāf asrār al-ilāhiyya*. On solitary devotion, see Fenton 2013.

68. See A. Maimonides 1927–38, 2:388; Fenton 1987, 63.

Divine directly.⁶⁹ In *Guide* III 9 (3:56), Maimonides employs the word *ḥijāb*, translated into French as “voile” (veil); his word choice evokes the rich imagery of the veil in Sufism that he believes was behind Maimonides’ own use of the term. Again, Friedländer and Pines show similar understandings of the image: Friedländer renders the word as “a large screen” (3:31); Pines calls it “a strong veil” (436).

Two Flaws in Munk’s Translation

By way of an interlude, I would like to point out two instances in which Munk’s translation may be flawed. In *Guide* I 74, when discussing al-Fārābī’s refutation of the Mu‘tazilite arguments for the creation of the universe, Munk (1:438 and n2) translates the adjective *al-mu‘arra min al-ta’aṣṣub* as “un examen impartial” (an impartial examination), explaining in a note that *ta’aṣṣub* means “montrer de la partialité” (to show partiality). Friedländer (1:354) follows Munk’s lead by offering the adverb “dispassionately.” Bearing in mind the ethnic tensions that the *‘aṣabiyya* illustrated in al-Andalus, these translations seem a bit understated. Pines, I think, comes closest to the (truly forceful) meaning of the word when he renders it as “without partisanship” (222), which Munk could have more strongly conveyed with an expression such as “par préjudice idéologique.”⁷⁰

The second instance appears in *Guide* III 15 (3:105 and n4), when Munk translates the term *al-a’yān* as “la transformation des *principaux*” — a rather incongruous choice in view of its established philosophical usage. He points out in a note that Silvestre de Sacy translates this word as “substances,” which is indeed its meaning in the earliest Arabic philosophical texts, and it is the sense of the word that Pines (“transmutation of substances,” 459) and perhaps Friedländer (“elementary components,” 3:60) adopted.

Lastly, I would like to point out that a recent discovery has confirmed one of Munk’s intuitions. While arguing against the opinions of the philosophers in his discussion of divine knowledge in *Guide* III 16, Maimonides

69. This notion, to which Munk refers in notes to *Guide* III 9 and 51 (Munk 3:56n3, 450n2), is much developed by al-Ḥujwīrī in his *Kashf al-maḥjūb* (al-Ḥujwīrī 1911, 325ff.). See also Chelhod 2012.

70. See also *Guide* II 22 (2:178 and n5), where Munk translates *muta’assibīn* as “passionate men.” He notes that al-Ḥarīzī translates as *ha-meqann’im* (zealous men), whereas Falaquera offers *ha-mitgabberim* (violent individuals). For reference, in *Guide* II 22, Ibn Tibbon gives a periphrasis for this word: *ha-‘ozrim le-ohavehem*, “who aid their supporters.” Cf. Friedländer 2:107: “partial critics”; Pines 319: “men imbued with a partisan spirit.”

quotes from a work by Alexander of Aphrodisias titled *Fī al-tadbīr* (On Governance), which the French translator renders as *Du Régime* (Munk 3:111). At the time of Munk's translation, Alexander's treatise was unknown; nevertheless, Munk treats it as an authentic work. Pines similarly assumes that it is Alexander's *Treatise on Providence* to which Maimonides refers.⁷¹ The Arabic translation, of which there are two versions, has only recently been discovered and edited.⁷² It can now be shown that Maimonides is indeed quoting Alexander's text, which he uses with great freedom, adapting it to the needs of his theological and philosophical arguments. Significantly, Maimonides calls the work *tadbīr*—the same name that the circle of al-Kindī gave it. (Maimonides ultimately seems to have been familiar with both translations.)⁷³

The Aftermath

When the first volume of Munk's work appeared, Samuel David Luzzatto addressed a Hebrew poem ("Hommage poétique à M. Munk") to him. It began:

They used to say in olden times: "a blind man is as good as dead."
 You, however, have demolished this proverb.
 Who is more alive than you?! Who so vital, even now?!
 Even though sun and fiery spark withhold from you their light.⁷⁴

The monumental three-volume edition and annotated French translation of the Arabic original of Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed* (Paris, 1856–66) became, of course, the crowning achievement of Munk's career. For his work that had cost him his eyesight he was awarded the Legion d'honneur and, in 1864, he succeeded Renan to the prestigious chair of Hebrew at the Collège de France.

71. Pines 1963, lxv.

72. Alexander of Aphrodisias 1999.

73. Alexander of Aphrodisias 1999, 90–91.

74. Luzzatto 1856, 707:

*'iwwer ke-met hu', qadmonim millelu,
 akh ha-mashal ha-zeh attah hishbatta.
 mi hay kamokha, mi gibbor gam attah
 ki shemesh u-sheviv esh lakh lo' yahellu.*

See also Luzzatto 1879, 318. On the relationship between Munk and Luzzatto, see Adorasio 2017b.

This appointment was to make an enormous impression on Jewish intellectuals in Prussia and eastern Europe; the whole European Jewish scholarly world held its breath as the man who had raised Jewish studies to the status of an academic discipline gave the inaugural lecture of his Hebrew course at the Collège de France.⁷⁵

Friedländer hailed Munk as the “regenerator of the Guide.”⁷⁶ Nothing could be more true. The scholarly standard of his edition completely changed the face of research on Maimonides and of Jewish studies in general. European Jewish theologians gave his edition an enthusiastic welcome, and several positive reviews were published in German scholarly journals. In a lecture in Vienna in 1865, Adolf Jellinek praised Munk’s edition as the “philosophical Bible of the Jews.”⁷⁷

The nineteenth century witnessed the production of several translations of the *Guide* into various European languages, almost all of which, apart from Simon Scheyer (1838) and Raphael Fürstenthal (1839), were indebted to Munk.⁷⁸ But despite Munk’s influence, none of these other translations rival the original by Munk. They are either translations of his version or highly dependent upon it.

A truly systematic comparison of Shlomo Pines’s translation and that of Munk lies beyond the scope of this chapter, but as I have attempted to demonstrate in the pages of this essay, the two men hold more in common than merely their first names: Munk and Pines frequently follow similar paths in their translation and interpretation. Nonetheless, as Alfred Ivry has already pointed out, Pines’s text, as a post-Enlightenment work, does not carry the apologetic dimension of *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. Whereas Munk felt obliged to clarify Maimonides’ text both philosophically and philologically to demonstrate how it encapsulates the very spirit of enlightenment, Pines had no such agenda, and his annotations and textual observations are as minimal as possible.⁷⁹

A new edition of Munk’s Arabic text was published (without the French translation and notes) by Issachar Joel in Jerusalem in 1930/31. Variants were placed at the back of his edition, which included the publication of Maimonides’ autograph pages, which had been discovered by Hirschfeld in

75. See Munk 1865 for the published version of the inaugural address.

76. Friedländer 3:xvii.

77. Jellinek 1865, 20.

78. For details, see the introduction to this volume.

79. Ivry 2004, 488.

the Cairo Genizah.⁸⁰ The volume also includes a brief index of biblical verses and technical terms.

The Paris publisher Maisonneuve then reissued the French translation and notes (but not the Arabic text) in 1960; this version was published again in 1970 and yet again in 1981.⁸¹

In 1979, the French publisher Verdier brought out a one-volume edition of Munk's translation—but pruned of its critical apparatus and copious notes. In Verdier's revised version of this edition, published in 2012, many of Munk's original notes are restored.⁸²

Before turning to the polemical overtones of Munk's work, it seems fitting to point out the strange bond that links the destiny of the *Guide* to France. It seems somewhat uncanny that four of its major translations were composed and (in part) published on French soil: the Hebrew of Ibn Tibbon, the Hebrew of al-Ḥarizi, the Latin of Agostino Giustiniani, and the French of Salomon Munk.

Ideological Overtones

Having discussed the circumstances surrounding the accomplishment of Munk's French translation of the *Guide*, I would like to conclude by examining the ideological reasons that may have persuaded him to pursue this monumental task. We recall that Munk's earlier work focused on Sa'adya Gaon. Why, then, did Munk choose to translate the *Guide*—and not Sa'adya's *Book of Beliefs and Opinions*, Judah Halevi's *Kuzari*, or any other major work of Jewish thought? Was Munk's scholarship animated by purely intellectual concerns, or could there have been some ideological motivation behind his enormous efforts?

These questions demand that we take into account the nineteenth-century struggle of *Wissenschaft des Judentums* in Germany to establish Jewish studies as an academic discipline and also to harmonize Judaism with the ideals of modern science.⁸³ This struggle represented an openly

80. Hirschfeld 1903.

81. Munk 1960. A reprint of the Paris original was also made by Otto Zeller (Osnabrück, 1964).

82. Munk 1979.

83. My reflections on Munk's place in the intellectual debates of the nineteenth century owe much to Simon-Nahum 1991 and Adorasio 2012. See also Adorasio's new book, *Dialectic of Separation: Judaism and Philosophy in the Work of Salomon Munk* (2017a), and Fenton 2018.

polemical reaction to the vision of Judaism that liberal Protestant theology and religious studies were propounding at the time.⁸⁴ Christian theologians had reproached Judaism for being imprisoned within its particularistic cult—one that had been rendered obsolete by the universalism of Christian teaching. In their eyes, Jewish ritual was an archaic practice that stood to be eliminated by conversion or assimilation. Jewish thinkers countered this criticism by integrating Judaism’s particularism into a universal system of principles and beliefs. This development became a centerpiece in the debate with Christianity: it not only demonstrated that there was an eminently universal dimension in Jewish thought, but also put Judaism’s capacity for internal evolution on display. For Munk, the role of the *Guide* in this debate is fundamental, for only the *Guide*—and not, say, Sa’adya’s *Book of Beliefs and Opinions*—would have granted its translator an opportunity to respond fully to Christian allegations.

According to the German historian of philosophy Heinrich Ritter (1791–1869), the Jews had not produced a single original philosopher throughout their history; he therefore omitted them from his Hegelian twelve-volume *Geschichte der Philosophie* (Hamburg, 1829–53). Munk’s translation of the *Guide* into a European language (and his abundant notes on the work) testified to Maimonides’ significant influence on Christian theology in general and on Albertus Magnus in particular.⁸⁵ Munk used the tools of philology (and, it should be said, the sweeping force of Maimonides’ thought) to challenge the hegemony of Christian theology.

Underlying this observation is the understanding that under the sway of Islam, Judaism formulated its doctrine in rational terms long before the Christian West began to do the same. Munk’s edition of the *Guide* is a demonstration of the ancient faith’s capacity to adapt to the contingencies of a contemporary cultural context. As Munk argues,

It is commonly held that the Muslim philosophers of Spain were the philosophical mentors of the Jews of that land. This opinion is exact in relation to Maimonides and his successors in Christian Spain. However, my study of Ibn Gabirol, or Avicbron, has convinced me that the Jews

84. This struggle is described in Wiese 1999.

85. His identification of Avicbron, who was also most influential on Albertus Magnus, with the Jewish philosopher Solomon Ibn Gabrirol had the same effect.

of Spain had much success before this discipline had found a worthy representative among the Muslims.⁸⁶

Later, the spread of peripatetic philosophy among the Jews predisposed them to become, once again, the intermediaries between the Arabs and Christian Europe and the transmitters of Greek philosophy to the West.⁸⁷

In addition, by drawing his reader's attention to the fact that the works of Averroes and other Arab philosophers—as well as the majority of scientific works that had been written in Arabic—had been translated into Latin by Jews, Munk legitimized the study of Hebrew sources, arguing that they were highly valuable to the understanding of Arabic philosophy. By reconstructing a more faithful (and, hence, a more complex) image of medieval Arabic philosophy, Munk made Hebrew philology a discipline that was of fundamental importance to the study of Islamic thought, and, by the same token, to the Christian Scholasticism that Islamic thought had influenced. Here we see Munk invite his Christian counterparts to deepen their knowledge of Jewish philosophical works so that they might broaden their understanding of the development of Christian theology. Indeed, in the concluding statement of his historical sketch of Jewish philosophy in the *Mélanges*, Munk overturns the Christian, Eurocentric historical perspective by flaunting the fundamental role of Judaism and Islam's combined efforts to civilize Europe:

In effect, as a nation or a religious society, the Jews only played a secondary role in the history of philosophy. But this was not their mission. However, they share undeniably with the Arabs the merit of having preserved and propagated the philosophical discipline throughout the centuries of barbarity, and of having exercised, for a certain period, a civilizing influence on the European world.⁸⁸

86. Munk 1857–59, 480–81: “On croit communément que les philosophes musulmans d’Espagne furent les maîtres en philosophie des Juifs de ce pays. Cette opinion est exacte pour ce qui concerne Maïmonide et ses successeurs de l’Espagne chrétienne; mais on a pu se convaincre, par notre travail sur Ibn-Gebirol ou Avicbron, que les Juifs d’Espagne cultivèrent la philosophie avec beaucoup de succès avant que cette science eût trouvé parmi les Musulmans un digne représentant.”

87. Munk 1857–59, 487.

88. Munk 1957–59, 511: “En somme, les Juifs, comme nation ou comme société religieuse, ne jouent dans l’histoire de la philosophie qu’un rôle secondaire; ce ne fut pas là leur mission. Cependant ils partagent incontestablement avec les Arabes le mérite d’avoir

Fascinated by Maimonides' role as the founder of a rational theology (who then reestablished traditional laws on the grounds of that rational teleology), Munk reads in the *Guide* the expression of his own ideal of conciliation between reason and religion.⁸⁹ He focuses in on Judaism's universal dimension and uses Maimonides' discussion of sacrifices to argue in its favor. The ritual particularism inherent in Mosaic worship is not a constitutive element, he explains, but is instead determined by the circumstances of its promulgation. According to Maimonides—on the basis of his wide readings in ancient Arabic literature—sacrifices, as well as certain other commandments, were originally polytheistic practices. These practices were nonetheless tolerated and codified by Hebrew legislation, since it would have been impossible to eliminate them at the time. However, they were imbued with new meanings that would align with the monotheistic message. In the Sinaitic legislation, ceremonial laws therefore occupy a position that is secondary to their underlying universal significance. The history of the Jewish people thus displays a progressive conquest of spirituality.

Conclusion

My final words address Munk's inclusion of Muslim thinkers in his notes to the *Guide*. Disengaged from the anti-Islamic prejudices of contemporary German theologians, Munk displays a generally positive attitude toward Islamic civilization. In his footnotes, he highlights Islam's catalyzing influence on Jewish thought and underlines the combined contribution of Islamic and Jewish philosophy to Christian Scholasticism. Whereas his Protestant contemporaries denigrated Islam on account of its supposed cultural inferiority, Munk emphasizes its civilizing effect on the West while pointing out the intermediary role that Jews played in its transmission. At the same time, however, Munk appears not to have adhered to some idealized vision of a Judeo-Islamic golden age in al-Andalus: he was the first to write at length about the Almohad persecutions at the time of Maimonides.⁹⁰ Indeed, he turned to this topic shortly after his visit to the East at the time of the Damascus Affair, and one wonders whether his encounter with Islamic society

conservé et propagé la science philosophique pendant les siècles de barbarie, et d'avoir exercé, pendant un certain temps, une influence civilisatrice sur le monde européen."

89. Munk 1:i. Cf. Ivry 2004, 482–83.

90. Munk 1842.

afforded him a more sober vision of the reality of Jewish existence under Islam. His interest in Judeo-Arabic studies, on the other hand, was driven by his preoccupation with the “interdisciplinary” philosophical stances of its authors.

Munk’s promotion of medieval Judaism legitimized the process of political and cultural emancipation. The importance of Hebrew sources for the study of Western Scholasticism justified, in his time, the Jewish presence in European universities and simultaneously transformed the area of Jewish studies into an academic discipline. Heinrich Graetz’s comprehensive account of Munk’s life and scholarship stands as a poignant (and contemporary) evaluation:

The glory of Jewish history during the Middle Ages developed during the rule of the Arabs in the East and West; its dawn began with Saadiah, and it reached its zenith with Maimuni. Munk banished the obscurity in which this epoch had been enwrapped, and illuminated it with the full light of his profound studies. The innermost thoughts of Maimuni, the awakener of intellects, to whom the Jewish race is chiefly indebted for its renaissance in modern days, were completely revealed only through the researches of Munk. He renewed in its original form what had been spoil by continual emendations. The proud boast of Christendom, that even in the obscurity of the Middle Ages it had disseminated the bright germs of thought, Munk controverted by incontestable proofs that without Arabic and Jewish philosophy, the darkness of the Middle Ages would have been impenetrable, and that the so-called Christian schools of philosophy of that period were fed upon the crumbs which fell from the lips of Jewish thinkers. Munk so conclusively established this historical fact that it is scarcely possible to speak of a Christian philosophy. . . . Munk fully recognized that the self-respect of the Jews would be confirmed only by self-knowledge, reached along the paths of science.⁹¹

Although it is doubtful that Munk’s foremost intention was to engage in anti-Christian apologetics, Graetz’s words reflect an overall trend that emerged in German-Jewish scholarship and heralded a powerful Maimonidean renaissance in the second half of the nineteenth century—a renaissance that was accompanied by the rediscovery of medieval Jewish thought.

91. Graetz 1870, 547–48; 1895, 665–66.

