

## **A Unique Blend: Merging Two Hebrew Versions of Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawṣī's *Book of Intellectual Circles* (*Kitāb al-Dawā'ir al-Wahmiyyah*)**

Lucas Oro Hershtein, Instituto de Lenguas y Culturas del Mediterráneo y Oriente Próximo, CSIC, Madrid, Spain

### **Abstract**

This paper examines a unique manuscript of the first Hebrew translation of the *Book of Imaginary Circles* (*Kitāb al-Dawā'ir al-Wahmiyyah*), completed by Solomon Ibn Da'ud, in which the author annotated Solomon's translation based on Moses Ibn Tibbon's later version of the same text. This manuscript stands out due to its complex intertextual relationships, as it was crafted not only with linguistic considerations but with an intention to explore the conceptual framework of *K. al-Dawā'ir*. By examining several examples that highlight the challenges of amalgamating elements from Moses's translation into Solomon's original, this article advances understanding of the intellectual exchanges that shaped the Jewish scholarly milieu of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. It highlights the philological, philosophical, and theological layers of Jewish engagement with one of the most renowned Islamic philosophical works among Jewish thinkers.

### **Keywords**

Medieval Arabic-into-Hebrew Translations; Medieval Arabic-Hebrew Terminology

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The *Book of Imaginary Circles* (*K. al-Dawā'ir al-Wahmiyyah*, hereafter *K. al-Dawā'ir*),<sup>2</sup> an early Islamic philosophical masterpiece from al-Andalus, was authored by Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī.<sup>3</sup> His life journey took him from Badajoz to Toledo, then Zaragoza, and finally Valencia, spanning approximately 1052 to 1127. Translated into Hebrew in the early thirteenth century, during the momentous period of scholarly Hebrew vocabulary standardization<sup>4</sup>—when “the Hebrew scientific-philosophical bookshelf was still quite small”<sup>5</sup>—*K. al-Dawā'ir*

---

<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to Dr. Yoav Meyrav, whose mentorship, support, and encouragement have been indispensable to every aspect of this research. His influence is so profound that no amount of gratitude could truly suffice. His insights and generosity during my time at the Institute for Jewish Philosophy and Religion of the Universität Hamburg (November 2022–November 2024) have enriched my work beyond expectation. The period under his guidance has been the most illuminating of my intellectual life to date—one that I know will leave a lasting impact. While I owe a much to his contributions, any errors or shortcomings in this article remain my responsibility. This research was funded by the European Union (ERC, HEPMASITE, 101041376); however, the views and opinions expressed are solely mine and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Council Executive Agency, which bear no responsibility for them. I would also like to extend my deep gratitude to Professors Reimund Leicht and Resianne Fontaine for their review of this article. Their insightful feedback and thoughtful suggestions, ranging from detailed comments to the overarching hypothesis, have greatly enhanced this work. My sincere thanks also go to Levana Chajes, whose copy-editing has improved not only the form but also the content of this paper. Finally, I am also thankful to the anonymous reviewers for their valuable remarks. While I have made every effort to incorporate these suggestions, any remaining errors are solely my responsibility.

<sup>2</sup> For an in-depth analysis of al-Baṭalyawsī's thought, *K. al-Dawā'ir al-Wahmiyyah*, why this title should replace that usually mentioned (*K. al-Ḥadā'iq*), and its sources and influence on Jewish, Muslim, and Christian thought, see Ayala Eliyahu, “Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought. Including an Edition and Translation of *Kitāb al-Dawā'ir al-Wahmiyyah*, Known as *Kitāb al-Ḥadā'iq*,” vol. 1 (PhD dissertation, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2010) (Heb.).

<sup>3</sup> For a complete bibliography list, see Ayala Eliyahu, “Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought,” vol. 1, pp. 235–271. To the texts mentioned there, the following may be added: Ayala Eliyahu, “From *Kitāb Al-Ḥadā'iq* to *Kitāb Al-Dawā'ir*: Reconsidering Ibn Al-Sīd Al-Baṭalyawsī's Philosophical Treatise,” *Al-Qanṭara* 1 (2015): 165–198; Ayala Eliyahu, “Muslim and Jewish Philosophy in Al-Andalus: Ibn Al-Sīd Al-Baṭalyawsī and Moses Ibn Ezra,” in *Judaeo-Arabic Culture in Al-Andalus, 13th Conference of the Society for Judaeo-Arabic Studies (Córdoba, 2007)*, ed. Amir Ashur (Córdoba: Oriens Academics, Córdoba Near Eastern Research Unit and Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2007), pp. 51–63; Rafael Ramón Guerrero, “Ibn Al-Sīd de Badajoz,” in *Coexistence and Cooperation in the Middle Ages, IV European Congress of Medieval Studies F.I.D.E.M. (Fédération Internationale Des Instituts d'Études Médiévales) 23–27 June 2009, Palermo (Italy)*, eds. Alejandro Musco and Giuliana Musotto (Palermo: Officina di Studi Medievali, 2014), pp. 1221–1232; Juan Antonio Pacheco Paniagua, “Ibn Al-Sid de Badajoz (I),” *Boletín de La Real Academia de Extremadura de Las Letras Y Las Artes* 27 (2019): 403–454; and Juan Antonio Pacheco Paniagua, “Ibn Al-Sid de Badajoz (II),” *Boletín de La Real Academia de Extremadura de Las Letras Y Las Artes* 28 (2020): 323–409; M. Zonta translates *K. al-Dawā'ir al-Wahmiyyah* as *Book of the Intellectual Spheres* in Mauro Zonta, *Medieval Hebrew Translations of Philosophical and Scientific Texts: A Chronological Table* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 60, #447.

<sup>4</sup> For a review of academic literature specifically focused on Medieval Hebrew philosophical terminology, including a detailed list of œuvres, see Resianne Fontaine, “The Study of Medieval Hebrew Philosophical Terminology in the Twentieth Century: Klatzkin's Thesaurus and Later Studies,” *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 7 (2) (2000): 160–181. Further relevant literature will be referenced throughout this article. The most comprehensive contemporary terminological study is “Peshat in Context,” (<https://www.peshat.org/>), an online multilingual thesaurus of medieval Hebrew philosophical and scientific terminology. (Peshat in Context has not yet—pending future updates—incorporated the two translations considered in this paper.) This project is supervised by Reimund Leicht and Giuseppe Veltri, with Resianne Fontaine serving as an Advisory Member, and Michael Engel and Florian Dunklau as Research Associates.

<sup>5</sup> Gad Freudenthal, “Science and Medicine,” in *The Cambridge History of Judaism. Vol. Six: The Middle Ages: The Christian World*, ed. Robert Chazan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), pp. 702–741, p. 713.

ultimately had a greater impact on Jewish thinkers than on its initial Muslim audience. This greater influence among Jewish scholars may have been partially due to political shifts in al-Andalus,<sup>6</sup> even though al-Baṭalyawsī himself was recognized as a philosopher among his Muslim contemporaries.<sup>7</sup> This influence is quantitatively evidenced by the survival of manuscripts: seven in Arabic, one in Judæo-Arabic, and twenty in Hebrew.

*K. al-Dawāʿir* was fully translated into Hebrew twice: first by Solomon Ibn Daʿud between 1205 and 1226,<sup>8</sup> and subsequently by Moses Ibn Tibbon<sup>9</sup> at some point during his translation career, estimated to have spanned from 1244 to 1274.<sup>10</sup> Moses’s translation, which was favored by medieval Jews, attracted not only philosophers but also a wider audience.<sup>11</sup> It has been extensively scrutinized in terms of the translator’s identity, background, and lexicography, in contrast to Solomon’s rendition, which has received comparatively less examination. Among the surviving manuscripts, seventeen are attributed to Moses’s translation, while only three are known to preserve Solomon’s work.

Two of the three manuscript witnesses of Solomon’s translation offer a near-identical text, with minor variations suggesting a divergent transmission line. In contrast, the third manuscript exhibits substantial differences, indicating that its author revised Solomon’s translation using Moses’s version as a reference. However, reconstructing the layers of translation in the manuscript—viewing them, so to speak, against the light—reveals that the individual who crafted the Vatican manuscript not only employed Moses’s text to correct Solomon’s but was also interested in the theoretical substance of the *K. al-Dawāʿir*, attempting to gain a deeper comprehension of text. This should not be taken to imply that the author held a specific agenda or approached Moses’s and Solomon’s translations from a predetermined conceptual viewpoint. Instead, it indicates that he was a genuine philosopher, not merely a transmitter of others’ ideas, even though his authorial efforts involved collating two previous

---

<sup>6</sup> See Delfina Serrano, “Ibn al-Sid al Batalyawsi (444/1052-521/1127): de los reinos de taifas a la época almorávide a través de la bibliografía de un ulema polifacético,” *Al-Qantara* 23 (2002): 53–92.

<sup>7</sup> See Emilio Tornero Poveda, “Cuestiones filosóficas del Kitāb al-Masāʿil de Ibn al-Sīd de Badajoz,” *Al-Qantara* 5 (1984): 15–32, p. 15 [1].

<sup>8</sup> On the figure of Solomon Ibn Daʿud and the dating of his translations, see Lucas Oro Hershtein, “‘I Am Not Inferior to Them’: Solomon Ibn Daʿud’s Introductions to His Arabic-Into-Hebrew Philosophical and Medical Translations,” *Maimonides Review of Philosophy and Religion* 3 (2024): 113–158.

<sup>9</sup> For a list of Moses’s translations and original compositions, see Howard Kreisel, Colette Sirat, and Avraham Israel, *The Writings of R’ Moses Ibn Tibbon* (Be’er Sheva: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev Press, 2010), pp. 8–35 (Heb.).

<sup>10</sup> See Howard Kreisel, “Moses Ibn Tibbon: Translator and Philosophical Exegete,” in *Judaism as Philosophy: Studies in Maimonides and the Medieval Jewish Philosophers of Provence* (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2015), pp. 73–115, on p. 86.

<sup>11</sup> On *K. al-Dawāʿir*’s influence on the Rašbah through Moses’s translation, see Yair Loberbaum, “The Textual Evidence of Rašbah’s Debate with Christians: A New Study,” *Zion* 84 (1) (2019): 81–85 (Heb.).

translations. In other words, he read, compared, and thought, using the materials at hand—these two manuscripts—to engage with the text’s ideas, not merely with its materiality.

This article centers on MS Vatican, Vatican Apostolic Library, ebr. 270, approached as a case study that sheds light on the complex process undertaken by its author to reconcile the translations of Solomon and Moses amidst terminological, philosophical, and theological discrepancies. It highlights this manuscript as a microcosm of the multifaceted nature of translation during the Middle Ages—encompassing both the form and substance of the text, as well as their interrelation. This essay is structured into four main sections: an exposition of *K. al-Dawā‘ir*’s principal conceptual guidelines, a survey of the manuscript corpus, a comparison between Solomon’s and Moses’s translations, and an examination of the Vatican manuscript.

It has been argued that the emergence of pre-modern philosophical Hebrew terminology was characterized by three main features: its reliance on foreign language sources and models, its strong adherence to an authoritative linguistic framework provided by religious texts, and its evolution through ongoing interactions with other languages and cultures.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, the Arabic-to-Hebrew translation movement initially adopted two distinct methods: philosophical and scientific texts were often translated verbatim, resulting in calques and loanwords that preserved the structure of the original texts, whereas literary works were translated more interpretatively, substituting Qur’ān and hadīth references with Biblical and rabbinical citations.<sup>13</sup> Drawing on these observations, an analysis of the history of the translations, receptions, and appropriations of *K. al-Dawā‘ir* by Jewish scholars illustrates that the development of Hebrew philosophical terminology extended beyond a purely scientific process, underscoring the significant role played by the interaction of language, thought, and belief in shaping philosophical language. This examination offers a fresh perspective on the integration of cultures that shaped medieval scholarship,<sup>14</sup> highlighting the complex interactions that transformed its intellectual foundations.

## 1. The Arabic-Into-Hebrew Translation of the *Kitāb al-Dawā‘ir al-Wahmiyyah*

---

<sup>12</sup> Reimund Leicht and Giuseppe Veltri, “The Study of Pre-modern Philosophical and Scientific Hebrew Terminology – Past, Present, and Future Perspectives,” in *Studies in the Formation of Medieval Hebrew Philosophical Terminology*, eds. Reimund Leicht and Giuseppe Veltri (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2019), pp. 1–35, on pp. 5–9.

<sup>13</sup> See James T. Robinson, “Translation, Arabic into Hebrew,” in *Medieval Islamic Civilization: An Encyclopedia*, ed. Josef W. Meri (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), pp. 821–822, on p. 821.

<sup>14</sup> On the relation between philosophy and theology for medieval Jewish thinkers, see Herbert A. Davidson, “The Study of Philosophy as a Religious Obligation,” in *Religion in a Religious Age: Proceedings of Regional Conferences Held at the University of California, Los Angeles, and Brandeis University in April 1973*, ed. S. D. Goitein (Cambridge, MA: Association for Jewish Studies, 1974), pp. 53–68.

## 1.1 The Ideas

The significant number of surviving Hebrew manuscripts attests to the appeal of *K. al-Dawā'ir* among Jews interested in philosophical ideas, leading to its translation and, notably in the case of the author of the Vatican manuscript, the pursuit of the most precise Hebrew version through comparison of various renditions. To understand the reasons behind this and to appreciate the philological nuances within the blended version, it is necessary to mention *K. al-Dawā'ir*'s overarching principles.

Al-Baṭalyawsī conceptualizes a cyclical cosmology, within which the universe eternally oscillates between emanation from and reversion to a divine source, which consequently implies that the created cosmos, differently from the necessary source of being, is not only contingent but also intrinsically hierarchical. The individuality and interconnectedness of all existences are derived from a singular, underlying principle: the cause of each being's identity and differentiation is the mediation of the unique essence bestowed from the divine source through the structure of existence. In this mediation, everything is simultaneously constituted and organized. The emergence of existential plurality from ontic singularity transcends mere structural formation, encompassing functional significance: everything that exists has a specific place but also plays a distinctive role in the movement of existence. Setting aside the pre-existential unity in God, al-Baṭalyawsī distinguishes five modes through which existence unfolds: it manifests in, as, and through the universal intellect, the universal soul, universal matter, human reason, and human imagination. These five modes can be further grouped into three overarching categories: the spiritual, the bodily, and the simultaneously spiritual and corporeal human substances.

The human form is the final ontic moment in the process of emanation taking place from the universal intellect, the terminus of creation. Nevertheless, in terms of its status, it is at the center of creation, not only because everything serves its purpose but also because it is the grounding point of the return journey. In al-Baṭalyawsī's discourse, the correlation between being and knowing assumes a central role: one's being is constituted by its knowledge, which reshapes one's existence. This concept implies a transformative process where understanding and existence are inextricably intertwined. Hence, God not only inherently possesses all knowledge, being the embodiment of that knowledge, but also the process of return to the divine is fundamentally intellectual. Since the faculty that enables humans to comprehend the intelligible world—their particular intellects—derives its very existence and capacity from the principle of knowledge itself—the universal intellect—the journey back to the intelligible domain starts by knowing our essence and, after it, its origin. Therefore, in the case of the

human being, even when for him the process of knowledge relies on external aids, the ascension to the intelligible dimension implies not only the logical acquisition of the forms of what is above but also what is below it.

The human being is considered a “third substance,” both spiritual and corporeal, because it is in between the two other modalities of existence. This is the case not only due to its nature but also through its intellectual activity, through which it can receive an increasing number of those forms present within the universal realm. The sole impediment to this unification process, preventing complete assimilation with the universal intellect, is human attachment to the bodily form. Because of this, some aspects of life can only be *epistemically* internalized during one’s lifetime; however, after death, when the soul is liberated and its cognitive faculties thereby enhanced, these aspects will be *substantially* integrated.

## 1.2 The Reasons

The enigma surrounding Jewish attraction to *K. al-Dawā‘ir* hints at a combination of social, philosophical, and religious motivations. While the precise impetus behind *K. al-Dawā‘ir*’s translation may be difficult to determine, it is apparent that the text provided responses—or a series of insights—to questions of pressing importance, likely extending beyond the individual translator to a broader community. In an epoch where philosophers were subject to scrutiny and often contentious debate by Jewish religious and political authorities, compelling them to actively defend the merit of studying and translating philosophical texts, and where manuscripts were both rare and financially burdensome, *K. al-Dawā‘ir*’s translation addressed a spectrum of intellectual and spiritual inquiries relevant to its time.<sup>15</sup>

First, the text might have served as a gateway to the underlying rationales of the “Neoplatonic” worldview.<sup>16</sup> Explicit Neoplatonic tendencies,<sup>17</sup> which appear to be filtered

---

<sup>15</sup> This is somehow similar to the contemporary urgency that drove the translation of Arabic medical texts into Hebrew, where translations were motivated by the practical need to acquire medical knowledge for a minority lacking access to major medical learning centers. See Harry Friedenwald, “The Use of The Hebrew Language in Medical Literature,” *Bulletin of the Institute of the History of Medicine* 2 (2) (1934): 77–111, on p. 88. However, the sociological factors that triggered the translations of philosophical texts were different. See Gad Freudenthal, “Why Translate? Views from Within Judaism: Egodocuments by Translators from Arabic and Latin Into Hebrew (Twelfth–Fourteenth Centuries),” in *Why Translate Science? Documents from Antiquity to the 16th Century Historical West (Bactria to the Atlantic)*, ed. Dimitri Gutas, with the assistance of Charles Burnett and Uwe Vagelpohl (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2022), pp. 544–683, on p. 552; on the translation of medical works, see also Lola Ferre and José Martínez Delgado, “Arabic Into Hebrew, a Case Study: Isaac Israeli’s Book on Fevers,” *Medieval Encounters* 21 (2015): 50–80.

<sup>16</sup> On the genesis of the historiographical category “Neoplatonism,” see Leo Catana, “The Origin of the Division Between Middle Platonism and Neoplatonism,” *Apeiron* 46 (2) (2013): 166–200.

<sup>17</sup> See Lawrence V. Berman, “Judaic-Arabic Thought in Spain and North Africa: Problems and Prospects,” in *Judaic-Arabic Studies: Proceedings of the Founding Conference of the Society for Judaic-Arabic Studies*, ed.

through *Rasā'il* of the *Ikhwān aṣ-ṣafā' wa khillān al-wafā'*,<sup>18</sup> permeate the entire text. Although “there appears to have been minimal interest in translating the many [specifically] Neoplatonic books written or translated into Arabic,”<sup>19</sup> the Neoplatonic *weltanschauung* represented a crucial element of the intricate metaphysical puzzle characterizing thirteenth-century Jewish philosophical endeavors.<sup>20</sup> There was no need, paradoxically, for specific Neoplatonic texts to be translated, since

the very framework of medieval Neo-Aristotelianism in the Islamicate world was saturated with Platonism [...] [and because] in numerous manifestations of philosophy in the Islamicate world, and specifically among Jews, authors were not strictly committed to either Aristotelianism or Neoplatonism but showed in their work independent syntheses of different theoretical frameworks.<sup>21</sup>

Second, another plausible reason could be its philosophical mysticism—the idea of a post-rational divine encounter that is both rooted in and explicable by philosophy. This concept may have particularly resonated with Jewish readers, providing a reconciliatory approach amid the era’s intellectual divergences.<sup>22</sup>

Third, these elements are intricately woven into the *K. al-Dawā'ir*’s cyclical model, which appears to have been appealing—through various formulations—to Jewish philosophers at the time of its Hebrew translation. This includes Moses’s father, Samuel Ibn Tibbon, who, in

---

Norman Gold (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 33–43, p. 41. The question of al-Baṭalyawī’s influences remains open to discussion. See Eliyahu, “Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought,” vol. 1, pp. 67–69.

<sup>18</sup> The question of what Neoplatonism meant for *Ikhwān* is also open to discussion. See Daryoush Mohammad Poor, “Extra-Ismaili Sources and a Shift of Paradigm in Nizārī Ismailim,” in *Intellectual Interactions in the Islamic World: The Ismaili Thread*, ed. Orkhan Mir-Kasimov (London: Institute of Ismaili Studies), pp. 219–246; and Ismail K. Poonawala, “An Early Doctrinal Controversy in the Iranian School of Isma‘ili Thought and Its Implications,” *Journal of Persianate Studies* 5 (2012): 17–34.

<sup>19</sup> See Steven Harvey, “Arabic into Hebrew: The Hebrew Translation Movement and the Influence of Averroes Upon Medieval Jewish Thought,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Jewish Philosophy*, ed. Daniel H. Frank and Oliver Leaman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 258–280, on p. 262; M. Zonta argues that the reason behind this is that “Medieval Neoplatonic Jewish authors knew Arabic well, so that they did not need Hebrew translations of these texts [the Pseudo-Aristotle’s *Theology*, the *Liber de causis*, Pseudo-Empedocles’ *Book of the Five Substances*, and the *Encyclopaedia of the Brethren of Purity*].” See Mauro Zonta, “Greek Texts Translated Into Hebrew,” in *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy* (Dordrecht: Springer, vol. 1: A–L, 2011), p. 432.

<sup>20</sup> See Alfred Ivry, “Maimonides and Neoplatonism: Challenge and Response,” in *Neoplatonism and Jewish Thought*, ed. Lenn E. Goodman (State University of New York Press: Albany, 1992), 137–156.

<sup>21</sup> See Adam Afterman and Omer Michaelis, “Jewish Neoplatonism,” in *Later Platonists and Their Heirs Among Christians, Jews, and Muslims*, eds. Eva Anagnostou-Laoutides and Ken Parry (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2023), 483–512, on p. 484. C. Sirat argues that it was Moses’s interest in Neoplatonism that made him translate *K. al-Dawā'ir*. See Colette Sirat, *A History of Jewish Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 229.

<sup>22</sup> On philosophical mysticism, see Gideon Freudenthal, “The Philosophical Mysticism of Maimonides and Maimon,” in *Maimonides and His Heritage*, ed. Idit Dobbs-Weinstein (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009), pp. 113–152.

his *Ma'amar yikavu ha-mayim*,<sup>23</sup> one of the last treatises he composed before he died in 1231 (following Solomon's translation of the *K. al-Dawā'ir*, and likely before Moses's translation), expounds on the cyclic history of the sublunar world as deriving from forces inherent to it. This perspective contrasts with the theories of other contemporary Jewish thinkers, including those in *K. al-Dawā'ir*, where cyclic return within the sublunar world is ascribed to external cosmological forces.<sup>24</sup>

### 1.3 The Manuscripts

There are seven known Arabic manuscripts of *K. al-Dawā'ir*, which can be classified into three distinct branches of transmission: (i) the Berlin manuscript,<sup>25</sup> (ii) the Leiden<sup>26</sup> and Oxford

---

<sup>23</sup> For a critical edition of *Ma'amar yikavu ha-mayim*, see Rebecca Kneller-Rowe, "Samuel Ibn Tibbon's *Ma'amar* on the Gathering of the Waters: A Philosophical and Exegetical Treatise," (PhD dissertation, Tel-Aviv University, 2011) (Heb.); G. Vajda has demonstrated its wide circulation in the thirteenth century. See Shalom Rosenberg, "The Return to the Garden of Eden: Notes on the History of the Idea of Restorative Redemption," in *The Messianic Idea in Jewish Thought: A Study Conference in Honour of the Eightieth Birthday of Gershom Scholem* (Jerusalem: Israeli Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1982), 37–86 (Heb.); Georges Vajda, "An Analysis of the *Ma'amar Yiqqawu ha-Mayim* by Samuel B. Judah Ibn Tibbon," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 10 (3–4) (1959): 137–149; and Georges Vajda, *Recherches sur la philosophie et la Kabbale dans la pensée juive du moyen-âge* (Paris: La Haye, 1962).

<sup>24</sup> See Gad Freudenthal, "Samuel Ibn Tibbon's Avicennian Theory of an Eternal World," *Aleph* 8 (2008): 41–129, on p. 100; for the date in which this text was composed, see p. 111; see also Tamás Visi, "The Early Ibn Ezra Supercommentaries: A Chapter in Medieval Jewish Intellectual History," (PhD dissertation, Central European University, 2006), pp. 166–171, and Kreisel, "Moses Ibn Tibbon: Translator and Philosophical Exegete," p. 84.

<sup>25</sup> *K. al-Dawā'ir* in the MS Berlin, Berlin Staatsbibliothek, 2303 [Spr. 554], is dated to 1203 c.e., making it the oldest extant witness of the work. The manuscript is written in Naskh script and features partial diacritical and vowel markings. It is complete, covering folios 167<sup>v</sup> to 195<sup>v</sup>. The manuscript was edited in Miguel Asín Palacios, "Ibn Al-Sīd de Badajoz Y Su 'Libro de Los Huertos' ('Kitāb Al-Ḥadā'iq')," *Al-Andalus* 5 (1940): 45–154, and catalogued in William Ahlwardt, *Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse Der Königlichen Bibliothek Zu Berlin. Achter Band. Verzeichniss Der Arabischen Handschriften*, vol. 4 (Berlin: A. Asher & Co., 1889), #2303, p. 528.

<sup>26</sup> The *K. al-Dawā'ir*, in MS Leiden, Leiden University Library, Or. 2926 (Ar. 2284) is dated to 1342–1343 c.e. The manuscript is written in Naskh script and is incomplete, comprising folios 1<sup>v</sup> to 14<sup>r</sup>. There are corrections between the lines, made by a hand different from that of the copyist of the main text. As argued by Eliyahu, based on a note written in a hand different from that of the main text, "at an earlier stage, the fourth chapter and the beginning of the fifth chapter were present in the manuscript but are now lost" (Eliyahu, "Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought," vol. 2, p. viii). The manuscript is catalogued in Jan Just Witkam, *Inventory of the Oriental Manuscripts of the Library of the University of Leiden*, vol. 3: Manuscripts Or. 2001–Or. 3000 (Leiden: Ter Lucht Press, 2008), p. 229, and Petrus Voorhoeve, *Handlist of Arabic Manuscripts in the Library of the University of Leiden and Other Collections in the Netherlands*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., vol. 1 (The Hague, Boston, and London: Leiden University Press, 1980), p. 105.

manuscripts,<sup>27</sup> and (iii) the Dublin,<sup>28</sup> Ankara<sup>29</sup> and Istanbul<sup>30</sup> manuscripts.<sup>31</sup> There might also be a Cairo manuscript.<sup>32</sup> It seems that, in its original Arabic rendition, *K. al-Dawā'ir* was disseminated not as a standalone work but as part of a more extensive compendium of al-Baṭalyawsī's texts.<sup>33</sup> There are twenty Hebrew codices, three containing the earliest translation

---

<sup>27</sup> In MS Oxford, Bodleian Library, Pockocke 181 (Neubauer 1334), it is written in Judæo-Arabic (with changes to the original Arabic in some sections where the Qur'ān or the prophet Muḥammad are mentioned, e.g., fol. 4v, ll. 10–15), using Sephardic script. It features partial diacritical markings. There is no internal datation, although Eliyahu dates it 1321–1350 through private correspondence with *Sfardata* (Eliyahu, “Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought,” vol. 2, p. ix, n. 36). The text spans from fol. 1<sup>v</sup> to 32<sup>r</sup>. It was catalogued in Adolf Neubauer, *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library and in the College Libraries of Oxford*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1886), #1334, p. 475. The fact that the only extant manuscript in Judæo-Arabic, dated between 1321 and 1350, appeared roughly a century after the Hebrew translations were completed suggests that the original Judeo-Arabic text was not entirely supplanted by the Hebrew versions among Jewish readers. This indicates that a certain “popular” readership may have continued to prefer the Arabic (or Judæo-Arabic) text over the Hebrew translations.

<sup>28</sup> For MS Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Ar. 4325, see below.

<sup>29</sup> *K. al-Dawā'ir* in MS Ankara, Üniversitesi Dil-ve Tarih Coğrafya Fakültesi Kütüphanesi, Collection Ismail Saib I, #1696, is attributed to Ibn Ruṣd. It is written in Naskh script. Although it has no internal dating, it has been dated to the fifteenth century. It is complete and spans from fols. 46<sup>v</sup> to 69<sup>r</sup>. This manuscript features the only reference to the Arabic philosopher Ibn Sīnā—a mention that does not appear in other manuscripts except the Istanbul manuscript, which is a copy of it.

<sup>30</sup> MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Hacı Mahmud Efendi #5683 is a copy of the Ankara manuscript. It is written in Naskh script, with diacritical marks (some of which have been completed by a different hand) and sporadic vowel markings. Corrections have been made in the text and margins by another hand. The manuscript is undated, and the text runs from fols. 60<sup>r</sup> to 89<sup>r</sup>. It contains the entire work, without a title, and is attributed to Ibn Ruṣd, as in the Ankara manuscript. On these manuscripts, see Richard C. Taylor, “Neoplatonic Texts in Turkey: Two Manuscripts, Containing Ibn Tufayl's *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*, Ibn Al-Sid's *Kitab Al-Hada'iq*, Ibn Bajja's *Ittisal Al-'Aql Bi-l-Insan*, the *Liber de Causis*, and an Anonymous Neoplatonic Treatise on Motion,” *Philosophy Faculty Research and Publications* 846 (1982): 251–264. I would like to thank Richard C. Taylor for generously sharing with me an updated, unpublished version of his paper.

<sup>31</sup> For a more complete description of these manuscripts, see Eliyahu, “Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought,” vol. 2, pp. vi–xv, and for the manuscripts' references, idem, vol. 1, pp. 236–237. The text was edited and translated into Hebrew on pp. 1–136. While previous editions only considered the Berlin, Dublin, and Cairo manuscripts, Eliyahu used all of them and also examined the Hebrew translations of the text. For an analysis of the previous editions, see pp. ii–v.

<sup>32</sup> In Muḥammad Ruḍwān al-Dāyah, *Abū Muḥammad 'Abdullāh Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī al-Andalusī's "The Gardens in the Elevated Philosophical Subjects,"* (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1988), p. 26 (Arab.), the editor says “in the year 1365 (h., 1946 c.e.), *Kitāb ḥadā'iq fī al-maṭlab al-'āliya al-falsafah al-'awīṣah* was published in Cairo in the series *Kutub Nādirah* by Al-Sayyid 'Izzah 'Aṭṭār al-Ḥussaynī.” I have not been able to see this edition. Eliyahu has argued that the Cairo manuscript was either almost identical to the Berlin manuscript or never existed (and Al-Sayyid 'Izzah 'Aṭṭār al-Ḥussaynī's edition is either based on the Berlin manuscript or it is a copy of Asin Palacios's edition) (Eliyahu, “Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought,” vol. 1, pp. ii–v). Nevertheless, she has said to have located, but not yet consulted, the edition at the Princeton University Library (Eliyahu, “From *Kitāb Al-Ḥadā'iq* to *Kitāb Al-Dawā'ir*: Reconsidering Ibn Al-Sīd Al-Baṭalyawsī's Philosophical Treatise,” p. 168, n. 7), but I have not been able to find it at <https://library.princeton.edu/>.

<sup>33</sup> Eliyahu has reached this conclusion by comparing an anthology (*majmū'ah*) of eighteen treatises by al-Baṭalyawsī, among them *K. al-Dawā'ir*, in MS Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Ar. 4325, which contains eighteen treatises by al-Baṭalyawsī, including *K. al-Dawā'ir*, and *K. al-masā'il*, a collection of ten works, albeit in a different order and excluding *K. al-Dawā'ir*, in MS Madrid, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de El Escorial, Ar. 1518; MS Dublin, CBL, Ar. 4325 was catalogued in Arthur John Arberry, *The Chester Beatty Library: A Handlist of the Arabic Manuscripts*, vol. 5. MSS 4001–4500 (Dublin: Hodges, Figgis and Co., Ltd, 1962), pp. 102–103. It has no internal dating, but it has been dated to the fifteenth century. In it, *K. al-Dawā'ir* goes from fols. 57<sup>v</sup> to 75<sup>r</sup>. This manuscript was used in the edition by Ruḍwān al-Dāyah (1988), although he does not explicitly say which manuscript was used and, in fact, includes an image from the Berlin manuscript. MS Madrid, RBME, Ar. 1518 is

by Solomon Ibn Da'ud and the remaining seventeen featuring the later translation by Moses Ibn Tibbon. Illustrating the intertextual dialogue within the manuscripts, *K. al-Dawā'ir* is found alongside strictly philosophical texts in most extant copies, whether in Arabic,<sup>34</sup> Judæo-Arabic,<sup>35</sup> or Hebrew.<sup>36</sup> Still, there are some exceptions, both in Arabic<sup>37</sup> and Hebrew.<sup>38</sup>

The first translation into Hebrew was carried out between 1205 and 1226 by Solomon, of whom very little is known. Four manuscripts of this translation are known, and three are extant. MS Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Or. 493, dated to the fifteenth century and written in Provençal script,<sup>39</sup> was first discovered and scrutinized by B. Richler.<sup>40</sup> In this version, al-Baṭalyawī's text is untitled; however, in the introduction to his translation, Solomon calls it *The Book of the Orders of Existence and the Series of the Circles of Creations* (סדרים עגלת הברואים) (MS Florence, BML, Or. 493, fol. 76<sup>r</sup>, l. 12).<sup>41</sup> MS Paris, Bibliothèque

---

catalogued in Hartwig Derenbourg and Evariste Lévi-Provençal, *Les Manuscrits Arabes de L'Escorial*, vol. 3 (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1928), p. 115.

<sup>34</sup> Among the Arabic manuscripts, MS Leiden, Leiden University Library, Or. 2926 (Ar. 2284) only has *K. al-Dawā'ir*; MS Ankara, Üniversitesi Dil-ve Tarih Coğrafya Fakültesi Kütüphanesi, Collection Ismail Saib I, #1696, also includes Ibn Ṭufayl's *Hayy Ibn Yaqzān*; Ibn Bājjah's *Ittiṣāl al-'aql bi al-insān*; *Liber de Causis*; and an anonymous *Kitāb al-Ḥarakah min al-Thaqīl li-Aristāṭālīs*. Here, *K. al-Dawā'ir* is attributed to Ibn Ruṣd: قال الفقيه القاضي مَهْمَد بن مَهْمَد بن رَشَد رحمة الله (fol. 46v, transcribed in Taylor 1982, p. 68); and MS Istanbul, SK, Hacı Mahmud Efendi #5683 contains the same texts, in the same order. For MS Dublin, CBL, Ar. 4325 manuscript, see below.

<sup>35</sup> MS Oxford, Bodl., Pococke 181, includes an anonymous *Al-kalām 'alā al-masā'il al-thalāth*; and Ibn Sīnā's *Risālah fī aqsām al-'ulūm al-'aqliyyah* and *Al-ḥikmah al-mašriqiyyah*.

<sup>36</sup> In all of the seventeen codices that contain Moses's translation, *K. al-dawā'ir* appears alongside other philosophical texts. Solomon's translation MS Florence, BML, Or. 493 also contains Crescas's *'Avāt nefesh*; Ibn Ruṣd's *Epitome on Aristotle's Meteoreologica*, *Middle Commentary on Aristotle's De Generatione et Corruptione*, and *Epitome of Aristotle's Physics*, a philosophica commentary by the little-known משה בן לוי; and two anonymous and untitled philosophical texts; MS Turin, Turin National University Library, 57 A. VI. 49, lost in the fire of 1904, also contained an astronomical treatise attributed to Ptolemy and Abraham b. Ḥiyyā's *Shape of the Earth* (see Bernardinus Peyron, "Codex CCXII. A. VI. 49," in *Codices Hebraici Manu Exarate Regiae Bibliothecae Quae in Taurinensi Athenaeo Asservatur* (Roma, Turin and Florence: Fratres Bocca, 1880), pp. 225–226, p. 226. It was not included in Antonio María Biscionio, *Catalogus Bibliothecae Mediceae Laurentianae et Palatinae Codicum Mss. Orientalium Catalogus*, vol. 2 (Imperiali Typographio, 1752).

<sup>37</sup> In MS Berlin, SB, 2303, *K. al-Dawā'ir* was transcribed alongside theological works, including al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī's *K. taqyīd al-'ilm*, Ḥusan al-Ājurrī's *Farḍ ṭalab al-'ilm*, and al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī's *Šaraf aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth*.

<sup>38</sup> As will be developed further on, MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270, the focus of this article, included among ḥalakhic commentaries and medical texts in the catalogue; furthermore, MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, hebr. 853, which was catalogued by Munk (1866), p. 148, without mentioning *K. al-Dawā'ir*, as a "traité de philosophie sur la première cause," includes it among kabbalistic œuvres such as Ḥanokh b. Solomon al-Constantini's *Mar'ot Elohim*; Abulafia's *Keeper of the Mišvah*; Yaakov b. Yaakov ha-Cohen's *Commentary on the sefirôt*; Azriel of Gerona's *The Gate of the Enquirer* and *Peruṣ ha-tefillot*; *Zohar Šemot*; an anonymous kabbalistic anthology; and three anonymous commentaries on the *sefirôt*.

<sup>39</sup> In MS Florence, BML, Or. 493, the text goes from fol. 75<sup>v</sup> to 90<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>40</sup> Benjamin Richler, "Identification of the Anonymous Translator of the Book of Intellectual Circles," *Kiryat Sefer* 53 (1978): 577 (Heb.); repr. in Benjamin Richler, "Identification of the Anonymous Translator of the Book of Intellectual Circles," in *From the Collection of the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts* (Jerusalem: Jewish National and University Library, 1995), pp. 121–122, on p. 122 (Heb).

<sup>41</sup> For an overview of the emergence and development of the Hebrew scientific corpus, see Freudenthal, "Science and Medicine". For a discussion on the "genre" of prefaces to translations from Arabic into Hebrew, see Jean-Pierre Rothschild, "Motivations et Méthodes Des Traductions En Hébreu Du Milieu Du XIIIe à La Fin Du XVe Siècle," in *Traduction et Traducteurs Au Moyen Âge. Actes Du Colloque International Du CNRS Organisé à Paris*,

Nationale de France, hébr. 853, dated to 1485 and written in Sephardic script, is missing the last page of al-Baṭalyawsī's text.<sup>42</sup> It was first identified by G. Scholem and analyzed, at his suggestion, by G. Vajda.<sup>43</sup> Al-Baṭalyawsī's text is also untitled here, and this version has not retained Solomon's introduction. The copyist of this manuscript seems to have been less meticulous, resulting in sporadic, subtle textual variations—occasionally altering the intended meaning—<sup>44</sup>between the renditions in both manuscripts. Some of these will be exemplified in the forthcoming analysis of case studies. A third exemplar of Solomon's translation is MS Turin, 57 A. VI. 49, destroyed in the 1904 fire at the Turin National University Library. According to B. Peyron, here, *K. al-Dawā'ir* was attributed to ר' שלמה דאור due to a scribal error, and the translation remained untitled; he also said that the text contained an introduction in prose and verse, which, based on the three sentences he transcribed, appears to be the same as what is currently only extant in MS Florence, BML, Or. 493.<sup>45</sup> The fourth surviving copy of Solomon's translation, preserved in MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270 (the focus of this study, with its codicological details summarized below), primarily reproduces Solomon's version. It is closer to the rendition in MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 870 than to that of MS Florence, BML, Or. 493, but it also incorporates elements from the later translation by Moses.

---

Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire Des Textes Les 26-28 Mai 1986 (Aubervilliers: Institut de Recherche et d'Histoire des Textes [IRHT], 1989), pp. 279–302.

<sup>42</sup> In MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 853, the text goes from fol. 22<sup>r</sup> to fol. 36<sup>v</sup>, where it ends in the last line of the folio, a few lines before the end of the text. This last line corresponds to David Kaufmann, *Die Spuren Al-Baṭlajūsīs in Der Jüdischen Religion-Philosophie Nebst Einer Ausgabe der Hebräischen Übersetzungen Seiner Bildlichen Kreise* (Leipzig, 1880), p. 55, l. 7; Eliyahu, "Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought," vol. 1, p. 93, §170, line 3; MS Florence, BML, Or. 493, fol. 90<sup>v</sup>, l. 7; and MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270, fol. 219<sup>r</sup>, l. 12.

<sup>43</sup> Georges Vajda, "Une Version Hébraïque Inconnue Des 'Cercles Imaginaires' de Baṭalyawsī," in *Semitic Studies in Memory of Immanuel Löw* (Budapest: Alexander Kohut Foundation, 1947), pp. 202–204; repr. Georges Vajda, "Une Version Hébraïque Inconnue Des 'Cercles Imaginaires' de Baṭalyawsī," in *Ibn Sīd Al-Baṭalyawsī 'Abdallāh Ibn Muḥammad (D. 521/1127): Texts and Studies*, ed. Fuat Sezgin (Frankfurt am Main: Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic Science, 1999), pp. 240–242.

<sup>44</sup> For instance, al-Baṭalyawsī writes, "Herein lies another perspective: every rational being can fully realise its essence only by comprehending the First Cause, from which all existents emanated." In the Arabic text, this is expressed as: *وهاهنا وجه آخر، وهو أن كل موجود يوصف بالنطق فإن تجوهره لا يكمل إلا بأن يعقل السبب الأول الذي منه انبعثت الموجودات* (Eliyahu, "Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought," vol. 2, §53, p. 28); MS Florence, BML, Or. 493 translates it as: *והפרוש השני הוא שכל מצוא שהוא מעין לא ישלם חרוצו בלתי אלא אם הכיר העלה*: (fol. 81<sup>r</sup>, l. 19). Moses's version is: *יש בו פנים אחרים והוא כי כל נמצא יתאר בעיון הנה עצמו לא* (Kaufmann, *Die Spuren Al-Baṭlajūsīs*, p. 22); MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270 follows Solomon, with only a minor change, saying: *אם יכיר מצוא שהוא מעין לא ישלם חרוצו בלתי שכל* (fol. 207<sup>v</sup>, last line). However, MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 853 presents a variation: *והפרוש השני הוא שכל מצוא שהוא מעין לא ישלם חרוצו בלתי העלה אשר ממנה נמצאו המצואים* (fol. 27<sup>r</sup>, the omitted words should have been in ll. 11–12). By omitting *אם הכיר*, the Paris manuscript conveys a divergent, inconsistent meaning: "Every being that is characterized by rational speech does not become a substance, except the first cause, from where beings emanate."

<sup>45</sup> B. Peyron wrote: "Equidem aperte lego דאור, cui superimposita est lineola, ornatus instar, non iam signum vocis compendiosae; sed fortasse legere etiam licet דאוד" (Peyron, "Fol. 5. Anonymi, Opus Metaphysicum Ex Arabico Sermone (Fortasse a Salomone Daud) Hebraice Redditum," p. 226).

The second translation into Hebrew was carried out in the latter half of the thirteenth century and titled *Sefer ha-Agulot ha-r' aiyoniyot*.<sup>46</sup> There are seventeen extant manuscripts of this version,<sup>47</sup> where *K. al-Dawā'ir* was attributed to Ibn Rushd, al-Ghazālī, or al-Fārābī.<sup>48</sup> G. Vajda appears to suggest that Solomon undertook his translation in response to Moses's version.<sup>49</sup> However, as noted earlier in this article, the evidence indicates that Moses likely began his translation efforts in 1244. Solomon's translation was completed between 1205 and 1233, so it must have preceded Moses's work. At the same time, there is no evidence to suggest that Moses was aware of Solomon's version. Given the customary norms among Jewish translators, who typically provided justifications for retranslating texts already available in Hebrew—based on the principle that redoing a translation without acknowledgement was an insult to the original translator—it could be argued that “if a work has two (or more) translations, but none of the translators refers to a predecessor, we may prudently posit that they were not aware of the work of their predecessor(s).”<sup>50</sup> The lack of justification in Moses's text, along with its absence of specific references to Solomon's version, suggests that he was unaware of Solomon's work rather than intentionally disregarding it. As with most of his translations, Moses did not say why he rendered this text in Hebrew.<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, an analysis of their respective translations indicates they were likely working with slightly different Arabic versions of *K. al-Dawā'ir*.<sup>52</sup> For an analysis of the transmission of manuscripts in Arabic and

<sup>46</sup> M. Steinschneider argues that Moses was, in fact, the one who titled the treatise (see Moritz Steinschneider, *Die Hebräischen Übersetzungen Des Mittelalters Und Die Juden Als Dolmetscher. Ein Beitrag Zur Literaturgeschichte Des Mittelalters, Meist Nach Handschriftlichen Quellen* (Berlin: Kommissionsverlag des Bibliographischen bureaus, 1893), p. 287. Of the Arabic manuscripts, only MS Berlin Staatsbibliothek 2303 has a title, كتاب الحدائق, in the title page (fol. 167<sup>v</sup>), but it was added by the copyist; the Judæo-Arabic version has דאיראה as a title (fol. 1<sup>r</sup>), added by a hand different to that of the copyist of the text.

<sup>47</sup> Seven of them have been included in Kaufmann's critical edition of the text. See a list of the manuscripts of Moses's Hebrew translation in Eliyahu, “Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought,” vol. 2, pp. 137–138.

<sup>48</sup> Eliyahu, “Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought,” vol. 2, pp. vi–xv; and Kaufmann, *Die Spuren Al-Baṭlajūsīs*, pp. 9–10.

<sup>49</sup> See Vajda, “Une Version Hébraïque Inconnue Des ‘Cercles Imaginaires’ de Baṭalyawsī,” p. 202; repr. Georges Vajda, “Une Version Hébraïque Inconnue Des ‘Cercles Imaginaires’ de Baṭalyawsī,” p. 240.

<sup>50</sup> Freudenthal, “Why Translate? Views From Within Judaism,” p. 554.

<sup>51</sup> See Steinschneider, *Die Hebräischen Übersetzungen Des Mittelalters*, §312, p. 504. See the exceptions in Freudenthal, “Why Translate? Views From Within Judaism,” pp. 612–615 (English) and pp. 661–662 (Hebrew).

<sup>52</sup> In addition to these complete extant translations, Samuel Ibn Moṭoṭ translated the first, second, and fourth chapters of *K. al-Dawā'ir* in 1370, incorporating them into his commentary on *S. Yešira*, the *Restorer of Lanes* (*S. Mesovev netivot*), of which nineteenth manuscripts have survived. Kaufmann, in his *Spuren Al-Baṭlajūsīs*, included the relevant parts of the *S. Mesovev netivot* side by side the Hebrew translation of *S. ha-Agulot ha-ra'yoniyot*. A critical edition of *S. Mesovev netivot* was published in Israel Moshe Sandman, “The מְשׁוֹבֵב נְתִיבוֹת (מְשׁוֹבֵב) of Samuel Ibn Matit (‘Motot’). Introductory Excursus, Critical Edition, and Annotated Translation,” (PhD dissertation, University of Chicago, 2006). According to Eliyahu, Ibn Moṭoṭ's translation, which was “more paraphrastic than that of [Moses] Ibn Tibbon, although sometimes more precise,” might have been undertaken because he was aware of Moses's version and sought to create a rendition more faithful to Baṭalyawsī's words than that of [Moses] Ibn Tibbon.” For instance, Ibn Moṭoṭ translated عوالم instead of عوالمات as حوائج وهمية instead of حوائج.

Hebrew, an overview of their geographical distribution is essential. While some information can be easily derived (when available) from the manuscripts—such as dates, script style, and the names of copyists, owners, and commissioners—correlating this information to create a comprehensive map goes beyond the scope of this paper. The details given for each manuscript are intended to support the objectives of this study.

## 2. The Translations

### 2.1 Different Styles

As noted by David Bunis and James Robinson:

The translators [from Arabic into Hebrew] [...] were not only passive agents of transmission. They were actively involved in choosing what to translate and how to present it in Hebrew. They were also involved in creating an ideology or mystique surrounding the translations, which would make them acceptable and appealing to the Hebrew-reading Jews who were encountering the “foreign sciences” for the first time.<sup>53</sup>

Similar to most Arabic-into-Hebrew translators of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries,<sup>54</sup> Moses<sup>55</sup> adhered to the belief that “Arabic-to-Hebrew translations should be word for word,

---

רעיונית, as rendered by Moses. Eliyahu further speculates that Ibn Moṭoṭ’s choice to retranslate these specific chapters could be linked to his particular interest in the thematic content of circles, potentially influenced by his involvement in a philosophical-kabbalistic study group. The alignment of Ibn Moṭoṭ’s version with any of the extant Arabic manuscripts of *K. al-Dawā’ir* remains to be determined. See Eliyahu, “Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought,” vol. 1, pp. 180–183. Furthermore, the *Scale of Contemplations (Mo’zne ha-’iyyunim)*, a Hebrew treatise first translated in the thirteenth century and whose Arabic original has not been found, contains sections of *K. al-Dawā’ir*, and several manuscripts of it remain. See a list of manuscripts in idem., pp. 139–140. For *K. al-Dawā’ir* as a source for *Mo’zne ha-’iyyunim*, see ibid., pp. 183–187 (and the texts she quotes there, through which the history of the understanding of how the first work influenced the second is reconstructed); see Y. Tzvi Langermann, “A Judaeo-Arabic Poem Attributed to Abū Ḥamid Al-Ghazālī,” *Miscelánea de Estudios Árabes y Hebraicos. Sección Hebreo* 52 (2003): 183–200, pp. 190–191; see also Eliyahu, “Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought,” vol. 1, pp. 184–187.<sup>53</sup> See David M. Bunis and James T. Robinson, “Languages and Translations,” in *The Cambridge History of Judaism. Vol. Six: The Middle Ages: The Christian World*, ed. Robert Chazan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 485–534, on p. 509.

<sup>54</sup> For an introduction to the different ways of understanding methods and goals of translations into Hebrew, see Abraham Halkin, “The Medieval Jewish Attitude toward Hebrew,” in *Biblical and Other Studies*, ed. Alexander Altmann (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1963), pp. 233–248; Rothschild, “Motivations et Méthodes Des Traductions En Hébreu Du Milieu Du XIIe à La Fin Du XVe Siècle”; Warren Zev Harvey, “Three Medieval Jewish Philosophers on the Hebrew Language,” in *The Origin and Nature of Language and Logic*, eds. Nadja Germann and Steven Harvey (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020), pp. 29–43; and Mauro Zonta, *La Filosofia Antica Nel Medioevo Ebraico: Le Traduzione Ebraiche Medievali Dei Teti Filosofici Antichi* (Brescia: Paideia, 1996), pp. 297–301.

<sup>55</sup> On the Ibn Tibbon family, see James T. Robinson, “The Ibn Tibbon Family: A Dynasty of Translators in Medieval ‘Provence,’” in *Be’erot Yiṣḥaq: Studies in Memory of Isadore Twersky* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), pp. 193–224; For Moses, see Colette Sirat, “La Pensée Philosophique de Moïse Ibn Tibbôn,” *Revue Des Études Juives* 138 (1979): 505–515. For a chronological list of his translations, see Otfried Fraïsse, *Moses ibn Tibbons Kommentar zum Hohelied und sein poetologisch-philosophisches Programm. Synoptische Edition* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2004), pp. 40–42. For Samuel Ibn Tibbon’s understanding of translation, see Yair Shiffman, “The Differences Between the Translations of Maimonides’ Guide of the Perplexed by

and eloquence must yield to faithfulness. Like his relatives, Moses states that the three skills needed to translate are knowledge of the two languages involved and knowledge of the subject.”<sup>56</sup> He was committed to rigid adherence to the source text, considering his versions as inherently subsidiary to the original, derivatives that needed to remain as closely connected as possible to their source.<sup>57</sup> Similarly, Solomon advocated for strict fidelity to the original text, albeit selecting Hebrew equivalents different from those Moses chose for the same Arabic terms.<sup>58</sup>

For instance, with the passive participle موجود,<sup>59</sup> Solomon employs מצווא,<sup>60</sup> and Moses selects נמצא—<sup>61</sup>both passive participles. Solomon’s choice resonates more frequently within Biblical texts than Moses’s. Similarly, for the active participle حامل,<sup>62</sup> Solomon opts for סובל,<sup>63</sup> and Moses for נושא,<sup>64</sup> each maintaining the active form. However, Moses’s term appears more commonly in Biblical Scripture. Unlike Moses’s approach, Solomon’s translation demonstrates

---

Falaquera, Ibn Tibbon and al-Ḥarizī, and Their Textual and Philosophical Implications,” *Journal of Semitic Studies* 44 (1) (1999): 47–61; and Kreisel, “Moses Ibn Tibbon.”

<sup>56</sup> Steven Harvey, “The Introductions of Thirteenth-Century Arabic-to-Hebrew Translators of Philosophic and Scientific Texts,” in *Vehicles of Transmission, Translation, and Transformation in Medieval Textual Culture*, eds. Robert Wisnovsky et al. (Ithaca: Cornell, 2011), pp. 223–234, on p. 228. Y. Meyrav has studied Moses Ibn Tibbon’s translation methodology, providing an in-depth analysis from the ground up, in Y. Meyrav, *Themistius’ Paraphrase of Aristotle’s Metaphysics 12: A Critical Hebrew-Arabic Edition of the Surviving Textual Evidence, With an Introduction, Preliminary Studies, and a Commentary* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2019), especially on pp. 24–109; for a specific description of Moses’s style, see idem, p. 95.

<sup>57</sup> The transition from a paraphrastic to a more literal style was a general trend in the movement of translations from Hebrew into Arabic. See Gad Freudenthal, “*Ketav Ha-Da’at* or *Sefer Ha-Shekhel We-Ha-Muskalot*: The Medieval Hebrew Translations of Al-Fārābī’s *Risālah Fī ‘-‘aql*: A Study in Text History and in the Evolution of Medieval Hebrew Philosophical Terminology,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 93 (1–2) (2002): 29–115, p. 69. However, the case of Maimonides’s *Guide*, first translated by S. Ibn Tibbon and then by J. al-Ḥarizī, illustrates that this was not a unidirectional process. This did not happen in a vacuum. The Ibn Tibbon-al-Ḥarizī controversy encompassed not merely the utilitarian aspects of translation—such as the relative merits of Arabic versus Hebrew or the role of philosophical training—but also fundamentally articulated a collision of two distinct socio-cultural frameworks: the Provençal intellectual milieu, wherein S. Ibn Tibbon was situated, and the Andalusian Judæo-Arabic tradition, from which J. al-Ḥarizī emerged. For an understanding of the distance and relations between Jewish “translators” and “philosophers” in Provence in Solomon’s time, see Zonta, *La Filosofia Antica Nel Medioevo Ebraico*, pp. 70–71. Regarding the two cultures, see Raymond P. Scheindlin, “Al-Ḥarizī’s Translation of the Guide of the Perplexed in Its Cultural Moment,” in *Maimonides’ Guide of the Perplexed in Translation: A History from the Thirteenth Century to the Twentieth*, eds. Josef Stern, James T. Robinson, and Yonatan Shemes (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2019), pp. 55–79, on pp. 75–79.

<sup>58</sup> The pioneering and only work to have incipiently studied Solomon’s distinctive translations is Eliyahu, “Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought,” vol. 1, pp. 177–179; Reimund Leicht raises the question of the relationship between various translation styles and “adab expectations,” a subject deserving further exploration. See Reimund Leicht, “Judah Ibn Tibbon: The Cultural and Intellectual Profile of the ‘Father of the Hebrew Translation Movement,’” in *Studies in the Formation of Medieval Hebrew Philosophical Terminology*, eds. Reimund Leicht and Giuseppe Veltri (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2019), pp. 104–130, on pp. 129–130.

<sup>59</sup> Eliyahu, “Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought,” vol. 2, §3, p. 2.

<sup>60</sup> MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 853, fol. 22<sup>r</sup>, l. 4.

<sup>61</sup> Kaufmann, *Die Spuren Al-Baṭlajūsis*, p. 1.

<sup>62</sup> Eliyahu, “Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought,” vol. 2, §34, p. 16.

<sup>63</sup> MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 853, fol. 25<sup>r</sup>, l. 3.

<sup>64</sup> Kaufmann, *Die Spuren Al-Baṭlajūsis*, p. 13.

a remarkable degree of editorial freedom, prioritizing the preservation of the source text's beauty and rhetorical elegance. He treated his version as an independent work, refining both the content and aesthetics to impress his prospective patron<sup>65</sup> while enhancing readability. Furthermore, Solomon consistently employed Hebrew terminology—sometimes in unconventional ways—usually juxtaposed with the original Arabic terms transliterated in Hebrew script.

Below are illustrative examples of these differing translation styles:

1. In the family of core metaphysical terms,<sup>66</sup> for ذات,<sup>67</sup> while Solomon has עצם,<sup>68</sup> Moses has עצמות;<sup>69</sup> for جوهر,<sup>70</sup> Solomon has חרוץ,<sup>71</sup> and Moses עצם,<sup>72</sup> and sometimes עצמות;<sup>73</sup> and for تجوهر,<sup>74</sup> Solomon has יתחרץ,<sup>75</sup> while Moses יעצם and יתעצם.<sup>76</sup> Solomon's choice of translations, such as “gold” for جوهر,<sup>77</sup> may reflect a nuanced understanding of its pre-philosophical meaning, “jewel.”<sup>78</sup>

---

<sup>65</sup> See Oro Hershtein, “I Am Not Inferior to Them.”

<sup>66</sup> The genesis of the Hebrew translations of some of the terms mentioned here is developed in Yehuda Halper, “Revision and Standardisation of Hebrew Philosophical Terminology in the Fourteenth Century: The Example of Averroes's Long Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics Δ,” *Aleph* 13 (1) (2013): 95–137.

<sup>67</sup> Eliyahu, “Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought,” vol. 2, §45, p. 23.

<sup>68</sup> MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 853, fol. 26r, l. 13.

<sup>69</sup> Kaufmann, *Die Spuren Al-Baṭlajûsis*, p. 18.

<sup>70</sup> Eliyahu, “Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought,” vol. 2, §170, p. 93.

<sup>71</sup> MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 853, fol. 36v, last line.

<sup>72</sup> Kaufmann, *Die Spuren Al-Baṭlajûsis*, p. 55.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid. Here the text in Arabic says, ذاتها وجوهرها (Eliyahu, “Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought,” vol. 2, §171, p. 92), which Moses translates as עצמותו ועצמן (Kaufmann, *Die Spuren Al-Baṭlajûsis*, p. 55); these last sentences of the text are lost in MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 853.

<sup>74</sup> Eliyahu, “Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought,” vol. 2, §15, p. 7.

<sup>75</sup> MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 853, fol. 24f, l. 6.

<sup>76</sup> Kaufmann, *Die Spuren Al-Baṭlajûsi*, p. 6. One MS has יעצם (idem, p. 6, n. 4).

<sup>77</sup> In David Kimḥi's ספר השרשים, in the entry for חרוץ it is said, “Some interpret [it as] good and precious stones” (“ויש מפרשים אבנים טובות יקרו”). David Kimḥi, “חרוץ,” in *Sefer ha- Šorašim* (Venice: Marco Antonio Giustiniani, 1546), pp. 165–166. See also Ernest Klein, “חרוץ,” in *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the Hebrew Language for Readers of English* (Jerusalem and Haifa: Carta Jerusalem and University of Haifa, 1987), p. 231.

<sup>78</sup> For a reconstruction of the possible history of the term جوهر, see Soheil Muhsin Afnan, “Jawhar, Dhāt, 'Ain,” in *Philosophical Terminology in Arabic and Persian* (Leiden: Brill, 1964), pp. 99–101.

2. In the family of epistemic terms, for *عقل*,<sup>79</sup> Solomon has *דעת*,<sup>80</sup> and *שכל*,<sup>81</sup> while Moses *שכל*,<sup>82</sup> for *عقل*,<sup>83</sup> Solomon has *לדעת*,<sup>84</sup> and *להכיר*, while Moses *להשכיל*,<sup>85</sup> and for *علم*,<sup>86</sup> Solomon has *חכמה*,<sup>87</sup> and *דעת*,<sup>88</sup> while Moses *ידיעה*,<sup>89</sup> and *דעת*.<sup>90</sup>
3. To describe the human being, for *الموجودات الناطقة*,<sup>91</sup> Solomon has *המצואים ההוגים*,<sup>92</sup> and Moses *הנמצאות המדברות*.<sup>93</sup>
4. When talking about matter, for *مادة*,<sup>94</sup> Solomon has *גולם*,<sup>95</sup> and Moses, *חומר*.<sup>96</sup>
5. When referring to the limits of existence, for *منتهى*,<sup>97</sup> Solomon has *תכלית* and *מקום אשר*,<sup>98</sup> and Moses *תכלית*;<sup>99</sup> and for *غاية*,<sup>100</sup> Solomon has *חקר מעלה*,<sup>101</sup> and Moses again *תכלית*.<sup>102</sup>
6. When talking about attributes, for *صفات*,<sup>103</sup> Solomon has *חידות*,<sup>104</sup> and Moses *תארים*;<sup>105</sup> although for *موصوف*,<sup>106</sup> both Solomon<sup>107</sup> and Moses have *מתואר*.<sup>108</sup>

## 2.2 Different Manuscripts

<sup>79</sup> Eliyahu, "Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought," vol. 2, §2, p. 1.

<sup>80</sup> MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 853, fol. 22<sup>r</sup>, l. 3.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., l. 8.

<sup>82</sup> Kaufmann, *Die Spuren Al-Baṭlajūsis*, p. 1.

<sup>83</sup> Eliyahu, "Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought," vol. 2, §53, p. 28.

<sup>84</sup> MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 853, fol. 27<sup>r</sup> (multiple times).

<sup>85</sup> Kaufmann, *Die Spuren Al-Baṭlajūsis*, p. 23.

<sup>86</sup> Eliyahu, "Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought," vol. 2, §45, p. 23.

<sup>87</sup> MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 853, fol. 27<sup>r</sup>, l. 4.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., fol. 26<sup>r</sup>, l. 13.

<sup>89</sup> Kaufmann, *Die Spuren Al-Baṭlajūsis*, p. 18.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>91</sup> Eliyahu, "Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought," vol. 2, §54, p. 29.

<sup>92</sup> MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 853, fol. 27<sup>r</sup>, l. 17.

<sup>93</sup> Kaufmann, *Die Spuren Al-Baṭlajūsis*, p. 23.

<sup>94</sup> Eliyahu, "Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought," vol. 2, §15, p. 7.

<sup>95</sup> MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 853, fol. 23<sup>r</sup>, l. 3.

<sup>96</sup> Kaufmann, *Die Spuren Al-Baṭlajūsis*, p. 5.

<sup>97</sup> Eliyahu, "Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought," vol. 2, §52, p. 28.

<sup>98</sup> MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 853, fol. 27<sup>r</sup>, l. 3.

<sup>99</sup> Kaufmann, *Die Spuren Al-Baṭlajūsis*, p. 22.

<sup>100</sup> Eliyahu, "Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought," vol. 2, §103, p. 55.

<sup>101</sup> MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 853, fol. 31<sup>v</sup>, l. 8.

<sup>102</sup> Kaufmann, *Die Spuren Al-Baṭlajūsis*, p. 38.

<sup>103</sup> Eliyahu, "Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought," vol. 2, §104, p. 57.

<sup>104</sup> MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 853, fol. 31<sup>v</sup>, l. 15.

<sup>105</sup> David Kaufmann, *Die Spuren Al-Baṭlajūsis*, p. 38.

<sup>106</sup> Eliyahu, "Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought," vol. 2, §104, p. 57.

<sup>107</sup> MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 853, fol. 31<sup>v</sup>, l. 18.

<sup>108</sup> Kaufmann, *Die Spuren Al-Baṭlajūsis*, p. 38.

Nonetheless, the divergences between Solomon and Moses transcend mere terminological preferences. It becomes evident that their differences are also, at least in part, attributable to their reliance on distinct Arabic manuscripts, as the following two examples will demonstrate.<sup>109</sup>

### 2.2.1 The Hierarchy of Being and Human Exceptionality

Midway through the second chapter, al-Baṭalyawsī posits, “Any being whose rank is far removed from the First Cause can only comprehend it by understanding the intermediary existents that precede it in rank.”<sup>110</sup> He continues by arguing that “the second existent, which is nearest to the First Cause in rank, requires no intermediary for the perfection of its essence”—which seems identical to it reaching its ultimate cause—while the third existent does need the mediation of the second being, and the same with the subsequent levels of reality.

Then, al-Baṭalyawsī says, “None of these rational beings<sup>111</sup> requires comprehension of what lies beneath their rank to complete its essence—except for humans”. Solomon translates this as, “No rational being, for the completion of its essence,<sup>112</sup> needs to understand solely what is above it; rather, it similarly needs to intelligize what lies below it in rank.” On the other hand, Moses renders it as, “No rational being, in the completion of its essence, needs to intelligize all that is below it in rank, except the human being.” The Arabic text emphasizes that only human

---

<sup>109</sup> There is also the question of the relationship between the Judeo-Arabic and Hebrew versions of *K. al-Dawā'ir*. In this regard, several points can be raised, based on Eliyahu's analysis (“Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought,” vol. 1, p. 177, n. 19). (A) In MS St. Petersburg, Institute of Oriental Studies, B66, fols. 1<sup>v</sup> and 9<sup>f</sup> contain text from the Judeo-Arabic version, which matches the Oxford manuscript. (B) The title given to the work in the Judeo-Arabic manuscript, דאיראת והמיה, may be a literal translation of Moses's Hebrew title, העגולות הרעיוניות. (C) In the second chapter, the Arabic manuscripts state: *فشبّهت الحكماء رتبة هذا النظر* (and the Berlin manuscript, fol. 176r, l. 10). Moses translates this as: *ודימו החכמים* (with variations noted in Kaufmann, *Die Spuren Al-Baṭlajūsīs*, p. 21), while Solomon renders it as: *ועל כן דימו החכמים העיון הזה וההסתכלות בעגולה* (MS Paris, BnF, hébr. fol. 26v, four lines from the bottom). Nevertheless, the word *رتبة* is absent from Solomon's translation. Similarly, the Judeo-Arabic text reads: *פשבהת אלחכמא הדא אלנטר ואלאעתבאר באלדאירה* (in the Oxford manuscript, end of fol. 11<sup>r</sup> and beginning of fol. 11<sup>v</sup>). This suggests that Moses—or later copyists—may have relied on a more accurate Arabic text, though this remains speculative. However, as Eliyahu notes, the presence of parallel errors in both Moses's translation and the extant Judeo-Arabic manuscript suggests the possibility that Moses did not work directly from the Arabic original but instead from a Judeo-Arabic copy, which itself was vulnerable to scribal mistakes. Therefore, while certain textual variations could hint at a more precise *Vorlage*, it is equally plausible that Moses's translation reflects the limitations of a flawed Judeo-Arabic manuscript. Given this evidence, the relationship between the Judeo-Arabic and Hebrew versions of *K. al-Dawā'ir* remains unresolved and warrants further research.

<sup>110</sup> Eliyahu, “Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought,” vol. 2, §53, p. 29.

<sup>111</sup> The philosophical debate regarding the identity of these “rational beings,” specifically whether the source of rationality, the universal intellect, can itself be deemed rational, extends beyond the scope of the current discussion.

<sup>112</sup> The expression “for the completion of its essence” translates *בהשלמת התהרצו לדעת*. The translation is a simplification of what, if taken literally, would mean a more complicated, twofold process, one referred to by the idea of *להשלים*, and another by the verb *התהרצו*, related to the concept of *הרצו*, conjugated as *התפעל* and thus carrying a reflexive meaning. Therefore, this would mean something like, “for the completion of the essentialization of its essence,” which I have tried to simplify by writing “for the completion of its essence.”

beings need to understand what is below them in rank. Moses reflects this idea, but goes further, implying that humans must comprehend everything beneath them. Contrastingly, Solomon posits that all rational beings need insight into both the higher and lower ranks. MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270 follows Solomon’s interpretation without further modification. Initially, this discrepancy seemed irreconcilable with the Arabic text, suggesting the possibility that Solomon accessed a different manuscript. However, the graphic similarity in Arabic between *دونه* (“below”) and *فوقه* (“above”) may have led to a misreading. This potential confusion could explain Solomon’s unique rendering, as he might have adapted his translation to fit what he perceived as the original intent due to a misinterpretation of the script.

Vatican	Moses	Solomon	<i>K. al-Dawā‘ir</i>
ואין מצוא מאלו המצואים ההוגים צריך בהשלמת התחרצו לדעת את אשר למעלה ממנו בלבד אלא צריך כמו לדעת את אשר למטה ממנו במעלה. <sup>113</sup>	ולא יצטרך כל נמצא מאלו הנמצאות המדברות בשלמות עצמו אל שישכיל כל מה שלמטה ממנו במעלה זולת האדם לבדו. <sup>114</sup>	ואין מצוא מאלו המצואים ההוגים צריך בהשלמת התחרצו לדעת אשר למעלה ממנו בלבד אלא צריך כמו כן לדעת את אשר למטה ממנו במעלה. <sup>115</sup>	ولا يحتاج موجود من هذه الموجودات الناطقة في كمال تجوهره <sup>116</sup> إلى أن يعقل ما هو دونه في المرتبة إلا الإنسان وحده. 117

## 2.2.2 Levels of Intellection and the First Cause

Two distinct versions of al-Baṭalyawsī’s text become evident a few pages later. In the manuscripts of Istanbul and Ankara and the version in Judæo-Arabic, the text says, “The level of the Active Intellect is the tenth level [counting] from the first cause.” However, in the Berlin, Dublin, and Leiden manuscripts a different wording is found, with the text saying, “The level of the Active Intellect is the tenth level [counting] from the first level.” Solomon aligns with the latter, but Moses follows the former version.

Although the consonantal skeletons (*rasm*) of *سبب* and *نسب* are not identical, both words are graphically similar, which—apart from any additional philosophical considerations—likely

<sup>113</sup> MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270, fol. 207v, ll. 6–8.

<sup>114</sup> Kaufmann, *Die Spuren Al-Baṭlajūsīs*, p. 23.

<sup>115</sup> MS Florence, BML, Or. 493, fol. 81v, ll. 25–26. In this case, when the text says *צריך בהשלמת התחרצו לדעת*, MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 853 states *בהשלמת התחרצו למעלה לדעת*, with the *למעלה* there being a copyist mistake. In the last words, where the text says *ממנו במעלה*, MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 853 has *ממנו כלומר במעלה*. See MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 853, fol. 27r, ll. 16–18.

<sup>116</sup> The Judæo-Arabic version offers a slightly modified version, saying *כמאל גוהר* (“in the perfection of its substance”) where the Arabic has *كمال تجوهره* (“to fully become a substance”) but this seems to be a copyist’s mistake. MS Oxford, Bodl., Pockoke, 181, fol. 11v, ll. 15–16.

<sup>117</sup> Eliyahu, “Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought,” vol. 2, §53, p. 29.

caused the confusion among copyists. It is also worth noting that while the Arabic manuscripts use the singular مرتبة, both Solomon and Moses render it in the plural form—מעלות and מדרגות, respectively. However, it is also worth noting that the terms منسوب and نسبة are<sup>118</sup> consistently rendered as מערכה by Solomon<sup>119</sup> and as מיוחס and יהוס by Moses<sup>120</sup> and that the expression السبب الأول is<sup>121</sup> transposed as הסובב הראשון by Solomon,<sup>122</sup> whereas Moses translates it as הסיבה הראשונה.<sup>123</sup> From these variations, it is evident not only that Solomon and Moses referenced distinct Arabic manuscripts but also, given the congruence of the Judæo-Arabic with Moses's rendition, that these different versions were in circulation among Jewish scholars. MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270 reproduces Solomon's version without further modifications.

Vatican	Moses	Solomon	<i>K. al-Dawā'ir</i>	<i>K. al-Dawā'ir</i>
[...] מעלת הדעת	[...] מדרגות השכל	[...] מעלת הדעת	[...] مرتبة العقل	[...] مرتبة العقل
הפועל והוא המעלה	הפועל והיא המעלה	הפועל והוא המעלה	الفعال، وهي المرتبة	الفعال، وهي المرتبة
הי ממעלות	העשירית ממעלת	העשירית ממעלות	العاشرة من مرتبة	العاشرة من مرتبة
המערכה הראשונה	הסיבה הראשונה	המערכה הראשונה <sup>126</sup>	النسب الأول	السبب الأول
[...]124.	[...]125.	[...]127.	[...]128.	[...]129.

<sup>118</sup> See, for instance, Eliyahu, "Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought," vol. 2, p. 41, where no variants are noticed.

<sup>119</sup> For this same example, see MS Florence, BML, Or. 493, fol. 82r, l. 23; MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 853, fol. 29v, l. 1; and MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270, 209v, l. 16.

<sup>120</sup> For this same example, see Kaufmann, *Die Spuren Al-Baṭṭajūsis*, p. 28.

<sup>121</sup> See, for instance, Eliyahu, "Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought," vol. 2, p. 2.

<sup>122</sup> For this same example, see MSS Florence, BNL, Or. 493, 76<sup>v</sup>, l. 23; Paris, BnF, hébr. 853, fol. 22<sup>v</sup>, l. 5; and Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270, fol. 201<sup>v</sup>, l. 13.

<sup>123</sup> Kaufmann, *Die Spuren Al-Baṭṭajūsis*, p. 1.

<sup>124</sup> MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270, fol. 207<sup>r</sup>, ll. 21–22.

<sup>125</sup> Kaufmann, *Die Spuren Al-Baṭṭajūsis*, p. 22.

<sup>126</sup> In understanding Solomon's use of המערכה הראשונה, it needs to be recognized that in the Arabic text, the concept of "order" is embodied through the root ر.ت.ب (see, for instance, Eliyahu, "Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought," vol. 2, p. 2.) which is translated via lexemes from the root د.ر.س. by both Solomon and Moses (for this same example, see MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 853, fol. 22v, l. 5; MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270, fol. 201v, l. 13) and Moses (Kaufmann, *Die Spuren Al-Baṭṭajūsis*, p. 1). Contextually, النسب الأول could be construed as "the first proportion." At first examination, its translation as המערכה הראשונה does not appear to encapsulate this nuanced meaning. See the entry for "מערכה" in Klein, *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the Hebrew Language for Readers of English*, p. 368. Nevertheless, given the semantic proximity of the roots ر.ت.ب and ن.س.ب, it is plausible that Solomon's understanding leaned towards this interpretation. See the entry for ن.س.ب in Edward William Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, vol. 1, pt. 7 (London: Stanley Lane-Poole, 1885), p. 2785. Thus, it is probable that Solomon interpreted this as signifying "the first proportion" or "the primary relation," possibly drawing parallels to the root ע.ר.ך as exemplified in its usage, for example, in Leviticus 1:8.

<sup>127</sup> MSS Florence, BML, Or. 493, fol. 81<sup>v</sup>, ll. 5–6; and Paris, BnF, hébr. 853, fol. 27<sup>r</sup>, ll. 6–7.

<sup>128</sup> Eliyahu, "Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought," vol. 2, §52, p. 28, n. 11.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28. The Judæo-Arabic has the same: אלעקל אלפעל והי מרתבה אלמרתבה אלעשרה מן מרתבה אלסבב אלأول מרתבה (MS Oxford, Bodl., Pockoke, 181, fol. 11<sup>v</sup>, ll. 15–16).

### 3. MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270's Merging

As previously mentioned, the fourth remaining copy of Solomon's translation is MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270. M. Idel initially identified that this was a translation of *K. al-Dawā'ir*,<sup>130</sup> though he did not explore its contents further. It was Y. Meyrav who uncovered its significance, revealing that the Vatican manuscript integrates terminology from both Solomon's and Moses's translations. He demonstrated this through a detailed comparison of the manuscripts with their respective versions. Meyrav observed, "this point warrants a dedicated study," which is precisely what this paper aims to provide.<sup>131</sup>

MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270 is a composite codex—restored and bound in two volumes, with the leaves re-foliated post-restoration—dating back to fourteenth century Spain (or possibly later, based on its script),<sup>132</sup> with several production units. The manuscript comprises 237 folios written in Sephardic semi-cursive script.<sup>133</sup> The same individual who copied *K. al-Dawā'ir* also transcribed the enigmatic *Ša'ar ha-yihud* (fols. 194<sup>r</sup>–201<sup>r</sup>),<sup>134</sup> as well as the beginning of the poem *Refu'at ha-Geviyah* by Judah al-Harizi (fol. 236<sup>v</sup>). In this manuscript, the translation of *K. al-Dawā'ir* remains untitled, and the translator's introduction is not featured.

---

<sup>130</sup> Moshe Idel, *Studies in Ecstatic Kabbalah* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1988), p. 47, n. 49.

<sup>131</sup> Yoav Meyrav, "In Search of Inspiration: Translating *Ilhām* in the Hebrew Tradition of Themistius's Paraphrase of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* 12 and Related Texts," *Henoah* 44 (1) (2022): 170–209.

<sup>132</sup> In the second half of the fourteenth century, translation activity declined sharply. Furthermore, in Spain, although the command of Arabic was still prevalent, the influence of Kabbalah had been on the rise since the early thirteenth century, leading to a diminished interest in philosophical texts. In the Midi, the reasons for the decline of the translation movement "are quite obvious. For one thing, the expulsion of 1306 that emptied centers of learning in Languedoc certainly disrupted numerous scholarly lives and reduced energies available for scholarship. For another, the 1303–6 controversy over the legitimacy of the study of science and philosophy increased the Traditionalist pressure on the rationalists, reducing the motivation of potential translators. In addition, the knowledge of Arabic declined among Jews in Provence and bilingual scholars became increasingly rare. Lastly, most of the texts that were the most obvious candidates for translation had already been translated." (Freudenthal, "Science and Medicine," p. 728).

<sup>133</sup> For a more detailed codicological analysis of MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270, see Benjamin Richler, Malachi Beit-Arié, and Nurit Pasternak, *Hebrew Manuscripts in the Vatican Library: Catalogue* (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 2008), pp. 199–200.

<sup>134</sup> The *Ša'ar ha-yihud* was edited by J. Gad in the second volume of his J. Gad, *Five Great Luminaries* (Johannesburg, 1953), pp. 158–165 (Heb.). This edition was based on an unidentified manuscript, which appears to be lost. In his edition, the work is attributed to Judah Ibn Tibbon, although it is unclear whether this attribution is present in the manuscript J. Gad transcribed or is merely his interpretation. Gad justifies this identification on the basis that Judah Ibn Tibbon was also the translator of the homonymous first chapter of *The Duties of the Heart*. This identification was accepted by Robinson in his "The Ibn Tibbon Family," p. 202, and is also mentioned—though with appropriate caution—by R. Leicht in his, "Judah Ibn Tibbon," p. 110, n. 27. The only scholar who has addressed this piece in both J. Gad's edition and the Vatican manuscript version (as well as in relation to J. Gad himself) is Y. Tzvi Langermann, in his article "From My Notebooks: Masīḥ bin Ḥakam, a Jewish-Christian (?) Physician of the Early Ninth Century," *Aleph* 4 (2004): 283–292. Langermann states, "late twelfth-century Provence is very plausible as the time and place where the text was produced."

### 3.1 Three Cases of Philosophical Blending

The first three case studies which will be presented belong to the first chapter of *K. al-Dawā'ir*, where al-Baṭalyawsī articulates a foundational cosmological model predicated on a cyclical construct of divine genesis. This model is characterized by emanation, extending through various intelligible realms, culminating in a return to the primal ontological origins.

All existence emanates from the Creator, the singleness of whose being—both in indeterminacy and its attributes—means that no other entity exists as He does, thus establishing God as the “first”—in the sense of unique—being. He imparts existence to all beings through a hierarchy of intermediaries. This results in a structured reality where the perfection of each being is contingent upon its relative proximity to God. Given the impossibility of actual infinity, each level of existence is self-contained.

The process of emanation is mirrored by a corresponding return, where each being reverts to its simplest form, shedding ontological constraints. Due to this hierarchical inner structure of reality, each form can reach up to the level that corresponds to its nature. For human beings, this ascent commences from matter and involves a process of substantiation,<sup>135</sup> where they strive to actualize their true essence, aided by the intellect. This movement is driven by each individual’s voluntary intellectual ascent toward the intelligible principles that are the source of his contemplation. However, due to ontological degradation, a person requires the assistance of the Active Intellect. The text appears to balance two interpretations of this return: one in which it culminates with the Active Intellect, and another where it transcends rationality, suggesting an experiential knowledge beyond the intellect’s scope.

#### 3.1.1 Form and Substance<sup>136</sup>

Each being’s indefinite beingness,<sup>137</sup> which is only homonymously identical to God’s being, comes directly from God, but their way of existence results from their place in the structure of

---

<sup>135</sup> The term “substantiation” here should be understood in its plain English sense, meaning “to give substance to.” In this context, it refers to a being giving substance to its own essence, or in other words, embodying itself.

<sup>136</sup> When transcribing Solomon’s translation, I will primarily use MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 853 as the reference point. Deviations from MS Florence, BML, Or. 493 will be noted using the following conventions: (a) elements present only in MS Florence, BML, Or. 493 but not in MS Paris BnF, hébr. 853 will be highlighted in blue and enclosed in ◊; (b) content in MS Paris BnF, hébr. 853 but absent in MS Florence, BML, 493 will be marked in blue without any additional symbols; (c) where there is a discrepancy between both MSS, the text from MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 853 will be in blue and without any specific mark, with the variant from MS Florence, BML, Or. 493 enclosed in □.

<sup>137</sup> The term “beingness” here does not translate a specific word in the text but attempts to capture the indeterminate mode of existence of everything “before” (understood ontologically rather than temporally) such existence is particularised through its inclusion within the universal intellect. This mode of expression is inherently complex, as it addresses a stage where distinctions such as “this” or “that” existence do not yet apply.

reality. The first creations of God are nine immaterial intellectual beings, followed by the Universal or Active Intellect, a pivotal ontological entity. Despite encompassing influences from these nine intellectual beings, the Active Intellect represents a disruption in direct emanation from God, because it introduces an ontological boundary, interrupting the previously continuous flow of divine emanation. Below this level resides the soul, inherently non-material yet subjected to epistemological constraints owing to its corporeal association. The soul's existence within a body leads to a hierarchy of soul levels, and below the soul are the forms, and then matter.

Vatican <sup>138</sup>	Moses <sup>139</sup>	Solomon <sup>140</sup>	Arabic/J-A <sup>141</sup>
כי כאשר מתחת מעלת הנפש במצוא היא מעלת הצורה. ותחת מעלת הצורה מעלת החרוץ הנקרא ג'והר הסובל את הצורה.	כי אשר תבא אחר מעלת הנפש במציאות מעלת הצורה. עוד תבא אחר מעלת הצורה מעלת העצם הנושא לצורה.	כי אשר מתחת מעלת הנפש במצוא היא מעלת הצורה. ותחת מעלת הצורה מעלת החרוץ הנקרא ג'והר הסובל את הצורה.	إن الذي يلي مرتبة النفس في الوجود مرتبة الصورة. ثم يلي مرتبة الصورة مرتبة الجوهر الحامل للصورة [להא].
ואמנם השמה מעלות הצורה קודם מעלת העצם הנושא אותה.	ואמנם הושמה מעלת הצורה קודם מעלת העצם הנושא אותה.		وإنما جُعِلت مرتبة الصورة قبل مرتبة الجوهر الحامل للصورة
והיה כן		והיה <גם> כן	
לשני פנים.	לשני פנים.	לשני פנים.	لوجهين.
האחד כי כאשר נחל מן המעלה העליונה ממעלת המצואים לדרת את השפלה מהם. או תהיה הצורה על הסדר הזה	אחד מהם כי אנחנו התחלנו מן היותר גבוהה ממעלות הנמצאות יורדים אל היותר שפלה מהם. והיתה הצורה על	האחד כי כאשר נחל מן המעלה העליונה [הראשונה] ממעלת המצואים לרדת את השפלה מהם אז תהיה הצורה על הסדר הזה קודמת לחרוץ כלומ' לחומר הסובל אותה.	أحدهما، لأننا [אנא] ابتدأنا [בדאנא] من أعلى مراتب الموجودات منحدرين إلى أدناها. فكانت الصورة على هذا الترتيب قبل الجوهر الحامل لها.

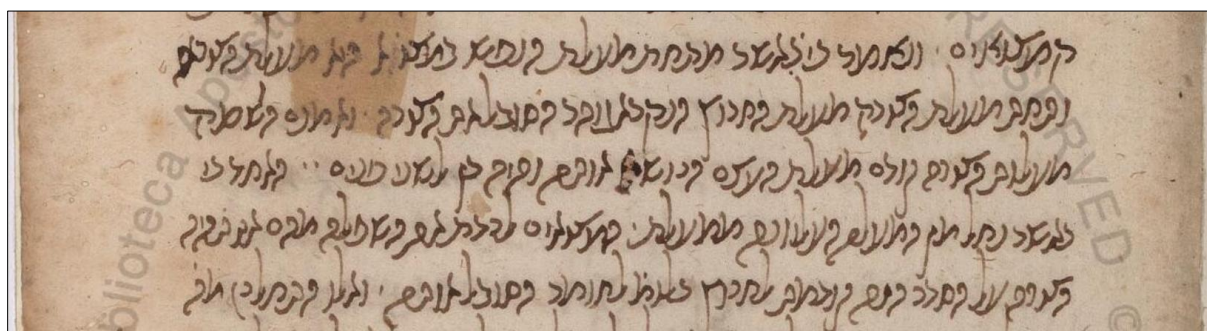
<sup>138</sup> MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270, fol. 270<sup>r</sup>, ll. 7–11.

<sup>139</sup> Kaufmann, *Die Spuren Al-Baṭṭaljšīs*, pp. 8–9.

<sup>140</sup> MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 853, fol. 23<sup>v</sup>, ll. 9–13; MS Florence, BML, Or. 493, fol. 78<sup>r</sup>, last two lines, and 79<sup>v</sup>, first two lines.

<sup>141</sup> Eliyahu, "Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought," vol. 2, §22, p. 10. MS Oxford, Bodl., Pococke 181, fol. 4<sup>v</sup>, ll. 10–15; The differences between the Arabic and Judæo-Arabic do not affect the meaning, so I will just highlight them in the text.

קודמת להרוץ כלומ' לחומר הסובל אותה.	הסדר הזה קודם העצם הנושא אותה.		
-------------------------------------	--------------------------------	--	--



MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270, fol. 270<sup>r</sup>, ll. 7–11

After saying that the level of the soul follows that of the intellect, al-Baṭalyawsī writes, “Returning to what we discussed regarding the ranks of existents, we say that following the rank of the soul in existence is the rank of the form, which is succeeded by the rank of the substance carrying the form.” Solomon introduces an addition in his translation, indicating that “the substance that carries the form” is denoted by “*jawhar*,” incorporating the original Arabic term. This rendition is mirrored in MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270. Two terminological differences, already analyzed above, emerge: جوهر is translated as הרוץ by Solomon and as עצם by Moses, and حامل as סובל by Solomon and נושא by Moses. In both cases, MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270 echoes Solomon’s rendition.<sup>142</sup>

Then, al-Baṭalyawsī says:

The precedence of the form over the substance bearing it in this enumeration arises for two reasons. First, because we began from the highest ranks of existents, descending to the lowest; thus, the form precedes the substance carrying it in this sequence.

Solomon’s translation omits the first sentence, likely due to a *homoioarcton*,<sup>143</sup> since this omission disrupts the logical flow of subsequent assertions. When he writes, “והיה גם כן לשני” or “פנים” or “והיה כן” (as found in MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 853), the phrase appears to refer merely to the sequential relationship between matter and form, rather than—as in the Arabic text—addressing why the level of form is analyzed before that of matter. It remains uncertain whether this phrase was inserted by Solomon himself, possibly attempting to bridge textual gaps

<sup>142</sup> There only is a light grammatical adaptation, with כאשר supplanting אשר.

<sup>143</sup> For a discussion on the phenomenon of *homoioarcton* and *homoioteleuton*, see Emanuel Tov, “Homoioteleuton, Homoioarcton (Parablepsis),” in *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Fortress Press, Royal Van Gorcum: Minneapolis, Assen, 2005), p. 238.

resulting from working with a damaged Arabic manuscript, or if it represents a later scribal intervention seeking to restore coherence to an already flawed Hebrew translation.<sup>144</sup>

Here, Moses offers a verbatim translation, and MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270 opts for Moses's choice without altering the terminological structure. This choice results in the same Arabic terms (حامل and جوه) being conveyed in two two different ways in the subsequent lines (first as הרוץ and סובל, followed by עצם and נושא). To clarify, MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270 does not simply exhibit a preference for Moses's rendition; instead, it actively completes a lacuna by adhering to Moses's interpretation. This action is not a "choice" in the conventional sense but a mechanical insertion intentionally employed to fill a textual gap. While striving for coherence, this methodological approach inadvertently introduces a layer of terminological ambiguity, resulting in a text that, despite its linguistic inconsistencies, achieves a conceptual richness surpassing its antecedents.

Furthermore, one of Solomon's two translation versions expands on the relationship between form and substance, adding "that is, the matter," after "the form is, according to this order, prior to the substance." This addition—identifying הרוץ with חומר—which most likely stems from the gloss of a copyist trying to simplify the metonymical phraseology that found its way to the text and not from Solomon's version itself, not only diverges from the theme being discussed in this paragraph, but it also represents a manifest philosophical inaccuracy. This is also the case in MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270.<sup>145</sup>

### 3.1.2 The Vegetative Soul and Its Faculties

In this chapter, when presenting his understanding of reality—both statically, describing the different levels of his hierarchy, and dynamically, analyzing the relations between them through the processes of emanation and return—particular attention is given by al-Baṭalyawsī to the six levels of existence of the soul; they are (i) the vegetative or instinctual, (ii) animal or irascible, (iii) human or rational, (iv) philosophically wise, (v) prophetic, (vi) and universal. Al-Baṭalyawsī summarizes the property (خاصة) of each soul, which he describes as what makes each of them different from the other (مقام الفصل).

Although the enumeration of souls starts with that of plants, since the ontological hierarchy extends from the level of the soul through form to the substance that bears it, the four

---

<sup>144</sup> It is also difficult to discern what exactly the scribe understood גַּם to be referencing, since neither the immediately preceding sentence (כי אשר מתחת מעלת הנפש) nor the previous paragraph—which summarizes the perspective of those who argue that there are twelve or fifteen levels in the soul-level of reality—provides any clear antecedent to which the phrase לשני פנים [...] ולהיה could meaningfully relate.

<sup>145</sup> For the elative أعلى, one manuscript has הראשונה, to be understood as meaning the first in the order of existence, and the other העליונה, which is grammatically closer to the Arabic text.

elements and minerals cannot be said to entirely lack some form of soul. Furthermore, since each modification of the subjacent being occurs through mediation (بوساطة) by the ontologically prior levels, the vegetative soul inherently contains the characteristics originally defining the four elements and minerals.

Vatican <sup>146</sup>	Moses <sup>147</sup>	Solomon <sup>148</sup>	Arabic/J-A <sup>149</sup>
סגולת נפש הצומחת. והיא גם היא נקראת המתאוה. סגולת הנפש הזאת להתעורר אחרי המזון ולהתעדן במציאותו כאשר במצא אותו. ולהצטער כאפיסתו כאשר תפקד אותו. ולהבין את אשר את אליה מן המזון להדוף את אשר לא יאות אליה מן המזון ולשמור את הדבר בין כשהוא ויחיד באישו ומינו בין כשהוא ומינו. וענין שמירתו כשהוא יהיה על ידי המזון. וענין שמירתו כשהוא במינו יהיה בתולדת הדמה.	וסגולות הנפש הצומחת ותקרא המתאוה. סגולת הנפש הזאת להתעוררות אל המזון ובקשתו והתענוג במציאותו כשימצאהו וההצטער להעדרו כשיעדר ממנו ובקש הנאות מן המזונות ודחות המתחלף ושמירה הדבר באישו ומינו אולם שמירת אישו הנה הוא יהיה במזון. ואולם שמירת מינו יהיה בהולדה.	סגולת הנפש הצומחת. והיא גם כן [גם היא] נקראת הנפש המתאוה. סגולת הנפש הזאת להתעורר אחרי המזון ולהתעדן במציאותו כאשר תמצא אותו. ולהצטער כאפיסתו כאשר [ill.]. ולהבין את אשר את אליה מן המזון להדוף את אשר לא יאות אליה מן המזון ולשמור את הדבר בין כשהוא ויחיד בין [!] כשהוא ומינו. וענין שמירתו כשהוא יחידי יהיה על ידי המזון. וענין שמירתו כשהוא במינו יהיה בתולדת הדמה.	خواص النفس النباتية وتسمى الشهوانية. خواص هذه النفس النزاع إلى الغذاء وطلبه، والالتذاز بوجوده إذا وجدته، والاستضرار [والألام] يفقده إذا فقده، واستدعاء الموافق من الأغذية، ودفع [ورفر] المخالف، وحفظ الشيء بشخصه ونوعه. أما حفظ شخصه فإنه يكون بالغذاء، وأما حفظ نوعه فبالتوليد [بألتوليد].
ונקראת השמירה הזאת התקון הטבעי. ובערבי אלתקוים אלטבעי.	ותקרא השמירה הזאת הקיום הטבעי.	ונקראת השמירה הזאת התקון הטבעי. ובערבי אלתקוים אלטבעי.	ويسمى هذا الحفظ التقويم الطبيعي.

Under a sub-title that says, “[On] The Properties of the Vegetative Soul, also referred to as ‘Appetitive [Soul],’” al-Baṭalyawsī writes,

The properties of the vegetative soul, also known as the appetitive soul, are its inclination toward food and its pursuit thereof, its pleasure in its presence when found,

<sup>146</sup> MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270, fol. 204<sup>r</sup>, ll. 11–17.

<sup>147</sup> Kaufmann, *Die Spuren Al-Baṭalyawsī*, p. 11.

<sup>148</sup> MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 853, fol. 24<sup>v</sup>, ll. 2–8; MS Florence, BML, Or. 493, fol. 79<sup>r</sup>, ll. 18–24.

<sup>149</sup> Eliyahu, “Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought,” vol. 2, §31, p. 14; MS Oxford, Bodl., Pococke 181, fol. 6<sup>v</sup>, ll. 4–11.

and its distress in its absence when lost. It seeks what is suitable in nourishment and rejects what is harmful. It preserves the being both as an individual and as a species: the former through nourishment, the latter through reproduction.

Solomon’s translation offers subtle variations. For instance, he references “the property” rather than “properties” of the soul, but this distinction is negligible, as al-Baṭalyawsī does not treat them as an arbitrary collection of traits but as the *مقام الفصل*—the defining point of differentiation for each being. Differences among Solomon’s translations suggest the possibility of distinct transmission chains of his text. Moreover, one version refines the Hebrew phrasing by adding *מזון* when discussing potentially unsuitable nourishment sources. A more substantial deviation appears in the rendering of the Arabic phrase concerning the vegetative soul’s role in safeguarding “both the individual and the species.”<sup>150</sup>

MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270 copies the text from Solomon’s version, but it has *ולשמור את* *באישו ומינו* *באישו ומינו* *בין כשהוא ומינו*. That is, the scribe includes a superscript annotation above Solomon’s version, *כשהוא ויחיד*, and introduces Moses’s version, *באישו ומינו*, retaining the repetition. Following this, the manuscript contains *במינו*, consistent with MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 853, but absent in MS Florence, BNL, Or. 493. Subsequently, al-Baṭalyawsī describes this act of preservation as “natural rectification.” In a bid to underscore his linguistic dexterity in both tongues, Solomon annotates, “In Arabic, this is referenced as ‘*al-taqwīm al-ṭabī‘iyy*.’” This explanatory addition is missing in Moses’s rendition, yet the Vatican manuscript echoes Moses’s translation.

Vatican <sup>151</sup>	Moses <sup>152</sup>	Solomon <sup>153</sup>	Arabic/J-A <sup>154</sup>
ויש לה המקומות <i>יש לה מן המקומות</i>	ויש לה מן המקומות	ויש לה המקומות אשר אינם	ولها الهياكل غير اللحمية،
הבלתי בשריות אשר אינם אינם	הבלתי בשריות	בשר והאיברים אשר כל	والأعضاء المتشابهة
בשר והאיברים אשר כל	והאברים המתדמים	חלקיה דומין זה לזה. ויש לה	الأجزاء. ولها سبع قوى:
חלקיה דומין זה לזה. יש לה ז'	החלקים. ולה ז' כחות	שבע כחות. הכח המושך	جاذبية، وممسكة، ولها
כחות הכח המושך ומחזיק	מושך ומחזיק ומעכל	והמעכב והמעכל וזן וההודף	وهاضمة، وغاذية،
		והפירה והמציר.	

<sup>150</sup> Moreover, MS Florence, BML, Or. 493 reads *ולשמור את הדבר בין כשהוא ומינו*, while in MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 853 there is a scribal error, saying *ולשמור את הדבר בין כשהוא ומינו*. This redundancy is absent in Moses’s rendition.

<sup>151</sup> MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270, fol. 204<sup>r</sup>, ll. 17–22.

<sup>152</sup> Kaufmann, *Die Spuren Al-Baṭalyawsī*, p. 11.

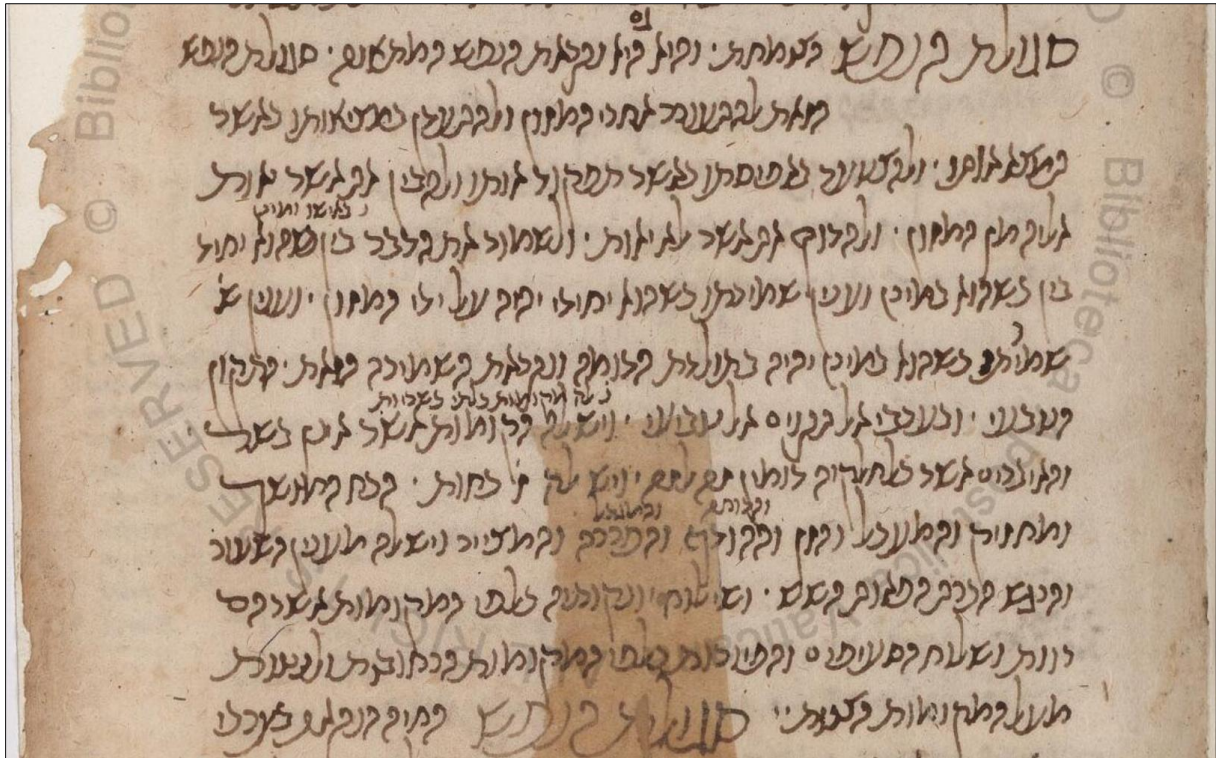
<sup>153</sup> MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 853, fol. 24<sup>v</sup>, ll. 8–10; MS Florence, BML, Or. 493, fol. 79<sup>r</sup>, ll. 14–25.

<sup>154</sup> Eliyahu, “Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought,” vol. 2, §31, p. 15; MS Oxford, Bodl., Pococke 181, fol. 6<sup>v</sup>, ll. 1–13.

ודוחה	והמזכר וזן וההודף	ודוחה וזן ומגדל	ודאפה, ומנמיה, ומصورة.
	והפירה ומגדל והמצייר.	ומצייר.	

Continuing, al-Baṭalyawsī postulates, “The vegetative soul has non-fleshy structures and organs similar to their constituent parts. It possesses seven faculties: attraction, retention, digestion, nutrition, expulsion, growth, and form-giving.”<sup>155</sup> The Vatican manuscript, where Solomon has ויש לה הקומות, ויש לה מן המקומות הבלתי בשריות מוס, supplements from Moses, which reproduces the Arabic text more literally. During the enumeration of the seven faculties of the soul, where their number could not be altered without affecting the philosophical integrity of the text, the scribe of the Vatican manuscript likely struggled to seamlessly merge both versions and instead chose to preserve them separately. Here, the first faculty aligns in both Solomon and Moses, with the Vatican manuscript reproducing it verbatim. However, for the Arabic term مسكة, which Solomon translates as מעכב, the Vatican manuscript exclusively preserves Moses’s version, להחזיק. Nevertheless, for the Arabic phrase دافعة ومنميه, the Vatican manuscript retains ודוחה ומגדל from Solomon—who uses vocabulary from Genesis 1:28—and appends ודוחה ומגדל from Moses.

<sup>155</sup> Eliahu translates مسورة as צורה (Eliyahu, “Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought,” vol. 1, §31, p. 102). The vegetative soul is usually understood to be primarily concerned with the basic life processes such as nourishment, growth, and reproduction. Therefore, understanding مسورة as “form-giving,” while etymologically correct, could misleadingly suggest a more active role in conferring the form, a function that is beyond the vegetative soul’s scope, which is more about sustaining and developing life rather than defining its essence.



MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270, fol. 204<sup>r</sup>, ll. 11–22

### 3.1.3 Prophetic Wisdom and Philosophical Inquiry

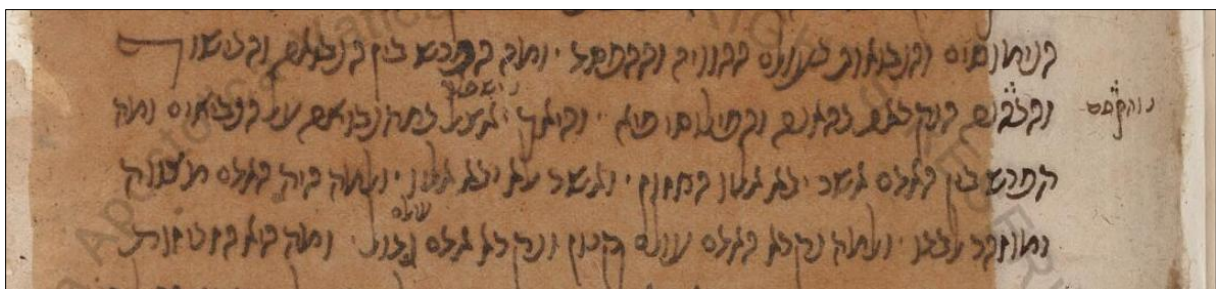
After dealing with the vegetative, animal, and human dimensions of the soul-level of reality, al-Baṭalyawsī moves to the wise prophetic one. He discusses four topics: (i) the twenty-one broad subjects whose knowledge distinguishes a philosophical soul (هذه الأمور كلها من خاصة النفس);<sup>156</sup> (ii) the two methods a philosophical soul employs for knowledge acquisition: conceptualization (تصور) and experience (التصديق من غير تصور);<sup>157</sup> (iii) the nature of philosophical souls, characterized by an intrinsic inclination (فطر) and readiness (استعداد) to receive knowledge from the universal intellect, and a commitment to both understanding and implementing their knowledge, as indicated by the emphasis on “knowledge and deeds” (العلم

<sup>156</sup> Eliyahu translates النفس الفلسفية as הנפש הפילוסופית, a literal rendering (*Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought*, vol. 2, §38, p. 103). In contrast, A. Palacios opts for “alma sabia filosófica,” which, though not literal, captures the confluence of philosophical acumen and ethical wisdom as delineated in al-Baṭalyawsī’s text (*Ibn Al-Sīd de Badajoz y Su “Libro de Los Huertos,”* p. 109 [65]). The term النفس الفلسفية extends beyond cognitive attributes to include virtues and a particular lifestyle, embodying virtues (مكتسبة للفضائل), renouncing vices (مطرحه للذائل), and integrating knowledge with action (اجتمع لها العلم والعمل). Nevertheless, the addition of “wise” in Palacios’s translation, while capturing the essence of النفس الفلسفية as both philosophically and ethically informed, might be seen as superfluous given the inherent overlap of wisdom with the classical notion of philosophical wisdom.

<sup>157</sup> That is, to be sure—or to confirm—that something is true (صدق) without having a representation (تصور) of it. See “الصَّنَقُ”, Djemil Saliba, *Dictionnaire philosophique en langue arabe, avec index des termes français, anglais et latins*, vol. 1 (Beyrut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Lubnānī, 1971), p. 723. The Berlin manuscript has التحقيق instead of التصديق (Eliyahu, “Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought,” vol. 2, p. 18, n. 6).

(iv) the idea, as propounded by al-Baṭalyawsī, that only individuals who fulfil these criteria, as advocated by Plato and Aristotle, can be considered true philosophers, emphasizing the importance of action over theory.

Vatican <sup>158</sup>	Moses <sup>159</sup>	Solomon <sup>160</sup>	Arabic/J-A <sup>161</sup>
ומה הפרש בין הנבואה והכישוף והכהונה והקסם הנקראת כהאנה והפילוסופיא.	ומה ההפרש בין הנבוא והקסם והכישוף והפילוסופיא.	ומה הפרש בין הנבואה והכישוף והכהונה כהאנה והפילוסופיא.	وما الفرق بين النبوة والسحر والكهانة والفلسفة؟
ואיך יאצל ישפע כח הנבוא על הנביאים.	ואיך ישפע כח הנבוא על הנביאים.	ואיך יאצל הנבואה על הנביאים.	وكيف تفيض قوة الوحي على الأنبياء؟
ומה ההפרש בין האדם אשר יבוא אליו החזון ואשר לא יבא אליו.	ומה ההפרש בין האדם אשר תשרה עליו רוח נבואה ובין מי שלא תשרה בו?	ומה הפרש בין האדם אשר יבוא אליו החזון ואשר לא יבא אליו.	وما الفرق بين الإنسان الذي يوحى إليه والذي لا يوحى إليه؟
ולמה היה האדם מצווה ומוזהר לבדו.	ולמה היה האדם מצווה ומוזהר בלתי זולתו.	ולמה היה האדם מצווה ומוזהר לבדו.	ولم صار الإنسان مأموراً منهياً دون غيره؟
ולמה נקרא האדם עולם קטן ונקרא אדם עולם גדול.	ומפני מה נקרא האדם עולם קטן ונקרא העולם אדם <sup>162</sup> גדול.	ולמה נקרא האדם עולם קטן ונקרא אדם [העולם] עולם גדול.	ولم سمي الإنسان عالماً صغيراً، وسمي العالم إنساناً كبيراً؟



MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270, fol. 205<sup>r</sup>, ll. 5–8

<sup>158</sup> MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270, fol. 205<sup>r</sup>, ll. 5–8.

<sup>159</sup> Kaufmann, *Die Spuren Al-Baṭlajūsis*, p. 14.

<sup>160</sup> MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 853, fol. 25<sup>r</sup>, ll. 17–20; MS Florence, BML, Or. 493, fol. 79<sup>v</sup>, last line, and fol. 80<sup>r</sup>, first line.

<sup>161</sup> Eliyahu, “Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought,” vol. 2, §37, p. 14; MS Oxford, Bodl., Pococke 181, fol. 7<sup>v</sup>, ll. 18–20 – f. 8<sup>r</sup>, l. 1; the differences between the Arabic and Judæo-Arabic do not affect the meaning, so I will just highlight them in the text.

<sup>162</sup> Two manuscripts have האדם עולם. See Kaufmann, *Die Spuren Al-Baṭlajūsis*, p. 14, n. 17.

The first sixteen topics that a true philosopher should master are metaphysical. In contrast, the final five topics shift focus to the distinction between philosophy and other forms of knowledge, and the reciprocity between practical and theoretical aspects. Al-Baṭalyawsī says:

What distinguishes prophecy from magic, divination, and philosophy? How does the vigor of prophecy move the prophets? How can we differentiate between an individual who receives inspiration and one who does not? Why is it solely the human being who is mandated [to do certain things] and warned [not to do other]? And why is a human termed as a “microcosm” while the universe is addressed as a “macro-human”?

In his translation, Solomon incorporates the Arabic phrase, והכהונה הנקראת כהאנה. MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270 draws inspiration from both sources. Solomon employs הכהונה, aligning with the pre-biblical meaning related to its Aramaic and Syriac cognates,<sup>163</sup> as “priesthood,”<sup>164</sup> while Moses adheres to the standard biblical usage (e.g., Numbers 23:23). Furthermore, the amalgamation of influences in MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270 can be seen when its copyist opts for ישפע,<sup>165</sup> Moses’s rendition, while also alluding to Solomon’s version, יאצל. Although ישפע is usually used with the meaning of “pouring out” in non-philosophical contexts (e.g., BT Niddah 9:8), both ישפע and יאצל, “emanating,”<sup>166</sup> are standard terms in philosophical vocabulary. To describe prophecy, Solomon uses הנבואה, as consistently found in the Bible (e.g., II Chronicles 15:9), while Moses prefers the more elaborate כה הנבואה—and MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270 follows Moses’s choice. Diving deeper, the Florence manuscript seems to have a lapse in its text, presenting ונקרא העולם עולם גדול. Conversely, the Paris manuscript posits ונקרא אדם גדול. The variances continue in Moses’s manuscripts, with some displaying עולם אדם and others האדם עולם. Addressing this inconsistency, the scribe of MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270 endeavors to rectify it by writing ונקרא אדם גדול, but adds a diminutive העולם reflecting the manuscript’s amalgamated nature and the scribe’s attention to detail.

### 3.1.4 The Diagram

In *K. al-Dawā‘ir*, al-Baṭalyawsī encapsulates his philosophical model within a diagram. This diagram, a circle divided into nine sections corresponding to the nine ranks of unity, acts as a visual metaphor for the principal metaphysical concepts elucidated in the text. The theoretical aspects of this diagram—its ability to encapsulate the symbiosis between cosmological

---

<sup>163</sup> Klein, “כהונה”, in *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary*, p. 271.

<sup>164</sup> Jastrow, “כהונה”, in *A Dictionary*, vol. 1, p. 614.

<sup>165</sup> Jastrow, “שפע (שפע) שופע”, in *A Dictionary*, vol. 2, p. 1540; Klein, “שפוע”, in *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary*, p. 674.

<sup>166</sup> Klein, “אצל”, in *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary*, p. 50.

description and mystical prescription, its historical dimensions, and its potential influence on subsequent Jewish esoteric texts, exceed the scope of this study, and will be addressed comprehensively in subsequent research. Nevertheless, a preliminary review of the diagrammatic representation, which includes both the diagram itself and the descriptive text, can further illustrate the synthesis undertaken by the author of the Vatican manuscript.

The text associated with the Arabic manuscripts remains almost entirely consistent, with only minor variations. However, two distinct versions of the diagram itself have been identified. Eliyahu, who has conducted a preliminary examination of the Arabic versions<sup>167</sup> and the Hebrew translations of the diagram and the accompanying text,<sup>168</sup> as well as their presence or absence across the different manuscripts,<sup>169</sup> proposes that the variance between the two diagram versions in the Arabic manuscripts may stem from an ambiguity in al-Baṭalyawsī's introductory remarks. Before presenting the diagram, al-Baṭalyawsī declares:

We shall conclude this chapter by setting in motion<sup>170</sup> a circle, representing what we have mentioned. This circle will be divided into nine parts according to the ranks of the nine integers. The Active Intellect will commence, followed by the beings contiguous to it in rank, proceeding in descending and ascending order until the last of beings folds back towards it. Within this circle, we mention nothing of what is above the Active Intellect so that it becomes clear that the return of human beings is to the Active Intellect, God willing. And this is the illustration of the circle.

Starting with the Active Intellect and following with entities ranked by their proximity to it, descending and ascending until the last being returns to it, al-Baṭalyawsī leads the reader to comprehend the Active Intellect as humanity's ultimate ontological reference, with the circle serving as a visual tool to grasp this philosophical concept. Yet, it remains ambiguous from his

MS Paris, BNF, 853, fol. 27<sup>v</sup>

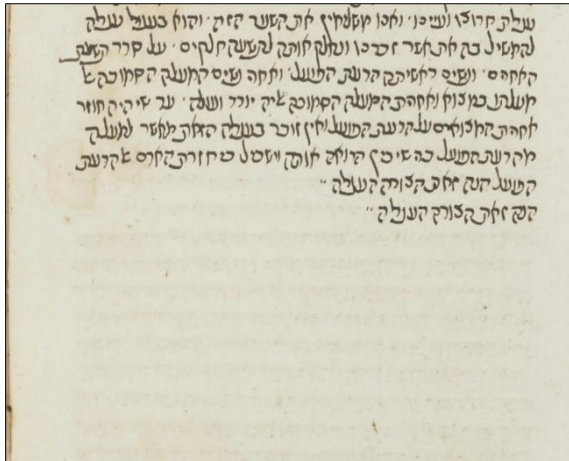
---

<sup>167</sup> Eliyahu, "חרשים מעגל הידיעה", in "Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought," vol. 1, pp. 106–108.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., pp. 187–189.

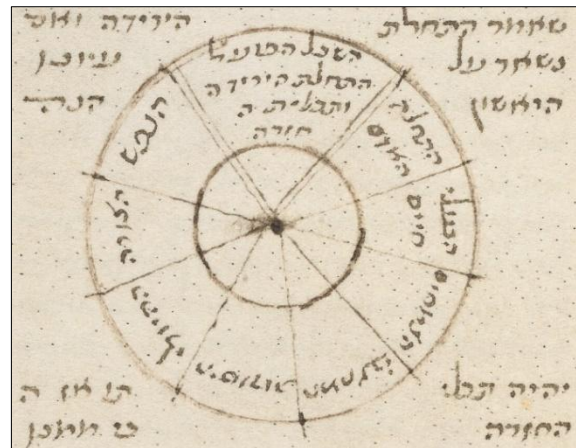
<sup>169</sup> Ibid., vol. 2, pp. vi–xiii.

<sup>170</sup> The verb *تدير*, employed here, is derived from the fourth form of the root *د.و.ر*, which carries connotations of turning, rotating, or managing. Its use seems not only descriptive but also reflects some interplay with the noun *دائرة*. This pairing has a dual purpose: it is descriptive of the physical layout of the philosophical model being depicted—a circle—and it reflects the methodological approach of the non-linear and recursive discourse. As Ayala Eliyahu explains, the verb *تصور* takes on two different meanings in this same paragraph. First, it "implies more than just a cognitive process, suggesting a connection between the observed and the observer," and later it means "to comprehend intellectually." As she adds, "This distinction is also reflected in Ibn Tibbon's translation (p. 25 [of the Kaufmann edition]), who, in his custom, used the same root for both verbs, but differentiated them by using passive voice for one (*שיצויר בצורת השכל הכללי*) and active voice for the other (*שיצויר כל הנמצאות*)" ("Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī," vol. 2, 109, no. 1).



words—and indeed, throughout *K. al-Dawā'ir*—whether the Active Intellect is part of these nine stages or represents an additional stage, impacting the diagram's depiction in terms of its structure and interpretative clarity.

There are two primary distinctions between the versions. First, the Ankara and Istanbul manuscripts position the soul and form between the Active Intellect and prime matter, whereas the Berlin manuscript does not.<sup>171</sup> Second, the Berlin manuscript presents the four elements as a distinct category, unlike the Ankara and Istanbul manuscripts, which combine them as one level. Collectively, the Ankara/Istanbul rendition appears more congruent with al-Baṭalyūsī's philosophical intentions when juxtaposed with the Berlin variant.<sup>172</sup> The Leiden,<sup>173</sup> Dublin,<sup>174</sup> and Oxford<sup>175</sup> manuscripts lack the diagram.



MS Oxford, Bodleian Library, Neubauer 1335/Pococke 276, f. 14<sup>r</sup>

Ibn Tibbon's version of the diagram, in general terms, mirrors that of the Ankara/Istanbul version.<sup>176</sup> Of Ibn Da'ud's translation, the Paris and Florence manuscripts reserve a blank space for the diagram; conversely, the Vatican manuscript does include it.

<sup>171</sup> According to Eliyahu, "It appears that the diagram was not an integral part of the original [Berlin] manuscript. The script looks different, suggesting that the diagram was drawn on a piece of paper that was then affixed to the blank space left on the page." (Ibid., p. vi).

<sup>172</sup> See *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 107.

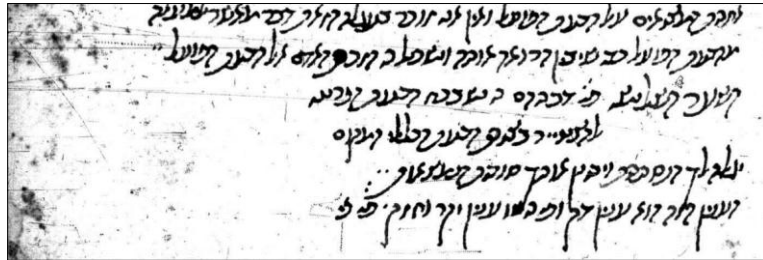
<sup>173</sup> See *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. vii. This manuscript lacks this entire chapter, so it is not possible to determine whether it contains the diagram or not. I have not consulted this manuscript.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.* I would like to express my gratitude to Marisol Rivera, Digital Assistant at the Chester Beatty Library, for her assistance in providing access to the microfilm of the manuscript.

<sup>175</sup> In MS Oxford, Bodl., Pococke 181, there is a blank space where the diagram should have been (fol. 13<sup>r</sup>).

<sup>176</sup> In the following manuscripts of Ibn Tibbon's translation, there is neither a diagram nor space allocated for it (in the place where it should have appeared): Budapest, Jewish Theological Seminary–University of Jewish Studies, K 100, fol. 26<sup>v</sup>; Saint Petersburg, National Library of Russia, Evr. II A 153, fol. 8<sup>r</sup>; London, British Library, Or. 10573, fol. 7<sup>r</sup>; Saint Petersburg, Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, B 150, fol. 10<sup>v</sup>; Saint Petersburg, National Library of Russia, Evr. I 456, fol. 5<sup>r</sup>; Saint Petersburg, Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, B66, fol. 9<sup>v</sup>; Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, Add. 660, fol. 8<sup>r</sup>; Oxford, Bodleian Library, Neubauer 1336/Opp. 595, fol. 6<sup>v</sup>. In the following manuscript of Ibn Tibbon's translation, there is no diagram, but an empty circle is indeed left for it where it should have appeared: Cambridge, Cambridge University Library, Add. 1742, fol. 4<sup>r</sup>. In the

In the Vatican manuscript, the diagram—whose Hebrew philosophical terminology used to translate key technical terms such as “Active Intellect” diverges from the terminology in the surrounding translation—must have been taken from Moses’s version. This conclusion



Florence, BML, 493, fol. 82r

is primarily based on the fact that the diagram does not appear in the other two manuscripts of Solomon’s version<sup>177</sup> and that the accompanying text follows

Moses’s rendition. Furthermore,

the author of the Vatican manuscript seems to have struggled with interpreting the diagram’s intended meaning. This is evident in his initial inclusion of eleven elements before recognizing the inconsistency and ultimately numbering only nine.

Vatican <sup>178</sup>	Moses <sup>179</sup>	Solomon <sup>180</sup>	Arabic <sup>181</sup>
ואנחנו משלימים את השער הזה. והוא בעגול עגלה להמשיל בה את אשר זכרנו ונחלק אותה לט' חלקים על סדר ט' האחדים ונשים ראשיתה הדעת הפועל ואחריו נשים המעלה הסמוכה אל מעלתו במצוא ואחריה המעלה הסמוכה אליה יורד ועולה עד שיהיה	ואנחנו נשלים השער הזה בשנקיף עגלה נמשיל בה מה שזכרנו ונחלקה לט' חלקים על מדרגות התשעה אחדים ונשים התחלתה בשכל הפועל ונמשיך אחריו מה שתדבק מדרגתו במציאות עם מדרגתו ואחר כן מה שילוו לו	ואנחנו משלימים את השער הזה. והוא בעגול עגלה להמשיל בה את אשר זכרנו ונחלק אותה לט' חלקים על סדר ט' האחדים ונשים ראשיתה הדעת הפועל ואחריו נשים המעלה הסמוכה אל מעלתו במצוא ואחריה המעלה הסמוכה אליה יורד ועולה עד שיהיה	ونحن نكمل هذا الباب بأن ندير دائرة، نمثل بها ما ذكرناه. ونقسمها تسعة أقسام على مراتب الأحاد التسعة، ونجعل مبدؤها العقل الفعال، وتتلوه بما يتصل مرتبته في الوجود بمرتبته، ثم ما يلي ذلك منحدرًا وصاعدًا حتى ينعطف آخر الموجودات

following manuscript of Ibn Tibbon’s translation, there is no diagram, but space is allocated for it: Oxford, Bodleian Library, Neubauer 1352/Mich. 288, fol. 131r. In the following manuscripts of Ibn Tibbon’s translation, a diagram is included: Oxford, Bodleian Library, Pococke 276, fol. 14r; London, British Library, Add. 21140, fol. 26r; Munich, Bavarian State Library, 201, fol. 83r; New York, Jewish Theological Seminary, 2323, fol. 90v; Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, hébr. 893, fol. 135r; Cambridge, Trinity College Library, F 12 35, fol. 61v; Jerusalem, Institute Ben-Zvi, 240, fol. 6v. The diagrams in these manuscripts are not identical; rather, there exist nuanced differences with philosophical significance that warrant further investigation in a separate study on which I am currently working. I am grateful to Hanna Gentili for personally photographing Oxford, Bodleian Library, Neubauer 1352/Mich. 288 and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Neubauer 1336/Opp. 595.

<sup>177</sup> See Eliyahu, “Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawṣī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought,” vol. 1, p. 188.

<sup>178</sup> MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270, fol. 208r, ll. 11 until the end of the folio.

<sup>179</sup> Kaufmann, *Die Spuren Al-Baṭlajūsis*, pp. 24–25.

<sup>180</sup> MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 853, fol. 27v, l. 11 until the end of the folio; MS Florence, BML, Or. 493, fol. 83r, l. 17 until the end of the folio; הנה זאת הצורה העגלה. הנה זאת הצורה העגלה appears only in the Paris manuscript.

<sup>181</sup> Eliyahu, “Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawṣī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought,” vol. 2, §58, pp. 31–31.

<p>חוזר אחדות המצואים על הדעת הפועל ואין אני זוכר בעגלה הזאת דבר מאשר למעלה מהדעת הפועל כדי שיבין הרואה אותה וישכיל כי חזרת האדם אל הדעת הפועל הנה זאת הצורה העגלה. הנה זאת הצורה העגלה.</p>	<p>יורד ועולה עד שיחזור האחרון שבכל הנמצאות עליו ולא נזכור בעגלה הזאת כלום ממה שעל השכל הפועל כדי שיתבאר למי שיראה אותה כי האדם תשובתו אל השכל הפועל</p>	<p>חוזר אחדות המצואים על הדעת הפועל ואין אני זוכר בעגלה הזאת דבר מאשר למעלה מהדעת הפועל כדי שיבין הרואה אותה וישכיל כי חזרת האדם אל הדעת הפועל הנה זאת הצורה העגלה. הנה זאת הצורה העגלה.</p>	<p>عليه. ولا نذكر في هذه الدائرة شيئاً مما فوق العقل الفعال لئيتين لمن رآها أن الإنسان مرجعه إلى العقل الفعال ان شاء الله. وهذه صورة الدائرة.</p>
<p>ענין אמרו התחלת הירידה ותכלית החזרה כי האדם יעיין תחלה מן החי בלתי מדבר ויכלה אל השכל הפועל וכאשר ירצה בעיונו בהפך השכל הפועל כמו שאמר התחלת הירידה ואם נשאר על עיונו הראשון הנה יהיה תכליתו אז החזרה כי ממנו יעלה בעיון בעת שישוב אל הדברים השכליים ומהם יתחיל בעיון בעת שישוב לעיין בעינינים המדעיים.</p>	<p>ענין אמרו התחלת הירידה ותכלית החזרה כי האדם יעיין תחלה מן החי בלתי מדבר ויכלה אל השכל הפועל וכאשר ירצה בעיונו בהפך השכל הפועל כמו שאמר התחלת הירידה ואם נשאר על עיונו הראשון הנה יהיה תכליתו אז החזרה כי ממנו יעלה בעיון בעת שישוב אל הדברים השכליים ומהם יתחיל בעיון בעת שישוב לעיין בעינינים המדעיים.</p>		

In the textual exposition preceding the diagram, Solomon adheres closely to the structure and lexicon of his Arabic precursor. He segments the circle into nine divisions, positioning the Active Intellect (translated as הדעת הפועל) at the commencement. The recurrent phrasing in the depiction of the circle's configuration (הנה זאת הצורה העגלה) may either underscore the diagram's importance or could signify a copyist's oversight. Moses's rendition begins in strict alignment with the Arabic source (employing alternative terminology, e.g., שכל הפועל), succeeded by a more elucidative paragraph that amplifies the circle metaphor.



MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270, fol. 208<sup>r</sup>

The Vatican manuscript's author amalgamates aspects of both Hebrew translations, merging Solomon's direct translation and the initial paragraph of Moses's version with the latter's more profound interpretative analysis. Thus, it presents a holistic perspective that encapsulates both the metaphysical strata and the cognitive journey towards the Active Intellect. In its diagrammatic terminology, the Vatican manuscript predominantly echoes Ibn Tibbon's rendition—for instance, utilizing השכל הפועל, yet in other translated segments, the expression הדעת הפועל is used—with a noteworthy variance: the consistent use of המתכות, aligning with Ibn Da'ud's translation, as opposed to המחצבים, featured in Ibn Tibbon's version.<sup>182</sup>

### 3.2 Three Cases of Theological Blending<sup>183</sup>

This section explores theological blending, a departure from the philosophical foci of prior discussions. Unlike the three previous cases, these instances of theological blending do not reflect the copyist's intent to focus on *K. al-Dawā'ir*'s philosophical complexities. Although al-Baṭalyawsī insists that his book deals solely with philosophical arguments and avoids the

<sup>182</sup> This has also been noted by Eliyahu, "Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought," vol. 1, pp. 187–188.

<sup>183</sup> The problem of the authenticity and attribution of the *aḥādīth* mentioned in this section goes beyond the scope of this paper.

domain of revelation, his narrative occasionally leans on religious scriptures. He invokes these sources to support, illustrate, or at least reinforce his rational arguments. As noted by J. Decter,

In ethical and philosophical literature, qur'ānic quotations are often glossed as prooftexts to support arguments since authors assume harmony between the message of revelation and the conclusions of speculation. Hence, the Hebrew translator had to weigh the competing values of rendering the parent text faithfully and presenting the Qur'ān as a source of truth.<sup>184</sup>

In the examined translations, each serves as a distinct prism through which the ideas of al-Baṭalyawsī are diffracted into the cultural and religious contexts of the translators, highlighting the complex endeavour of transmitting not merely text but also its meanings and worldviews. However, two questions remain unanswered.

Firstly, a pronounced methodological divergence exists in the approach of Solomon and Moses towards al-Baṭalyawsī's text. Solomon tends to disregard the explicit Islamic references present in the text, whereas Moses incorporates them within a Jewish framework. This adaptation by Moses—who, despite recognizing “an overlap between physical science and religion,”<sup>185</sup> typically prioritizes translation over interpretation—raises questions about its authenticity. Did Moses himself introduce these adaptations, or were they later interpolations by a subsequent editor of his translation?

In either case, the methodological divergence between Solomon and Moses in handling Islamic references within al-Baṭalyawsī's text may be attributed to several factors. First, the socio-cultural personal context in which both of them worked might have influenced their approaches. Their personal prevailing attitudes towards Islam, the perceived need for intellectual and theological boundary-making, and the convictions of the translators could have played significant roles. For instance, Solomon's decision to overlook Islamic references could be seen as an attempt to universalize al-Baṭalyawsī's philosophical insights, making them accessible and acceptable to a Jewish audience without the contentious layer of Islamic theology. Conversely, the adaptations of Islamic references into a Jewish context, whether by Moses or a later copyist, suggest a more integrative approach, potentially indicative of a more syncretic view of knowledge across religious boundaries where such intercultural exchanges were seen as enriching rather than threatening. Moreover, the involvement of later editors or copyists in making the Vatican manuscript could signify a tradition of textual scholarship where

---

<sup>184</sup> Jonathan P. Decter, “The Rendering of Qur'ānic quotations in Hebrew Translations of Islamic Texts,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 96 (3) (2006): 336–358, p. 343.

<sup>185</sup> Otfried Fraisse, “Moses ibn Tibbon's Concept of Vital Heat - A Reassessment of Peripatetic Epistemology in Terms of Natural Sciences,” in *Jewish Philosophy: Perspectives and Retrospectives*, eds. Raphael Jospe and Dov Schwartz (Boston: Academic Studies Press, 2012), 255–278, on p. 277.

translations were not static but evolved, incorporating new interpretations or corrections to align with changing intellectual or theological currents.

Secondly, the inconsistent completion of theological segments in the Vatican manuscript, based on Moses’s version, raises questions. It is uncertain whether the manuscript’s author had a deliberate rationale for selectively incorporating these segments—at times following Moses’s interpretations and at other times omitting them—or if this selection process was merely incidental. Given that the author’s guiding principle for his translation transcended mere textual correction, aiming to grasp the philosophical essence of the text,<sup>186</sup> the apparent inconsistency—from a contemporary perspective of what inconsistency entails—<sup>187</sup>in incorporating these segments could have been influenced by various factors, including the manuscript author’s personal beliefs, his intended audience, and his intellectual milieu. This selective approach might also reveal an attempt to demonstrate the compatibility of religious truths with rational inquiry, affirming the unity of divine wisdom and human reason. By selectively including certain theological elements, the manuscript’s author may have aimed to shape a version of al-Baṭalyawsī’s work that aligned with his own philosophical aspirations—though these remain unclear to us.

### 3.2.1 Two Lives

Early in the third chapter, al-Baṭalyawsī states that for a human being to fully actualize its essence (تجوهر), it must comprehend (إدراك) both the sensible aspects of the world, described as the person’s “first life,” and the intelligible aspects of it, referred as the “second life.” If an individual understands (فهم) that this duality is central to their essence (ذات), they recognize their distinguished status (مرتبة) among creation. This awareness brings not only happiness (سعد) but also salvation (خلص).<sup>188</sup>

Vatican <sup>189</sup>	Moses <sup>190</sup>	Solomon	Arabic/J-A <sup>191</sup>
------------------------	----------------------	---------	---------------------------

<sup>186</sup> For the fourteenth-century Jewish philosophical curriculum, see Steven Harvey, “Why did Fourteenth-Century Jews turn to Alghazali’s account of Natural Science?,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 91 (3–4) (2001): 359–376.

<sup>187</sup> For a text-based discussion of the idea of “consistency” in Medieval translations from Arabic into Hebrew, see Resianne Fontaine, “‘Tibbonide Terminology’ and Hebrew Meteorological Texts,” in *Studies in the Formation of Medieval Hebrew Philosophical Terminology*, eds. Reimund Leicht and Giuseppe Veltri (Leiden and Boston: Brill), pp. 64–75, on pp. 74–75.

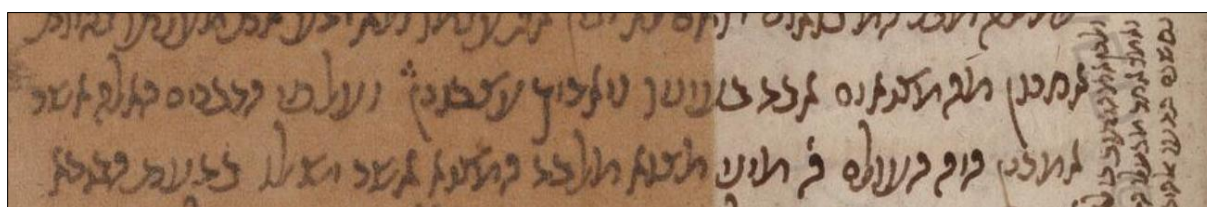
<sup>188</sup> Eliyahu, “Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought,” vol. 2, §§64–65, p. 37.

<sup>189</sup> MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270, fol. 209<sup>r</sup>, ll. 10–11.

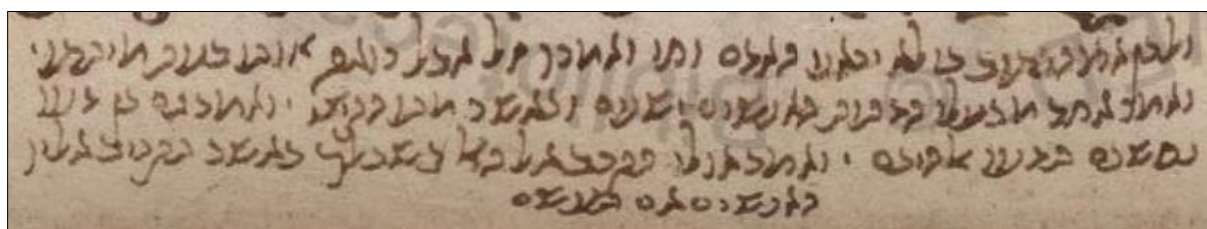
<sup>190</sup> Kaufmann, *Die Spuren Al-Baṭlajūsīs*, p. 27.

<sup>191</sup> Eliyahu, “Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought,” vol. 2, §65, p. 38; see notes 9 and 10 for some slight variations in the Arabic manuscripts, e.g., concerning the reference to ‘Alī; MS Oxford, Bodl., Pococke 181, fol. 14<sup>v</sup>, ll. 8–11.

<p>[Gloss] ולכן אמר הכתוב כי לא יראני האדם וחי ואמר רז"ל אבל רואה אותו בשעת מיתתו ואמר אחד מבעלי הדתות האנשים ישנים וכאשר מתו הקיצו ואמר גם כן דעו נפשכם תדעו אלהיכם ואמר אולי תקרוב אל האל בשכלך כאשר תקרוב אליו האנשים אם תעשם.</p>	<p>ולכן אמר הכתוב כי לא יראני האדם וחי ואמר רז"ל אבל רואה אותו בשעת מיתתו ואמר אחד מבעלי הדתות האנשים ישנים וכאשר מתו הקיצו ואמר גם כן דעו נפשכם תדעו אלהיכם ואמר אולי תקרוב אל האל בשכלך כאשר תקרוב אליו האנשים אליו בעשותם.</p>	<p>ولذلك قال النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم [لأب] الناس نيام فإذا ماتوا انتبهوا. وقال أيضاً [أيضاً] أعلمكم بنفسه أعلمكم بربه. وقال لعلي تقرب إلى الله تعالى بعقلك، إذا تقرب الناس إليه بأعمالهم.</p>
---	---	--



MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270, fol. 209r, ll. 10–11



MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270, fol. 209r (gloss)

In what appears to be an effort to find a religious corroboration for the idea just mentioned, al-Baṭalyawsī says, “The Prophet, peace be upon him, said, ‘People are asleep; when they die, they awaken.’” Moses translates this first sentence in two stages. First, he provides a Jewish interpretation by replacing the first part of the *ḥadīth* with a quote from Exodus 33:20: “Therefore, Scripture says ‘For no human being shall see Me and live.’” Then he substitutes the second part with a phrase of—to the best of my knowledge—unknown origin: “But, said our Sages of Blessed Memory, one may see Him at the time of his death.” Next, he accurately translates the *ḥadīth*, replacing the reference to the Prophet Muḥammad with a respectfully neutral equivalent: “One of the masters of the religions said, ‘Human beings are asleep, and when they die, they awaken.’”

Al-Baṭalyawsī then continues, “He [Prophet Muḥammad] also said, ‘He who knows himself knows his Lord,’” which Moses renders as, “He also said, ‘Know your soul, and you will know your God.’” Finally, al-Baṭalyawsī writes, “To ‘Alī, he said, ‘Draw near to God Almighty with your intellect, as others draw near to Him with their deeds,’” which Moses translates verbatim, omitting ‘Alī’s name. Solomon chooses to bypass this entire paragraph. He concludes the preceding one by stating that someone who fails to comprehend the place of human beings in the hierarchy of existence, “will perish in his sufferings and his grief will be prolonged” (יאבד בנועניו ויארוך עצבונו). He then directly transitions to the subsequent topic, writing, “According to what has been said...” (על פי הדברים אשר אמרנו).<sup>192</sup> MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270 contains Solomon’s text. However, Moses’s rendition of this paragraph—lacking in Solomon’s translation—is added here as a gloss, albeit with a minor variation at the end.

### 3.3.2 God’s Completeness

At the conclusion of the sixth chapter, al-Baṭalyawsī posits that all discourse regarding divine attributes can be condensed into a fundamental axiom: God is without resemblance (شبه) and nothing bears similarity to Him. Grasping (علم) this tenet through irrefutable proofs (البراهين) leads to its complete internalization (becoming تقرث في نفس). Consequently, any opinion formed by those who misinterpret the nature of divine attributes is nullified. This is because such opinions invariably stem from the erroneous notion that analogies (تشابه) can be drawn between the divine and the created. Seeking a religious counterpart to align with his philosophical stance, al-Baṭalyawsī cites a passage emphasizing that the only true completeness (صفة الكمال) ascribed to God—exemplified in the Qur’ān—is inherently distinct from any comparable notion when applied to created beings.<sup>193</sup>

Vatican <sup>194</sup>	Moses <sup>195</sup>	Solomon	Arabic <sup>196</sup>
<p>וכבר קיימה תורתנו האמתית אשר הגדילנו האל בה כי האל ברא הכל ויודע הכל ומשגיח בכל.</p>	<p>וכבר קיימה תורתנו האמתית אשר הגדילנו האל בה כי האל ברא הכל ויודע הכל ומשגיח בכל.</p>		<p>وقد أثبتت شريعتنا الحنيفية [ألنبيه] التي شرفنا الله تعالى بها، أن الله</p>

<sup>192</sup> MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 853, f. 28v, ll. 1–2; MS Florence, BML, Or. 493, fol. 82<sup>v</sup>, three last lines.

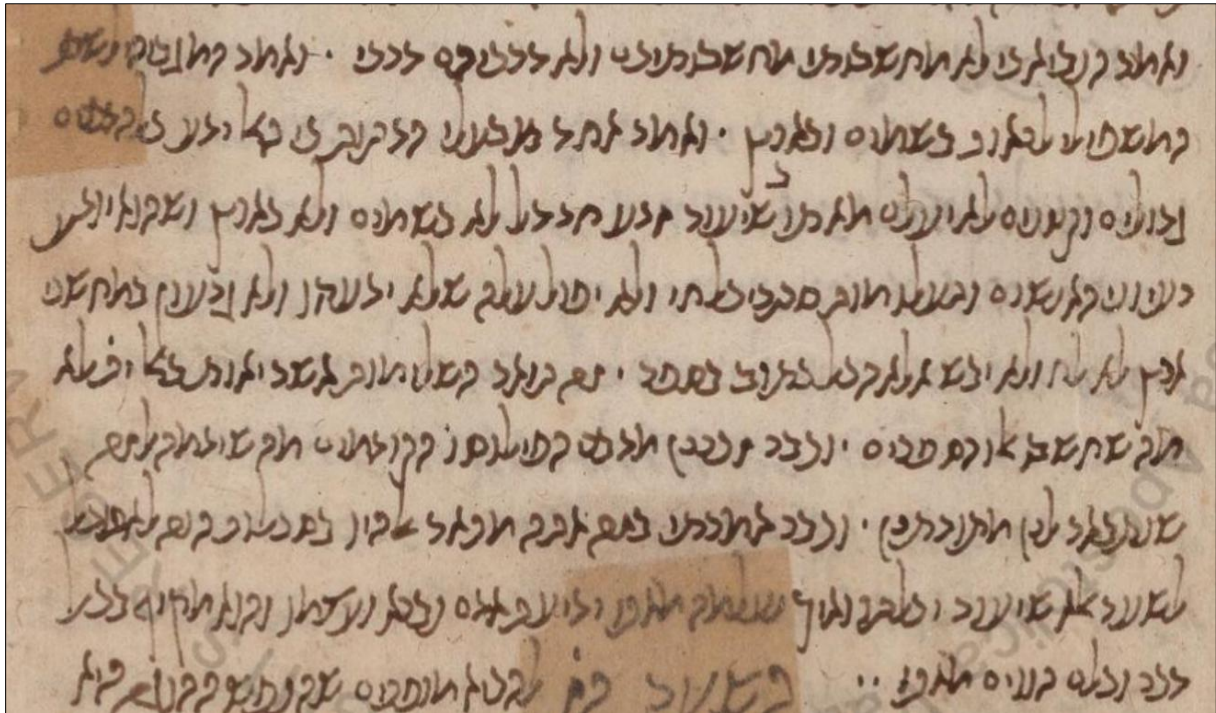
<sup>193</sup> Eliyahu, “Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought,” vol. 2, §156, p. 83.

<sup>194</sup> MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270, fol. 217<sup>r</sup>, ll. 1–18.

<sup>195</sup> Kaufmann, *Die Spuren Al-Baṭlajūsīs*, pp. 50–51.

<sup>196</sup> Eliyahu, “Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought,” vol. 2, §156, p. 83; MS Oxford, Bodl., Pococke 181, fol. 30<sup>v</sup>, l. 17, fol. 31<sup>r</sup>, l. 7.

		<p>عالم بكبير الأشياء وصغيرها.</p>
<p>ואמר הנביא כי לא מחשבותי מחשבותיכם ולא דרכיכם דרכי ואמר המגביהי לשבת המשפילי לראות בשמים ובארץ ואמר אחד מבעלי הדתות כי האל ידע הדברים גדוליהם וקטניהם לא יעלם מאתו כשעור זרע חרדל לא בשמים ולא בארץ ושהוא יודע. רעיוני האנשים ותעלומות הלבבות ולא יפול עלה שלא ידעהו ולא גרעין במחשכי ארץ לא לח ולא יבש.</p>	<p>وَأَمْرُ النَّبِيِّ كَيْ لَا تَحْسَبَاتِي تَحْسَبَاتِكُمْ وَلَا دَرَجَاتِكُمْ دَرَجَاتِي وَأَمْرُ الْمَغْبِيهِ لِلسَّبْتِ الْمُسْفِلِي لِلرَّاهِطِ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَأَمْرُ أَحَدِ مَبْعُودِي الذِّمَمَاتِ كَيْ يَكْفُرَ الْإِلَهُ بِالْأَشْيَاءِ الْعَظِيمَاتِ وَالصَّغِيرَاتِ لَا يَكْفُرُ عَنْهُ مَا لَا يَكْفُرُ عَنْهُ مَنْ يَكْفُرُ بِأَرْضِهِ وَأَمْرُ الْإِلَهِ بِالسَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَا يَكْفُرُ عَنْهُ مَنْ يَكْفُرُ بِأَرْضِهِ وَأَمْرُ الْإِلَهِ بِالسَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَا يَكْفُرُ عَنْهُ مَنْ يَكْفُرُ بِأَرْضِهِ</p>	<p>وَلَا يَغْرُبُ عَنْهُ مِنْقَالُ ذَرَّةٍ [٢٦٦] لَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ.</p>
		<p>وَأَنَّهُ يَغْلَمُ خَائِنَةً الْأَعْيُنِ وَمَا تُخْفِي الصُّدُورُ.</p>
		<p>وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٌ فِي ظِلْمَاتِ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٌ وَلَا يَابِسٌ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ.</p>
<p>אלא הכל כתוב בספר זה תואר השלמות אשר יאות באל יתברך לא מה שחשבו אלו המבטלים.</p>	<p>אלא הכל כתוב בספר זה תואר השלמות אשר יאות באל יתברך לא מה שחשבו אלו המבטלים.</p>	<p>وهذه صفة الكمال التي تليق بالله تعالى، لا ما زعمه هؤلاء المبطلون.</p>
<p>וכבר זכרנו מדברי הפילוסופים הקודמים מה שהוא משתוה לזה שהודיעתנו תורתינו.</p>	<p>וכבר זכרנו מדברי הפילוסופים הקודמים מה שהוא משתוה לזה שהודיעתנו תורתינו.</p>	<p>وقد ذكرنا من كلام الفلاسفة المتقدمين ما يطابق هذا الذي وردت به [٢٦٦] شريعتنا.</p>



MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270, fol. 217<sup>3</sup>, ll. 10–18

The Arabic text states, “Indeed, our true [or ‘Islamic’] law, with which God has honored us, has proven that God knows the big and small things.” This specifically Islamic term *شريعتنا الحنيفية* is translated into the more Jewish *תורתנו האמתית* in Hebrew. The Istanbul and Ankara manuscripts use *الحقيقية*, which is closer to the Hebrew version.<sup>197</sup> However, the Hebrew translation diverges significantly with *ומשגיח בכל*, not merely expanding on but altering the text to convey that God “created everything, knows everything, and watches over all things,” thus introducing a broader depiction of God’s omniscience and providence that is not explicitly stated in the Arabic text.

The Arabic text then quotes the Qur’ān, stating, “Not even an atom’s weight is hidden from Him in the heavens or the earth,” (*sūrah* 34:3) “God even knows the sly glances of the eyes and whatever the hearts conceals,” (*sūrah* 40:19) and “And He knows what is in the land and sea. Not even a leaf falls without His knowledge, nor a grain in the darkness of the earth or anything—green or dry—but is written in a perfect book [the Qur’ān].” (*sūrah* 6:59) The Hebrew translation, while maintaining a similar structure, significantly diverges in content, particularly with the phrase *ואמר הנביא*, introducing a quote from Isaiah 55:8 absent in the Arabic.

<sup>197</sup> Eliyahu, “Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought,” vol. 2, p. 83, n. 14. The Judæo-Arabic *אלנפיה* is a typo.

The Arabic continues, “And this is the attribute of perfection which befits God, not what is claimed by those who make false claims.” Moses’s version closely mirrors this idea, emphasizing God’s perfection and contrasting it with the views of those who deny it. Moses mentions the concept of the book but avoids a literal translation of *كتب مبین*, referring to the Qur’ān. The Hebrew text uses *זה תואר השלמות* to translate the Arabic *صفة الكمال*, maintaining the conceptual similitude but adapting the wording.

Finally, the Arabic text declares, “We mentioned from the words of the ancient philosophers that which corresponds to this [doctrine] brought forth by our law.” The translation is direct, with *זכרנו מדברי הפילוסופים הקודמים* closely mirroring the Arabic, again substituting *תורתנו* with *שריעتنا*. The Hebrew text aligns closely with the Arabic original’s overall themes, yet there are significant differences in specific details and wording, reflecting the distinct religious and linguistic contexts.

This entire last section, starting with *وقد أثبتت شريعتنا الحنيفية* in Arabic, is omitted by Solomon, who concludes his translation of the sixth chapter with the preceding sentence and proceeds to the next one.<sup>198</sup> Consequently, the author of MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270 felt compelled to copy it word-for-word from Moses’s version, even though he primarily followed Solomon’s rendition in the preceding sentence.

### 3.2.3 Soul and Body

At the onset of the seventh and last chapter, al-Baṭalyawsī presents seven philosophical proofs to affirm the soul’s endurance post-mortem. These arguments collectively posit that the soul is an inherently cognitive and existent entity distinct from the physical body. This leads to the assertion that the soul not only continues to exist but remains cognitively active after physical death.

Vatican <sup>199</sup>	Moses <sup>200</sup>	Solomon <sup>201</sup>	Arabic <sup>202</sup>
ועל כן היה חייה אחרי מות הגוף.	הנה הנפש אם כן היה אחר מות הגשם.	ועל כן היה חייה אחרי מות הגוף.	فالنفس إذن حية بعد موت الجسم.

<sup>198</sup> MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 853, fol. 35<sup>r</sup>, three lines from the bottom; MS Florence, BML, Or. 493, fol. 89<sup>v</sup>, fifteenth line.

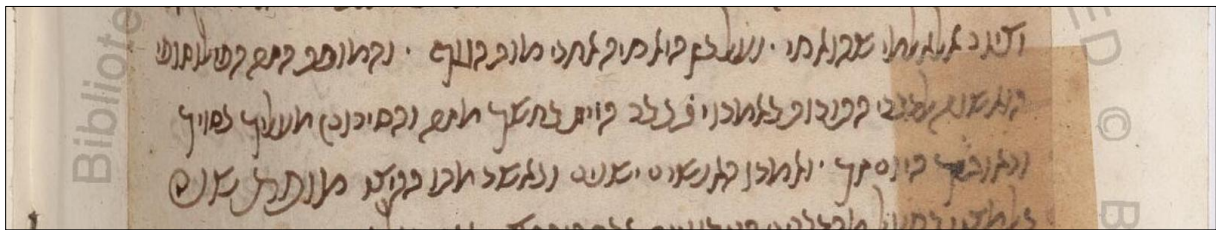
<sup>199</sup> MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270, fol. 217<sup>v</sup>, ll. 1–3.

<sup>200</sup> Kaufmann, *Die Spuren Al-Baṭalyawsī*, p. 52.

<sup>201</sup> MS Florence, BML, Or. 493, fol. 89<sup>r</sup>, last two lines; MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 853, fol. 35<sup>v</sup>, ll. 9–13. There are no variations between the two MSS here.

<sup>202</sup> Eliyahu, “Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought,” vol. 2, §159, p. 86; MS Oxford, Bodl., Pococke 181, fol. 31<sup>v</sup>, ll. 14–17.

<p>והמופת הזה הפילוסופי הוא שוה דברי התורות.</p>	<p>והנה השתוה למופת הזה הפילוסופי לשון תורתנו.</p>	<p>והמופת הזה הפילוסופי הוא שוה דברי התורות.</p>	<p>وقد وافق هذا البرهان الفلسفي من نصوص شرعنا [שריעתנא].</p>
<p>באמרו ית' כבר היית בחושך מזה והסירונו מעליך כסוייך יראותך היום זך.</p>	<p>באמרו ית' כבר היית בחושך מזה והסירונו מעליך כסוייך יראותך היום זך.</p>		<p>قال الله تعالى [تعالى] لَقَدْ كُنْتَ فِي غَفْلَةٍ مِّنْ هَذَا فَكَشَفْنَا عَنْكَ غِطَاءَكَ فَبَصَرُكَ الْيَوْمَ حَدِيدٌ.</p>
<p>ואמרו האנשים ישנים וכאשר מתו הקיצו.</p>	<p>ואמרו האנשים ישנים וכאשר מתו הקיצו.<sup>203</sup></p>		<p>وقول نبياً عليه السلام الناس نيام فإذا ماتوا انتبهوا.</p>
	<p>דמיון זה בתורתנו הקדושה לפי דעתי והוא מה שנאמר למשה והסירותי את כפי וראית את אחורי לפני לא יראו.</p>		



MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270, fol. 217<sup>v</sup>, ll. 10–13

This comprehensive philosophical stance, as articulated by al-Baṭalyawsī, finds a consistent echo in the central conclusion that, “the soul is alive after the death of the body,” a sentiment uniformly upheld across all versions—from the Arabic original, to the Judæo-Arabic transcription, and Solomon’s and Moses’s translations. However, when al-Baṭalyawsī correlates this philosophical evidence with “the texts of our revelation,” subtle distinctions emerge. The Judæo-Arabic version inclines towards “the texts of our law,” whereas Solomon, perhaps intending a broader meaning, generalizes it to “the words of the laws [or of the ‘religions’].” On the other hand, Moses aligns more closely with the original Arabic phrasing, but he identifies the source of his previously quoted statement (see above) as “Our Torah” (or “our law” or “our religion”).

<sup>203</sup> In Kaufmann’s edition, this sentence continues with ולהבדיל בין ההשך ובין האור. However, as he clarifies, this is a gloss (Kaufmann, *Die Spuren Al-Baṭlajūsīs*, p. 52, n. 9).

Diving into scriptural references, al-Baṭalyawsī draws from the Qur’ān, *sūrah* 50:22. Both the author of the Judæo-Arabic version and Moses circumvent the direct mention of “Allāh.” However, Solomon sidesteps this Qur’ānic reference entirely, and in his version, this argument ends here. While Moses refrains from using “Allāh” in his translation, opting instead for “the words of the Almighty,” a similar approach is observed in the Vatican manuscript. However, this alignment with Moses’s method in the Vatican manuscript might be interpreted not as an ideological choice but rather as a mechanical act of filling in missing elements, suggesting a less deliberate theological stance and a more pragmatic approach to translation consistency.

The Judæo-Arabic version’s minimalist “he said” reflects an approach that strips the attribution of its specific Islamic context, possibly to render the content more universally accessible. This simplicity may indicate a deliberate choice to focus on the philosophical essence rather than on theological debates. Meanwhile, Moses reshapes the original sentiment, extracting the direct attribution and subtly shifting its emphasis by adding, “This [the message of the translated *ḥadīth*, although he did not say that this was a *ḥadīth*] resembles our holy Torah.” Conversely, Solomon’s translation not only alters but also reimagines the original message.

MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270 introduces yet another layer of interpretation. By shifting from the singular “he said” of the Judæo-Arabic to the plural “they said,” there seems to be an implicit reference to the collective voice of Muslims. This choice, along with the use of לְהַקִּיץ instead of לְקוֹץ (the verb chosen by Moses), suggests a closer alignment with the original Arabic and Judæo-Arabic phraseology, indicating a careful balance between literal translation and cultural context. Moses’s final addition—made after al-Baṭalyawsī’s text ends—links the *ḥadīth* to Exodus 33:23, demonstrating the shared common idea, despite their apparent unrelatedness. This introduces a personal interpretative layer that extends beyond translation.

### **3.2.4 A Case of Theological Non-Blending**

The preceding analysis across six case studies—three grounded in philosophy and three in theology—sought to demonstrate the Vatican manuscript’s endeavours to synthesise the translations of Moses and Solomon. Yet, at least one departure from this methodological approach exists. In a particularly religiously charged segment, Moses deals directly with the Arabic text, translating it in full, while Solomon excludes it, a decision mirrored in the Vatican manuscript.

By the end of the fifth chapter, al-Baṭalyawsī criticizes the argument that divine attributes are contingent because they have been formulated by humans (الصفات محدثة بحدوث) (الموجودات).<sup>204</sup> Instead, he argues that “[divine] attributes exist in themselves and adhered to God, regardless of whether they are known or unknown.”<sup>205</sup> The entire section where the subsequent two texts are included is translated neither by Solomon nor by the author of the blended manuscript.<sup>206</sup>

Vatican	Moses <sup>207</sup>	Solomon	Arabic <sup>208</sup>
	וזה מאמר החכמים והפילוסופים וסברתם ובדרך הזה הלך השאפע ורבים מחכמי ישמעאלים.		وهذا قول اكثر [كبراء] الفلاسفة وزعمائهم؛ واليه ذهب الشافعي وداود وجماعة من علماء المسلمين [ألما].

Addressing different views on divine attributes, al-Baṭalyawsī condemns those who say: “In spite of their differences, they [i.e., divine attribute] are reduced to the [divine] essence rather than existing as qualities distinct from and additional to it; that is, knowledge and the knower, life and the living, are one and the same immutable essence.” He adds, “This view is held by the majority of philosophers and their leaders; it is also embraced by al-Shāfi‘ī, Dāwūd, and a number of Muslim scholars.”<sup>209</sup> In two respects, this version is preserved in the Berlin manuscript, where it reads اكثر. In contrast, the Leiden and Dublin manuscripts, as well as the Judæo-Arabic manuscript, have كبراء instead of اكثر. Furthermore, where the text reads الفلاسفة, the Istanbul and Ankara manuscripts substitute الفقهاء—an alteration also reflected in Moses’s translation as החכמים.

Vatican	Moses <sup>210</sup>	Solomon	Arabic <sup>211</sup>

<sup>204</sup> Eliyahu, “Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought,” vol. 2, §115, p. 63.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>206</sup> In MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270 (fol. 214<sup>r</sup>), the fifth chapter finishes on the same point. Over the penultimate word, הכחז, the copyist wrote its equivalent in Moses’s version, השלילה (Kaufmann, *Die Spuren Al-Baṭlajūsīs*, p. 41, second line), and then added בלבד, which has no Arabic equivalent, and it is neither in Moses’s translation nor in MS Paris, BnF, hébr. 853. It appears only in MS Florence, BML, Or. 493 (fol. 86<sup>r</sup>, ninth line from the bottom).

<sup>207</sup> Kaufmann, *Die Spuren Al-Baṭlajūsīs*, p. 42.

<sup>208</sup> Eliyahu, “Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought,” vol. 2, §122, p. 66; MS Oxford, Bodl., Pococke 181, fol. 24<sup>r</sup>, ll. 10–1.

<sup>209</sup> Eliyahu, “Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought,” vol. 2, §122, p. 66.

<sup>210</sup> Kaufmann, *Die Spuren Al-Baṭlajūsīs*, pp. 43–44.

<sup>211</sup> Eliyahu, “Ibn al-Sīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought,” vol. 2, §125–126, p. 68; MS Oxford, Bodl., Pococke 181, fol. 24<sup>v</sup>, two last lines, and 25<sup>r</sup>, two first lines.

	<p>...והוא דבר יכחישהו השמע והשכל יחד.  וגם כן הנה לשון התורה תאמת מאמרינו  ויבטל מאמרם כי האל ית' כבר קיים  לעצמו החכמה והידיעה בלשון התורה  ורבו מאד הספורים מהנביאים ע"ה באשר  לו יכולת ורצון והדומה להם ממה שלא  יוכלו המעתיזילה לדחתו.</p>	<p>...وهو أمر يبطله السماع والعقل جميعاً.  وأيضاً فإن نصوص الشرع تصحح [יצחק]  قولنا وتبطل [ויבטל] قولهم: لأن الله تعالى قد  أثبت لنفسه علماً في نص القرآن. وتواترت  الأخبار عن النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم بأن له  قدرة وإرادة، ونحو ذلك مما لا تقدر المعتزلة  على دفعه.</p>
--	---	---

In the second text, al-Baṭalyawsī says,

It is a matter that both tradition<sup>212</sup> and intellect nullify. Also, the textual sources of the law confirm our statement and invalidate theirs, for God, exalted be He, has affirmed knowledge for Himself in the text of the Qurʾān. Likewise, abundant reports from the Prophet, peace be upon him, establish that He possesses power, will, and similar attributes, which the Muʿtazilites are incapable of rejecting.

Moses translates this as follows:

“It is a matter that both tradition and intellect will refute. Moreover, the language of the Torah affirms our statement and nullifies theirs, for God, blessed be He, has indeed established for Himself wisdom and knowledge in the language of the Torah. The accounts of the prophets, peace be upon them, are also numerous, asserting that He possesses power, will, and similar attributes, which the Muʿtazilites cannot deny.”

#### 4. MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270 as a “Palimpsest”

Solomon’s and Moses’s translation practices, together with the editorial choices reflected in MS Vatican, Vat. Ebr. 270, exemplify the intellectual negotiations that shaped knowledge transmission across cultural boundaries within the medieval Jewish world. Through its two Hebrew versions, al-Baṭalyawsī’s text metamorphoses into an interpretive composite. The translations by both Solomon and Moses represent acts of philosophical and theological bridging, inevitably involving departures from the original text’s literal meaning.

MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270 epitomises a “palimpsest” figuratively and materially. Materially, Solomon’s and Moses’s texts are intricately interwoven—each disrupting and inhabiting the other.<sup>213</sup> Textually, meaning continuously defers along an extensive chain of signification,<sup>214</sup> unfolding from the Vatican manuscript back through the previously annotated

<sup>212</sup> I translate שמע/سماع as “tradition” following Eliyahu, “Ibn al-Ṣīd al-Baṭalyawsī and His Place in Medieval Muslim and Jewish Thought,” vol. 2, p. 123. See the entry for “שמעתתא, שמעתא” in Klein, *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary*, p. 667.

<sup>213</sup> See Sarah Dillon, “Reinscribing De Quincey’s Palimpsest: The Significance of the Palimpsest in Contemporary Literary and Cultural Studies,” *Textual Practice* 19 (3) (2005): 243–263, p. 245.

<sup>214</sup> See Karen Ferreira-Meyers, “Writing of Mythical Proportions: Myths and Intertextuality Revisited in Amélie Nothomb’s Oeuvre,” *Lwati: A Journal of Contemporary Research* 5 (1) (2008): 204–214, on p. 205.

manuscript on which it was based, passing through Moses's earlier glosses and Solomon's translation, and ultimately tracing back to al-Baṭalyawsī's "original" text. These layers remain present in MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270, ghostly and haunting, explicitly absent yet implicitly shaping its essence. MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270 serves simultaneously as a container and as what it contains—a vessel where the interplay of text, translations, and interpretations fosters a living dialogue across time.

Two layers of analysis become evident when examining this translation of *K. al-Dawā'ir*: static and dynamic. (i) From a static perspective, the manuscript emerges as a textual confluence, a final composite embodying intellectual synthesis. A reader approaching it without prior knowledge of its composite nature, may initially perceive a text of greater philosophical complexity than its source translations. This complexity arises precisely because MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270 integrates sometimes contradictory conceptual and terminological choices of both translations. (ii) From a dynamic viewpoint, the author of the manuscript appears to have pursued three primary objectives in the merging process: recovering material missing in Solomon's translation through Moses's rendition; substituting terms or expressions in Solomon's translation with perceived superior alternatives from Moses's version; and incorporating terms or expressions found in both translations when each was deemed valuable enough to preserve..

Based on the case studies analyzed above, one may tentatively hypothesize that MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270 resulted from a two-tiered editorial process. Initially, an individual holding Solomon's translation likely had access to a copy of Moses's version. This individual appears to have annotated variations from Moses's translation alongside Solomon's text. Sometimes Moses's translation was used merely to supplement Solomon's where it lacked terms or fragments of the text, with little additional philosophical depth. However, in other cases, this individual not only revised the translated text but also used it to enrich his understanding of the philosophical matters addressed. Subsequently, a second individual, possessing this annotated manuscript, undertook the task of synthesizing these annotations into a unified, coherent text.

Now, one might question whether this second individual can truly be labelled an "author," given that he essentially arranged a glossed manuscript into a new form—transforming marginal notes into the main body of the text. In doing so, he converted a text with peripheral commentary into an intertext that integrates its divergences. In this respect, it has been argued:

In general, there must have been a fundamental difference between the reproduction of texts by a hired scribe and reproduction by a *talmid ḥakham* who was copying texts for his own use [...]. I suggest calling the former a scribe, and the latter a copyist. One is entitled to assume that the average hired scribe would have been consciously more loyal to his model, probably would have avoided critical and deliberate intervention in the transmission, yet would have been more fallible and vulnerable to the involuntary changes and mistakes conditioned by the mechanism of copying, while the scholar-copyist might intentionally interfere in the transmission, revise his exemplar, emend and reconstruct the text, add to it and modify it according to this knowledge, memory, conjecture or other exemplars, and indeed regard copying as a critical editing and not merely as duplicating.<sup>215</sup>

From another complementary perspective, paraphrasing the distinction between a “writer” and an “author,” the individual who glossed Solomon’s version using Moses’s can be seen as the “writer” of that manuscript, while the one who produced the Vatican manuscript as its “author.”<sup>216</sup> Furthermore, introducing a more materialistic dimension, even if the “author” of the Vatican manuscript did nothing more than unify a glossed text, his intentional effort—distinct from a purely semantic aim and acknowledging the inherent difficulty in grasping an author’s “translational intentions”<sup>217</sup>—does make him the “author” of this work. His authorship does not lie in being the guardian of the text’s meaning but in reshaping the manuscript. Thus, while he may not be the author of the text, he remains the author of the work.<sup>218</sup>

This endeavor transcended mere grammatical corrections as the copyist confronted the practical challenges of integration. At times, paragraphs or terms from Moses’s version were seamlessly incorporated into the text or directly replaced Solomon’s translation. In other instances, Moses’s alternative terms appeared as a superscript above Solomon’s texts. In merging Solomon’s and Moses’s content and form, this individual effectively created a new rendition of *K. al-Dawā’ir*. This version, extant MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270, intertwines multiple interpretations, enhancing the intellectual depth of its two foundational translations. This merging process underscores the manuscript’s intertextuality, understood as “a relationship of copresence between two texts or among several texts: that is to say, eidetically and typically as

---

<sup>215</sup> Malachi Beit-Arié, “Transmission of Texts by Scribes and Copyists: Unconscious and Critical Interferences,” *Bulletin of John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 7 (3) (1993): 33–51, on pp. 39–40.

<sup>216</sup> See Michael Foucault, “Qu’est-ce qu’un auteur?” *Bulletin de la Société française de philosophie* 63 (3) (1969): 73–104.

<sup>217</sup> See Leicht and Veltri, “The Study of Pre-modern Philosophical and Scientific Hebrew Terminology,” p. 9.

<sup>218</sup> See Carla Benedetti, “Is the Author Dead,” in *The Empty Cage. Inquiry into the Mysterious Disappearance of the Author*, trans. William J. Hartley (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005), pp. 1–25, esp. pp. 12–15.

the actual presence of one text within another.”<sup>219</sup> More precisely, it reveals it as “a palimpsest of itself,”<sup>220</sup> continually rewriting and reinterpreting its layers.<sup>221</sup>

MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270 is significant not only for its philological and philosophical merits but also for its distinct place within the temporal and spatial dimensions of the Arabic-into-Hebrew translation movement. It reflects the sociological dimensions of this movement in a dual manner. First, it reveals that translators operated as autonomous agents, each driven by unique motivations. Second, despite individual intellectual pursuits, they recognized themselves within a “socially self-conscious, coherent tradition without central oversight.” Working in isolation yet remaining aware of their predecessors and contemporaries, they contributed to a shared scholarly legacy.<sup>222</sup> Moreover, the manuscript highlights the linguistic innovations that emerged from translations between the twelfth and fourteenth centuries—so literal that they gave rise to “a completely new Hebrew language [...] set apart from ordinary Hebrew.”<sup>223</sup>

The creator of the Vatican manuscript, motivated by intellectual curiosity, engaged thoughtfully with two versions of the same text. His work was more than comparative analysis; it was a respectful effort to integrate the voices of the original translators into one unified version. This synthesis not only preserved the integrity of their contributions but also enriched the Hebrew language, expanding its semantic potential.<sup>224</sup> Furthermore, the Vatican manuscript highlights an often-overlooked aspect of medieval Jewish philosophy: it was not exclusively the domain of prominent philosophers and translators but also involved lay thinkers.<sup>225</sup> In this

---

<sup>219</sup> Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests. Literature in the Second Degree*, trans. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), p. 2.

<sup>220</sup> Asad Q. Ahmed, “Anatomy of the Commentary: A View from Above,” in *Palimpsests of Themselves Logic and Commentary in Postclassical Muslim South Asia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2022), pp. 107–139, on p. 108.

<sup>221</sup> “Palimpsest” is not a univocal term. As Geoff Bailey explains in “Time Perspectives, Palimpsests and the Archaeology of Time,” *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 26 (2007):198–223, there are various types of palimpsests, both in a material and figurative sense. The Vatican manuscript may be understood as a “cumulative palimpsest,” defined as “one in which the successive episodes of deposition, or layers of activity, remain superimposed one upon the other without loss of evidence, but are so reworked and mixed together that it is difficult or impossible to separate them into their original constituents” (p. 204). This is distinct from “true palimpsests,” where each new layer typically erases or overwrites the previous one. In a cumulative palimpsest, the traces from different episodes remain, but they are blended in such a way that their distinctiveness is blurred. However, the boundary between cumulative and true palimpsests is not always clear-cut, as Bailey notes (p. 205).

<sup>222</sup> Freudenthal, “Why Translate? Views From Within Judaism,” p. 553.

<sup>223</sup> Chayim Rabin, “The Linguistics of Translation,” in *Aspects of Translation. Studies of Communication* 2, eds. Andrew D. Booth et al. (London: Secker and Warburg, 1959), pp. 123–145, on p. 133.

<sup>224</sup> For an analysis of the position of the Hebrew language among medieval Jewish thinkers, see Halkin, “The Medieval Jewish Attitude Toward Hebrew.”

<sup>225</sup> See Alfred Ivry, “Philosophical Translations from the Arabic in Hebrew During the Middle Ages,” in *Rencontres de cultures dans la philosophie médiévale: Traductions et traducteurs de l’antiquité tardive au XIVe siècle*, eds. J. Hamesse and M. Fattori (Louvain-la-Neuve: Institut d’Études Médiévales and Université Casino, 1990), pp. 167–186.

context, while the Hebrew of these translations might constitute a sociolect—a social dialect shaped by collective scholarly efforts—the Hebrew presented in MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270 transcends this classification, evolving into an idiolect. This idiolect, a highly individualized linguistic expression, reflects the compiler’s unique intellectual synthesis and linguistic choices. While it has been observed that, in “the Hebrew philosophical books of the Middle Ages, original and translated [...], the difficulty of language exceeds that of thought,”<sup>226</sup> MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270 defies this trend.

MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270 not only represents the intellectual depth and linguistic innovation characteristic of the translation movement but also encapsulates the spirit of those who animated it. These figures, “motivated by personal initiative and devotion to the cause of philosophy and science as a field of knowledge to be added to traditional Jewish learning,”<sup>227</sup> exemplify the profound commitment to expanding the horizons of Jewish intellectual tradition. Through his synthesis, MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270’s author epitomizes the Arabic-to-Hebrew translation movement, bridging philosophical worlds and enriching medieval Jewish scholarship.

<b>MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270 as a “Palimpsest”: A Reading Hypothesis<sup>228</sup></b>
1. Possession of Solomon’s Translation of <i>K. al-Dawā‘ir</i> by a Jewish Reader.
2. Access to Moses’s Version of <i>K. al-Dawā‘ir</i> & Noting Variations. The reader compares Solomon’s translation with Moses’s version, identifying differences without initially altering Solomon’s text.
3. Use of Moses’s Translation to Amend Solomon’s Version. Based on the noted variations, the reader begins to amend Solomon’s version, enriching the initial text.
4. Acquisition of the Annotated Manuscript. Another reader acquires the manuscript that now contains Solomon’s translation plus the annotations derived from Moses’s version.

<sup>226</sup> J. Klatzkin’s *Thesaurus philosophicus linguae hebraicae*, quoted in English in Israel Efros, “Review of ‘*Ozar ha-Munahimha-Pilosofim*’ by Jacob Klatzkin,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 22 (2) (1931): 191–198, on p. 191.

<sup>227</sup> Gad Fraudenthal and Ruth Glasner, “Patterns of Medieval Translation Movements,” in *De l’Antiquité tardive au moyen âge*, eds. Elisa Coda and Cecilia Martini Bonadeo (Paris: Vrin, 2014), pp. 245–252, p. 247.

<sup>228</sup> These stages are an analytic model designed to understand the interactions involved in the creation of the Vatican manuscript. They do not suggest that the initial three phases of the first author’s analysis of the texts of Solomon and Moses, or the subsequent three phases of the second author’s work with the glossed manuscript, occurred as distinct events. Instead, these divisions help systematically explore the simultaneously fluid and overlapping processes undertaken by both authors. Each stage highlights a distinct aspect of the integration process, emphasizing the iterative nature of the work—characterized by repeated interactions with Solomon’s and Moses’s texts—and the reflective nature—requiring ongoing assessment of the meaning, relevance, and accuracy of the translations relative to each other.

5. Incorporation of Glosses Into the Main Text. Annotations are integrated directly into the main body of the text, transforming the manuscript by embedding Moses's variations within the primary narrative.

6. Crafting of the Blended Hebrew Version of *K. al-Dawā'ir*. The final stage recognizes the emergence of the new version as a distinct entity, representing the culmination of the synthesis process.

## 5. Conclusion

In the panorama of medieval Jewish thought, where the luminaries of thought have left their marks upon the annals of scholarship, with their lives and legacies thoroughly chronicled, this study turns its attention beyond the celebrated to one of the silent custodians of intellectual heritage. As noted by Malachi Beit-Arié,

At least half the medieval Hebrew manuscripts were personal, user-produced books, copied by educated persons or scholars for their own use, and only half, or most probably less than half, were produced by hired scribes, whether professional or occasional. Such a high rate of non-professional, personal copying, prevailing in all the Jewish geo-cultural areas except for Yemen, certainly reflects the extent of Jewish literacy and education.<sup>229</sup>

The Vatican manuscript author's reading, translation, and analysis transcended mere scholarly exercise, becoming a conscious philosophical inquiry shaped by his curiosity. Often overshadowed in contemporary research by their more renowned counterparts, these everyday scholars, working within the margins of ancient manuscripts and the fissures of narrative syntheses, played a critical role in ensuring that the oeuvres of those celebrated scholars not only thrived but also remained accessible.

This article has explored, through the lens of MS Vatican, Vat. ebr. 270, the dialogues between Solomon and Moses orchestrated by the manuscript's author, hypothetically mediated by his conversation with the prior annotated version. The study of this process not only brings to light their textual conversations but also highlights a shift in approach—from focusing exclusively on producing definitive critical editions to recognizing manuscripts themselves as active agents in idea transmission.<sup>230</sup>

---

<sup>229</sup> Malachi Beit-Arié, "Transmission of Texts by Scribes and Copyists: Unconscious and Critical Interferences," *Bulletin of John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 7 (3) (1993): 33–51, on p. 39.

<sup>230</sup> See Yoav Meyrav, "Arabic-into-Hebrew Translation Strategies and Procedures in the Hebrew Manuscript Tradition of Themistius's Paraphrase of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* XII," in *Studies in the Formation of Medieval Hebrew Philosophical Terminology*, eds. Reimund Leicht and Giuseppe Veltri (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2019), pp. 166–198, on p. 197.

While it has been acknowledged that practitioners of medieval Jewish philosophy traditionally understood their activity as “philosophy,” “exegesis,” or “polemics,” the Vatican manuscript reveals a novel perspective,<sup>231</sup> positioning philosophy as intertwined with—or even realized through—the act of translation. Hopefully, this reconstruction will not only challenge us to broaden our scholarly imagination of what “philosophy” meant in a specific place and time but also invite us to envisage a dialogical history of medieval philosophy. This history would be defined by conversation, not merely a one-directional dialogue from past to present, but a multidirectional series of conversations, all situated within the past,<sup>232</sup> yet still speaking to us today.

---

<sup>231</sup> See Arthur Hyman, “Jewish Philosophy as Philosophy, as Exegesis, and as Polemic,” in *Qu’est-ce que la philosophie au moyen age? / What is philosophy in the Middle Ages? / Was ist Philosophie im Mittelalter? Der 10. Internationale Kongress für Mittelalterliche Philosophie vom 25. bis 30. August 1997 in Erfurt in Kurzfassungen*, eds. Jan A. Aertsen and A. Speer (Köln: Acta Academiae Scientiarum 4, 1997), pp. 35–38. The emergence of the Vatican manuscript in the fourteenth century—an era when “allegoric interpretation” gained widespread traction across the Jewish spectrum—may carry significant socio-intellectual implications. See Gad Freudenthal, “Holiness and Defilement: The Ambivalent Perception of Philosophy by Its Opponents in the Early Fourteenth Century,” *Micrologus* 9 (2001): 169–193, on p. 191.

<sup>232</sup> See Sarah Hutton, “Intellectual History and the History of Philosophy,” *History of European Ideas* 40 (7) (2014): 925–937, on p. 936.