

El estudio de Abraham Ibn Daud en las últimas tres décadas: ¿Qué (no) sabemos?

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Recibido: 30/05/2022 // Aceptado: 05/09/2022

Resumen. Las últimas tres décadas han sido testigos de un nuevo y vívido interés en Ibn Daud. La bibliografía en la entrada dedicada a este autor en la *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* revela que muchos estudios sobre Abraham Ibn Daud, así como nuevas ediciones de sus escritos, se han publicado entre 1990 y principios de la década de 2020. El objetivo de este artículo es hacer un balance de los resultados de la nueva investigación y revisar cómo se ha avanzado en nuestro conocimiento de este autor multifacético en las últimas décadas y detectar dónde hay todavía lagunas en nuestro conocimiento de su obra. Aunque voy a abordar varios aspectos de la vida de Ibn Daud, sus actividades y la recepción de sus obras, mi enfoque se va a centrar en los estudios de su trabajo filosófico.

Palabras clave: Abraham Ibn Daud, Avendauth, Gundissalinus, Avicenna, al-Ghazali, Maimonides, medieval Jewish philosophy, Hebrew.

[en] The Study of Abraham Ibn Daud in the Past Three Decades: What Do We (Not) Know?

Abstract. The past three decades have witnessed a new and vivid interest in Ibn Daud. The bibliography in the entry devoted to this author in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* reveals that many studies on Abraham Ibn Daud and new editions of his writings were released between 1990 and the early 2020s. The aim of my contribution is to take stock of the results of the new research and to review how our knowledge of this multi-faceted author, the protagonist of the current publication, has been advanced in the past decades and where there are still gaps in our knowledge. Although I will discuss several aspects of Ibn Daud's life, his activities, and the reception of his works, my focus will be on studies of his philosophical work.

Keywords: Abraham Ibn Daud, Avendauth, Gundissalinus, Avicenna, al-Ghazali, Maimonides, medieval Jewish philosophy, Hebrew chronicles.

Sumario: 1. Introduction. 2. Biography. 3. Works. 4. Ibn Daud's philosophical sources. 5. Ibn Daud's place in medieval Jewish philosophy. 6. Reception of Ibn Daud's philosophy. 7. Ibn Daud's historical works. 8. In conclusion.

Cómo citar: Fontaine, R. (2023). The Study of Abraham Ibn Daud in the Past Three Decades: ¿What Do We (Not) Know?" *Revista Anales del Seminario de Historia de la Filosofía*, 40 (1), pp. 183-189.

1. Introduction

As is well known, history has been rather unkind to the twelfth-century Toledan Jewish thinker Abraham Ibn Daud (c. 1110-1180). Whereas his historiographical book *Sefer ha-Qabbalah* (The Book of Tradition, 1160/61) became a classic, his philosophical work

ha-Emunah ha-Ramah (The Exalted Faith), written around the same time, fared less well. Soon overshadowed by Maimonides' *Moreh Nevukhim*, it attracted some, but not much attention on the part of later Jewish philosophers, and also in modern research it was long relatively understudied. Of course, in the nineteenth century eminent scholars such as Jacob Guttman,² S.

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² GUTTMANN, J. "Die Religionsphilosophie des Abraham Ibn Daud aus Toledo". *MGWJ* 26, 1877, pp. 461-477; 540-556 and *MGWJ* 27, 1878, pp. 14-35; 110-129; 161-169; 202-217; 262-281; 304-316; 361-376; 400-422; 452-469; 503-522; 532-568.

Horovitz,³ David Kaufmann,⁴ and Wilhelm Bacher⁵ examined (aspects of) his philosophy, and in the twentieth century Harry A. Wolfson often referred to him in his various studies on medieval Jewish philosophy.⁶ In 1954 Milton Arfa devoted his PhD thesis to Ibn Daud, a work that, sadly, remained unpublished.⁷ In general, however, Ibn Daud remained largely neglected, partly because he was often primarily viewed as a forerunner of Maimonides, and thus considered to be secondary to that towering figure. As a result, Ibn Daud's life, his activities and influence remained largely unknown.

Fortunately, the picture has changed in recent times. The past three decades have witnessed a new and vivid interest in Ibn Daud. The bibliography in the entry devoted to this author in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* reveals that many studies on Abraham Ibn Daud and new editions of his writings were released between 1990 and the early 2020s, in large part thanks to the authors of the essays in this volume.⁸ The aim of my contribution is to take stock of the results of the new research and to review how our knowledge of this multi-faceted author, the protagonist of the current publication, has been advanced in the past decades and where there are still gaps in our knowledge. Although I will discuss several aspects of Ibn Daud's life, his activities, and the reception of his works, my focus will be on studies of his philosophical work, since Ibn Daud's historical works will be the topic of several dedicated essays in this monographic issue.

2. Biography

What is still unknown is exactly when and where Ibn Daud was born in Andalusia. The data usually given are: c. 1110 in Cordoba. This is likely, but not certain. On the other hand, there are new details about the end of his life: the reports about his death as a martyr have found confirmation in the *Midrash ha-Hojmah*, written some five decades after the event, in the 1230s in To-

ledo, as was discovered by C. Sirat.⁹ The same information is also found in a contemporaneous letter from R. Yosef bar Todros Halevi of Burgos to the scholars of Provence, which forms part of the exchange of letters during the Maimonidean controversy of the 1230s.¹⁰ Here "the great sage R. Abraham bar Daud" is referred to as the author of *Seder* (not: *Sefer*) *ha-Qabbalah*, and in both sources he is called "*ha-Sefaradi*."

However, the most important new biographical fact is that it has now been established that Avendauth and Ibn Daud are one and the same person, as M. Th. D'Alverny conjectured some 65 years ago in her seminal article "Avendauth?".¹¹ In a long detailed article Gad Freudenthal has argued, decisively in my view, that Avendauth is indeed identical with Ibn Daud.¹² Freudenthal built on earlier studies by Charles Burnett, Alexander Fidora and Amos Bertolacci on the translation activity in Toledo in the twelfth century in general and on the cooperation between the translator-philosopher Dominicus Gundissalinus and Avendauth in particular. These studies showed that Avendauth should be seen as the moving spirit behind the Avicenna translations program.¹³

Freudenthal added a vital finding to this discussion: the description in *ha-Emunah ha-Ramah* of a strange experiment on the boiling down of must suggests a strong link between the two authors. This passage derives from what he calls "obscure" mathematical material, in which Gundissalinus is known to have been interested. As Freudenthal points out, Ibn Daud, as it were, rebukes his Christian colleague for wasting his time on such matters instead of being concerned about the salvation of his soul. It is almost as if we can hear the two scholars arguing with each other.¹⁴ Moreover, Nicola Polloni has pointed to intellectual exchange between them regarding another issue: whereas Gundissa-

³ HOROVITZ, S. "Die Psychologie des Aristotelikers Abraham Ibn Daud". *Jahresbericht des jüdisch-theologischen Seminars Fraenckel'scher Stiftung für das Jahr 1911*. Breslau, 1912, pp. 212-286.

⁴ KAUFMANN, D. *Geschichte der Attributenlehre in der jüdischen Religionsphilosophie*. Gotha, 1877; idem, "Die Sinne. Beiträge zur Geschichte der Physiologie und Psychologie im Mittelalter". *Jahresbericht der Landesrabbinerschule in Budapest für das Schuljahr 1883/4*. Budapest, 1884, pp. 241-252, 341-360.

⁵ BACHER, W. *Die Bibelepexese der jüdischen Religionsphilosophen des Mittelalters vor Maimuni*. Budapest, 1892, pp. 137-155; idem, "Der arabische Titel des religionsphilosophischen Werkes Abraham Ibn Dauds". *ZDMG* 56, 1892, p. 541.

⁶ See the articles by Harry Austryn WOLFSON collected in the two volumes in TWERSKY, I. and WILLIAMS, G. H. (eds.), *Studies in the History of Philosophy and Religion*. 2 vols. Cambridge, Mass. 1973 and 1977.

⁷ ARFA, M. *Abraham Ibn Daud and the Beginnings of Medieval Jewish Aristotelianism*. Ph.D. Columbia Univ. 1954. S. BODENHEIMER has studied Ibn Daud's biology, "The 'The biology of Abraham Ibn Daud of Toledo'. *Archives internationales d'histoire des sciences* 4, 1951, pp. 39-62. pp.39-62 biology of Abraham Ibn Daud of Toledo". *Archives internationales d'histoire des sciences* 4, 1951: pp. 39-62.

⁸ See the entry on Abraham Ibn Daud in SEP at: <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2020/entries/abraham-daud/>.

⁹ SIRAT, C. "Juda b. Salomon ha-Cohen. Philosophe, astronome et peut-être kabbaliste de la première moitié du XIIIe siècle". *Italia* 2, 1978, pp. 39-61, on p. 43.

¹⁰ *Ginzei Nistarot*. Vol. IV. Ed. J. Kobak, Bamberg, 1878, p. 169.6-7. Isaac Israeli in his *Yesod 'Olam* (c. 1310) also reports that Ibn Daud died a martyr's death, cf. below n. 25.

¹¹ D'ALVERNY, M. Th. "Avendauth?", in *Homenaje a Millás Vallicrosa*. Barcelona: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1954-1956, vol.1, pp. 19-43.

¹² FREUDENTHAL, G. "Abraham Ibn Daud, Avendauth, Dominicus Gundissalinus and Practical Mathematics in Mid-Twelfth-Century Toledo". *Aleph. Historical Studies in Science & Judaism* 16.1, 2016, pp. 61-106.

¹³ BURNETT, Ch., "Translating from Arabic into Latin in the Middle Ages: Theory, Practice, and Criticism", in LOFTS, S.G. and ROSEMAN, P.W. (eds.), *Éditer, traduire, interpréter. Essais de méthodologie philosophique*. Louvain: Peeters, 1997, pp. 55-78, and the studies mentioned in FREUDENTHAL 2016 (see preceding note), n. 23; FIDORA, A., "Abraham Ibn Daud and Dominicus Gundissalinus: Philosophie und religiöse Toleranz im Toledo des 12. Jahrhunderts", in SCHWARTZ, Y. and KRECH, V. (eds.), *Religious Apologetics: Philosophical Argumentation*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004, pp. 251-266, and FIDORA, A., "Religious Diversity and the Philosophical Translations of Twelfth-Century Toledo", in MEWS, C.J. and CROSSLEY, J.N. (eds.), *Communities of Learning. Networks and the Shaping of Intellectual Identity in Europe, 1000-1500*. Turnhout: Brepols, 2011, pp. 19-36; BERTOLACCI, A., "A Community of Translators: The Latin Medieval Versions of Avicenna's *Book of the Cure*" in MEWS, C.J. and CROSSLEY, J.N. (eds.), *Communities of Learning*, op. cit. pp. 37-54.

¹⁴ FREUDENTHAL, G. "Abraham Ibn Daud, Avendauth, Dominicus Gundissalinus", op.cit., pp. 79-100.

linus first adopted Solomon Ibn Gabirol's doctrine of hylomorphism, later, following Ibn Daud's criticism of this theory, he modified it, merging Gabirol's view with Avicenna's position.¹⁵ Polloni has also argued that it was Ibn Daud's application to the archbishop in Toledo, petitioning the latter's support in his translation project, that led Gundissalinus to settle in Toledo (1161-1162), so that the Latin scholar could cooperate with Ibn Daud in translating Avicennian texts.¹⁶

As far as I know, the identification thesis Avendauth = Ibn Daud has not been contested, and after Freudenthal's research it would indeed require very strong arguments to dispute it. Besides the identification, a number of important insights transpire from these new studies: first, that Ibn Daud was *the* central figure in the Toledan translation activities, second, that as an immigrant/refugee he transferred the model of patronage from Andalusia to Toledo, analogous to Judah ibn Tibbon's enterprise in Provence around the same time (1161), and third, that he was the crucial factor in the emergence of "Avicennism in Toledo". To this we can add that Gundissalinus' turn to Avicenna under Ibn Daud's influence contributed to the reception of Avicenna, in particular his psychology, in Jewish philosophy.¹⁷

3. Works

Unfortunately, the "big unknown" is still the Arabic original of Ibn Daud's philosophical work, *al-'Aqīdah al-rafi'ah*, which seems to have disappeared in the early sixteenth century.¹⁸ On the other hand, thanks to Amira Eran, we have now an excellent and complete edition of the two fourteenth-century Hebrew translations *ha-Emunah ha-Ramah* (translated by Solomon Ibn Lavi) and *ha-Emunah ha-Nissa'ah* (translated by Samuel Ibn Maṭūṭ) with an anonymous fifteenth-century commentary.¹⁹ The new edition, based on a MS that apparently had access to the Arabic, replaces the 1986 edition of Samuelson/Weiss, which still retains some worth, since it provides the only English translation extant today.²⁰ A year prior to the publication of Eran's

edition, a team of rabbis published an edition of *ha-Emunah ha-Ramah*, with a rendering in modern Hebrew and with the anonymous commentary.²¹

A most important discovery in the field of Ibn Daud's philosophy is a Judeo-Arabic fragment from the Kaufmann Collection in Budapest, unearthed by Krisztina Szilágyi.²² Forming part of an anthology that comprises works by Avicenna and Averroes, the fragment treats the transmission of motion in relation to *Physics* VIII.²³ Unfortunately it is damaged (torn and stained), but it contains a colophon, probably datable to 1391, that unambiguously states Ibn Daud's authorship. As yet, it is the only extant specimen of his writings in Arabic. The significance of the fragment is that it enhances the reputation of Ibn Daud as an accomplished philosopher who wrote not only for beginners. Moreover, basing herself on a statement by Albertus Magnus, Szilágyi suggests that Abraham Ibn Daud may also have written a book on *Metaphysics*, to which the title *Liber de Causis* was wrongly assigned.²⁴

These findings are important in light of the remark by the astronomer Isaac Israeli in his *Yesod Olam* (written c. 1310), according to which Abraham Ibn Daud, who is called "intelligent and expert in every science," wrote many books.²⁵ However, the "important astronomical book" (*sifro he-hashuv we-ha-nikhbad behokhmat ha-tekhunah*) to which Israeli refers in this regard has not yet come to light. A Latin translation of an astrological work in Madrid, MS Bibl. Nacional, cod 10015, copied in the thirteenth century, has also been associated with Ibn Daud, but although Marie-Thérèse d'Alverny already drew attention to it in her 1954 article, this has not yet been examined.²⁶

For Ibn Daud's chronicles we now have the very solid edition, English translation and study by Katja Vehlow,²⁷ which completes the editions of Ibn Daud's historical works initiated by Gershom D. Cohen's edition and study of its first part, *Sefer ha-Qabbalah*, of 1967.²⁸ To Lola Ferre we owe a Spanish translation of

¹⁵ POLLONI, N. "Toledan ontologies: Gundissalinus, Ibn Daud and the Problem of Gabirolian Hylomorphism", in FIDORA A. and POLLONI, N. (eds.), *Appropriation, Interpretation and Criticism: Philosophical and Theological Exchanges Between the Arabic, Hebrew and Latin Intellectual Traditions*. Barcelona-Roma, 2017, pp. 19-49.

¹⁶ POLLONI, N. "Elementi per una biografia di Dominicus Gundisalvi". *AHDLMA* 82, 2015, pp. 7-22.

¹⁷ SCHWARTZ, Y. "Thirteenth-Century Hebrew Psychological Discussions: The Role of Latin Sources in the Formation of Hebrew Aristotelianism", in VAN OPPENRAAY, A. (ed.), *The Letter before the Spirit: The Importance of Text Editions for the Study of the Reception of Aristotle*. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2012, pp. 173-194.

¹⁸ STEINSCHEIDER, M. *Die hebräischen Übersetzungen des Mittelalters und die Juden als Dolmetscher*. Graz: Akademische Druck- und Verlagsanstalt, 1956², p. 370.

¹⁹ ERAN, A. (ed.), *Abraham Ibn Da'ūd. The Exalted Faith. Ha-Emunah ha-Ramah Translated by Solomon Ibn Lavi. Ha-Emunah ha-Nissa'ah Translated by Samuel Ibn Maṭūṭ. The Anonymous Commentary to Ha-Emunah ha-Ramah*. Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 2019. For the relation between the two translations, see also below, section "Reception".

²⁰ SAMUELSON, N. and WEISS, G. (eds), *The Exalted Faith. Abraham Ibn Daud*. Rutherford etc.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press / Lon-

don and Toronto: Associated University Press, 1986. On the limitations of both the edition and the English translation, see the review by Alfred I. IVRY in *Speculum* 64 no. 3, 1989, pp. 721-722.

²¹ Bene Brak: Institute for Jewish Thought and Knowledge, 2018. The rabbinical team that produced this edition was helped by information provided by A. Eran.

²² SZILÁGYI, K. "A Fragment of a Book of Physics from the David Kaufmann Genizah Collection (Budapest) and the Identity of Ibn Daud with Avendauth". *Aleph. Historical Studies in Science & Judaism* 16.1, 2016, pp. 11-31. For an edition of the fragment by K. SZILÁGYI and Y. Tzvi LANGERMANN, see *ibid.*, pp. 33-38.

²³ See LANGERMANN, Y. T. "Fragments of Commentaries on Aristotle's *Physics* from the David Kaufmann Genizah Collection, by Ibn Daud and Others (?)" *Aleph. Historical Studies in Science & Judaism* 16.1, 2016, pp. 39-60.

²⁴ SZILÁGYI, K. "A Fragment of a Book of Physics", *op. cit.*, pp. 26-28.

²⁵ *Yesod 'Olam* IV.18, ed. B. Goldberg and L. Rosenkranz (Berlin 1846-1848), vol. 2, pp. 35a-b.

²⁶ See FREUDENTHAL, G. "Abraham Ibn Daud, Avendauth, Dominicus Gundissalinus", *op. cit.*, p. 65, end of note 5.

²⁷ VEHLow, K. *Abraham Ibn Daud's Dorot 'Olam (Generations of the Ages). A Critical Edition and Translation of Zikhron Divrey Romi, Divrey Malkhey Yisra'el, and the Midrash on Zechariah*. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2013. For these texts, see the article by K. Vehlow in this volume.

²⁸ COHEN, G. D. *A Critical Edition with a Translation and Notes of The Book of Tradition (Sefer ha-Qabbalah) by Abraham Ibn Daud*. Lon-

Sefer ha-Qabbalah.²⁹ But the anti-Karaite work to which Ibn Daud refers in this book is still unknown. Perhaps the reference is to the polemical section in *ha-Emunah ha-Ramah* II.5.2 in which Ibn Daud marshals proofs for the continuity of the chain of tradition since Moses.

4. Ibn Daud's philosophical sources

Strange as it may sound, despite the new studies, the question of Ibn Daud's philosophical sources has not yet been conclusively solved.³⁰ While it has become abundantly clear that of the Muslim philosophers, Avicenna exerted a major influence on Ibn Daud's thought, it is a matter of debate which Avicennian texts he had at his disposal. Many of his statements have parallels in Avicenna's *summae*, the *Shifā'* ("The Cure") and in the *Najāt* ("The Salvation"), but the problem is that these two works contain a good deal of overlap. The exact relation between Avicenna's two *summae* has not yet been investigated systematically. It is sometimes claimed that the *Najāt* is a summary of the *Shifā'*, but this is not always the case. For example, the account of the problem of evil is virtually identical in the two texts.³¹ We know that the *Shifā'* was available in Toledo (and that Avendauth/Ibn Daud himself was involved in translating parts of it), whereas we have no evidence of the physical presence of the *Najāt* in Toledo or in the Iberian peninsula around that time. Only a precise comparison of Avicenna's two works with the expositions in *ha-Emunah ha-Ramah* can solve this question. If it can be shown that Ibn Daud also used the *Najāt*, this would imply that this Avicennian text, too, circulated in Toledo in the second half of the twelfth century, long before its translation into Hebrew in the 1330s by the Provençal author Ṭodros Ṭodrosi in Trinquetaille.

The question of Avicennian sources moreover includes the role of Al-Ghazali's *Maqāṣid al-falāsifah*, a digest of Avicennian teachings, as a source for Ibn Daud. It seems likely that Ibn Daud also had access to al-Ghazali's work and that he used it alongside Avicennian texts.³²

As noted, recent research has investigated the contacts between Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus, and the similarities and dissimilarities are the subject of inquiry in two articles of this volume.³³ The two collaborators

had overlapping interests, for example, the study of the soul, but their thought also displays doctrinal differences, and, as we have seen, Ibn Daud is critical of Gundissalinus' theories. Yet inasmuch as the thought of the latter contributed to shaping or formulating that of the former, the Latin scholar should be considered to be a source of Ibn Daud, too.

5. Ibn Daud's place in medieval Jewish philosophy

In histories of medieval Jewish philosophy Ibn Daud is generally depicted as the first Jewish Aristotelian. According to Colette Sirat, for example, *ha-Emunah ha-Ramah* is the first "book that one can designate as Aristotelian."³⁴ Although largely correct, the portrayal of Ibn Daud as the first Jewish Aristotelian is not without problems, for it is a matter of debate how much of an Aristotelian he was. Few scholars today would agree with Isaac Husik's assertion that "in Ibn Daud and Maimonides, Neo-Platonism is reduced to the vanishing point, and Aristotelianism is in full view and possession of the field."³⁵ This claim is certainly exaggerated, since the thought of both Ibn Daud and Maimonides contains several notions, such as emanationist cosmology, that are commonly associated with Neo-Platonism.

As is well known, however, the label "Neo-Platonism" is a modern invention, and in medieval Jewish thought we encounter a number of what Sarah Stroumsa calls "Hybrid Philosophers" who combine "Neo-Platonic" or "un-Aristotelian" elements with Aristotelian ones.³⁶ Milton Arfa observes that Ibn Daud wrote "at the point where on the one hand it (= medieval Jewish philosophy) has rejected Neoplatonism but has not yet freed itself of many of its fundamental doctrines and thought habits, and on the other has espoused Aristotelianism but has not yet assimilated the full meaning of its world outlook."³⁷ And he concludes: "To distinguish between the crosscurrents of Aristotelian Neoplatonism and Neoplatonic Aristotelianism is thus not a simple matter."³⁸

liche Buchgesellschaft, 2004, pp. 10-26; POLLONI, N. "Toledan Ontologies", op. cit.; see also Eran's edition, pp. 45-50 and the articles by Polloni and Eran in this volume.

³⁴ SIRAT, C. *A History of Jewish Philosophy in the Middle Ages*. Cambridge etc.: Cambridge University Press / Paris: Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de l'homme, 1985, p. 141.

³⁵ HUSIK, I. *A History of Mediaeval Jewish Philosophy*. Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Publications, 2002 (reprint of Philadelphia: Jewish Publications Society of America, 1941), p. 200. This sentence forms part of Husik's description of the development of medieval Jewish philosophy: "First came Kalam in Saadia, Mukammas, the Karaites Al-Basir and Jeshua ben Judah. Then Neo-Platonism and Kalam combined, or pure Neo-Platonism, in Bahya, Gabirol, Ibn Zaddik and the two Ibn Ezras, Abraham and Moses. In Judah Halevi [...] we have Neo-Platonism and Aristotelianism. Finally in Ibn Daud and Maimonides, Neo-Platonism is reduced to the vanishing point, and Aristotelianism is in full view and possession of the field."

³⁶ STROUMSA, S. *Andalus and Sefarad. On Philosophy and Its History in Islamic Spain*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2019, pp. 120-123. On the term "Neo-Platonist", see Y. Tzvi LANGERMANN, "Cosmology and Cosmogony in *Doresh Reshumot*, a Thirteenth-Century Commentary on the Torah". *Harvard Theological Review* 97.2, 2004: pp. 197-227, on p. 222, n. 63.

³⁷ ARFA, M., *Abraham Ibn Daud*, op. cit., p. 4.

³⁸ Ibid.

don: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1967.

²⁹ FERRE, L. *Abraham Ibn Daud. Libro de la Tradición (Sefer ha-Qabbalah)*. Barcelona: Riopiedras Ediciones, 1990. Non vidi.

³⁰ For an overview of the sources underlying *ha-Emunah ha-Ramah*, see ed. ERAN, op. cit., pp. 31-50.

³¹ Cf. FONTAINE, R. "Abraham Ibn Daud and Avicenna on Evil", in HASSE, D.N. and BERTOLACCI, A. (eds.), *The Arabic, Hebrew and Latin Reception of Avicenna's Metaphysics*, Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2012, pp. 159-176, on p. 161.

³² On this question, see FONTAINE, R. "Avicennian Sources in Abraham Ibn Daud's Natural Philosophy?", in HASSE, D.N. and BERTOLACCI, A. (eds.), *The Arabic, Hebrew and Latin Reception of Avicenna's Physics and Cosmology*, Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter, 2018, pp. 241-268.

³³ See FIDORA, A. "Abraham ibn Daūd und Dominicus Gundissalinus: Philosophie und religiöse Toleranz im Toledo des 12. Jahrhunderts", in LUTZ-BACHMANN, M. and FIDORA, A. (eds), *Juden, Christen und Muslime. Religionsdialoge im Mittelalter*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaft-

Ibn Daud's introduction to *ha-Emunah ha-Ramah* bespeaks a strong sense of self-awareness as a pioneer, for he announces his project as something new. To solve the problem he faces, namely, the contradiction between biblical verses that teach the freedom of will against those that seem to establish determinism, no suitable books were found, he declares. In this regard he mentions Saadia and Ibn Gabirol, whose writings were not sufficient to remove the difficulty. Although Ibn Daud's claim for "newness" may in part be rhetorical – after all, such claims are found in other medieval introductions as well –, comparison with earlier Jewish thinkers does indeed point to a gradual transition towards a more distinct Aristotelianism in Ibn Daud's thought.

He himself felt called upon to react to Jehuda ha-Levi's position concerning the usefulness of philosophy for religion, and in order to refute ha-Levi, he relied on the Muslim *falāsifah* al-Farabi and Avicenna, whom he calls "the true philosophers."³⁹ Ibn Daud is the first to transplant their thought to Jewish soil, and hence to a certain extent the question of his Aristotelianism reverts to that of the Aristotelianism of his Muslim sources, a question that itself is a matter of debate. That said, there is unmistakably a shift in orientation or even a new orientation in Ibn Daud's work. As convincingly argued by Arfa, it is Ibn Daud's emphasis on the Aristotelian doctrine of substance that is "symptomatic of the transition from neoplatonism to Aristotelianism".⁴⁰ His distinction between substance and accident is decidedly Aristotelian, which explains his critique of Ibn Gabirol, who held that the selfsame thing can be both a substance and an accident. Aristotle's notion of substance forms the basis and point of departure for Ibn Daud's expositions on nature, motion, the soul and the incorporeal substances, and thus determines the Aristotelian outlook of his work.

Moreover, the structure of *ha-Emunah ha-Ramah* (logic, physics, metaphysics, ethics) reflects the Aristotelian classification of the sciences and Ibn Daud's awareness of the importance of the orderly study of the sciences.⁴¹ These features warrant the inclusion of Ibn Daud among the Jewish Aristotelians, provided one bears in mind that his Aristotelianism displays also un-Aristotelian elements. Furthermore, in order finally to determine the extent of Ibn Daud's Aristotelianism, one should also examine how he uses Aristotelian notions for his own purposes; how he differs from Gundisalinus, and how the Aristotelian elements in his thought compare to those in Maimonides.

6. Reception of Ibn Daud's philosophy

This brings us to the question of the reception of Ibn Daud's philosophical work. The most intriguing question here is: was Maimonides familiar with Ibn Daud's *al-'Aqīdah al-raft'ah*? There is as yet no definitive answer to this question, also because we are not well informed about Maimonides' whereabouts in the 1160s, so we cannot know whether he had the opportunity to come across Ibn Daud's book. As is well known, in his *Guide* Maimonides himself does not cite any of his Jewish predecessors by name. As Zev Harvey observes: "Readers of the *Guide* could truly get the idea that Maimonides has created his philosophic interpretation of Judaism *ex nihilo*."⁴²

Yet it is tempting to see an allusion to Ibn Daud in a famous passage in *Guide* I.71:

As for the Andalusians among the people of our nation, all of them cling to the affirmations of the philosophers and incline to their opinions, in so far as these do not ruin the foundations of the Law. You will not find them in any way taking the paths of the Mutakallimun. In many things concerning the scanty matter of which the later ones among them had knowledge they have therefore approximately the same doctrine that we set forth in this Treatise.⁴³

The description seems to fit no one better than Ibn Daud. Several studies have pointed to parallels and similarities between the two thinkers, yet it has to be taken into account that in part these parallels can be explained by the fact that both thinkers shared the same philosophical paradigm, namely that of the Muslim *falāsifah*.⁴⁴ Therefore, similarities in passages where Ibn Daud and Maimonides interpret Scripture in light of philosophical theories are more relevant to our question. Such similarities can be found in their discussions on prophecy, providence, evil, ethics, divine attributes and angels, for example in the use of the term *elohim*. I have ventured the suggestion that *ha-Emunah ha-Ramah* provided Maimonides with a model from which he could draw inspiration on the one hand, but that he considered to be in need of improvement on the other. Put differently, he may have devised his *Guide* in part as an immediate corrective of Ibn Daud's work.⁴⁵ To further investigate this issue the key question should be: how

³⁹ For the reasons for the switch to Aristotelianism in Andalusia, see STROUMSA, S. *Andalus and Sefarad*, op. cit., pp. 158-161. Stroumsa suggests that "Ibn Daud's book was intended as a response to the flagrant Shi'i inspired Neoplatonizing spirit of the *Kuzari*" (p. 160). On Ibn Daud's place in medieval Jewish philosophy, see also the article by R. Leicht in this volume.

⁴⁰ ARFA, M., *Abraham Ibn Daud*, op.cit., p. 34.

⁴¹ Interestingly, a manuscript of the *Midrash ha-Hokhmah*, a thirteenth-century text that presents an overview of Aristotle's philosophy as interpreted by Averroes, contains marginal annotations that are taken from Ibn Daud's book, which suggests that the scribe of this manuscript took *ha-Emunah ha-Ramah* to be a work of Aristotelianism. For these annotations, see FONTAINE, R. "Abraham Ibn Daud and the *Midrash ha-Hokhmah*: a mini-discovery". *Zutot. Perspectives on Jewish Culture*, 2002, pp. 156-163.

⁴² HARVEY, W. Z. "Maimonides' Place in the History of Philosophy", in KRAUT, B. (ed.), *Moses Maimonides: Communal Impact, Historic Legacy*. Proceedings of an International Symposium, November 16, 2003, Center for Jewish Studies Queens College: CUNY, 2005, pp. 27-35, on p. 29.

⁴³ TRANS. PINES, S. *Moses Maimonides. The Guide of the Perplexed*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1963, vol. 1, p. 177.

⁴⁴ For parallels between Ibn Daud and Maimonides, see FONTAINE, R. *In Defence of Judaism: Abraham Ibn Daud. Sources and Structure of ha-Emunah ha-Ramah*. Assen: Van Gorcum, 1990, index s.v. Maimonides, and ERAN, A. *From Simple Faith to Sublime Faith. Ibn Daud's Pre-Maimonidean Thought*. Ha-Kibbutz ha-meuchad 1998 (Hebr.), index s.v. Ben Maimon, Moshe. For the older research on this question, see the literature quoted in Eran's edition, p. 51 n. 81. See also Fontaine's article quoted in the next note.

⁴⁵ See FONTAINE, R. "Was Maimonides an Epigone?", in BERGER, S.Z. and ZWIEP, I.E. (eds.), *Epigonism and the Dynamic of Jewish Culture*, = *Studia Rosenthaliana* 40, 2007-2008, pp. 9-26.

does Maimonides' attitude towards Avicenna differ from that of Ibn Daud? Could it be that Maimonides is critical of his predecessor's extensive use of Avicenna given that in his famous letter to Samuel Ibn Tibbon he recommends al-Farabi more warmly than Avicenna?⁴⁶ Another question that should be taken into consideration here is the extent to which both Ibn Daud and Maimonides rely on Abraham Ibn Ezra.

Although Ibn Daud's philosophical work was quickly overshadowed by Maimonides' *Guide*, later authors do refer to it.⁴⁷ These references are scanty for the thirteenth and early fourteenth century.⁴⁸ In the aforementioned *Midrash ha-Hokhmah* (Arabic version 1230s) the Toledan author Judah ben Solomon ha-Cohen calls attention to a solution proposed by Ibn Daud regarding a difficulty in the interpretation of a passage in Aristotle's *Categories*. Isaac Israeli refers to Ibn Daud's "important book on the foundations of faith," mentioning its Arabic title (in *Yesod 'Olam*, c. 1310, cf. above).

The picture changes, however, in the course of the fourteenth century. Following the lead of S. Pines, who pointed to similarities between the views held by Ibn Daud and Gersonides on "the possible" and their implication for the problem of human freedom, Amira Eran has suggested that this parallel may have played a role in the eventual translation of *al-'Aqīdah al-rafi'ah* into Hebrew and the writing of a commentary on it.⁴⁹ Be this as it may, from the second half of the fourteenth century onwards we notice an increasing interest in Ibn Daud's thought. The Arabic work was translated twice, presumably in the 1370s, more than two centuries after its composition. According to the late Mauro Zonta, this was occasioned by a renewed interest in the writings of Avicenna, Ibn Daud's main source, an interest springing from the conviction that Avicenna's system of thought was more compatible with religion than that of Averroes.⁵⁰ The two

translations were executed roughly around the same time in Christian Spain, but it is still not certain which one preceded the other. In 1995 Amira Eran established that the two translations have a common substratum and concluded on the basis of linguistic considerations that Ibn Moṭoṭ, the translator of *ha-Emunah ha-Nissa'ah*, had *ha-Emunah ha-Ramah* by Solomon Ibn Lavi before his eyes.⁵¹ Several scholars accepted her thesis, but most recently Zev Harvey has cast doubts and made a case for the opposite scenario in an as yet unpublished article. Comparing the introductory paratexts of the two translations, he raises the possibility that Isaac ben Sheshet ben Perfet, who commissioned the translation, probably at the instigation of Ḥasdai Crescas, was not satisfied with Ibn Moṭoṭ's translation and requested Ibn Lavi to rework it.⁵² Harvey also wonders whether the two translators collaborated. In any event, *ha-Emunah ha-Ramah*, with its more rigid Aristotelian terminology, has become the authoritative and dominant translation; it is extant in more than 16 manuscripts, whereas we have only one manuscript of *ha-Emunah ha-Nissa'ah*.

It is certain that the book interested Crescas, who mentions Ibn Daud as a philosopher alongside Avicenna and al-Ghazali.⁵³ Crescas' interest in Ibn Daud's thought may already date from the early stages of his *Light of the Lord* (late fourteenth century), which he eventually completed in 1410. It remains to be investigated whether the tragic events in the Iberian peninsula in Crescas' lifetime played a role in his appreciation of the Toledan thinker. In any case, Crescas' pupil Joseph Albo (d. 1444) also made direct use of Ibn Daud's philosophical work in his *Sefer ha-'Iqqarim*, as Dror Ehrlich has recently shown on the basis of terminology and textual parallels.⁵⁴ Other fifteenth-century thinkers who profited from Ibn Daud's work include Ephraim al-Naqawah, who quotes Ibn Daud in *Sha'ar kevod ha-Shem* (c. 1420), and Isaac Arama, who criticizes him in his *'Aqedat Yiṣṣhaq* (c. 1480).⁵⁵ As noted above, a reader of the

⁴⁶ *Iggerot ha-Rambam*, ed. SHAILAT, I., Jerusalem: Maaliyot, pp. 352-354. Cf. HARVEY, S., "Did Maimonides Letter to Samuel Ibn Tibbon Determine which Philosophers Would be Studied by Later Jewish Thinkers?" *Jewish Quarterly Review* 83, 1992, pp. 51-70.

⁴⁷ For an overview, see ASSUDRI, Y., "Abraham ibn Daud and his Philosophical Book 'The Sublime Faith' – Conjectures" (Hebr.), in WYGODA, S., ACKERMANN, A., EISENMANN, E., RAVITZKY, A. (eds.), *Homo Homini (Adam le-adam). Essays in Jewish Philosophy presented by his students to Professor Warren Zev Harvey*, Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 2016, pp. 41-82, on pp. 69-77. Assudri's list includes mentions of the Arabic and Hebrew title of Ibn Daud's philosophical work, as well as actual usages and parallels.

⁴⁸ Most recently, W. Z. Harvey has suggested that Nachmanides may have had access to the Arabic version of Ibn Daud's work, cf. HARVEY, "Ibn Daud, Ibn Matut we-sod ha-malbush" (forthcoming in *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Thought*, 2022). My thanks to prof. Harvey for showing me this article before publication.

⁴⁹ ERAN, A. "What Was Ralbag's Influence on the Translation of Ibn Daud's *The Exalted Faith*, and on Its Anonymous Commentary?" (Hebr.), *Da'at* 85, 2018, pp. 167-187. Eran cautions, however, that this is not to say that Gersonides actually had access to Ibn Daud's book. It is rather the interest in this *problématique* that may have been influential.

⁵⁰ ZONTA, M. "Avicenna in Medieval Jewish Philosophy", in JANSSENS, J. and DE SMET, D. (eds.), *Avicenna and his Heritage*. Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2002, pp. 267-268; 277-278. On the compatibility between Avicennian philosophy and Judaism, cf. also S. Pines' remark in his translation of the *Guide* that Avicenna's system "is much more consonant with religious feeling [...] and doubtless also with religion *tout court* as conceived in the Middle Ages than the

doctrine of the Orthodox Aristotelians," PINES, S. *Moses Maimonides, The Guide of the Perplexed*, op. cit. vol. 1, p. xciii. For a broader perspective on the interest in Avicenna among fourteenth-century Jewish thinkers, see also ZONTA, M. "Fonti antiche e medievali della logica ebraica nella Provenza del Trecento". *Medioevo* 23, 1997, pp. 515-594, and idem, "The Role of Avicenna and of Islamic 'Avicennism' in the 14th-century Jewish Debate Around Philosophy and Religion". *Oriente Moderno* 19/3, 2000, pp. 647-660.

⁵¹ ERAN, A. "The Hebrew Translations of Abraham ibn Daud's *Exalted Faith*". (Hebr.), *Tarbiz* 65 (1995), pp. 79-107.

⁵² HARVEY, W. Z. "The Puzzling Hebrew Translations of Ibn Daud's *Exalted Faith*", forthcoming in GORGONI, F., KAJON, I. and VALENTE, L. (eds.), *Philosophical Translations in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages in Memory of Mauro Zonta*. Rome: Aracne. I am grateful to Prof. Z. Harvey for showing me his article before publication.

⁵³ Cf. WOLFSON, H. A., *Crescas' Critique of Aristotle: Problems of Aristotle's Physics in Jewish and Arabic Philosophy*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971, pp. 130-131 with notes on pp. 320-323.

⁵⁴ EHRLICH, D. "Le-hashpa'ato shel *ha-emunah ha-ramah* le-R. Avraham Ibn Daud 'al *sefer ha-ikarim* le-R. Yosef Albo". *Alei Sefer* 21, 2010, pp. 35-46. These parallels concern anti-Christian polemics (on the eternity of the Law) and the notion of God's necessary existence. See also EHRLICH, "R. Joseph Albo's Discussion of the Proofs for the Existence of God". *Journal for Jewish Thought and Philosophy* 15.2 (2007).

⁵⁵ On Ephraim al-Naqawah, see ASSUDRI, Y. "Abraham ibn Daud and his Philosophical Book 'The Sublime Faith'", op. cit. pp., 45-50; on Isaac Arama, *ibid.* p. 76.

Midrash ha-Hokhmah consulted *Ha-Emunah ha-Ramah* and copied comments from it in the margin of a manuscript.⁵⁶ Here we have to mention the anonymous commentary preserved in a late fifteenth-century Italian manuscript and published in the 2018 and 2019 editions. Its origin is unknown; it seems to have been written for beginners in philosophy and may have been intended for teaching purposes.⁵⁷ Still later, in the seventeenth century, Joseph Solomon Delmedigo recommends studying Ibn Daud's book.⁵⁸

We can thus conclude that in spite of Maimonides' pervasive impact on medieval Jewish thought the philosophical book of his predecessor was not completely neglected by later generations. To be sure, if it indeed formed the incentive for Maimonides' *Guide*, the influence of *ha-Emunah ha-Ramah* in Jewish thought, albeit indirect, is much greater.

7. Ibn Daud's historical works

Our knowledge of Ibn Daud the historian and chronicler has also vastly expanded over the past few decades. An important new insight into the interpretation of *Sefer ha-Qabbalah* was provided by Eve Krakowski. Krakowski challenged G.D. Cohen's "classic" thesis, according to which the work conveys an esoteric messianic message for salvation in 1189, in which schematism plays an important part.⁵⁹ Krakowski argues that the book is not "overly schematic" and that the inconsistencies are the result of a combination of sources, the main aim of the book being polemical, namely to defend rabbinic Judaism "in the face of Karaite, Christian and Muslim opposition." In her view, the work should be viewed as a legitimization of the political power of the elite, rather than as reflecting a Spanish "nationalistic" trend. According to Krakowski, although upholding a Jewish messianic doctrine, *Sefer ha-Qabbalah* does not convey a *historically specific* messianic promise.

Krakowski's interpretation has been endorsed by Katja Vehlow, to whom we owe a fine edition with English translation of *Dorot 'Olam*, which, as noted, completes the edition of Ibn Daud's historiographical works.⁶⁰ Vehlow calls attention to the political undertones in these works, discussing how Ibn Daud treats issues of political leadership, authority and sovereignty in *Dorot 'Olam*.⁶¹ Still more recently, José Antonio Fernández López has emphasized the ethical-theologi-

cal-political subtext of Ibn Daud's message of consolation in *Sefer ha-Qabbalah*.⁶²

Characterizing *Dorot 'Olam* as "one of the most influential and innovative historical works in medieval Hebrew literature," Vehlow has also traced the reception of Ibn Daud's chronicles in the Christian world via sixteenth-century translations in Latin, German and English. We learn that it was mostly Protestant-leaning authors, such as the Christian Hebraist Sebastian Münster, who for a variety of ideological and theological reasons (such as identification with the biblical Israel) turned to Ibn Daud's chronicles and were fascinated by it.⁶³ In view of Ibn Daud's anti-Karaite agenda it is perhaps somewhat ironical that the sixteenth-century Karaite author Isaac of Troki also referred to Ibn Daud's *Midrash on Zechariah* in his defense of Judaism against Christians.⁶⁴

E. Gutwirth has pointed to the role of patronage in the production of sixteenth-century translations/adaptations of Hebrew historiographical works, which presents an interesting parallel with the patronage-background in Ibn Daud's own time.⁶⁵ The relevance of Ibn Daud's chronicles for Iberian/Toledan history and identity and the Jewish role in it is also a topic of current research.⁶⁶

8. In conclusion

I have summarized the results of the new research, and indicated where there are still questions. The most important result of the recent studies, I think, is that Abraham Ibn Daud now emerges as an influential and important thinker. He has been "promoted" from a "forerunner" of Maimonides to a thinker worthy to be studied in his own right. The new assessment positions him as a cultural agent, someone who, like Abraham bar Hiyya and Abraham Ibn Ezra, transcended boundaries, straddling the Islamic and the Christian world.

More generally, two important lessons can be learned here: one is that in studying medieval Jewish philosophy one should not only address philosophical issues, but also pay attention to the wider context and explore processes of acculturation while considering the entire oeuvre of the author. The second is that it is important to focus not only on the "big names" in medieval Jewish thought, important as they may be, but that we need to study also the so-called "minor figures". Fortunately, nowadays more and more modern scholars are dedicating themselves to this task, which will help us gain a more complete picture of the development of Jewish intellectual history.

⁵⁶ See FONTAINE, R. "Abraham Ibn Daud and the *Midrash ha-Hokhmah*: a Mini-Discovery", op. cit.

⁵⁷ See FONTAINE, R. "For the Dossier of Abraham Ibn Daud: Some Observations on an Anonymous Commentary on his *Ha-Emunah ha-Ramah*". *Zutot* 7, 2010, pp. 35-40. On the possible relation between Gersonides and the anonymous commentator, see A. ERAN's article mentioned in n. 49.

⁵⁸ ASSUDRI, Y. "Abraham ibn Daud and his Philosophical Book "The Sublime Faith", op. cit., p. 76.

⁵⁹ KRAKOWSKI, E. "On the Literary Character of Abraham Ibn Daud's *Sefer ha-Qabbalah*," *European Journal of Jewish Studies*, 1.2, 2007, pp. 219-247.

⁶⁰ See note 27 above.

⁶¹ See also Vehlow's article in this volume.

⁶² FERNÁNDEZ LÓPEZ, J. A. "Tradicón, liderazgo y política del Consuelo en Abraham ibn Daud". *Los Torres de Lucca* 8/14, 2019, pp. 83-107.

⁶³ VEHLLOW, *Dorot 'Olam*, op. cit., pp. 63-73.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 72.

⁶⁵ GUTWIRTH, E. "L'accueil fait à Abraham Ibn Daud dans l'Europe de la Renaissance", in SHOHAM, G. and ROSENSTIEL, F. (eds.), *Tolède et Jérusalem : Tentative de symbiose entre les cultures espagnole et judaïque*. Lausanne: Éd. L'Age d'Homme, 1992, pp. 97-110.

⁶⁶ See the articles by J. A. Fernández López and J. L. Villacañas in this volume.