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Medieval Iberian Cultures in Contact

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5

MEDIEVAL IBERIAN CULTURES IN CONTACT

Iberian cultural production as translation and adaptation

Michelle M. Hamilton

Scholars of medieval Iberia have expressed frustration with the perceived limitations of Américo Castro's theory of *convivencia* as a model for explaining the cultural interactions between different religious, ethnic, and linguistic groups in the Iberian Peninsula during the Middle Ages (Catlos 2014b; Ray 2005; Soifer 2009). Brian Catlos (2014a) has argued that the creative and sometimes destructive interactions between Iberians in the Middle Ages are not unique, but reflect the larger Mediterranean world in which Muslims, Jews, and Christians (in addition to Byzantines, North Africans, Romans, Phoenicians, etc.) had been meeting, interacting, and sharing ideas and customs for millennia. While the aforementioned historians are primarily concerned with describing the social, political, and economic exchanges between Iberians (and to a lesser extent their artistic and literary production), scholars of Jewish cultural production in the medieval Mediterranean have been wrestling with how to explain what they call the Islamic or Arabic nature of Jewish cultural production in the medieval Arabo-Islamic world (including al-Andalus). Charles Manekin (2012), Daniel L. Lasker (2012), Gad Fruedenthal (2012), and Sarah Stroumsa (2012) have nuanced the theory of cultural symbiosis that S. D. Goitein used to describe early medieval Jewish-Islamic thought (1971, 2003). These scholars see the prevalence of philosophical rationalism as key to explaining the nature and types of ideas and cultural production that were both imported (through translation and commentaries), as well as created in original compositions produced throughout the Arabo-Islamic world, and particularly in Iberia. The Peninsula constituted one of the areas in which "polemical exchange between Jews and Christians was rational and relatively free," and where "philosophy and logic were eagerly developed as tools of such exchange" (Goldstein 2012, 9–10).

The present study takes as its point of departure the idea that the free and rational exchange of ideas and theories concerning religious belief – precisely the mechanism that provided the modus operandi of cultural contact and accommodation for medieval Arabized Jews according to Lasker, Freudenthal, et al. – is central to and a defining element of much medieval Iberian cultural production, even for those works produced after most of the Peninsula was in Christian hands. An examination of all such works is well beyond the scope of the present article. Instead I turn to those Iberian works in which the author-transmitters create a narrative of imaginative fiction to accommodate the Arabo-Andalusi philosophical notion of the active intellect. In the Arabo-Andalusi tradition, philosophic inquiry – whose subjects included the

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natural world, the cosmos, God, and so on – becomes the way that man can use his intellect, which in turn is considered the uniquely human feature that can, if properly developed, bring man from the world of matter to the celestial realm of the divine (Corbin 1993, 248). Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera's *Ha-Mebeqqesh* (*The Seeker*), Ramón Llull's *Felix*, and Alfonso de la Torre's *Visión deleitable* all involve the incorporation of translated material into a narrative fictional frame used by the authors to stimulate their readers' intellect/reason and help him/her to achieve knowledge of God. I argue that these fictional narratives are witnesses to the particular form of intellectual openness and free exchange of religious ideas that Stroumsa, Freudenthal, and others have observed in the (Judeo-)Andalusi tradition. Two phenomena related to this intellectual openness and to the imaginative narratives examined herein are the Aristotelian theory of the active intellect, discussed previously, and the translation activity that defines medieval Iberian cultural production.

Translation was a part of intellectual life across the Peninsula from well before the twelfth century (Burnett 1994; Harvey 1977; Márquez Villanueva 1996), and involved many agents, most of whom remain unknown, who facilitated the creation and exchange of translated material. Francisco Márquez Villanueva points out that for medieval Iberia, instead of just thinking of the translators and the works translated in Toledo, we must also consider the libraries, the workshops where books were created, the commercial trade in books, and the various professionals across the Peninsula who provided the infrastructure for this vast cultural phenomenon that was by no means confined to a single city (1996, 24). These lines of exchange and contact – not all of which originated in the Peninsula, and many of which extended beyond the mountains to the north, or the sea to the south and east, continuing even across the Mediterranean to the Levant and beyond – are both real and imagined. Iberian intellectuals of the tenth to sixteenth centuries not only traveled to study and acquire knowledge of close and distant lands and teachers, but they also crafted a series of imaginative fictional texts, such as those studied herein that reflected the very real intellectual journeys of their creators.[1]

The beginnings of this story, as Stroumsa notes, are cloudy, but emerge in the early years of Umayyad rule on the Peninsula, when the caliphs of al-Andalus played important roles in bringing the wisdom of Baghdad to Iberia (2012, 48). While the studies of Burnett (1994), Corbin (1993, 242–52), and Daiber (2012) explore the Arabic translations and commentaries on the work of Greek thinkers such as Aristotle, Plato, and Galen that circulated from al-Andalus into Christian Europe, Rafael Ramón Guerrero notes that the comprehensive study of Andalusi Aristotelianism remains to be written (2013, 403). How the work of Aristotle and his Arab interpreters in the Abbasid realm – Al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) – made their way to the scholars of al-Andalus involves tales that have been lost – those of travelers (scholars, merchants, renegades) who often accompanied the many texts that circulated across the medieval Islamic world and Mediterranean (Stroumsa 2012, 50). However, a few examples do remain, and they provide us with glimpses of how such agents went about their business and how such works were obtained and made accessible.

In *The Ornament of the World*, Maria Rosa Menocal tells the tale of caliph ʿAbd al-Raḥmān II's efforts to find a Greek scholar to translate into Arabic a Greek copy of Dioscorides' *On Medicine* given to him by the Byzantine emperor (2002, 89). It is ʿAbd al-Raḥmān's vizier and personal physician, the Jew Hasdai Ibn Shaprut, who heads the group that carries out the translation for the caliphal library – a group that also includes a Nestorian Christian translator from Constantinople brought to al-Andalus especially for the task. The tale is meant to be emblematic of the process of cultural transmission and translation by which the "great works" of the classical world passed eventually into Western Europe and, according to many scholars, served as catalyst both for the so-called Renaissance of the twelfth century and eventually of

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the later Renaissance that ushered in our present modernity. Menocal highlights that the tale of Dioscorides in Arabic Córdoba is a tale of a Christian translator, a Jewish courtier and poet (Hasdai ibn Shaprut), and an Andalusi caliph (ʿAbd al-Raḥmān II) (2002, 48–49); however, Stroumsa further points out that Hasdai Ibn Shaprut's role as creator and patron to the nascent Judeo-Iberian philosophical and literary tradition was contingent upon a network of scholars and texts that in turn depended upon not just rulers and their viziers, but upon merchants, middle men, and even pirates (2012, 50). For both Stroumsa and Menocal this instance of cultural contact was part of a larger process that transcended religious borders.

S. D. Goitein's studies of the Cairo Genizah documents offer glimpses of stories similar to that of Dioscorides' manuscript that Stroumsa and Menocal claim as symbolic of Andalusi cultural contact, with accounts of scholars, soldiers, merchants, and renegades traveling and transporting ideas across the Mediterranean. The Genizah documents reveal that the learned – scribes, teachers, and especially, cantors – often traveled and found work far from where they were born (2003, 279–283). Teachers from Spain were found in small towns, as well as in the larger cities of medieval Egypt (Goitein 1971, 188). In the Genizah there are accounts of books used as valuable trade commodities, collateral for unpaid debts, and communal gifts, as well as coveted objects of study, or even the object of ransom attempts (80, 155, 194, 221). According to Goitein, the portrait of travel and cultural exchange recorded in the Genizah documents can be explained by the fact that "by the injunctions of their religion, Jews (like Muslims) engaged in a lifetime of study" (2003, 269). Houri Touati, in fact, has established travel as a defining characteristic of scholarship and learning in the whole of the medieval Islamic world: "Candidates for learning who hoped to become inscribed within a prestigious genealogy of scholarship were advised to connect themselves to the most renowned masters of their time, those for whom, as the medieval biographical dictionaries put it, 'one packs his bags and loads up the beasts'" (2010, 8). Andalusi scholars such as the ninth-century Baqī ibn Mukhlad of Córdoba, Ibn Ḥabīb, and Abū al-Ṣalt (d. 1126) took up this call (85, 89–90, 235). Their efforts, and the efforts of all those involved in the transmission of ideas, benefited Iberian scholars on the Peninsula, such as Ibn Ḥazm (944–1064), whose works on philosophy and religion show the extent to which the work of Arabic philosophers from Baghdad (including knowledge of Aristotelian philosophy) had been absorbed by eleventh-century scholars on the Peninsula. As Ramón Guerrero points out, Ibn Ḥazm's work shows that Aristotle and works attributed to him had become part of a "*corpus arabicum* . . . which introduced a system of thought that seemed not to contradict the basic tenets of Islam" (2013, 403). This act of accommodating Greek ideas concerning the universe and man's role in it to an Islamic way of seeing that same universe/man becomes the basis for an Arabo-Andalusi narrative of personal enlightenment, Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, and then subsequently for the Judeo-Iberian and vernacular Christian accounts explored herein.

Ibn Ḥazm is one of a generation of Andalusi scholars and jurists who taught a "rationalist view of religious studies," and, as Avner Ben Zaken points out, "scholarship of philosophy that arose out of it carried its unique stamp in which logic, mathematics, and astronomy took center stage" (2011, 26). These earlier scholars' work is formative in the thinking of Ibn Ṭufayl (1105–1185), who engaged with the ideas of Aristotle, in addition to those of Arabic and Persian theologians. Ibn Ṭufayl penned the influential work *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* (*Ḥayy*), the fictional journey of a wild boy who, although alone on an island, comes to discover the truths of the natural world and of the universe (including the existence of God). For Ibn Ṭufayl, the careful and extended study of the natural world via "exploration and research," as the young Ḥayy does on his island, offered a means of coming to the same truth of God's oneness proposed by Sufi thought and the ideas of al-Ghazālī concerning an intuitive, ecstatic union with God (Ben

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Zaken 2011, 27–28). Al-Ghazālī, though, had attacked the Greek and Arab philosophers such as al-Kindī, al-Fārābī, and Avicenna, who in his treatise, the *Tahāfut al-Falāsifa* valued reason and the rational approach to the natural world and metaphysics over intuitive or more faith-based types of argumentation such as revelation (Corbin 1993, 183–184).

Ibn Ṭufayl rejects "the claim that ecstasy is possible without gradual philosophical practice" (Ben Zaken 2011, 18, 22). In *Ḥayy*, "Ibn Tufayl merges Al-Ghazālī's science of practice with the philosophical tradition of al-Andalus that emphasizes logic, mathematics, and astronomy" (22). Ḥayy achieves knowledge of God by observing and imitating the movement of the stars and celestial bodies, the beings closest to God in the Aristotelian chain of being (Ben Zaken 2011, 23). Ibn Ṭufayl emphasizes that it is Ḥayy's intellect that ultimately allows him to transcend matter and enter the celestial realm (2009, 173–74). In *Ḥayy* the Aristotelian rational intellect allows such knowledge: "When Ibn Tufayl's Hayy tells the narrator of *Hayy* of the constitution of reality in highly poetic and evocative language . . . he is outlining to the rational intellect why it should make the effort to perfect itself, in terms which an ordinary individual will understand" (Leaman 2009, 99). *Ḥayy* survived in at least six medieval manuscript copies, and, as Ben Zaken points out, was translated and transformed by scholars over the course of the next 700 years (2011, 141n.1, 5–14). For Oliver Leaman, Ḥayy's tale is quintessentially Andalusi (2009, 160). When the learned Absal arrives to the island, Ḥayy sees it as an opportunity for exchange:

> In the philosophical novel by Ibn Tufayl . . . the stranger on the island is greeted enthusiastically by Hayy, and theirs is a genuine dialogue of views and forms of knowledge. Hayy has the confidence of someone who has gone to the source of knowledge, the principles of reason alone, and when someone comes, he is eager to share his knowledge and also to learn from him . . . It is this kind of universalism which had such a radical effect on the West, and which transformed philosophy into a dynamic and revolutionary doctrine . . . [and] produced such a strong reaction, an attempt to throw back the challenging principles of Andalusi thought.
>
> (Leaman 2009, 160)

Ibn Ṭufayl was an agent of the transmission and synthesis of Eastern and Andalusi ideas in the Berber courts of Marrakech and al-Andalus (Ben Zaken 2011, 22). He traveled from his native Guadix to Granada where he served as secretary for the Almohad governor, a position he also held for the governors of Ceuta and Tangier. He was then appointed as court physician for the Almohad ruler Abu Yaʿḳūb Yūsuf in Marrakesh (16). It is there that he introduced the young Ibn Rushd to the Almohad ruler Abu Yaʿḳūb Yūsuf, for whom the latter penned those works that arguably changed the nature of Western thought (Carra de Vaux 2014).

Perhaps it was this Andalusi thinker, ʾAbū l-Walīd Muḥammad ibnʾAḥmad ibn Rushd, or Averroes (1126–1198), whose ideas were most accommodated by Jewish and Christian thinkers. He was known as "the Commentator" because of his paraphrases and commentaries on the works of Aristotle. In addition to his translations and commentaries of Aristotle, Ibn Rushd composed a work (the *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut* [*Incoherence of the Incoherence*]) defending the use of reason and speculative philosophy to ponder certain theological positions such as the eternity of the universe, the role of God in it, and man's fate in such a cosmos. This work was written in response to al-Ghazālī's attack on the use of philosophy for such purposes (discussed previously).

Born in Córdoba, Ibn Rushd seems to have traveled to Seville to study with Abū Jābir ibn Ḥafṣūn, then to the court of Abū Yaʿḳūb Yūsuf in Marrakesh, where Ibn Ṭufayl encouraged

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him to write his commentaries on Aristotle (the *Organon*) (Goodman 1996, 314). Ibn Rushd's philosophical works spread rapidly across the Iberian Peninsula, revolutionizing thought. They also soon made inroads into Northern Europe where Latin was the *lingua franca* of scholarship:

> By the time Averroes and Maimonides were writing their mature works, at the end of the twelfth century, the "schools" of translation of Toledo and the rest of the network for getting these works out of Arabic and into Latin were so sophisticated and developed that they were being read in the major intellectual centers of Latin Christendom almost as soon as they were available in Arabic.
>
> (Menocal 2005)

The routes and transmitters of Ibn Rushd's version of Aristotelian thought pass through Iberia, and include such figures as Johnannes Hispalense, Dominicus Gundalissalinus, Adelard of Bath, Michael Scot, and several anonymous Arabic-Latin translators working in thirteenth-century Castile (Cruz Hernández 1986; Daiber 2012, 140–141).[2] M. Alonso Alonso (1964) underscores the role of Jewish intellectuals in this process. Taking as an example Qalonymous ben Qalonymous' thirteenth-century Hebrew copy of the *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*, which was used for the fourteenth-century Latin translation of the work, Alonso Alonso notes the important role that Jewish scholars played in this transmission, and the fact that many other works of the Arabo-Andalusi tradition made their way into Latin via Hebrew.

This is but one example of the many medieval Judeo-Iberian scholars who became experts on and translators into Hebrew of the works of Aristotle and Ibn Rushd's interpretations of them; they also dealt similarly with other important classical works, including those of Plato, Alexander of Aphrodisius, and Plotinus (Freudenthal 2012; Harvey 2003; Zonta 2007). These works had a profound impact on Jewish thought in Iberia and throughout the Mediterranean. The *Moreh Nebukhim*, Maimonides' *Guide of the Perplexed* (*Guide*), which has become one of the most important texts of the Jewish tradition, presents Aristotelian rationalism and the ideas of the Arab philosophers and Christian scholastics in the service of Judaism and the Jewish reader (Frank 2003, 140–144; Stroumsa 2009, 24–52). In the spirit of Ibn Rushd's *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*, the *Guide* is a defense of philosophical inquiry and a response to those like al-Ghazālī who were opposed to the use of speculative philosophy in the investigation of metaphysics and traditional religious beliefs (Kellner 2006, 11–15, 43–44). In the *Guide*, Maimonides (1138–1204) "insisted that the obligation to understand (i.e., to prove rationally) the tenets of Torah falls upon all Jews. Those who do not or cannot do that fail to earn a share in the world to come" (Kellner 2006, 231). He presents these tenets in a series of principles, including the existence and unity of God, and proceeds to offer rational proofs of the truth of these principles (*Guide* 2.1–2). For the development of the intellect, it is not enough to believe these tenets to be true; the learned must understand why. "Maimonides implicitly adopts a view . . . according to which that which makes us human, and in consequence that which survives our death, is what we know" (Kellner 2006, 220).

The "relative intellectual openness of his world" not only helps explain his thought, but also its legacy (Stroumsa 2009, 6). Maimonides was familiar with the philosophical works of Aristotle, al-Fārābī, Ibn Bājja, and "up to a point, Avicenna" (among others) (Sirat 1985, 162). He was also a practicing medical doctor, familiar with the works of the Arab medical tradition, as well as a religious leader, familiar with the Torah, Mishnah, and Midrash. Stroumsa has noted that Maimonides "is a Mediterranean thinker in the sense that he is more than a Jewish thinker, or more than an Islamic philosopher . . . in modern parlance he could perhaps be called

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'cosmopolitan,' that is, a person who belongs to more than one of the subcultures that together form the world in which he lives" (2009, 7).

Within a generation we find the rationalism of the Arabo-Andalusi philosophical tradition that Maimonides defended in his *Guide* become the guiding methodology and the truth sought (and found) by the protagonist of Shem Tov Ibn Falaquera's fictional narrative, *Sefer Ha-Mebaqqesh* (*Book of the Seeker*). In this work, Ibn Falaquera (1225–1290) takes the rhymed prose form of the Hebrew *maqāmāt* and uses it to develop a single linear narrative which features a protagonist who travels in search of knowledge and whose wisdom, gained through encounters with experts in a variety of trades, sciences, and fields of study, accumulates until it is completed in his exchange with the philosopher (Jospe 1988, 46–47).[3] The Seeker is open to learning from all:

> There was once a youth in a certain province, who was tender in years but old in wisdom . . . all those who knew him in those days of the past called him "Mebaqqesh" [Seeker]. He never left the tent of wisdom and sought after all noble qualities . . . Yearning to dwell in the shadow of the wise, he investigated the rightful way. Swift as an eagle, he pursued truth and all those who possessed it. . . . Therefore he set his heart to inquire into and search out men's ways to illumine their actions with the candle of reason and measure them on the scale of wisdom.
>
> (1976, 9–10)

In the *Sefer Ha-Mebeqqesh*, the truths the protagonist finds are culled from the work of Maimonides, Ibn Rushd, Avicenna, and others, put in the mouth of several of the characters he meets. For example, as we would expect, the physician cites Maimonides, Ibn Rushd, Galen, Hippocrates and al-Rāzī (1976, 45). In his exchange with the learned religious scholar, who tells him that his behavior/works are more important than wisdom, the Seeker reacts by telling him that despite his knowledge of Torah, "thou lackest the loftiest quality, which is the quality of reason and science. Inasmuch as thou hast begun to ascend the steps of perfection, and hast mounted some of them, complete thine ascent" (1954, 100). The wise man accepts the Seeker as a pupil, imparting lessons from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* concerning the nature of moral virtue and the nature of evil. The work offers a fictional account (in the tradition of *Ḥayy*) of how the individual should use his intellect in the pursuit of wisdom, with the goal being knowledge of the divine. The wise man underscores for the Seeker man's obligation to develop his intellect (which, as explored previously, should be done through logic and philosophical speculation): "By virtue of intelligence man has been elevated above all earthly creatures, and God has been with him" (1954, 139).

According to Herschel Levine, it is likely that "Ibn Falaquera derived a partial outline for the first half of the *Seeker* from Maimonides' *Guide* (Book III, Chapter 54) which expands upon a classification of Aristotle and explains the four types of perfections sought by man," although Levine also admits that other scholars have suggested that *Ḥayy* inspired the work (1954, xxx). Ibn Falaquera was born into a rich and powerful family in Tudela in the Kingdom of Navarre. During his youth he wrote poetry, but he then turned to philosophy, composing several paraphrases of the work of Andalusi writers (Ibn Rushd, al-Fārābī, Avicenna, and Ibn Bajja/Avempace) and Classical authors (Aristotle, Plato), as well as one of the first commentaries of Maimonides' *Guide* (Harvey 2003, 266–267; Sirat 1985, 234). As Steven Harvey points out, "his goal was to teach wisdom and science, and this meant . . . Aristotelian science as it was explained by Averroes . . . this offered the Hebrew reader for the first time comprehensive access to the full range of Aristotelian science" (2003, 267). *Ha-Mebeqqesh* reveals not only

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that the ethos of seeking wisdom remained a central motivator of Iberian cultural production in thirteenth-century Navarre, but also that that production continued to be informed by Ibn Rushd's rationalism (via Maimonides), as well as the thought of Ibn Gabirol, Galen, Aristotle, Plato, and Arabic philosophers and thinkers such as Ḥunayn ibn ʻIsḥāq (Levine 1954, xxvii–xxxiv).

Ramón Llull (1232–1315), a contemporary of Ibn Falaquera, shared the latter's desire to impart Andalusi wisdom in his works, and, like such predecessors as Maimonides and Ibn Rushd, Llull similarly martialed the complex Andalusi philosophical tradition in the service of reason and religion. Bonner notes that Llull was born in Mallorca, which "was strategically placed at the center of the commercial wheel of the western Mediterranean," and that "probably only a handful of thirteenth-century European cities were more cosmopolitan" (1985a, 1). Llull himself was a frequent traveler, leaving his home in Mallorca to deliver lectures at the court of Joan I and the University of Paris, and to preach in Tunisia (1–12). Like so many of his Catalan compatriots, past and future, Llull penned treatises reflecting his hybrid, complex cultural formation in a variety of languages, including Latin, Catalan, and Arabic (1–44). Llull cites in his works not only the Talmud and Quran, but several works of Aristotle (15). Logic is central to Llull's thinking and forms an essential part of his Great Universal Art, his combinatory program of "finding truth," based on a "logic which followed the true patterns of the universe" (Johnston 1987, 24; Yates 1954, 117). He produced both an Arabic commentary and a Latin translation of al-Ghazālī's treatise on logic (Johnston 1987; Hasse 2014).

Scholars note, though, that apart from the treatise on al-Ghazālī's logic, much of Llull's knowledge of Muslim philosophy and thought seems to be popular in origin (Garcías Palou 1981, 29–32, 353; Johnston 1987, 11, 32). Llull's exposure to popular forms of Arabo-Andalusi thought – philosophical thought as well as collections of tales – speaks to his origins and life in a region that had until shortly before his birth been in Muslim hands, and where he was exposed to daily interactions with Muslims (Garcías Palou 1981, 25–30). The Arabo-Andalusi connection is perhaps most evident in *Llibre de meravelles/Book of Wonders* or *Felix*, the fictional account of the searcher for truth, which is "the only work in which Llull used identifiable preexisting material," which is "all of oriental origins" (Bonner 1985b, 653). *Felix* offers testimony to the circulation of the Persian philosophical compendium, the *Ikhwān al-safā'*, and to narrative collections such as the *1001 Nights* and *Kalila wa Dimna* (Bonner 1985b, 653). *Felix*, like much of Llull's work, was designed to offer in narrative form an explanation of how reason served religious (Christian) belief. He adapts the imperative to develop the intellect as advocated by Ibn Rushd, Ibn Ṭufayl, Maimonides, and Ibn Falaquera (discussed previously) to the Augustinian triad (in which memory and love/will are added to intellect/understanding to reflect the Christian Trinity).

The work survives in several manuscript copies and fifteenth-century incunabula, as well as medieval translations into French, Spanish, and Italian (Bonner 1985b, 655–658).[4] The work's protagonist, like the Seeker and Ḥayy, is told to travel in search of wisdom. Felix's father, on his death bed, tells his son in the opening scene of the work to "travel through the world" and seek knowledge of God (Llull 1985, 659). Felix is instructed by a hermit who reveals that the laws of the natural world are compatible with Christian truths, offering a Christianized version of the lessons Ḥayy discovered on his own in Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy*. The work illustrates what Bonner has observed, namely that "it is precisely for theological subjects that Llull uses his logical techniques" (2007, 252). The wise hermit, in response to Felix's question, "What is the purpose of man's life in this world?" replies:

> Man lives in this world so that, by living, he may remember, understand and love God; and man lives in this world so that he may live in the next world in everlasting

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> glory . . . the rational soul is one with a man's life, for what is rational soul, is life; that is to say, that memory, understanding, and will are of the nature of spiritual life, and their life is a being that is the soul, similar to the sun's being, which is to shine with the form and matter of light.
>
> (1985b, 840)

Like Ḥayy and the Seeker, Felix is educated in scientific and moral lessons ("the hermit taught Felix how to wonder and gave him many examples by which he might possess acquired knowledge; for by these examples the soul is uplifted to remember, understand, and will" 1103). One of these *exempla* involves the story of a king whose page brings him a book entitled the *Llibre de plasent visió* (Chapter 57) (865). A hermit had instructed the page to give the king this richly illustrated book, in which "all the philosophers appear, as well as the works of nature, such as men, beasts, birds, fish, and plants; and all of the beasts . . . and all of the mechanical arts" (865). This hermit was a philosopher who made this illustrated encyclopedic work of all he observed over the course of his life. The book changes the king's life, causing him to realize the vanities of this world, after which he builds a monastery and then renounces his throne and becomes a monk, living a life dedicated to contemplating the truths contained in this book (866–867). As in the book in the parable, Llull's encyclopedic *Felix* is meant to direct the reader to the truth of Christianity through philosophical argument.

Felix does not stress the acquisition of traditional Church laws, but of speculative thought – Felix asks about the existence of God, angels, the Aristotelian hierarchy of being, and all aspects of ethics, echoing Llull's belief that "logic and indeed all philosophical discourse must reflect the nature of things" (Johnston 1987, 4). Felix's journey ends in a monastery, where he can impart what he has learned "in matters of science and devotion" to the monks, even taking the habit and becoming one himself (1985, 1103–1104). It is noteworthy that Felix joins the monastic community only at the end of his life, and because the monks seek his wisdom (and not vice versa). Felix seeks out and accrues knowledge as a secular individual, not as a representative of a particular Christian sect. This acquisition of knowledge of the natural world and moral values allows him to die a peaceful death and to live on in the book of the same name that imparts his lessons.

With a title reminiscent of the encyclopedic work of the embedded tale in Llull's *Felix*, the *Llibre de plasent visió*, the fifteenth-century *converso* (whether sincere or not), Alfonso de la Torre crafts his *Visión deleitable* as a self-help guide for the fifteenth-century Iberian's personal use.[5] The work's author, Alfonso de la Torre, studied at the University of Salamanca, served in the court of Carlos de Viana in Navarre, and also spent time in Naples at the court of Alfonso el Magnánimo (Girón Negrón 2001, 16–17). The *Visión* circulated widely and survives in some seventeen Romance manuscript witnesses and eleven early modern print editions, including sixteenth-century copies printed in Frankfurt, Ferrara, Venice, and Amsterdam (García López 1991, 17–34). Adopting the imagined spiritual journey of Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy*, Ibn Falaquera's *The Seeker*, and Llull's *Felix*, the *Visión* is an encyclopedic work in which verbal descriptions of visual images (reminiscent of the illustrations made by the hermit in Llull's story) complement explicit instruction on the arts, sciences, and moral philosophy. The protagonist, Entendimiento, an allegory for the narrator's intellect, is a seeker for knowledge. Like Ibn Falaquera's *Seeker*, he encounters a series of people who teach him through both explicit instruction and Socratic dialogue on the various fields of knowledge, and, like Ḥayy, he ends up in the celestial realms with the higher celestial beings. Along the way, the reader witnesses as Entendimiento is introduced (either directly or indirectly) to "the authorities and luminaries of each of the sciences he masters, including not only the Liberal Arts in whose

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homes he encounters Abraham, Moses, Virgil, Aristotle, Boethius, Quintilian, Pythagorus, Hermes Trismegistus, Zoroaster and Euclid, but also, in the palaces of Sabieza, Razón and Natura, the supposed authorities on metaphysics or the science of nature and God, namely Jupiter, Alexander of Aphrodisius, [and] the philosophers of the Andalusi tradition, al-Fārābī, al-Ghazālī, Avicenna, Maimonides, and Ibn Rushd" (Hamilton 2014, 19).[6]

The narrator's intellect is allowed to ascend the mountain of wisdom by mastering one lesson on the natural world after another. At the top of the mountain, Astronomy personified allows him to pass into the celestial realm. Here, Entendimiento receives lessons from the sisters Wisdom, Truth, and Reason. At the core of their lessons on God and man's role in the universe are Maimonides' twenty-six proofs of God's existence from the *Guide* rendered in Castilian translation (Girón Negrón 2001, 59; Wickersham Crawford 1913, 189–195). Subsequent chapters provide paraphrases of Maimonides' proofs regarding the nature and power of God, and the nature of the angels, man, and the chain of being (Wickersham Crawford 1913, 195–209). Entendimiento's journey is an allegorical version of the Arabo-Andalusi conception of the acquired intellect as discussed by Maimonides, and reveals to the reader that man's intellect is capable of "cognition of intelligibles [as] the source of eternal perdurance," that is, the means of achieving immortality/happiness (Tirosh-Samuelson 2003, 382).

However, the work is clear that, even though it adopts ideas (and whole passages) from all the traditions of the Peninsula, including Ibn Rushd, Maimonides, and Isidore, none has a monopoly on the truth.[7] The protagonist, Entendimiento, states, "non me moverá más la verdad dicha por boca de cristiano, que de judío o moro o gentil, sy verdades sean todas, nin negaré menos la falsya dicha por boca de uno que de boca de otro" (1991, 146). Since the twelfth century and the works of ibn Rushd and Maimonides, Iberian thinkers had been willing to accept and engage the opinions of others – the openness that both Stroumsa and Leaman note in prior discussion. As we have seen, the Iberian authors of the narratives examined previously went to great lengths to adopt and "make their own," either through translation or other forms of accommodation within a recognizable "updated" frame, the Arabo-Andalusi legacy of intellectual exchange. Here we find Alfonso de la Torre adopting this ethos in his fifteenth-century Castilian narrative.

The *Visión* clearly shows that the works and ideas of the (Judeo-)Andalusi philosophical tradition with which this brief study opened, survived and continued to shape the form of Iberian cultural production well into the fifteenth century. Alfonso de la Torre's interior journey offers us a topography created out of both the Andalusi and medieval scholastic world of ideas, and shows that Andalusi intellectual openness survived in Iberian fiction, despite the increasing persecution and marginalization of Jews and Muslims and the concurrent rise of imaginative fiction in which heroes such as Tirant lo Blanc and Amadis are portrayed as being divinely inspired to travel to fight "infidels." Such narratives stand in contrast to the narratives of Ibn Ṭufayl, Ibn Rushd, Maimonides, Ramón Llull, and Alfonso de la Torre in which intellectual voyages allow their readers to imaginatively explore and interact with peoples across the globe (and even beyond), and to develop their own critical sense of right and wrong.

I hope to have given a brief overview of a few of the authors and works that helped define a medieval Iberian cultural production marked by knowledge of and reactions to a variety of bodies of knowledge which extended well beyond the geographical borders of the Peninsula and which defy clearly defined categories such as "Arab" or "Jewish" or "Christian." The forementioned Iberian fictional narratives of intellectual development, all of which involve the incorporation of Andalusi material in translation, reveal that the map of medieval Iberian textual transmission encompasses the entire Peninsula and beyond, and that texts were transmitted in a variety of languages (to Latin and Arabic we must add Catalan, Hebrew, French,

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Provençal, and Italian when we consider the transmission of those texts beyond the Peninsula). The fact that the imagined narrative of the development of an individual intellect could appeal to Iberians and continue to instruct them from the twelfth to the fifteenth century provides us with compelling evidence that intellectual openness was a defining feature not just of Arabo- or Judeo-Andalusi philosophy, but of medieval Iberian cultural production at large.

Notes

1 On the intellectual journey in Iberian literature, see Haro (1993), Parmley (2013, 2014), and Surtz (1987).
2 Zonta notes that a number of Aristotle's works were known only in the Jewish tradition and have survived only in medieval Hebrew copies (2007, 241).
3 According to Levine, there are two known manuscript copies from the fifteenth century (1954, xxxix–xl).
4 An embedded *exemplum* from the *Llibre des marevelles* circulated independently as the *Llibre de las bestias* (Bonner 1985b, 653).
5 On Alfonso de la Torre's *converso* identity, see Girón Negrón (2001, 18–24).
6 See Torre (1991, 107–137, 150, 211).
7 On the sources of the work, see Girón Negrón (2001, 66–207).

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