

# Why Translate Science?

*Documents from Antiquity to the 16<sup>th</sup> Century in the  
Historical West (Bactria to the Atlantic)*

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Cover illustration: the beginning of Hippocrates's famous aphorism 'Life is Short, Art is Long', in Syriac and Arabic translation. Paris, BNF, MS arabe 6734, fol. 29v.

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# Renaissance Scholars on Why They Translate Scientific and Philosophical Works from Arabic into Latin

*Dag Nikolaus Hasse*

## Part One: Essay

A good number of texts provide explicit information about the motives and circumstances surrounding Arabic–(Hebrew)–Latin translations in the Renaissance, notably the many prefaces and dedicatory letters that accompany printed texts. Renaissance translations are successors to the medieval Arabic–Latin translations of scientific and philosophical texts, most of which had been produced in the twelfth to the thirteenth centuries. The new wave of translations stretches from about 1480, when Girolamo Ramusio in Damascus and Elia del Medigo in Italy started to translate Avicenna and Averroes, until 1549, the death of the last productive translator, Jacob Mantino.<sup>1</sup>

The documents presented here in English translation and in their original versions are arranged roughly in chronological order. Most of them are in Latin, the standard academic language of Christian Europe of the time, and were written by translators, revisers, editors of translations, or historians interested in translations; two documents are archival minutes of faculty meetings of Padua University (Texts 4.1 and 4.2). The translators included in this collection fall into two groups: those who translated from Arabic and worked in Arabic-speaking countries, like Girolamo Ramusio and Andrea Alpago, and those who translated from Hebrew versions of Arabic texts and worked in Northern Italy and Rome, like Elia del Medigo, Paolo Ricci, Abraham de Balmes, Calo Calonymos, and Jacob Mantino. The outcome of these seventy years of translation effort is impressive in size and quality: Avicenna's *Canon of Medicine* was made accessible in new and improved Latin versions, and many commentaries by Averroes then still unknown in Christian Europe could now be read in Latin, such as the *Long Commentary on the Posterior Analytics*, the *Epitome of the Metaphysics*, and the *Middle Commentary on De animalibus*.<sup>2</sup> But the translators also

1 For a comprehensive treatment of the transmission of Arabic sciences and philosophy in the Renaissance, see Hasse, *Success and Suppression*.

2 On Averroes translations in the Renaissance, see Tamani, 'Traduzioni ebraico-latine', 105–114;

engaged with other Arabic scientific traditions, such as the medicine of Averroes, the astronomy of Alpetragius, and the astrology of Haly ibn Abenragel.

Patrons played an important role in many Renaissance translations, as the dedicatory letters presented below demonstrate. Three aristocratic patrons, in particular, were prominently involved in the Hebrew–Latin translations of Averroes: Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Domenico Grimani, and Ercole Gonzaga. In the early 1480s, Elia del Medigo translated several texts for Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, who was continuing his studies at Padua University. Domenico Grimani, a young Venetian aristocrat and student at Padua University, was commissioning Averroes translations from Elia del Medigo in the 1480s, and later in life, when he became cardinal and patriarch of Aquila and famous for his humanist library, he ordered and financed Averroes translations by Abraham de Balmes, which were printed in 1523. In the 1520s, Ercole Gonzaga, bishop of Mantua and a student and admirer of the Aristotelian philosopher Pietro Pomponazzi, became the patron of some of Jacob Mantino's Averroes translations. While it is clear that Pico, Grimani, and Gonzaga actively commissioned and supported Hebrew–Latin translations, we do not know the degree to which other addressees were involved in the works dedicated to them. Addressees include Alberto Pio, prince of Carpi, a humanist Aristotelian; the Venetian doge Andrea Gritti, who had studied at Padua University; Gian Matteo Giberti, bishop of Verona; and Pope Leo X, Pope Paul III, and the papal military commander Guido Rangoni, all three of whom are dedicatees of translations by Jacob Mantino. It may well be the case that the dedicatee also supported the printing of the work.

The remarkable connection between the Averroes translations and the Italian high aristocracy is partly explainable by the fact that many of the Jewish translators of Averroes were physicians: Abraham de Balmes served as personal physician to Cardinal Domenico Grimani, and Jacob Mantino to Pope Paul III, while Calo Calonymos gave medical counsel to Andrea Gritti, the doge of Venice. But it is also explainable by common links to the University of Padua. Most of the dedicatees had studied in Padua, and some remained admirers of the Aristotelian philosophy taught there, in particular that of Pietro Pomponazzi and Averroes. The links hold firm, despite the facts that most of the translators and patrons involved lived in other cities for most of their lives, and that Padua University lost influence when it was closed down from 1509 to 1517. In the decades before and after the closure, the University of Padua was one of

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Burnett, 'The Second Revelation', 185–198; Di Donato, 'Traduttori di Averroè', 25–49; and Hasse, *Success and Suppression*, chap. III and 341–357.

the biggest universities in Christian Europe, an intellectual hub that attracted students from many European countries, and which educated and hosted many scholars of the time.<sup>3</sup> Hence, while it is important not to overemphasize an alleged 'Padua School' of thought, the documents presented here underline the fact that there did exist in Padua an intellectual climate very sympathetic towards Averroes that radiated far beyond Padua. This climate was the social context for most Averroes translations of the Renaissance.

Remarkably enough, Padua is also the context for two translations of Avicenna's *Canon of Medicine* (see Texts 1 and 4).<sup>4</sup> The translators Girolamo Ramusio and Andrea Alpago studied philosophy and medicine in Padua and were later appointed physicians at the Venetian embassy in Damascus: Ramusio in 1483, Alpago (after Ramusio's death) in c. 1487. While Ramusio's attempt at translation was not completed and survives only as rough notes in a manuscript, Andrea Alpago's substantial corrections to the *Canon* became a success story. During his sojourn in Damascus, which lasted for three decades until 1517, Alpago learned much from reading Avicenna's medical and philosophical works with his teacher Ibn al-Makkī, a distinguished Arabic scholar of Damascus.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, Alpago remained in touch with the officials in Venice and Padua. After his return to the Veneto, he submitted his Arabic-Latin translations to the faculty (Collegio) of philosophers and physicians of Padua University. The Collegio officially recommended Alpago's corrections to the *Canon* in January 1521 (Texts 4.1 and 4.2), and the corrections, which are important philological accomplishments in themselves, were printed posthumously in 1527 by his nephew Paolo Alpago. From 1544 onwards, these corrections were often printed in early modern *Canon* editions, either in the margin or integrated into the text. Andrea Alpago is a remarkable figure, whose contacts bridge large distances and who had travelled 'in Cyprus, Syria, Egypt, and virtually the whole Orient' in search of trustworthy manuscripts, as his nephew Paolo Alpago relates (Text 4.3). Shortly before his death in 1522, Alpago was even offered a professorship in practical medicine at Padua University.<sup>6</sup>

3 Grendler, *The Universities of the Italian Renaissance*, 36–40.

4 On Renaissance translations of the *Canon of Medicine*, see Siraisi, *Avicenna in Renaissance Italy*, 133–143; and Hasse, *Success and Suppression*, 96–115. Cf. also d'Alverny, 'Avicenne et les médecins de Venise', 182–188.

5 On Andrea Alpago's mentor in Damascus, see Michot, 'A Mamlūk theologian's commentary', 195–198 ('Appendix 1: *rays ebenmechī, praeceptor meus*'). See also Veit, 'Andrea Alpago und Schah Ismā'īl', 457–465.

6 On Andrea Alpago, see the fundamental study by Lucchetta, *Il medico e filosofo*, and Hasse, *Success and Suppression*, 96–115, with further literature.

The existence of patrons, of an audience, and of an academic context therefore constituted an important foundation for Arabic–(Hebrew–)Latin translation activity in the Renaissance. The Collegio's adoption of Alpago's version of the *Canon* is motivated by another factor often mentioned in the documents below: the demand for and concern to have a correct text. The Paduan professors cannot imagine 'a more laudable and more necessary enterprise' than the correction of obscure and faulty passages in the medieval Latin version of Avicenna's *Canon*. In a culture where Avicenna and Averroes were prescribed reading in many Christian European universities, correct translations of these authors were an essential demand. The promise of uncorrupted texts that are more reliable than the medieval translations is proffered alike by Arabic–Latin translators, Hebrew–Latin translators, and humanist revisers. Dedicated humanists such as Paolo Ricci, Jean Bruyerin Champier, Alban Thorer, Miguel Jerónimo Lesdesma, and Antonius Stupa (Texts 3, 9–11, and 14) often add a polemical tone to this promise, by pointing to the barbarous style of the medieval translators and to the 'millions of mistakes' (Text 11) that distort these texts, as they claim. The Hebrew–Latin translators, in turn, argue that the Hebrew transmission of Averroes offers better and more correct texts than the Latin transmission, where most books by Averroes are 'corrupted', as Calo Calonymos puts it (Text 6.1). This is also because Jewish education emphasizes truth, whereas the Romans honour rhetoric first, as Abraham de Balmes argues (Text 5). Balmes even extends the hope for a correct text to the works of Aristotle himself, who was transmitted badly by the Greeks in antiquity, so that 'in remedying the defects of Aristotle's books one should trust the one Averroes more than all Greeks together' (Text 5). As is obvious here, the transmission of textual witnesses is an important topic for many translators: many of them claim to have found a particularly old or trustworthy manuscript that forms the basis of their translation or revision. The interest in transmission is also apparent, for example, in Grimani's inquiry into the tradition of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and the different sequence of books in Greek, Arabic, and Latin. (Text 2).

The translators, however, are not only hunting for correct versions of existing texts, but also, and successfully, for new texts unknown to the Latins. The Paduan faculty of philosophers and physicians is most interested not only in Alpago's *Canon* translation, but also in 'the translation of some Arabic books not yet published' (Text 4.2). Six such translations, namely of philosophical works by Avicenna, were printed by Andrea Alpago's nephew in 1546, but Paolo attests that there existed further translations that do not seem to be extant today (Text 4.3). Jacob Mantino is 'touched by incredible joy' when he encounters a Hebrew version of Averroes's *Middle Commentary on De animalibus*,

'which had long been desired by the Latins' (Text 7.1), and Abraham de Balmes comments on the fact that his translation of the *Long Commentary on the Posterior Analytics* fills an important gap (Text 5). The greatest demand, apparently, is for new texts by Averroes, which are diligently collected by the editors of the monumental 1550/52 Giunta edition of the combined Aristotle and Averroes (Text 13).<sup>7</sup>

Intellectual interests are an important factor in all translation movements, and this is no less true in this case. The first translator chronologically, Elia del Medigo, already responds to the philosophical interests of his patron Domenico Grimani, who had discussed the problem of universals with him, defending an anti-realistic position. There is much evidence for a strong Renaissance interest in Averroes's commentaries on logic: Domenico Grimani commissions the translation of logical commentaries from Abraham de Balmes, who himself composes a *Liber de demonstratione*, which is printed together with his translations; Averroes's *Long Commentary on the Posterior Analytics* is translated three times, by Burana, Balmes, and Mantino; and the editors of the Giunta edition are fully abreast with the teaching of logic at Padua University, one of them (Marco degli Oddi) being a professor of logic himself. However, as one can see from the full list of Renaissance Arabic- (Hebrew-)Latin translations that I have published elsewhere,<sup>8</sup> other disciplines of philosophy are much in demand too, especially natural philosophy, psychology, and metaphysics. The translators themselves often share these interests, as is apparent from their own philosophical works, such as Elia del Medigo's Latin treatises on cosmology and psychology, and Calo Calonymos's work *On the Creation of the World Proved with Physical Reasons*.

In medicine, scholars were most interested in three areas: first, topics that were often taught at the universities, such as the principles of medicine, treatment methods, and fevers (see Text 7.3), which are covered for instance in Avicenna's *Canon of Medicine*, chapters I.1, I.4, and IV.1; second, the compatibility of philosophical and medical doctrines, and of Aristotle and Galen in particular, a topic that motivates Jean Bruyerin Champier to revise Averroes's *Colliget* (Text 9); and third, medical botany and pharmacology, a field to which the translator Andrea Alpago contributes much through his *Interpretatio Arabicorum nominum*, a Latin lexicon of Arabic proper names in the *Canon*, and of drug names in particular.

In astronomy and astrology, hardly any translations were produced, save for Calo Calonymos's translation of Alpetragius's astronomical *Theorica plane-*

<sup>7</sup> On this important edition, see Burnett, 'Revisiting', 55–64.

<sup>8</sup> Hasse, *Success and Suppression*, 72–75.

*tarum* and Antonius Stupa's revision of Haly filius Abenragel's astrological *De iudiciis astrorum*. The intellectual context of Calo's translation is noteworthy (Text 6.2): in the dedication, Calo praises the anti-Ptolemaic attitude of Averroes and Alpetragius, who had attacked Ptolemy's mathematical astronomy for not being in accordance with the physics of the universe. The physical problems of Ptolemy's astronomy are a vibrant topic for many intellectuals in the decades around 1500, among them Girolamo Fracastoro, Giovan Battista Amico, and Nicolaus Copernicus.<sup>9</sup> Calo clearly takes side with Alpetragius and Averroes against Ptolemy and laments the physical 'absurdities' that deter people from the discipline of astronomy as a whole.

Humanist motives play a role in the Renaissance translation movement in many different ways. Some have already been remarked upon, such as the humanist profile of patrons and editors; the search for reliable manuscripts; the comparison of textual witnesses; and the interest in correcting textual mistakes. Another important humanist topic, also in the documents below, is Latin style. Jacob Mantino's translations, for example, are written in a moderately classicizing Latin, which present Averroes and Avicenna in a form that is much more acceptable for readers with humanist education than the translations of the Middle Ages. Mantino puts this bluntly: the 'unkempt and mutilated' Latin style of the older translations is the reason 'why many today condemn the teaching of Averroes' (Text 7.2). A different and more polemical tone comes from full-blooded humanists such as Paolo Ricci, Miguel Ledesma, and Antonius Stupa, who deplore the 'barbarism and foolishness' of the medieval translators and commentators and produce texts in a thoroughly classicizing, and sometimes exquisite, Latin style.

The background to such remarks about 'barbarism' is the Greek/Arabic antagonism that looms large in the long-lasting Renaissance controversy over the value of Arabic sciences and philosophy.<sup>10</sup> This controversy centres on several main topics that reverberate in the documents below: the presumed corruption of medical knowledge in the Arabic-Latin tradition, the alleged irreligion of Averroes's philosophy, and the 'un-Ptolemaic' astrology of Arabic authorities like Albumasar. These accusations are usually uttered by humanists. It is all the more noteworthy that several humanists appear among the revisers and editors of Arabic-Latin translations and speak positively about Arabic science. The French humanist Bruyerin Champier defends Averroes as

9 On Amico and Fracastoro, see Di Bono, 'Copernicus, Amico, Fracastoro', 133–154. Cf. Hasse, 'Averroes' Critique of Ptolemy', 69–88.

10 On this controversy, see Klein-Franke, *Die klassische Antike in der Tradition des Islam*, 65–76; and Hasse, *Success and Suppression*, 138–139, 250–255, with further literature (459, n. 7).



'the greatest savourer of Galen's books' (Text 9). The Swiss humanist Thorer praises the Arabic physician Rhazes as being more useful for medical practice and less obscure than Hippocrates and Galen (Text 10). Miguel Ledesma assures his readers that there is nothing in his Avicenna edition that is not in full harmony with Galen (Text 11). But many humanists were scathing in their critique of Arabic-Latin scientific traditions and provoked the reaction of scholars such as Abraham de Balmes, who takes an openly anti-humanist stance. It is wrong, he claims, to aim for 'ornate eloquence' rather than for truth. And it is wrong to prefer the Greek commentators, and the Greeks in general, to Averroes, since philosophy did not originate with the Greeks, but with the barbarians, i.e., in the Near East, which is one reason why Averroes, as a barbarian, is more to be trusted on the interpretation of Aristotle than any Greek commentator (Text 5).

Historical arguments such as these, for which Abraham de Balmes draws on the Christian historian Eusebius (third century AD), are often employed by translators and editors. At the other end of the spectrum, one may locate the testimony of Girolamo Donzellini (Text 15), a humanist editor of Rhazes, whose preface to the edition, ironically, contains a hardliner humanist's view of history. Donzellini deplores the transmission of medicine from the Greeks to the Arabs, because as a result medicine was shipwrecked, and from the Arabs to the medieval Latins, because medicine remained there unproductive for a long time; only the Renaissance period under the Medici saw a resuscitation of medicine 'from the clear sources of the Greek'. Other historical accounts of the cross-cultural transmission of the sciences, such as those by Johannes Carion, Jean Bruyerin Champier, and Jacob Milich (Texts 8, 9, and 12), are less prejudiced than those of Balmes and Donzellini. It is in the Renaissance that a Western historiography of translation movements emerges. From the very beginning, this historiography, coloured by justificatory and polemical purposes, also serves to describe the author's own attitude towards the translation and cross-cultural transmission of the sciences and philosophy.

## Part Two: Texts in Translation

Unless otherwise specified, translations are the author's own.

### Text 1. Girolamo Ramusio

Girolamo Ramusio was the first Renaissance scholar who tried to improve the medieval Latin version of Avicenna's *Canon of Medicine* by comparing it to the Arabic. Like Andrea Alpago after him, Ramusio served as a physician at the Venetian embassy in Damascus. The result of his work on the *Canon* is extant in an Arabic manuscript that preserves Ramusio's Latin translation written between the lines of Arabic. This 'translation'—or, rather, rough notes for a translation, since Ramusio noted Latin equivalents for each Arabic term but did not produce an intelligible Latin syntax—must have been written between 1483, when Ramusio arrived in Damascus, and his premature death in 1486 in Beirut. Ramusio had studied philosophy and medicine at Padua University in the 1470s. The end of the manuscript preserves a letter to a friend called Flavius, in which Ramusio explains the circumstances and motives of his attempt at translation.<sup>11</sup>

Girolamo Ramusio, interlinear Arabic–Latin translation of Avicenna's *Canon*, Paris, BNF, MS arabe 2897, ff. 160v and 349r.

f.160v

I wanted to turn first to what is publicly lectured upon at the University of Padua. [...]

f.349r

To Flavius by Ramusius. When writing in Arabic [i.e., copying an Arabic manuscript of the *Canon*], I have seen much that is in total conflict with the Latin of Avicenna [i.e., with Gerard of Cremona's translation of the *Canon*]. I have made notes of many things that the Latin <translator> had omitted or written in a distorted fashion; I have read much that I was not able to turn into Latin with precision because of my inexperience with the Arabic language. Hence,

<sup>11</sup> On Girolamo Ramusio, see d'Alverny, 'Survivance et renaissance d'Avicenne', 95; and Hasse, *Success and Suppression*, 96.

learning from day to day, I correct and emend myself and my writing more successfully every day.

In copying this first <book> of Avicenna in Arabic, I have not retained any order, generally, for I have always started with the more useful things first, leaving the less useful for later. In order that you may understand the sequence, my best Flavius, listen: I have first turned to anatomy <on leaf> 1, <then to the section> on pulse, urine, and excretion from leaf 50; chapter 1.4 <begins> on leaf 107; the sixth subchapter on the faculties on leaf 160; the second fen on leaf 174; and the third fen on leaf 272. <With respect to> the rest of 1.4 and to anatomy, you will see that my Latin is corrected. But don't be astonished if not everything is as diligently corrected, since I understood everything <only> slowly, and in order to learn faster, I wrote in Arabic and impaired everything with <my hastily written> letters. I hope to return to everything next year, examine it with utmost care, and turn it into its best form. Hence I thank the mighty gods and Catta[?] etc.

**Text 2.** Elia del Medigo, *Domino Dominico Grimani*; ed. Kieszkowski, 76–77.

The Jewish scholar Elia del Medigo's translations are the starting-point of the Renaissance wave of Hebrew–Latin translations of Averroes's commentaries on Aristotle. Del Medigo was born in Candia on Crete (modern Heraklion), lived in Venice, Padua, Florence, Bassano, and Perugia from some time before 1480 until about 1490, and then returned to Crete, where he died in 1493. Del Medigo dedicated some of his translations to two young noblemen and students at Padua University, Domenico Grimani and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, who would become famous also for their humanist interests, though it is their philosophical inclinations that, according to del Medigo, motivated them to order from him new translations of Averroes. Translating Averroes from Hebrew into Latin was a difficult undertaking for del Medigo, whose Latin was much less fluent than that of later translators such as Paolo Ricci or Jacob Mantino.<sup>12</sup>

Often in discussing philosophical matters, as is your habit [i.e., of the dedicatee, Domenico Grimani], you spoke to me about the order of the books of <Aristotle's> *Metaphysics*, <i.e., about> which one should be the first: either the book [*Alpha elatton*] that begins with <the discussion of> truth, as the ancient texts generally have it, or the following book [*Alpha*], as some new texts have it. For you argued that the book that is generally the first [*Alpha elatton*] is like a pref-

12 On Elia del Medigo, see Engel, *Elijah Del Medigo*; and Hasse, *Success and Suppression*, 77–78.

ace [...] to the entire *Metaphysics*, in particular according to the Arabic(-Latin) translation, where the book [*Alpha*] that is found (first) among the Latins, is not the first. And because you have reasoned well, I wanted to translate for you the preface of the commentator [i.e., Averroes], which he wrote for book XII of the *Metaphysics*, where he explains the order of the books and many good things. And even though I have translated (this text) already for the most noble gentleman Giovanni (Pico), count of Mirandola, nevertheless I do not have this translation, and (the two translations) perhaps do not vary in any sentence. Often Your Magnificence also discussed the (problem of) universals, arguing that they do not exist outside the soul. Many Latins would disagree, even though in itself this is doubtless true. [...]

I do not want to say more about this issue for the moment, but rather I would like to translate what Averroes says about this in the above-mentioned passage [i.e., *Metaphysics*, VII.48 and VII.51], from which the truth of the matter appears. And even though these things are difficult, and many people may have erred (on the matter), nevertheless the truth will be plain to intelligent people like you, in particular because the difficult issues are explained by me through the words of the commentator in other places, as in the questions on the intellect [i.e., *the Long Commentary on De anima*, III.5], when speaking about the universal, and in other places. What (Averroes) says in the afore-mentioned preface contributes much to this issue, and in particular what I translated of his *Epitome* (of the *Metaphysics*). Because I know that you are able to know many good and difficult things by yourself, I have in this (case) preserved not only its meaning, but also the words in the best way possible. Farewell.

### Text 3. Paolo Ricci

The Hebrew-Latin translator Paolo Ricci (d. 1541), a Christian convert from Judaism, teacher of philosophy and medicine, and, later in life, physician at the Habsburg court, stands out among the translators discussed in this chapter for his high-flown neo-classical Latin style. Ricci's humanist motives are apparent in the preface to his translation of Averroes's *Middle Commentary on De caelo*, published in 1511. He believes, as many humanist scholars of the time did, that the medieval Latin translations of Averroes are replete with errors. This is a topic he had discussed already with his 'companion philosophers' at Padua University, apparently in past years when he was still a student. The remedy he proposes is to translate anew from Jewish sources.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> On Paolo Ricci, see Roling, *Aristotelische Naturphilosophie*; and Hasse, *Success and Suppression*, 78–79.

Paolo Ricci, *Prefatio* (Milan, 1511), f.7r; English translation from Burnett, 'The Second Revelation', 193.

Not only these three prefaces, but the entire Latin version of Averroes, as I have once explained to some of our companion philosophers, abounds in many corruptions and errors. I wanted to warn you of this so that, when you see that some things in this preface [to the commentary on the *Physics*] and others which I have taken from the libraries of the Jews do not agree with the Latin version, you do not burst into a complaining and accusatory tone of voice. For everywhere there are Jews and some people skilled in the Arabic tongue whom, if you are a seeker after truth, you may consult and cross-examine as much as you can. In this way, you will recognize that everything has been transmitted carefully and precisely.

#### Text 4. Andrea Alpago

Andrea Alpago (d. 1522) is the most 'Oriental' of all translators of the Renaissance, since he lived for about thirty years in Damascus. A native of the city of Belluno, north of Venice, Alpago studied philosophy and medicine in Padua. In about 1487, he became the successor of Girolamo Ramusio as physician of the Venetian embassy in Damascus, and returned to Italy as late as December 1520. Alpago's corrections of the medieval Latin version of Avicenna's *Canon of Medicine* were a great success. They were officially embraced by the faculty of philosophers and physicians of the University of Padua in 1521, as the documents translated below show. They were printed by his nephew Paolo Alpago in 1527 and often integrated into *Canon* editions from 1544 onwards.<sup>14</sup>

**Text 4.1.** Collegio of the philosophers and physicians of the University of Padua, *Pro excellentissimo*; ed. Lucchetta, 88–89.

In the name of Christ Amen. In the year 1521 after Christ, indiction 1X, on Monday, 21 January, at the 17th hour, in the church S. Urbano, where the Sacro Collegio of the most distinguished doctors of the arts and of medicine of Padua convened by order of Vincenzo Moscheta, the excellent doctor of the arts and medicine and Prior of his gentlemen counsellors, it was said and declared by the above-mentioned gentleman Prior:

<sup>14</sup> On Andrea Alpago, see n. 6 above.

'Most excellent gentlemen doctors! The reason for this extraordinary convention of yours is the following: there is a distinguished doctor of the arts and medicine, the gentleman master Andrea <Alpago> of the city <of Belluno>, who for many years lived in Oriental areas and in particular in Damascus, where he admirably performed the medical art and for a long time entertained familiarity and contacts with a certain excellent Arab physician, most expert in the Arabic language [i.e., Ibn al-Makkī]. From this man he learned much and thus became so brilliant that he corrected and translated certain passages of Avicenna. As a result, many passages of the same Avicenna, which had been obscure, were now made clear and obvious. And he also translated some further Arabic books into Latin. Surely in our time we could not have a more laudable and more necessary enterprise than this correction and translation, since through this the same passages that before, as was said above, had been obscure and ambiguous, were made clear and intelligible. And in fact this man deserves much praise, and it would be our task to recommend him to our most famous gentlemen Rectors <of the city of Padua> and to ask our magnificences that they deign to recommend this excellent man to the serene highness our Duke of Venice to the effect that his so precious works are made well known, and also that he has reason to proceed in this endeavour, namely in translating other passages of the same Avicenna and other books from Arabic into Latin.'

After this statement had been made, this man [i.e., Andrea Alpago] was much recommended by several most renowned doctors of the Collegio and various statements were made on the issue. Finally, the above-mentioned gentleman Prior suggested the following resolution: whether it would please them that the most renowned doctors of the arts and medicine, the gentlemen masters Nicolò da Genova, Ludovico Carensio, Girolamo Bagolino, and Giovanni Lorenzo da Sassoferrato, by the order of this Sacro Collegio, examine the works by the afore-mentioned most perfect doctor of the arts and medicine gentleman master Andrea of the city <of Belluno> and make a report to the Sacro Collegio.

Text 4.2. Collegio of the philosophers and physicians of the University of Padua, *Pro domino magistro Andrea de Cividale*; ed. Lucchetta, 90.

On Thursday, 24 January <1521>, in the church S. Urbano, at the 22nd hour.

When the Sacro Collegio of the most distinguished doctors of the arts and medicine of Padua convened again, by order of the above-mentioned gentleman Prior, the excellent doctors who had before been chosen to examine the

works of the mentioned gentleman, master Andrea of the city <of Belluno>, spoke after they had inspected several works by the same master Andrea, translated from Arabic into Latin. They presented their report one by one and recommended them highly as useful and necessary.

When this report was made, the above-mentioned gentleman Prior suggested the following resolution, which is: in view of the excellent report made by the most distinguished doctors of the arts and medicine, gentlemen masters Nicolò da Genova, Ludovico Carensio, Girolamo Bagolino, and Giovanni Lorenzo da Sassoferrato, about the excellent translation and correction of passages in the books by Avicenna accomplished by the excellent doctor of the arts and medicine gentleman master Andrea of the city <of Belluno>, and about the translation of some Arabic books not yet published, that the below-mentioned five most excellent doctors be elected by this Sacro Collegio to approach the magnificent gentlemen Rectors <of the city> and praise and favour this man because of these works in a way that befits this most sacred Collegio.

**Text 4.3.** Paolo Alpago, *Ter illustrissimo* (Venice, 1546), \*1<sup>v</sup>–\*2<sup>v</sup>, dedicatory letter to Cardinal Alessandro Farnese (d. 1589).

Paolo Alpago of Belluno, physician, wishes the best of fortune to the thrice famous and venerable gentleman Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, his most revered master.

Andrea Alpago of Belluno, my uncle, the renowned philosopher and physician, had translated—thrice famous and venerable master—the great book on medicine by Avicenna from Arabic into the Latin language, having redeemed it from innumerable faults, with great success, as very many people saw who have the book in their hands, and with great labour, expense, and risks, as I saw who, still a young man and his companion in writing and intensive study, did not leave his side a finger's breadth in the least when he, in his old age, was searching for the hiding places of the Arabic language and for trustworthy manuscripts in Cyprus, Syria, Egypt, and virtually the whole Orient. This book was first published some years ago [in 1527] by myself, but was published again recently [in 1544] in somewhat corrected form.

My uncle had translated some splendid treatises by the same Avicenna: the *Compendium of the Soul*, *On Destination*, i.e., *on the State of Souls after Separation from their Bodies*, *Aphorisms on the Soul*, *On Definitions*, *On Questions*, (and) *On Divisions of the Sciences*.<sup>15</sup> These were lying around with me for a longer time

15 These texts are: *Compendium on the Soul* (G<sub>PI0</sub>), *The Immolation Destination* (G<sub>M2</sub>),

than was appropriate and than I wished, concealed by darkness and location, because I was hindered both by the laborious work on this greater edition [i.e., the *Canon* edition of 1544] and by private occupations. [...]

Hence, send this most splendid light to those who are in darkness; and see <yourself> what Avicenna thinks about the soul and how much he agrees with the Christians. And when we realize that we have done you a favour with this, most famous and venerable gentleman, you may expect some further <translated texts> of this kind, treatises not only by the same Avicenna, but also by other Arabs, which had been rendered into Latin by the same person, my uncle, and which are worthy, in my opinion, of having a place in the palaces of princes, namely, *On Poisons*, *On the Correction of Errors that Occur in the Regimen of Health*, *On Pleasant Medicaments for Princes*, *On Precious Stones*, and many other such texts.

### Text 5. Abraham de Balmes

Abraham de Balmes (d. 1523), a Jewish scholar from Lecce, counts among the most productive Hebrew-<sup>Latin</sup> Arabic translators of the Renaissance. His translations include works by Avempace (Ibn Bāḡḡa), Alfarabi (al-Fārābī), and Alhazen (Ibn al-Hayṭam), but the majority of them were concerned with Averroes and his works on logic. He shared this interest in logic with his patron Cardinal Domenico Grimani, whom Balmes served as personal physician. Grimani commissioned and financed the printing of seven Averroes translations by Balmes in 1523. Balmes's dedication to Grimani (who, three decades before, had been the patron of Elia del Medigo) is remarkable for its rejoinder to the anti-Arabic polemics of his time. Balmes answers with a cultural history of philosophy, which is based on Eusebius. The inventors of philosophy were barbarians, not the Greeks, Balmes claims, and Averroes is their worthy successor, who is a greater expert on Aristotle than the Greek commentators and fully to be trusted in matters of logic.<sup>16</sup>

Abraham de Balmes, *Divo Dominico Grimano* (Venice, 1523), sig. AA2r-v and sig. AA3r, dedicatory letter to Domenico Grimani concerning his Hebrew-Latin translation of Averroes.

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extracts from *Notes* (GS12a), *Definitions* (GL6), *Answers to Ten Questions* (GP9), and *The Divisions of Philosophy* (GS1). Cf. d'Alverny, 'Andrea Alpago interprete', 2. The classificatory numbers refer to Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, second edition.

16 On Abraham de Balmes, see Giuliano Tamani, 'Le traduzioni ebraico-latine di Abraham', 613-635; and Hasse, *Success and Suppression*, 89-91.



Often, my most esteemed Sir, I have contemplated the fact that our hard work, which we have produced with your support and dedicated to your renowned name, will amount to nothing if it is not useful for the many people studying the arts. For this reason, we have tried with full zeal, with our own effort, and with the help of friends to have the money needed for the printing of a portion of our translations and editions, since my means do not suffice for <printing> everything at once. [...]

But perhaps a vain adversary might say: what have we to do with Averroes, a barbarian, given that our Peripatetic philosophy originated with the Greeks, not with the barbarians? These people should read, I beg, the tenth <book> of the *Preparation of the Gospel* by Eusebius [of Caesarea, third century AD], who says in the second chapter that all those among the Greeks who truly philosophized are recent <thinkers>. [...]

Then, more than 600 years after the Trojan times, there flourished among the Greeks those who were called 'the wise', who invented nothing else but some short and pleasant maxims for the benefit of human life.<sup>17</sup> Then, after a long interval, it is reported that the genus of philosophers came into being—for Pythagoras was the first of all those who clearly invented also the term 'philosophy'—who only learned from the barbarians, but nothing from the Greeks, as someone dared to say. We therefore have to acknowledge that the entire philosophy of the Greeks originated with the barbarians. [...]

Given this, let us come to Aristotle's philosophy, which we cannot call 'correct' but rather 'corrupt' among the Greeks, for the reason that the descendants of Neleus, <son of Coriscus> concealed the books of Aristotle and Theophrastus in some trench and finally handed them over, ruined by worms and humidity, to Apellicon of Teos [d. c. 84 BC]. Apellicon was more a lover of books than of wisdom and let the books be transcribed, wishing to amend the ruined passages, but the text was not added correctly and he produced the books replete with errors, as Strabo relates in book 13 <chapter 154>. Who therefore will be more capable than Averroes properly to correct the books in accordance with Aristotle's intention? Averroes, as we have often read, wrenched his <correct> text out of a bad translation and wrote a commentary that conforms to the meaning of the Greek manuscript, which is why we think that in remedying the defects of Aristotle's books one should trust more the one Averroes than all Greeks together. But let us leave this aside and return to those worthless people who, blown up with flatulence rather than philosophy, polemicize against

17 The reference here is to the traditional seven sages of Greece, already referred to in Plato's *Protagoras* (342e–343a), Thales of Miletus, Pittacus of Mytilene, Bias of Priene, Solon of Athens, Cleobulus of Lindus, Myson of Chenae, and Chilon of Sparta.

our Averroes in order to boast about speaking Greek, saying that he did not understand Aristotle's intention because his doctrine often diverges from the Greek.

To these people one should answer that they may well correct their corrupt and ruined Greek manuscripts and align them with Averroes's interpretation, or they may restore for us a speaking and living Aristotle, who informs us about whether the emendations of Averroes are closer to the truth or those of the Greeks. But let us grant that Averroes did not agree with Aristotle, since they believe they have to censure him in such a way; <still,> Averroes needs to be praised and revered highly, because his doctrine, which they do not believe to be Aristotle's, is closer to truth and reason than the doctrine that these people claim and declare to be Aristotle's. For this reason, it would be more honourable for them to learn Averroes's doctrine from his good followers than shamefully to tear him to pieces with venomous teeth.

Let them be happy with the little wind they make about him; we shall imitate Averroes and believe in most of what he says, and in particular on logic, where there is no religious problem to be feared. We therefore offer these books, which are dedicated to you, divine Grimani, to our descendants, so that they realize that they have these books because of you, since we have published them upon your commission, dedicated them to your name, and published them with your support. For they have in this volume Averroes's *Long Commentary on the Posterior Analytics* of Aristotle, which had not been known among the Latins <and> which we have recently translated according to the intention of Averroes, adding separate comments. [...]

Let no one believe that we have written this to exhibit ornate eloquence and a pretence at oratorical skill; rather we have translated it by employing our commonly used words and the forms that appear everywhere, since I prefer to be criticized for the misuse of rhetoric rather than for changing the meaning or the wording of the author; first, because from my very first years when I was immersed in my Hebrew letters in my Talmudic schools, where truth was given priority over eloquence, which was despised, and secondly but more importantly, because the difference between languages usually gives rise to frequent breaches of the norms of speech. For the Romans thought that witty eloquence always deserves to be honoured first, the Hebrews, truth.

#### Text 6. Calo Calonymos ben David

Calo Calonymos ben David of Naples came from a Jewish family of southern Italy, but moved to Venice later in life, in 1517, where he continued to practise as a much-esteemed physician. Two Hebrew–Latin Averroes translations by Calo were printed in

Venice in 1527 and dedicated to Alberto Pio, prince of Carpi, a humanist Aristotelian who had been a student of the Paduan philosopher Pietro Pomponazzi. In his dedication, Calo emphasizes the great potential of Hebrew for correcting the Latin translations of Averroes. The second dedication accompanies the 1531 printing of Calo's translation of *On Astronomy* by Alpetragius (al-Biṭrūḡī), which was meant to replace the medieval translation by Michael Scot. Calo praises this work for its Aristotelian and anti-Ptolemaic astronomy, which avoids the physical absurdities, as he sees it, of Ptolemy's mathematical astronomy.<sup>18</sup>

**Text 6.1.** Calo Calonymos, *Illustri domino Alberto Pio* (Venice, 1527), verso of title-page, dedicatory letter to Alberto Pio, prince of Carpi, concerning his Hebrew–Latin translation of Averroes.

Excellent gentleman, <Alberto Pio>! Averroes, the prince of the commentators, in different phases of his life composed three sorts of commentaries, i.e., long commentaries, paraphrases, and epitomes, on many logical, physical, meta-physical, and ethical volumes of Aristotle, the light of philosophy. In old age, Averroes did not cease to compose very many little books and letters in which he corrected himself with regard to many questions he had already addressed in those commentaries, and in which he expressed himself more clearly where in these texts he had proceeded inadequately. Almost all these books can be found among the Jews, and, in fact, in correct condition—not corrupted like most books <by Averroes> among the Latins—so that the intention of Averroes with reference to the intention of Aristotle in all his above-mentioned works is ascertained perfectly.

Even though I do not have the capacity to translate all those little books into Latin, which exceed my powers in quantity and quality, since I am impeded by my work as a physician in this famous city of Venice, I nevertheless decided to translate now into Latin the most refined little book or letter by Averroes, *About the Connection of the Abstract Intellect with the Human Being*, add it to our translation of Averroes's *Incoherence of the Incoherence* of the philosophy of Algazel<sup>19</sup> and to our own book *On the Creation of the World Proved with Physical Reasons*, and to print everything together. This is why, since I often consider

18 On Calo Calonymos, see Di Donato, 'Traduttori di Averroè', 38–40.

19 These two texts are: *Treatise on the Contact of the Separate Intellect with Man* (*Maqāla fi ṭiṣāl al-'aql al-mufāriq bi-l-insān*), not extant in Arabic (no. 43.2), and the famous *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut* (no. 56). The classificatory numbers refer to Endress, 'Averrois Opera', 339–381.

in my mind that your famous Excellence flourishes in all genres of literature and especially in Peripatetic philosophy, that I dedicate this very useful little book to you as evidence of our service, which is growing every day, if God wills.

Text 6.2. Calo Calonymos, *Reverendissimo domino* [...] *Ioanni Mattheo de Giberti episcopo* (Venice, 1531), sig. aaiv, dedicatory letter to Gian Matteo Giberti, bishop of Verona, concerning his Hebrew–Latin translation of Alpetragius.

When I fully devoted myself to <studying> the theory of Ptolemy for many years, I confess to immortal God that I perceived in this theory so many and such important points of conflict with physical reasons that I never felt satisfied and hence I almost retreated from it. In fact, some, even many, avoid the study of astronomy, because they see that in heaven there are things of such absurdity that nobody can observe.

This is why, awakened by a divine counsel, I began to study this little work together with Elia, my beloved son-in-law and a very intelligent man, and I was satisfied as I revisited from the top <of the heavens>, as it were, the physical causes of the diversities in the heavenly spheres. And if the book I had in hand was faulty <in any place>, I corrected it with another exemplar, paying much attention especially to the shape of the letters. Hence, intellectually weak though I might be, I published this little work and translated it into Latin with the same number of words as lucidly and plainly as I could, so that people will be able to reach this knowledge of the movements of the spheres in harmony with physical science, as a result of which the science of astronomy will be elucidated by being proven with true demonstrations. The astronomy of Ptolemy, however, lacks both demonstrations through effect [*quia*] and demonstrations through cause [*propter quid*], as Averroes testifies in the proem to Ptolemy's *Almagest*, because according to this doctrine astronomy itself can be demonstrated in the other liberal arts.

Even though this little book was transmitted to the Latins before, that previous translation [i.e., by Michael Scot] is so obscure that hardly anything good can be extracted from it, and occasionally the meaning of the author is completely eliminated, which is something you rarely hear about.

#### Text 7. Jacob Mantino

Jacob Mantino (d. 1549) stands out among all Hebrew–Latin translators in the Renaissance for his accomplished and moderately humanist Latin, for the high social standing he achieved in Bologna, Venice, and Rome, and for the appreciation he enjoyed among

his contemporaries, such as the Giunta editors, who, after his death, praised the 'golden' translations of this 'most learned' scholar.<sup>20</sup> Mantino was a physician much respected among the high clergy, noble families, and ambassadors, and served as personal physician to Pope Paul III from 1533 onwards. The dedications of some of his translations to high-ranking patrons demonstrate his humanist motivation and high esteem for Averroes and Avicenna. Mantino and his patrons, Bishop Ercole Gonzaga and Doge Andrea Gritti of Venice, had studied in Padua or Bologna, where Mantino expected to find readers for his translations.<sup>21</sup>

**Text 7.1.** Jacob Mantino, *Leoni decimo pontifici maximo* (Rome, 1521), sig. Aiv, dedicatory letter to Pope Leo X concerning his Hebrew–Latin translation of Averroes.

Many years later [after Aristotle], Averroes of Cordoba, who acquired the title 'commentator' with full right, expounded, as he had done with other books of Aristotle, the books entitled *On the Parts* and *On the Generation of Animals* in a brief, but clearly divine paraphrase, in which Averroes defends most vehemently the teaching of Aristotle against Galen, Avicenna, and many others. When I recently encountered this paraphrase, which had long been desired by the Latins, written in our, i.e., Hebrew, characters, I was touched by incredible joy. And I did not stop until I had rendered it, as best as I can, in Latin speech, convinced that what I have produced will be most welcome to those who teach the science dealing with nature. Because just as it is difficult to acquire knowledge of the natural world without Aristotle, likewise it is not recommendable, at least in my opinion, to teach Aristotle without Averroes.

**Text 7.2.** Jacob Mantino, *Herculi Consagae electo Mantuano domino* (1523, ed. Kaufmann, 222), dedicatory letter to Ercole Gonzaga, bishop of Mantua, concerning his Hebrew–Latin translation of Averroes.

There exist almost innumerable, as it were, interpreters and commentators of Aristotle, among whom only one, Averroes of Cordoba, a Muslim, comes closest to the sentences of Aristotle himself, as nobody in fact can doubt. [...]

20 Aristotle and Averroes, *Omnia [...] opera* (Venice, 1562), I, 2, f.319r: 'Hucusque doctissimi Mantini candide lector aurea super hoc primo Posteriorum pervenit translatio. Cetera vero morte preventus perficere haud potuit'

21 On Jacob Mantino, the most informative study is still that by Kaufmann, 'Jacob Mantino', 30–60, 207–229. Cf. Hasse, *Success and Suppression*, 79–80.

And although in the books we are going to translate and in those we have translated already we do not claim for ourselves eloquence in Latin—for I admit that I have not attained it—we will nevertheless not imitate that translation [of the *Long Commentary on the Metaphysics*] that was produced for the Latins long ago [by Michael Scot] in an ugly and barbarous way, but we will, to the best of our ability, attempt to render the sentences of the author intact and intelligible. Therefore, I have decided to send this *Epitome of the Metaphysics* by Averroes to the printer, since much appears unkempt and mutilated, because of a distorted translation, in Averroes's *Long Commentary* which the Latins have—this, in fact, is a common feature of all old translations of Averroes and is the reason why many today condemn the teaching of Averroes.

Text 7.3. Jacob Mantino, *Andree Gritti serenissimo ac excellentissimo Venetiarum principi* (Venice, 1530), sig. A1v–A2r, dedicatory letter to doge Andrea Gritti of Venice concerning his Hebrew–Latin translation of Avicenna's *Canon*.

But because Avicenna in writing had used a pagan and idiosyncratic Arabic language, which is not that easily acquired by Latin people, the translation of his works abounds in many and great errors, which Andrea of Belluno, the famous physician of our time who is equally learned in the Arabic and Latin languages, has laudably emended for the most part. He was not, however, able to purify the field entirely from foreign seeds; rather, many remain, which cloud the truth of reading as with some fog.

This is why I decided—because I always believed that nothing is more appropriate for humans than to contribute benefit to all mortals in any way whatsoever—to turn now to some commentaries by Avicenna, just as I rendered many <texts> in various disciplines from Hebrew into Latin, translate them into Latin purged and, as far as possible, fully cleaned from all blemishes, and offer them to readers as manifest evidence of my mind. When people compare my translation with those of others, they will see for themselves what they owe to me.

Because three parts especially of Avicenna's <*Canon*> are publicly lectured upon at the universities—namely the first part of the first book, which is called the first fen of the first book [on the definition and principles of medicine], the fourth part, which is named the fourth fen of the first book [on treatment methods], and the first part of the fourth book, which is entitled the first fen of the fourth book [on fevers]—I proposed to render all these <parts> into Latin speech and started with the fourth part of the first fen, since this part seems to be of greater usefulness for the general art of healing than the other parts.

## Text 8. Johannes Carion

Johannes Carion (d. 1537), an influential German Protestant historian, represents an evolving historical interest in translation movements, and in Arabic–Latin translations in particular. His attribution of the *Almagest* translation to the circle of Frederick II Hohenstaufen, however, is not correct historically: this translation was made by Gerard of Cremona in twelfth-century Toledo.

Johannes Carion, *Chronica* (Wittenberg, 1533), s.v. 'Fridericus der ander, der xxiii. Deudsche Keisar'.

This laudable emperor [i.e., Frederick II Hohenstaufen] I cannot lament enough, gifted as he was with so many virtues but afflicted so much by the popes that it is appalling. He knew many languages, Latin, German, Greek, and Saracen [i.e., Arabic], and fostered the arts. He had the *Almagest* of Ptolemy transferred for the first time from the Saracen language into Latin and thus renewed the fine art of astronomy, which nobody in the whole of Europe had been learning for a long time.

## Text 9. Jean Bruyerin Champier

In 1537, the French physician and humanist Jean Bruyerin Champier published the allegedly 'first Latin version' of Averroes's medical magnum opus *Colliget* (*Kitāb al-Kullīyyāt fī l-ṭibb*, *Book on the Generalities of Medicine*), which in fact is a humanist revision of the medieval Latin translation by Bonacosa, produced in 1285. Bruyerin Champier was still alive in 1560, when he dedicated his own *De re cibaria libri XXII* to Michel de l'Hôpital, who had just been appointed chancellor of France. The Averroes edition of 1537 is accompanied by an eight-page prefatory epistle, written in the house of Bruyerin's uncle Symphorien Champier, and is addressed to two French physicians. Here Bruyerin not only justifies his 'translation' as being of benefit to medicine, but also explains, with remarkable accuracy, the historical migration of books and scientific knowledge, via translations, from Greek to Arabic and from Arabic to Latin. He also comments on the advantages of the work on medicine by Averroes, who succeeded in harmonizing Galen with Aristotle.<sup>22</sup>

Jean Bruyerin Champier, *Praefatio* (Lyon, 1537), sig. A3r–A4v.

<sup>22</sup> On Jean Bruyerin Champier, see Burnett, 'The Second Revelation', 194–195; and Hasse, *Success and Suppression*, 6 and 115–121.

When I reflected upon the fact that almost all the works of our prince Galen were translated into Latin, together with the works of later Greek authors, due to the steady effort of learned men, it came to my mind that I too could help medicine if I were to treat as diligently as possible the matter I have undertaken, which was either not tried by others or greatly corrupted and distorted. In this matter I have spent enormous labour, because the manuscripts that have been printed are so highly corrupt that I could not derive any, or hardly any, help from them. But some months ago, a very old manuscript fell into my hands which contained three or four sections of these *Collectanea*, and which went back to the time when the philosophy and the medicine of the Arabs and Moors entered France. <In view of> these works, I think at this point it is my duty to teach how the learning of these barbarous nations came to us.

When the great flourishing of learning collapsed in Athens and Gothic barbarity invaded the Roman empire, some Greek books of both the philosophers and the physicians migrated to the Arabs and Moors—and to the Spanish, too, who were held prisoners under the yoke of the Arabs and used their language and laws—especially the books of Aristotle, as well as those of Galen; even Plato seems to have been read by Avicenna. Thus, it happened that they [the Arabs] translated many volumes of both authors from Greek into their own language. For it is known that this nation [the Arabs] was most zealous in the study of the humanities, with the result that Averroes, Alfarabi, Avicenna, and innumerable others of the same period philosophized on the basis of these books, which they thought alone sufficed for the investigation of truth; and they wholly concentrated on this effort and poured all the force of their intellect into writing interpretations and explanations of both authors [i.e., Aristotle and Galen].

When Alfonso, a man with the greatest desire for the sciences and especially for mathematics, reigned in Spain at the time when the Moorish still held Betica [i.e., the southern province of Spain], it easily happened that, partly because of the vicinity, partly because of the frequent commerce between the people, books written in the language of Averroes and the other Moors were transported into the north-eastern province of Spain. There they were somehow rendered into Latin by some Spaniard or, since the schools of philosophy and medicine were already flourishing in Paris, they were transported from Spain to France and were brought to Paris, just as the monk John Scotus [Eriugena] had translated the works of Dionysius [i.e., Pseudo-Dionysius Areopagita] into Latin when Charles the Great was emperor [*sic*: when Charles the Bald was king, around AD 860].

Moreover, the Jews did not wish at all to be debarred from these doctrines. Of these Moses Aegyptus [i.e., Maimonides]—the most penetrating follower of



Aristotle, who philosophized at the time of Averroes—was, as far as I know, the first to embark on this enterprise. Afterwards, others imitated him and brought to light many works belonging to every kind of teaching. [... Bruyerin Champier mentions that he was motivated by Jérôme Monteux to revise Averroes's *Colliget.*]

For <Jérôme Monteux> very often and frankly admitted that he had made more progress by reading our Averroes—in general, the greatest savourer of Galen's books—than by reading any of the late Greeks other <than Galen>. This statement can be boldly embraced by anybody who has most diligently studied the commentaries of all of them. For he will see clearly that Averroes did not write with the purpose of censuring Galen, to whom he is so addicted and whom he praises so excellently, or defaming him, but that he was working with full zeal and in every way to free Aristotle—to whom he also dedicated himself very much—if possible, from the stain of significant error, and to harmonize one with the other [i.e., Galen with Aristotle].

#### Text 10. Alban Thorer

Alban Thorer (1489–1550) was a Swiss humanist and physician, professor of Latin and rhetoric at the University of Basel, and a Latin–German translator of Andreas Vesalius's anatomy. In 1544, Thorer published an edition of nine medical works, among them the *Liber ad Almansorem* by Rhazes (Abū Bakr ibn Zakariyā' al-Rāzī), which, rather than a translation proper, is a humanist revision of Gerard of Cremona's twelfth-century translation. The title-page and the preface comment programmatically on the value of Arabic medicine and on the deficiencies, as Thorer saw it, of medieval Arabic–Latin translations.

Alban Thorer, *Illustrissimo* [...] *abbati* (Basel, 1544), title-page and preface to his humanist revision of Rhazes, sig. A2r.

#### *Title-page*

These are the works of the supreme physician Abubeter Rhazes Maomethus, <which are> rather excellent because of the great amount of practice and experience and because of the most certain information, drawn from logical demonstrations, on all non-natural conditions, and also because of the richest collection of medicaments. Nothing is more useful than these <books> for practice, because he explains everything obscure in Hippocrates or diffuse in Galen in the most faithful and learned way and illuminates it.

They have been translated into Latin by Gerard of Toledo, physician of Cremona, by Andreas Vesalius of Brussels, and by Alban Thorer of Winterthur, and

have now for the first time been most rigorously and diligently collated with an old manuscript and <thus> restored, so that they can be understood by students of medicine. Nothing could be given to them that is more salubrious for the use of miserable mortal beings against so many kinds of illnesses.

### *Preface*

That the Arabs seem to be, and in fact are, less pleasing and more confused and turbid than the Greeks, one should attribute less to the <Arab> authors themselves, whose language in general is considered inelegant, ungraceful, and rude, than to their most incompetent translators, who make everything terrible through unkempt style, false and obscure Arabic and barbaric terms, and utmost inelegance. Without doubt, if these authors were available in texts of their own language, and if this language were as known as Greek and Latin are, they would not cause such a nausea in most readers.

### Text 11. Miguel Jerónimo Ledesma

Miguel Jerónimo Ledesma (d. 1547), professor of medicine in Valencia and one of the protagonists of humanism in Spain, published in 1547 a 'translation' of Avicenna's *Canon medicinae*, book 1, fen 1, which, in fact, is a much-abbreviated stylistic revision of Gerard of Cremona's translation of the *Canon*. In the dedication to Thomas de Villanueva, archbishop of Valencia, Ledesma offers a motivation for his work, claiming that Avicenna's medicine, which he finds to be in total accordance with Galen, was seriously distorted by 'barbarous' medieval translators and commentators.<sup>23</sup>

Miguel Jerónimo Ledesma, *Epistola nuncupatoria* (Valencia, 1547/1548), sig. A2v–A3r, preface to humanist revision of Avicenna.

Using a unique order and always behaving as a translator of Galen, Avicenna attempts in a very learned way to fulfil all duties of the best physician. But partly because he was ignorant of Greek and Latin, and partly because he was using incorrectly translated <texts by> Paul of Aegina and Galen, as will be apparent to whoever compares them with Avicenna, nobody should be astonished at the fact that Avicenna had occasionally made mistakes when recounting simple medicines, in the method of treatment, as well as in other

23 On Miguel Jerónimo Ledesma, see Ballester, 'The Circulation', 183–199; Siraisi, *Avicenna in Renaissance Italy*, 138–139; and Hasse, *Success and Suppression*, 99.

things that pertain to teaching the nature of medical subjects and principles. In addition to all this, the very deplorable calamity befell Avicenna that he had a barbarous translator and even more barbarous commentators. Hence, if someone sets out to consider the issue thoroughly and without any prejudice, he will realize that because of the corrupt translation of Galen, the lapse of time [i.e., from Avicenna until today], and the barbarism and foolishness of the commentators inevitably millions of mistakes affect the author himself.

In commiseration, I made a great effort to restore to the Arabic truth, if not the entire Avicenna, at least this one of his many books. It is not worth the trouble to notify where things are discarded, added, or changed, because everyone can use his eyes to examine the details at his own discretion. However, I do not want to leave unmentioned the following, that there is not one passage in Avicenna that we did not either confirm through the statement by Galen from where it is taken, or reject through a disagreeing statement by Galen. For this work, our very ancient Avicenna codex was at hand, a manuscript that deviates much from the vulgate <text>. Likewise, at times even the recent translator Andrea <Alpago> of Belluno, rather than following the truth, actually follows the interpretation of Gentile <da Foligno> or Niccolò <Bertruccio?>, or some other <Latin commentator>. In addition to our own extraordinary efforts in discovering the peculiarities of languages, an associate was consulted who is skilled equally in the Arabic language and in medicine.

#### Text 12. Jacob Milich

Jacob Milich (1501–1559), the first anatomy professor of Wittenberg University, includes a succinct history of the Greek–Arabic–Latin transmission of medicine in his ‘Speech about the Life of Avicenna’, which encourages young people to study medicine.

Jacob Milich, *Oratio de Avicennae vita* (Wittenberg, 1550), sig. B7v.

Even though after the expulsion of the Greek language many ancient authors were also expelled, some people thirsty for knowledge were nevertheless looking for sources. For this reason, many writings of Hippocrates, Galen, and Ptolemy were translated by the Saracens into the Arabic language, from which not much later they were translated into Latin with the help of emperors Lothar and Frederick II.

## Text 13. Giunta editors

The eleven-volume edition of the combined Aristotle and Averroes, which appeared in 1550–1552 at the Giunta press in Venice, counts among the most ambitious editorial projects in science and philosophy of the Renaissance. The edition was reprinted three times, with some modifications and additions: in 1560, 1562, and 1574/75. The first edition is accompanied by a long prefatory fascicle written by one of the editors, Marco degli Oddi, a teacher of logic at Padua University. From this preface we learn that Giovanni Battista Bagolino of Verona, himself the son of a Paduan logic professor, was the driving force behind the edition and did most of the editorial and philological work in preparation, but he died too early to see the volumes in print. Bagolino is praised in particular for his care in correcting medieval translations and for collecting all the Renaissance Hebrew–Latin translations of Averroes that he could find. The dedicatory letter by Tommaso Giunta contains a programmatic accolade of Averroes as a commentator superior to his Greek predecessors.<sup>24</sup>

Giunta editors, *Aristotelis Stagiritae [...] opera* (Venice, 1550/1552), title-page and I, f.2v; English translation from Burnett, 'Revisiting', 55 and 58.

*Title-page*

All the commentaries of Averroes of Cordoba on these works [i.e., of Aristotle] that have come down to us, and other books of his on logic, philosophy and medicine, of which some too, having escaped the notice of the Latins, have recently been translated by Jacob Mantino; others have been translated by the same scholar in a clearer and more faithful way than ever before, and the rest have been most diligently corrected in almost innumerable places from the manuscripts and the best printed books of the most celebrated philosophers of this time of ours, each having been adorned with a large number of marginal notes.

*Dedicatory Letter by Tommaso Giunta*

When Aristotle dealt with principles, methods, and general things in such a way that he left many things to be inspected and investigated more carefully by others, the Greeks made little—or rather no—effort in doing this. But the Arabs,

24 On the Giunta edition, see the classic article by Schmitt, 'Renaissance Averroism'; and Burnett, 'Revisiting'.

not content with mere translations, thought that the whole subject matter—i.e. the things themselves which had to be dealt with—should be investigated by them more carefully and fully. In this Averroes especially can be praised. His most solid teaching is not so much drawn from, as squeezed out of, the water-springs of the Greeks. He shone out so much that he alone rightly has claimed the name of ‘Commentator’ for himself. And now it should be clear amongst everybody who has practised philosophy in recent centuries that those parts of philosophy which had been omitted by Aristotle have been investigated more carefully by no other person, and no one has established them on more solid foundations.

#### Text 14. Antonius Stupa

Antonius Stupa was a Swiss humanist (d. 1551) who worked as a corrector at the Petri publishing house in Basel. He did not produce a translation proper, but a revision of a major work of Arabic astrology: the *De iudiciis astrorum* by Haly filius Abenrager (‘Alī ibn abī l-Riḡāl). This text had been translated in the thirteenth century into Old Castilian and from Old Castilian into Latin by two Italian notaries at the court of King Alfonso x. Stupa’s work was motivated by his disgust about the ‘Spanish, French, and Italian phrases’ in this medieval version.<sup>25</sup>

Antonius Stupa, *Epistola nuncupatoria* (Basel, 1551), sig. a3r–v, dedicatory letter to Haly filius Abenrager; English translation from Burnett, ‘The Second Revelation’, 190–191, slightly adapted.

Abenrager was an Arab, as has just been pointed out, and wrote in Arabic, and Jehuda son of Musca translated the work from Arabic into Spanish (as is clear from the translators’ preface); and from this afterwards Egidio of Parma with Petrus Regius translated it into Latin, so that Spanish, French, and Italian phrases, rather than the meanings and expressions of the Latin language, were retained everywhere (something that was tolerated in those times). For what Latin writer has ever said ‘charista baldi’ for ‘caritas annonae’ or ‘frumenti’? This author abounds in words like this, as anyone who compares our edition with the translation in the Venetian edition [first printed 1485] will easily discover. We do not make the comparison out of a desire to dash out of the hands of scholars that translation and replace it by our own, but so that they can agree to our purging and grant that a style that is barbarous and more French and

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25 On Antonius Stupa, see Jenny, ‘Antonius Stuppa’, 49–83.

Spanish than Latin (as will be shown in our arguments) should be transcribed into the better diction of the Latin language, changed and made more pure, presuming that they have some desire for the purity of this diction.

#### Text 15. Girolamo Donzellini

A final example of the growing historical awareness for translation movements comes from the Italian physician Girolamo Donzellini (d. 1587), who served as the editor of the Basel 1564 edition of Rhazes's *Liber ad Almansorem*, book IX, together with Leonardo Giacchini's commentary. In a long preface of eighteen pages, Donzellini, in truly humanist manner, elaborates on the nobility of medicine and includes a short history of the discipline, which is clearly prejudiced against the merits of Arabic and medieval medicine.

Girolamo Donzellini, *Praefatio* (Basel, 1564), sig. B4r–v, preface to edition of Rhazes.

When the science of medicine was transported from the Greeks to the Arabs, it was shipwrecked, and when the Latins received it from the Arabs, they were very unproductively involved in it for a long time. God, having finally mercy on our fate, brought the sciences back to light, together with the competence in languages, and also illuminated this divine science [i.e., medicine]: a number of men were awakened who taught the science from the clear sources of the Greek. For when the Ottoman fury began to mistreat Greece with arms, the most learned scholars of the Greeks, unable to bear this barbarism, came to Italy, bringing with them treasures of books. They were received most respectfully by the family of the Medici and brought light to all disciplines that were for the most part corrupt. Since that time medicine began to flourish.

### Part Three: Original Texts

**Text 1.** Girolamo Ramusio, *Ad Flavium*, Paris, BNF, MS arabe 2897, ff.160v and 349r.

*f.160v*

Volui prius videre que in gymnasio Patavino publice leguntur.

*f.349r*

Ad Flavium Ramusius. Inter scribendum arabice multa vidi que latino Abuali omnino repugnant, multa annotavi que latinus dimisit aut incorrepta scripsit, multa perlegi que non ita ad unguem latina facere potui ob imperitiam arabice lingue, quare in dies adiscens in dies melius corrigo meque ac scripta mea castigo; dum igitur hunc primum Abuali arabice scripsi nullum ordinem fere servavi, nam ad utiliora prius semper accessi posteriora relinquens minus utilia, et ut ordinem reperias, Flavi optime, aduerte: primo vidi usque ad anathomiam 1, de pulsu, urina et egestionem a charta 50, quarta primi a charta 107, doctrina sexta de virtutibus a charta 160, fen secunda a charta 174, fen tertia a charta 272. Reliquum quarte primi et de anathomia invenies latinum meum correctum, nec admireris si omnia non ita dilligenter castigata sint, cum sensim omnia perceperim, et ut citius adiscerem arabice scripsi et litteris omnia labefeci. Spero inde futuro anno omnia repetere et dilligentissime omni studio perscrutari et in optimam formam redigere, quare diis magnis et Cate gratias ago etc.

**Text 2.** Elia del Medigo, *Domino Dominico Grimani*; ed. Kieszkowski, 76–77.

Sepe philosophando, ut tui moris est, dixisti mihi de ordine librorum methaphysice, quis debet esse primus, an liber incipiens de veritate, sicut invenitur communiter in libris antiquis, an sequens, sicut invenitur in quibusdam novis. Dicebas enim quod ille liber qui communiter est primus est tamquam prohemium [...] totius libri metaphysice, et maxime secundum translationem arabicam, in ipsa enim non est primus, qui invenitur apud latinos. Et quia bene ratiocinatus fuisti, volui transducere (tibi) prohemium Commentatoris, quod fecit in *XII*o Metaphysice, in quo ponit ordinem librorum et multa bona. Et quamvis alias transduxi dignissimo domino Johanni comiti Mirandolano, tamen illam transductionem non habeo, et forte in nulla sententia variatur. Multotiens etiam tractabat magnificentia vestra de universalibus, dicens ipsa

non esse extra animam, cui multi latini opponunt, quamvis in se sine dubio est verum. [...]

De hoc autem nolo ad presens prolongare, sed tamen volui transducere dicta Commentatoris in hoc in loco allegato, ex quibus verbis apparet veritas huius. Et quamvis difficilia sint, et forte multi errabunt, tamen intelligenti sicut vos apparebit veritas, et maxime quia id quod est difficile declaratum est a me per verba Commentatoris in aliis locis, in questionibus de intellectu, loquendo de universali, et in aliis locis. Id etiam quod dicit in prohemio predicto multum facit in hoc, et id quod transdixi de sua Summa de hoc maxime. Quia ego scio quod ex te potes multa bona et difficilia cognoscere, in hoc autem non solum sententiam suam servavi, ymmo et verba meliore modo, quo fieri possit. Valet.

Text 3. Paolo Ricci, *Prefatio* (Milan, 1511), f.7r.

Nec solum eiusmodi tria prooemia, sed universa in Averoi latina editio, ut quandoque aliquibus ex conphilosophis nostris patefeci, crebris corruptellis erroribusque abundat. Haec admonuisse volui ne quando aliqua huius prooemii et aliorum subsequentium que de hebreorum bibliotheca excerpseris, a latina editione discriminari conspexeris, in querulam et criminatorem vocem prorumpas. Ubique enim hebrei et nonnulli arabice lingue adsunt eruditi, quos si veri explorator fueris consule pro viribusque examina, unde omnia quidem sedulo ac adamussim tradita esse dignosces.

Text 4. Andrea Alpago

Text 4.1. Collegio of the philosophers and physicians of the University of Padua, *Pro excellentissimo*; ed. Lucchetta, 88–89.

In Christi nomine amen. Anno a nativitate eiusdem millesimo quingentesimo vigesimo primo, indictione nona, die lune vigesimo primo ianuarii in ecclesia S. Urbani hora decimaseptima, ubi, convocato Sacro Collegio clarissimorum artium et medicine doctorum Padue mandato excellentis artium et medicine doctoris domini Vincentii Moscheta, prioris, et dominorum consiliariorum suorum, per prefatum dominum priorem dictum et expositum [*sic*] fuit:

‘Excellentissimi domini doctores, causa convocationis extraordinarie vestrorum est ista, quia est quidam preclarus artium et medicine doctor dominus magister Andreas de Cividale qui per plures annos stetit in partibus oriental-



ibus et maxime in Damascho ubi se mirabiliter gessit [sic] circa medicinam et longo tempore habuit familiaritatem et commercium cum quodam excellenti medico arabo et sapientissimo in lingua araba, a quo multa didicit et sic effectus est tam preclarus quod correxit et translatavit certa loca Avicene, propter quam correctionem et translationem multa loca ipsius Avicene, que antea erant obscura, reddita sunt clara et manifesta, ac etiam certos alios libros arabos in latinum translatavit. Certe temporibus nostris rem magis laudabilem et necessariam habere non poteramus quam correctionem et traductionem ipsam, cum ipsa correctione et traductione loca ipsa que per prius, ut supra dictum est, erant obscura et ambigua, facta sint clara et intelligibilia. Et profecto vir iste meretur magnam laudem et nostrum esset ipsum commendare penes clarissimos dominos Rectores nostros et suas magnificentias rogare ut talem virum excellentem commendare dignarentur serenissimo domino Duci nostro Venetiarum ad hoc, ut opera sua tam digna manifestarentur et haberet etiam causam proseguendi in re ipsa, videlicet in traslatando alia loca ipsius Avicene et alios libros ex arabo in latinum.'

Qua expositione facta, talis vir plurimum commendatus fuit per nonnullos celeberrimos doctores in ipso Collegio existentes et fuerunt super tali re facti diversi sermones, tandem prefatus dominus Prior posuit hunc partitum, videlicet quibus placet quod excellentissimi artium et medicine doctores domini magistri Nicolaus de Ianua, Ludovius Carensius, Hieronimus Bagolinus, et Iohanne Laurentius de Sassoferrato auctoritate huius Sacri Collegii videant opera dicti consumatissimi artium et medicine doctoris domini magistri Andree de Cividale et refferant huic Sacro Collegio.

**Text 4.2.** Collegio of the philosophers and physicians of the University of Padua, *Pro domino magistro Andrea de Cividale*; ed. Lucchetta, 90.

Die iovis xxiiii ianuarii, in ecclesia S. Urbani, hora xxii.

Convocato iterum Sacro Collegio famosissimorum artium et medicinae doctorum Padue mandato ultrascripti domini prioris ultrascripti excellentes doctores, ultra electi ad videndum opera prefati domini magistri Andree de Cividale, rettulerunt et relationem suam fecerunt singulatim cum vidissent nonnulla opera eiusdem magistri Andree, translata ex arabo in latinum: illaque sumopere comendarunt tamquam utilia et necessaria.

Qua relatione habita, iamdictus dominus Prior posuit hoc partitum, videlicet: attenta optima relatione facta per clarissimos artium et medicine doctores dominos magistros Nicolaum de Ianua, Ludovicum Carensium, Hieronimum Bagolinum et Iohannem Laurentium de Sassoferrato de optima

translacione [*sic*] et correctione locorum in libris Avicene facta per excellentem artium et medicine doctorem dominum magistrum Andream de Cividale nec non etiam de translacione quorundam librorum arabum nondum editorum, quod per istud Sacrum Collegium elligantur infrascripti quinque excellentissimi doctores qui accedant ad magnificos dominos Rectores et eo modo et tali talem virum propter huiusmodi opera laudent et approbent quo deceat hoc Sacratissimum Collegium.

**Text 4.3.** Paolo Alpagò, *Ter illustrissimo* [...] (Venice, 1546), \*1<sup>v</sup>–\*2<sup>v</sup>.

Paulus Alpagus Bellunensis phisicus, ter Illustrissimo ac Reverendissimo Domino Alexandro Cardinali Farnesio, domino suo colendissimo, foelicitatem.

Verterat, ter Illustrissime ac Reverendissime Domine, ex Arabica in Latinam linguam innumeris mendis vindicatum Andreas Alpagus Bellunensis patruus meus philosophus ac medicus insignis maximum de re medica Avicennae volumen; quanta foelicitate videre quam plurimi quorum prae manibus est, quantis laboribus, sumptu ac periculis vidi ego qui adolescens adhuc, dum iam longevus in Cypro, Syria, Aegypto, ac toto pene oriente, Arabicae linguae latebras, et codicum fidem perquireret, ab eius latere ne transversum quidem unguem discessi, styli etiam ac lucubrationum socius. Id est a me aliquot ab hinc annis primo in lucem editum, secundo vero nuperrime aliquanto emendatius.

Verterat idem patruus meus eiusdem Avicennae libellos aureos scilicet Compendium de anima, De Mahad idest de dispositione animarum post ipsarum separationem a corporibus, Aphorismos de anima, De diffinitionibus et quaesitis, De divisionibus scientiarum. Haec iacuere apud me diutius, quam par erat quamque ego cupiebam, tenebris ac situ obducta, cum ego essem et lucubrando maiore illo volumine, et privatis negociis impeditus. [...]

Illuminare igitur iubar fulgentissimum his, qui in tenebris sunt; et quid Avicenna de anima sentiat, quamque cum Christianis conveniat, vide. Ac si in hoc gratificatos nos esse non nihil Illustrissimae ac Reverendissimae D<ominae> tuae intelligemus, nonnulla alia id genus, tum eiusdem Avicennae, tum aliorum Arabum opuscula ab eodem patruo meo latinitate donata, digna meo iudicio, quae in Principum aulis degant, scilicet De venenis, De correctione errorum quae accidunt in regimine sanitatis, De medicinis principum non horribilibus, De lapidibus pretiosis, et pleraque alia, expecta.

Text 5. Abraham de Balmes, *Divo Dominico Grimano* (Venice, 1523), sig. AA2r-v and sig. AA3r.

Saepe mecum estimavi, reverendissime Domine, nostras lucubrationes, quas te favente aedidimus et tuo inclyto nomini inscripsimus, nihil fore nisi multitudini studiosae bonarum artium prodessent. Quam ob rem omni conatu et propria industria et amicorum adminiculis pro aliqua portionestrarum traductionum aeditionumque imprimenda exponendas pecunias habere curavimus, cum simul ad omnes non suppetant mihi vires. [...]

Sed dicet forsitan ventosus adversarius: quid nobis cum Averroy barbaro viro? Cum nostra perypathetica philosophia a graecis non a barbaris ipsis ortum habuerit? Legant hi quaesumus graeci viri Eusebii Pamphili decimum de evangelica praeparatione, qui illius secundo capite ait quod iuniores omnes sunt qui apud graecos recte aliquid philosophati sunt. [...]

Deinde annis post troiana tempora pluribus quam sexcentis illi qui sapientes apud graecos vocati sunt floruerunt, qui nihil aliud quam sententias quasdam commode ac breviter dictas ad utilitatem humanae vitae invenerunt. Magno deinde spatio temporis interposito philosophorum genus incepisse fertur, Pythagoras enim primus omnium fuit quem philosophiae quoque nomen invenisse constat, qui non nisi a barbaris didicit, a graecis autem nihil eum habuisse ausus quispiam est dicere? Fateri ergo oportet a barbaris graeciae philosophiam omnem ortam esse. [...]

Sed dato hoc ad Aristotelis philosophiam veniamus, quam non possumus dicere correctam potius quam corruptam esse apud graecos, eo quod Aristotelis et Theophrasti libros in fossa quadam Nelei posteri occuluerunt, quos et tineis et humiditate labefactos tandem Apeliconi Teio tradiderunt, qui cum magis librorum esset studiosus quam sapientiae, volens corrosiones emendare eos transcribendos dedit, scriptura non recte suppleta, quapropter libros edidit erroribus plenos, ut Strabo libro tertiodecimo refert. Quis ergo valebit illos rectius ad mentem Aristotelis castigare quam unus Averroys? Quem saepius legimus extorsisse suum textum falso traductum et expositionem scripsisse sententiae codicis graeci conformem, quare in perficiendo defectus librorum Aristotelis magis uni Averroy quam omnibus graecis credendum censemus. Sed missa isthaec faciamus, ad hos futiles viros redeamus qui potius ventositate quam philosophia inflati ut graecizare se ostentent in nostrum Averroyem oblatrant, dicentes quod Aristotelis mentem non habuerit, quia a graeca littera sua sententia saepe recedit.

Quibus dicendum est quod suos graecos codices corruptos et labefactos castigant et ad Averroys mentem reducant, vel Aristo<telem> loquentem vivum nobis restituant, qui certos nos faciat, an Averroys vel graecorum castigationes

sint veriores? Sed esto quod Averroys non scripserit ad mentem Aristotelis quando sic ipsum vituperare putant, nimis admodum magnificare et venerari eum censemus, dum Averroys sententia, quam isti negant fuisse Aristo<telis>, veritati et rationi conformior cernitur quam sit illa quam Aristote<lis> illi fuisse affirmant et praedicant. Qua de re honoratius esset eis Averroys doctrinam a suis bonis imitatoribus audire quam viperino dente illum turpiter in cassum lacerare.

Gaudeant ergo ventulo illi suo, nos Averroym imitemur, Averroy credamus in maiore parte suorum dictorum praecipue in logica, ubi nullum fidei scandalum est metuendum. Hos ergo dive Grimane libros ita nostris posteris tibi inscriptos tradimus, ut per te illos habuisse censeant, quando te iubente eos aedidimus, tuoque nomini inscripsimus et te favente publicos facimus; habebunt enim in hoc volumine nondum apud latinos visa magna Averroys commentaria super libros posteriorum analiticorum Aristotelis iuxta litterae seriem, quam etiam ad mentem Averroys noviter traduximus et commentis singulis apposuimus. [...]

Nec credat aliquis quod eloquentiae ornatu et orationis fucu ea scripserimus, sed nostris communibus usitatis verbis et modis passim venientibus ipsa tradimus, cum maluerim de abusu eloquentiae quam de mutata sententia aut serie authoris increpandum esse, tum quia mea prima ineunte aetate meis hebraeis litteris meis talmudisticis gymnasiis immissus sum, quibus veritas praeponitur spreta eloquentia, eo magis quia linguarum disparitas contrarias eloquii normas saepe parere solet. Romani enim dicacitatem, hebraei vero veritatem semper praeonorandam censuerunt.

#### Text 6. Calo Calonymos ben David

Text 6.1. Calo Calonymos, *Illustri domino Alberto Pio* (Venice, 1527), verso of title-page.

Averoes expositorum princeps, Excellens Domine, in plurimis Aristotelis philosophie luminis voluminibus et logicis et physicis et metaphysicis et moralibus tria genera commentariorum, magna scilicet commentaria, paraphrases et epithomata in diversis suis etatibus edidit. Nec destitit in senectute multos et multos edere libellos et epistolas quibus quidem se castigavit in multis quesitis de eis que in predictis commentariis dixerat ac se clarius elucidat si diminute in eis se gesserat. Que omnia fere volumina apud hebreos reperiuntur et correcta quidem, non autem corrupta ut plurima que apud latinos, ex quibus perfecte mens Averrois ad mentem Aristotelis in omnibus suis operibus iam dictis elicitur.

Et si mihi exercitio medendi in hac Inclyta Venetiarum urbe impedito non sit facultas libellos illos omnes excedentes quidem et quantitate et qualitate vires meas in latinum transferendi, decrevi tamen in presentiarum excultissimum libellum seu epistolam ipsius Averrois De connexionione intellectus abstracti cum homine latinitati donare eumque annectere nostre traductioni Destructionis Averrois destructionum philosophie Algazelis ac libro nostro De creatione mundi physicis rationibus probata omnesque una impressioni tradere. Quare sepius animo mecum ipse volutans tuam Illustrem Dominationem omni litterarum genere presertim philosophie peripatetice florere, hunc iccirco libellum perutilem tibi dedico pro inditio nostre servitutis in dies domino concedente amplius augende.

**Text 6.2.** Calo Calonymos, *Reverendissimo domino [...]* Ioanni Mattheo de Gibertis episcopo Veronensi (Venice, 1531), sig. aa1v.

Et cum per multos annos sane Ptolemaei incubuerim theorice, immortalem testor deum mihi ipsi nunquam satisfacere valui perspicuens aequidem in ea tot et tanta phisicis adversantia rationibus, itaque me poene ab ea removi; quinimmo nonnulli ac etiam complures preterea astrologiae incumbere pretereunt, videntes in coelo tam absurda inesse que contemplari potest nemo.

Quare divino excitatus consilio huic studium adhibens opusculo una cum Elia genero delecto viro quidem acuto mihi ipsi satisfeci tanquam repetens ab alto phisicas diversitatum in orbibus inventarum causas. Et si mihi mendosus accomodatus fuit liber cum alio tamen exemplo ac nimia vigilia precipue litteralibus figuris eum correxi, itaque ingenii imbecillitate hoc opusculum in lucem edidi et id in latinum totidem verbis lucide et plane ut potui transtuli, ut homines ad hanc motuum orbium cognitionem cum phisice scientiae consensu pervenire possint ac valeant et sic astrologiae scientia veris probata demonstrationibus illustrabitur, illa vero Ptolemaei teste Averroe in sui Almagesti prohemio et demonstratione quia et demonstratione propter quid orbata est. Quoniam ergo iuxta eam doctrinam in caeteris liberalibus artibus astrologia ipsa concludi potest.

Et si hic libellus ad latinos iam antea traditus est, illa tamen translatio ita involuta est, ut vix ab ea aliquid boni evelli possit, quinimmo interdum auctoris penitus aufertur sensus, quod auditu difficile est.

## Text 7. Jacob Mantino

Text 7.1. Jacob Mantino, *Leoni decimo pontifici maximo* (Rome, 1521), sig. A1v.

Multis post annis Averrois Cordubensis (qui unus interpretis nomen iure merito est assequutus) ut caeteros Aristotelis libros ita et eos qui de partibus et generatione animalium inscribuntur explicavit, conscripta brevi quadam sed certe divina paraphrasi, in qua Aristotelis sententiam adversus Galenum, Avicennam et alios complures accerrime defendit. Hanc quum diu a Latinis desyderatam nuper offendissem nostris, hoc est Haebraicis, exaratam litteris, incredibili gaudio sum affectus. Nec prius destiti quam eam pro virili meo in latinam converterem orationem; facturum me arbitratus gratissimum iis qui scientiam, quae de natura est, profitentur. Nam ut rerum naturalium cognitionem sine Aristotele adipisci difficile est, ita Aristotelem sine Averroi profiteri, meo quidem iudicio, non est valdae probandum.

Text 7.2. Jacob Mantino, *Herculi Consagae electo Mantuano domino*; ed. Kaufmann, 222.

Huius [sc. Aristotelis] equidem expositores atque commentatores innumerales prope dixerim extant, inter quos unus tantum Averrois Cordubensis machometanus sententiis ipsius Aristotelis maxime accedere nullus prorsus potest ambigere. [...]

Et quamvis in his libris vertendis et iam conversis a nobis latinam eloquentiam non profiteamur, fateor enim me eam non esse assecutum, illam tamen traductionem quae pridem fede et barbore latinis data fuit atque obscure non imitabimur, sed pro viribus conabimur sententiam integram auctori reddere et intelligibilem. Quapropter hoc epithoma metaphisice Averrois prelo transferre decrevi, cum in longa commentatione ipsius quam latini habent multa inculta et mutilata [sic] appareant, propter depravatam traductionem, idque profecto est familiare omnibus priscis traductionibus Averrois fuitque causa ut multi hac etate doctrinam Averrois damnent.

Text 7.3. Jacob Mantino, *Andree Griti serenissimo ac excellentissimo Venetiarum principi* (Venice, 1530), sig. A1v–A2r.

Sed quoniam Avicenna in scribendo gentilitio ac sibi peculiari Arabico idiomate usus est, quod a latinis hominibus non ita facile comparatur, eius operum traductio maximis ac multis erroribus scatet, quos Andreas Belunensis, etatis nostrae medicus insignis et Arabica latinaque lingua pariter eruditus, magna ex

parte laudabiliter emendaverit, alieno tamen semine campum penitus expurgare non potuit, sed adhuc plurima relictas sunt quae veluti nebula quadam veritatem lectionis obducant.

Quamobrem ego qui nihil magis proprium hominis esse semper existima-  
verim quam quoquo modo universis utilitatem conferre mortalibus, quemad-  
modum pleraque in variis facultatibus ex hebraico in latinum sermonem con-  
verti, ita nunc aliquos Avicennae commentarios aggressus, eos maculis omni-  
bus emendatos, ac quoad fieri possit, absolutissimos latinitate donatos, tan-  
quam evidens animi mei indicium legentibus offerre decrevi; qui postquam  
meam cum aliorum interpretationibus comparaverint, quid mihi debeant ipsi  
viderint.

Cum autem tres potissimum Avicennae partes in gymnasiis publice legan-  
tur, videlicet prima pars primi libri, quae prima fens primi dicitur, et quarta,  
quae quarta fens primi nuncupatur, ac prima pars quarti libri, quae prima fens  
quarti appellatur, ea omnia in latinam orationem vertere proponens a quarta  
fens primi libri interpretari exorsus sum quia haec pars maiorem caeteris in uni-  
versali medendi arte utilitatem afferre videtur.

**Text 8.** Johannes Carion, *Chronica* (Wittenberg, 1533), s.v. 'Fridericus der ander,  
der xxiiii. Deudsche Keisar'.

Diesen loeblichen Keisar kan ich nicht gnug klagen, der mit so viel schoenen  
tuegenden begnadet gewesen, Noch haben ihm die Baepst so hart zu gesetzt,  
das zu erbarmen ist. Er hat viel sprachen gekoent, Latin, Deudsche, Grekisch,  
und Sarracenische, Hat auch die kuensten gefuerrdet. Das Almagestum Ptolemei  
hat er erstlich aus Sarracenischer sprach in Latin bringen lassen, und dadurch  
die schoene kunst Astronomia, die inn gantzem Europa kein mensch lange zeit  
gelernet hat, widder auff bracht.

**Text 9.** Jean Bruyerin Champier, *Praefatio* (Lyon, 1537), sig. A3r-A4v.

Consideranti nanque mihi Galeni principis nostri universa pene opera Latini-  
tate donata, simul ac Grecorum aliorum posteriorum, diligentia virorum doc-  
torum, venit in mentem me quoque posse medicinam adiuvere si hanc quam  
aggredior materiam, aliis vel intentatam vel corruptissime depravatam, quam  
possem diligentissime tractarem. Laboravi equidem hac in re vehementer quo-  
niam codices quos typis excusos habemus depravatissimi essent, unde aut nihil  
aut parum adiuventi ab iis capere potuimus. Verum ab hinc menses aliquot  
inciderat in manus nostras codex vetustissimus, qui tres quatuorve sectiones  
horum Collectaneorum complectebatur quique referebat eam tempestatem

qua in Gallias immigrarunt Arabum atque Mauritanorum tum philosophia, tum medicina. Porro mei officii esse puto, eadem opera docere, quo modo harum gentium barbararum doctrina ad nos deuolarit.

Postquam itaque Athenarum florentissimum studium corrui, Romanumque imperium Gotthica barbaries inuasit, migrarunt ad Arabas Mauritanosque, adde et Hispanos (qui sub Arabum iugo vincti tenebantur atque eorum lingua ac legibus utebantur), Graeci aliquot tum philosophorum, tum medicorum libri, potissimumque Aristotelis, simul ac Galeni, (quinetiam Platonem legisse uidetur Auicenna). Quo factum est ut complura utriusque volumina e Graeco in suam linguam conuerterint, constat nanque eam gentem bonarum scientiarum fuisse studiosissimam, quamobrem Auerrhous, Alpharabius, Auicenna, alique innumeri eodem seculo iis philosophati sunt libris, quos solos ueritati indagandae sufficere arbitrati sunt; in hocque negotium toti incumbentes, uimque omnem ingenii effundentes utriusque interpretationes atque expositiones susceperunt.

Cum vero in Hispania imperaret Alphonsus literarum, et maxime mathematicarum, sitientissimus, Mauris adhuc Bethicam obtinentibus, facile fuit ut partim ob uiciniam, partim ob frequens populorum commercium comportarentur in Hispaniam citeriorem Auerrhoi aliorumque Maurorum lingua conscripti libri, ubi ab Hispano quopiam Latinitate utcumque donati sint, aut florentibus iam in Lutecia Parisiorum philosophiae medicinaeque studiis ex Hispania in Gallias deportati illic transferri potuerunt, quemadmodum imperium tenente Carolo Magno Ioannes Scotus monachus Dionysii opera converterat in Latinum.

Praeterea Haebrei horum placitorum exortes minime esse voluerunt, quorum primus (quantum intelligo) Moses Aegyptius, acerrimus Aristotelis sector et Auerrhoi seculo philosophatus, negotium tale est aggressus, quem postea alii imitati multa in lucem emiserunt in omni doctrinae genere monumenta. [...]

Frequentissime etenim ingenueque confessus est [i.e., Hieronymus Montuus], se plus per Auerrhoi nostri lectionem profecisse (alioqui Galeni operum maximus helluo) quam per ullum alium posteriorum Graecorum. Cuius sententiae audacter subscribere poterit is qui in omnium commentariis diligentissime sit uersatus. Quippe liquido perspiciet non eo animo scripsisse Auerrhoum ut Galenum (cui tantum sit addictus, quemque tam egregie laudet) taxaret calumniareturque, uerum id omni studio modisque omnibus satagere ut Aristotelem (cui etiam summopere fauebat), si fieri posset, ab erroris insignis nota liberaret huncque cum illo conciliaret.



Text 10. Alban Thorer, *Illustrissimo* [...] *abbati* (Basel, 1544), title-page and preface, sig. A2r.

*Title-page*

Abubetri Rhazae Maomethi, ob usum experientiamque multiplicem et ob certissimas ex demonstrationibus logicis indicationes ad omnes praeter naturam affectus, atque etiam propter remediorum uberrimam materiam, summi medici opera exquisitiora, quibus nihil utilius ad actus praticos extat, omnia enim penitus quae habet aut Hippocrates obscuriora aut Galenus fusiora, fidelissime doctissimeque exponit et in lucem profert.

Per Gerarduum Toletanum medicum Cremonensem, Andream Vesalium Bruxellensem, Albanum Torinum Vitoduranum latinitate donata, ac iam primum quam castigatissime ad uetustum codicem summo studio collata et restaurata, sic ut a medicinae candidatis intelligi possint. Quibus nihil prorsus salutaris in miserorum mortalium usum aduersus tot morborum species conferri potuit.

*Preface*

Quod vero minus quam Graeci iucundi et turbulentiores squalidique magis videntur et revera existunt Arabes, non tam autoribus ipsis, quorum idioma in universum inelegans, inconcinnum et horridulum habetur, quam ineptissimis ipsis interpretibus adscribendum autumo, qui incomptissimo caractere, vitiatas et obscuras dictionibus Arabicis et Barbaris, plurimaque inconcinnitate omnia horrificarunt. Et procul dubio, si tales autores sua lingua scripti extarent, et eadem nobis tam nota atque Graeca et Latina foret, non tantam plerisque lectoribus nauseam mouerent.

Text 11. Miguel Jerónimo Ledesma, *Epistola nuncupatoria* (Valencia, 1547/1548), sig. A2v–A3r.

Avicenna vero erudite admodum et singulari ordine usus et Galeni se usquequaque faciens interpretem omnes medici optimi numeros absolvere conatur. Caeterum quia tum Graecitatis et Latinitatis ignarus erat, tum quod perperam translatus Paulum et Galenum habebat, quod intelliget qui hosce illi contulerit, mirari nemo debet quod aliquando tum in tradendis simplicibus medicamentis, tum in medendi methodo atque etiam in ceteris quae ad rerum et principiorum medicine naturam perdiscendam vergunt, fuerit lapsus. Porro praeter haec omnia illud satis lachrymabile damnum accidit Avicennae, quod

nactus est barbarum interpretem barbarioresque multo enarratores. Unde si quis rem penitus et sine ullo affectu velit perpendere, intelliget ex corrupta Galeni tralatione, ex temporis diuturnitate, ex enarratorum barbarie et ineptiis, non potuisse nisi errorum myriadas in autorem ipsum dimanare.

Quod ego miseratus si non totum Avicennam certe hunc ex tot libris unum ad Arabicam veritatem enixus sum emendare. Ubi quae abiecta, addita aut commutata sint, non est opere precium referre, singula nanque quivis oculis poterit pro arbitrio perlustrare. Illud tamen non tacebo nullum esse Avicenne locum quem vel Galeni dicto, ex quo desumptus est, non confirmemus, vel eiusdem sententia, cum ab illo dissentit, antiquemus. Cui labori praesto fuit vetustissimus noster codex Avicennicus manu scriptus longe a vulgato dissidens. Item Andreas Bellunensis novus interpret atqui is aliquando Gentilis aut Nicoli aut alterius cuiuspiam sententiam verius sequitur quam veritatem, quibus praeter peculiaria nostra in vestigandis linguarum proprietatibus studia, adde consultum fuisse socium Arabicae linguae non minus quam rei medicae peritum.

Text 12. Jacob Milich, *Oratio de Avicennae vita* (Wittenberg, 1550), sig. B7v.

E(t)si enim pulsa lingua graeca, veteres autores etiam exulabant, tamen aliqui studiosiores requirebant fontes. Quare et in linguam Arabicam pleraque Hippocratis Galeni et Ptolemei opera a Sarracenis in linguam Arabicam sunt conversa, ex qua lingua non multo post nostrorum imperatorum beneficio Lotharii ac Friderici secundi in latinam linguam translata sunt.

Text 13. Giunta editors, *Aristotelis Stagiritae [...] opera* (Venice, 1550/1552), title-page and 1, f.2v (dedicatory letter).

### *Title-page*

Averrois Cordubensis in ea opera omnes qui ad nos pervenere commentarii, alique ipsius in logica, philosophia, et medicina libri: Quorum aliqui non amplius a Latinis visi, nuper a Iacob Mantino sunt conversi: Alii ab eodem clarius ac fidelius, quam unquam antea ab aliis, translati: Caeteri ex manuscriptis, optimisque codicibus Philosophorum hac nostra aetate celeberrimorum, innumeris pene locis diligentissime castigati: Singuli compluribus margineis scholiis exornati.

*Dedicatory Letter*

Sed cum Aristoteles principia, modos et quae generalia sunt ita tractasset ut aliis multa diligentius inspicienda ac contemplanda relinqueret, in eo Graeci parum admodum, ne dicam nihil, laboris sibi sumpserunt. At Arabes, non contenti nudis interpretationibus, materiam totam, hoc est res ipsas de quibus tractandum fuerat, multo diligentius ac fusius sibi inspiciendas putaverunt, idque vel praecipuum in Averroe laudatur, cuius solidissima doctrina de Graecorum fontibus non magis hausta quam expressa usque eo enituit ut solus 'commentatoris' nomen sibi iure vendicaret, ac iam constet inter omnes qui proximis seculis sunt philosophati, eas philosophiae partes quae ab Aristotele sunt omisae, ab alio hactenus nemine vel diligentius inspectas vel fundamentis solidioribus fuisse constitutas.

**Text 14.** Antonius Stupa, *Epistola nuncupatoria* (Basel, 1551), sig. a3r–v.

Fuit autem, ut modo dictum est, hic author Arabs et Arabice conscripsit, quem Yhuda filius Muscae (ut in interpretum prooemio patet) de Arabico in Hispanicum idioma transtulit atque ex hoc post in Latinum sermonem vertit Aegidius Parmensis una cum Petro Regio, sic ut phrases Hispanicae, Gallicae et Italicae ubique magis fuerint servatae (quod illa tempora tulerunt) quam proprietates et dictiones Latini sermonis. Quis enim Latinorum dixit unquam 'charitiam bladi' pro 'caritate annonae' seu 'frumenti', quibus locutionibus scatebat hic author, quod ille facile deprehendet qui illam Venetam translationem cum hac nostra conferet. Non hoc agimus ut velimus illam de manibus studiosorum excutere et nostram recipi, sed ut purgationem ferant concedantque barbaram et magis Gallicam et Hispanicam (quemadmodum in rationibus nostris patebit) quam Latinam versationem, in meliorem Latinae linguae sermonem transcribi, mutari et puriorem fieri, si puritatis huius sermonis eos detinet aliqua cupiditas.

**Text 15.** Girolamo Donzellini, *Praefatio* (Basel, 1564), sig. B4r–v.

A Graecis ad Arabas delata [sc. medicinae scientia], naufragium fecit, ac Latini ab Arabibus illam recipientes, diu admodum infoeliciter in illa versati sunt. Deus tandem nostram sortem miseratus, cum una cum linguarum peritia, scientias in lucem reuocaret, hanc etiam divinam artem illustravit, excitatis aliquot viris, qui e limpidis Graecorum fontibus illam docerent. Siquidem ex quo Othomanicus furor Graeciam armis coepit divexare, eius barbariem non ferentes Graecorum doctissimi in Italiam venerunt, librorum thesauros secum

adferentes, qui a Medicea familia potissimum honorifice accepti, disciplinis omnibus magna ex parte corruptis, lumen attulerunt. Ex eo tempore medicina florere coepit.

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