

ABBREVIATION IN MEDIEVAL LATIN TRANSLATIONS FROM ARABIC

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There are many methods of adopting a text to a different cultural context, and abbreviation is one of them. It is a technique often employed by Arabic–Latin translators of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, albeit not by the majority of them. There are different kinds of abbreviation techniques, and the translators had different motives for shortening an Arabic source while translating. This article compares the techniques and motives of five abbreviating translators, who worked in different periods and regions and thus belong to different phases of the Arabic–Latin translation movement. Abbreviation techniques, it turns out, reveal much about the mechanisms of transmission in the Middle Ages, also indirectly about the majority of literal translations.

The Arabic–Latin translations stretch over several centuries. The earliest Arabic–Latin translator worked in tenth-century Catalonia, rendering several texts on the astrolabe into Latin. In the eleventh century, there followed a wave of translations of books in medicine and natural philosophy in Southern Italy; Constantinus Africanus is the best known among these translators. The Spanish translation movement of the twelfth century was particularly productive; it covered all branches of philosophy and the sciences. Prominent translators were John of Seville, Dominicus Gundisalvi, and Gerard of Cremona. In the thirteenth century, the Spanish translating activities continued at a slower pace. The most productive translation area now was Sicily and Southern Italy, when the region was ruled by Frederick II Hohenstaufen. At the end of the thirteenth century several translations were produced in Montpellier and Barcelona. But then the translating activity stopped,

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and was resumed again from 1480 onwards, when Hebrew scholars in Italy translated a large number of Arabic works from Hebrew into Latin.¹

The background to my discussion of abbreviation techniques are two developments in the long process of Arabic–Latin translations: a growing tendency among the translators to translate *verbum de verbo*, and a growing tendency not to disguise the Arabic origin of the texts and not to give it a Greekizing appearance, as the earlier Arabic–Latin translators had tried to do. The two developments are interconnected: the gradual adoption of the Boethian ideal of literal translation was accompanied by greater faithfulness towards the Arabic original and thus led to the gradual disappearance of Greekizing versions. Charles Burnett has collected the evidence for these trends, especially from programmatic statements by the translators themselves.²

The turning point in both developments seems to be the Spanish translators of the twelfth century. It was here that John of Seville (in the 1120s and 1130s), and the Toledan translators Dominicus Gundisalvi and Gerard of Cremona (after 1150) began to adhere to a strictly literal method of translation, which did not disguise its Arabic origin. It is true, though, that there are exceptions to this rule: there are some literal translations before that period, such as by the aforementioned anonymous translator of astrolabe literature in Catalonia,³ and there are some free translations after 1150, such as Gundisalvi's rendering of al-Fārābī's *Enumeration*

¹ Recent surveys of the translation process are Charles Burnett, 'Arabic into Latin: The Reception of Arabic Philosophy into Western Europe', in *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, ed. by Peter Adamson and Richard C. Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 370–404; and Dag Nikolaus Hasse, 'The Social Conditions of the Arabic – (Hebrew–) Latin Translation Movements in Medieval Spain and in the Renaissance', in *Wissen über Grenzen: Arabisches Wissen und lateinisches Mittelalter*, ed. by Andreas Speer and Lydia Wegener, *Miscellanea Mediaevalia*, 33 (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2006), pp. 68–86, 806.

² Charles Burnett, 'Translating from Arabic into Latin in the Middle Ages: Theory, Practice, and Criticism', in *Éditer, Traduire, Interpréter: essais de méthodologie philosophique*, ed. by S. G. Lofts and P. W. Rosemann (Leuven: Peeters, 1997), pp. 55–78; and Charles Burnett, 'Humanism and Orientalism in the Translations from Arabic into Latin in the Middle Ages', in *Wissen über Grenzen*, ed. by Speer and Wegener, pp. 22–31.

³ Section III of the *Sententia astrolabii* is literally translated from the Arabic treatise on the use of the astrolabe by al-Khwārizmī, albeit with many explanatory additions. The anonymous translator states in the preface that he wants to be a faithful translator, promising 'to simply translate, just as the Arabic text has it' ('ut in Arabico habetur, simpliciter interpretari'). A table with an Arabic–Latin comparison of passages is in Paul Kunitzsch, 'Al-Khwārizmī as a Source for the *Sententia astrolabii*', in *The Arabs and the Stars* (Northampton: Variorum, 1989), art. IX, pp. 227–36. On the preface, see Burnett, 'Translating from Arabic into Latin in the Middle Ages', p. 63, n. 20.

of the Sciences (*Iḥṣā' al-ʿulūm*).⁴ My interest here is to investigate how the technique of abbreviation relates to these developments. One result will be that abbreviation is a technique employed in all phases of the translation process, also in the period when the *verbum de verbo* paradigm is well established.

I will discuss the techniques and motives of five abbreviating translators in chronological order: first, Constantine the African, who was active in Southern Italy in the later eleventh century; second, Hermann of Carinthia, active around 1140 in the Ebro valley in Spain; third, Michael Scot and his translation of Averroes's *Long Commentary on the Metaphysics*, which was produced in Toledo or in Southern Italy between c. 1210 and 1230; fourth, Theodore of Antioch, who translated texts on falconry for Frederick II Hohenstaufen around 1240; and fifth, Paolo Ricci, a Hebrew–Latin translator of the Renaissance, who produced a Latin Averroes translation in exquisite classical Latin style.

I

It is well known that the first of these translators, Constantine the African of the eleventh century, does not translate literally: he summarizes passages that appear too longish to him and he omits repetitions.⁵ But the most flagrant omissions concern Arabic proper names and titles,⁶ including those of the authors. With one exception, that of Isaac Israeli, Constantine never mentions the author of an Arabic text he has translated. The titles are often changed: what in Arabic was *The Complete Book of the Medical Art* (*Kitāb kāmīl al-ṣināʿ at al-ṭibbiyyah*) by ʿAlī ibn al-ʿAbbās al-Majūsī, now carries the Greek-looking title *Pantegni Constantini* (or, alternatively, *Pantegni translatus a Constantino*, or, *editus a Constantino*).⁷ What is also characteristic of Constantine's translations is the attempt to compile and

⁴ Al-Fārābī's treatise also received a literal translation by Gerard of Cremona. A brief comparison of the two translations is in Al-Fārābī, *Über die Wissenschaften: De scientiis; Nach der lateinischen Übersetzung Gerhards von Cremona*, ed. by Franz Schupp (Hamburg: Meiner, 2005), pp. lxiii–lxix.

⁵ As shown by Gerrit Bos, 'Ibn al-Gazzār's "Risāla fi n-nisyan" and Constantine's "Liber de oblivione"', in *Constantine the African and ʿAlī ibn al-ʿAbbās al-Magūsī: The Pantegni and Related Texts*, ed. by Charles Burnett and Danielle Jacquart, *Studies in Ancient Medicine*, 10 (Leiden: Brill, 1994), pp. 203–32.

⁶ Danielle Jacquart and Françoise Micheau, *La Médecine arabe et l'occident médiéval* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1990), p. 104.

⁷ See the list of manuscripts of the *Pantegni* in *Constantine the African*, ed. by Burnett and Jacquart, pp. 319–51.

combine several treatises. This is the case in the second part of the *Pantegni*, which is not a direct translation from al-Majūsī, but a compilation from different Arabic sources, among them texts by the Arabic physician Ibn al-Jazzār.⁸

Constantine's method was severely criticized after his death by another translator: Stephen of Antioch, who produced a new Latin version of al-Majūsī's medical encyclopaedia in 1127. In the preface Stephen writes:

[The part of the *Pantegni* which depends on al-Majūsī's text] is vitiated through a hot-headed deceit. For [the translator] had cut out the name of the author and the title, and put himself as creator of the book (*inventorem libri*) — he who had been the translator — and entitled [the book] with his own name.⁹

Stephen castigates Constantine for his overconfidence and impudence, and proclaims to follow a different method, 'ascribing to the author what is his, and to ourselves what belongs to the translator'.¹⁰ That Constantine was not the author of the *Pantegni* seems also to have been known to other scholars: in a few early manuscripts of the *Pantegni*, the treatise is attributed to *Rasis*, apparently with the aim to promote the treatise as written by a famous Arabic author; in one manuscript, Constantine is named as the translator of *Rasis*.¹¹

It is obvious that Stephen of Antioch had a different attitude towards the authority of Arabic *inventores libri* than Constantine. Constantine's motives are not stated explicitly, but one motive apparently was to resuscitate Greek medicine, especially that of Galen; at least, this is a plausible inference from the fact that he mentions only Greek authorities and omits all Arabic names. For Constantine, the works by al-Majūsī and Ibn al-Jazzār seem to present Greek medicine in a new garment. It is possible that Constantine's attitude is influenced by other scholars. He had come from Qayrawān in North Africa to Salerno where he encountered

⁸ Raphaela Veit, 'Al-Mağūsī's "Kitāb al-Malaki" and its Latin Translation ascribed to Constantine the African: The Reconstruction of "Pantegni", "Practica", Liber III', *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, 16 (2006), 133–68.

⁹ Burnett, 'Translating from Arabic into Latin in the Middle Ages', pp. 62, 77: 'Alteram vero [partem] interpretis calida depravatam fraude, nomen etenim auctoris titulumque subtraxerat, seque qui interpres exstiterat et inventorem libri posuit et suo nomine titulavit.'

¹⁰ Burnett, 'Translating from Arabic into Latin in the Middle Ages', pp. 63, 77: 'auctori quod suum est, nobis quod interpretis ascribentes.'

¹¹ Charles Burnett, 'Encounters with Razi the Philosopher: Constantine the African, Petrus Alfonsi and Ramon Martí', in *Pensamiento medieval hispano: Homenaje a Horacio Santiago-Otero*, ed. by José María Soto Rábanos (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1998), pp. 973–92, esp. pp. 974–78.

a group of Latin scholars very interested in Greek medicine. It was in this milieu that treatises by Hippocrates and Nemesius of Emesa were translated from Greek, but also from Arabic. In the latter versions, the Arabic origin is disguised — a feature shared by Constantine's translations.¹² On the other hand, it is also apparent that Constantine was interested in medical knowledge and that he wanted to remedy the deficiencies of Latin medicine by providing information from Arabic sources, without caring for the text or author of his immediate source. Whether his compilatory or his humanistic interests are dominant is difficult to decide.

II

Hermann of Carinthia had humanist or classicizing ideals similar to Constantine's, but he was working in a different area, in north-east Spain, and was connected to the humanist milieu of Chartres. Thierry of Chartres is addressed by him as his teacher. Hermann writes a polished, classicizing Latin, with a liking for Greek loan words. He justifies his method of translation in the preface to his Latin version of Abū Ma'shar's *Great Introduction to Astrology*, where he addresses his fellow translator Robert of Ketton:

You have experienced how difficult it is to turn out anything suitable to Latin speech from such an exuberance of expression (*fluxus loquendi*) as is characteristic of the Arabs, especially in these subjects [that is, the science of the stars] which demand such an exact replica of the matter.¹³

Robert's advice, as reported by Hermann, is to deviate from the ideal of literal translation established by Boethius (*a Boecii sententia*), in order to avoid the prolixity (*prolixitas*) of the Arabic text. Hermann follows the advice. His translation of Abū Ma'shar is about half as long as the literal translation by John of Seville, which was produced only a few years before. Hermann is inspired by a humanist ideal, as was Constantine the African, but his principal motive is not to suggest that the text

¹² Burnett, 'Humanism and Orientalism', p. 23.

¹³ Burnett, 'Translating from Arabic into Latin in the Middle Ages', pp. 60, 76: 'Expertus quippe tu nichilominus quam grave sit ex tam fluxo loquendi genere quod apud Arabes est Latine orationi congruum aliquod commutari atque in hiis maxime que tam artam rerum imitationem postulant.' Cf. also Charles Burnett, 'Literal Translation and Intelligent Adaptation Amongst the Arabic-Latin Translators of the First Half of the Twelfth Century', in *La diffusione delle scienze islamiche nel Medio Evo Europeo*, ed. by Biancamaria Scarcia Amoretti (Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1987), pp. 9–28, esp. pp. 14–18.

contains Greek science; rather, it is stylistic: to avoid exuberance of expression. Hermann's method of abbreviation also differs markedly from Constantine's. Hermann paraphrases the Arabic text, whereas Constantine shortens it, but in principle follows the Arabic word order. Hermann's text is so short that the paraphrase does not cover all sections of the original; many passages are simply omitted. The result of this drastic abbreviation technique is a very readable introduction to astrology, which contains considerably less information than the Arabic original.

Another result is linguistic. The passages which receive a periphrastic translation in Latin are written in a classical Latin that is almost never influenced by its Arabic source. As a consequence, the linguistic differences between the two languages, one Semitic, one Indo-European, come to bear fully on the transmission. The differences in syntax are particularly influential. Hermann uses many more adversative, concessive, and causal conjunctions than Abū Maʿshar, with the result that the logical connections between the sentences are more explicit. A detailed comparison of John's and Hermann's translations of chapters I. 3–4 of Abū Maʿshar's *Great Introduction*¹⁴ shows that the absolute number of adversative and concessive conjunctions in Hermann's text (*autem, vero, sed, tamen, nihilominus*, etc.) doubles that of John's and Abū Maʿshar's — even though Hermann's text is only half as long as the other two.¹⁵ In the case of causal conjunctions (*enim, nam, cum, quidem*, etc.), the absolute number is roughly the same; but the usage of these particles by Hermann is very specific: he rarely employs causal conjunctions when they appear in the Arabic text, and instead inserts additional causal conjunctions when there is no equivalent Arabic conjunction. This happens in particular when Hermann's own text is much shorter than the original. The additional conjunctions apparently serve to render the abbreviated argumentation more explicit.¹⁶

¹⁴ The Arabic and Latin versions are available in Abū Maʿshar al-Balkhī, *Kitāb al-madkhal al-kabīr ilā ʿilm al-ḥkām al-nujūm: Liber introductorii maioris ad scientiam judiciorum astrorum*, ed. by Richard Lemay, 9 vols (Naples: Istituto universitario Orientale, 1995–96). Lemay discusses Hermann's translation method at VII, 193–203. I have also compared, for the Arabic text, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Oriental 565 (s. xv CE); for John's Latin translation Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, MS Clm 122 (s. xvi CE), fols 1–286; and for Hermann's translation Erfurt, Amploniana, MS 4° 363, (s. xiv CE), fols 38–58.

¹⁵ The absolute numbers for strong adversative conjunctions in chapters I. 3–4 are 5 (Abū Maʿshar), 7 (John), 11 (Hermann), for weak adversative conjunctions 12, 16, 29, and for concessive conjunctions 2, 2, 6.

¹⁶ The absolute numbers for causal conjunctions are 33 (Abū Maʿshar), 39 (John), 29 (Hermann). But sixteen of the twenty-nine conjunctions used by Hermann do not have any equivalent in the Arabic text.

These results also reflect linguistic differences between the paratactic Arabic and the hypotactic Latin languages. Classical Latin sentences are usually connected by particles. It is, in fact, a distinctive feature of classical Latin that the connection between sentences is indicated by disjunctive, adversative, and other particles. In contrast, Arabic texts are usually connected by the particles *wa* and *fa* ('and'), the meaning of which is less concrete and explicit. Classicizing translations from Arabic in general face the problem of introducing a logical order into the text which is not explicit in the Arabic.

But this does not mean that the grammatical differences between the two languages were impossible to overcome. Translators like John of Seville, who also translated Abū Maʿshar's *Great Introduction*, decided to breach with the classical rules of Latin syntax and to write an Arabicized Latin. John of Seville followed the Arabic copy *verbum de verbo* — 'lest I might depart from the path of truth', as he says in the preface to another translation.¹⁷ And he adds the qualification that no translator is able to follow the letter perfectly: 'nullus valet sequi semper litteraturam'.¹⁸ John of Seville follows the Arabic word order in the majority of cases, for instance in placing the predicate before the subject. But even he does not translate all Arabic pronouns literally, since the pronouns often serve syntactical functions that are fulfilled in Latin by the inflection of the nouns. For example, John writes 'terminum loci in quo moventur';¹⁹ had he followed the Arabic, 'alladhī tataḥarraku fihi', he would have said 'ad terminum loci qui moventur in eo'. John of Seville thus successfully showed that an understandable literal translation from Arabic was possible.

Abbreviation, therefore, is not a necessity demanded by the grammatical differences between the two languages. In general, one can say that the Arabic–Latin transmission was not much hampered by linguistic difficulties, at least not after John of Seville and the later Toledan translators had made the *verbum de verbo* method the ruling paradigm.

III

The *verbum de verbo* method was employed by most of the subsequent translators, those in Spain, but also those in Southern Italy related to the court of Frederick II

¹⁷ Burnett, 'Translating from Arabic into Latin in the Middle Ages', pp. 64, 77–78: 'ne longius a veritatis tramite recederem'.

¹⁸ Burnett, 'Translating from Arabic into Latin in the Middle Ages', pp. 64, 77–78.

¹⁹ Abū Maʿshar, *Kitāb al-madkhal*, chap. I. 3: II, 20 (Arabic); V, 23 (Latin).

Hohenstaufen. The third translator of this survey, Michael Scot, belongs to this milieu. As I have shown elsewhere, Michael Scot is the translator of at least six anonymous Averroes translations (perhaps of seven, if Averroes's commentary on *De animalibus* counts among them), in addition to the *Long Commentary on De caelo*, of which there is external evidence for Michael Scot's translating activity, since it is accompanied by Michael's dedication to the French cleric Etienne de Provins.²⁰

For present purposes, the focus is on Averroes's translation of the *Long Commentary on the Metaphysics* into Latin, which is a telling example since the Arabic original is extant. Michael Scot uses the *verbum de verbo* method both for the text of Aristotle and the commentary of Averroes, but he significantly shortens Averroes's commentary, without shortening anything in Aristotle's lemmata. The obvious conclusion is that the authority of the Arabic commentator weighs much less than that of the Greek philosopher. Aafke van Oppenraay has pointed to a parallel phenomenon relating to the books on animals by Aristotle and Avicenna, because Michael Scot translates Aristotle's books on animals without omissions, but shortens Avicenna's *De animalibus*.²¹

What is omitted in the *Long Commentary on the Metaphysics*? The abbreviation technique is not periphrastic, as was Hermann of Carinthia's. Michael Scot omits, in all parts of the commentary, half or full sentences and occasionally also groups of several sentences. For the rest, he continues to translate literally — he thus continues the Toledan tradition of literal translation, but only partially. Most of Michael Scot's omissions concern additional information, such as references to other Aristotelian works and repetitions. Only in very rare cases does he summarize a text which he finds long. His overall aim seems to have been to significantly reduce the size of the text (as was Hermann's aim with Abū Maʿshar), but without using summaries or paraphrases. Some omissions, however, clearly show that Michael Scot also adopted the content to its new Latin surrounding. He omits information relating to Arabic culture, such as references to the theological current of the Ashʿariyyah,²² to the Andalusian astronomer Ibn Muʿādh,²³ and several

²⁰ Dag Nikolaus Hasse, *Latin Averroes Translations of the First Half of the Thirteenth Century* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2010); the text will also appear in the forthcoming proceedings of the 12th International Congress of the SIEPM 2007 in Palermo.

²¹ Aafke M. I. van Oppenraay, 'Michael Scot's Arabic-Latin Translation of Aristotle's Books on Animals', in *Aristotle's Animals in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. by Carlos Steel, Guy Guldentops, and Pieter Beullens (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999), pp. 31–43.

²² Averroes, *Tafsīr Mā Bāʿd at-Ṭabīʿat*, ed. by Maurice Bouyges, 3 vols (Beirut: Imprimerie catholique, 1938–48), I, Alpha elatton 15, p. 46.

²³ Averroes, *Tafsīr Mā Bāʿd at-Ṭabīʿat*, II, Delta 30, p. 655.

substantial passages that discuss Arabic grammar and Arabic metrics (references like: ‘fī lisāni l-‘arab, fī kalāmi l-‘arab, ‘alā ‘ādāti al-‘arab’), for instance a passage which compares the derivation of adjectives from nouns in Greek and Arabic.²⁴

Michael Scot’s technique contrasts with, for instance, the twelfth-century Toledan translator Gerard of Cremona, who tries to rescue as much information of the Arabic text as possible; if a word is without parallel in Latin, Gerard transliterates it. There is a contrast also with the earlier abbreviating translators such as Constantine the African or Hermann of Carinthia: Michael Scot abbreviates, but he does not seem to have Hellenizing or compilatory motives in a narrow sense. But he does try to Latinize the text, as we have seen, in the sense that he adopts it to the expectations of Latin readers — which is a general motive he has in common with Constantine and Hermann. He also shares with them the treatment of the Arabic author as a secondary source. Averroes is subjected to substantial abbreviation apparently because he offers information on the true object of interest: Aristotle and his metaphysics.

IV

Theodore of Antioch, the fourth translator, worked in the direct vicinity of Frederick II Hohenstaufen.²⁵ He took part in producing the *Moamin*, a book on falconry — which is a topic Frederick II was extremely interested in and on which Frederick himself wrote a Latin treatise: *De arte venandi cum avibus*. The circumstances of the production of the *Moamin*, which is the combined work of Theodore and Frederick, have recently come to light through the effort of Stefan Georges.²⁶ The most probable scenario for the complex translation process is the following: Frederick II commissioned Theodore of Antioch to translate the *Kitāb al-Mutawakkilī*, a treatise on the medical treatment of falcons and dogs. Theodore,

²⁴ Averroes, *Tafsīr Mā Bā‘d at-Tabrāt*, I, Gamma 11, p. 364; II, Delta 14, pp. 557–58; II, Theta 12, p. 1173.

²⁵ See Charles Burnett, ‘Master Theodore, Frederick II’s Philosopher’, in *Federico II e le nuove culture, Atti del XXXI Convegno storico internazionale, Todi, 9–12 ottobre 1994* (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull’alto Medioevo, 1995), pp. 225–85; repr. with corrections in Charles Burnett, *Arabic into Latin in the Middle Ages: The Translators and their Intellectual and Social Context* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), Article IX.

²⁶ Stefan Georges, *Das zweite Falkenbuch Kaiser Friedrichs II: Quellen, Entstehung, Überlieferung und Rezeption des Moamin; Mit einer Edition der lateinischen Überlieferung* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2008).

in all likelihood, first produced a literal translation of this text, Frederick then decided that the text should be merged with another text on falconry by al-Ghiṭrif, which was probably also translated for him by Theodore, and he decided further that the new compilation should be abbreviated and the terminology be revised. Either Theodore or Frederick now abbreviated the text by about a third.²⁷ Frederick revised the terminology²⁸ in accordance with the terminology of his own *De arte venandi cum avibus*.²⁹ All this happened around 1240–41. Afterwards, the *Moamin* was copied and put into circulation.

What kind of abbreviation technique did they employ? Some sections are omitted because of their content: introductory information on the history of falconry and legendary stories,³⁰ which were of no concern, it seems, to experienced falconers. Also, Theodore and Frederick omitted the many names of Arabic authorities on falconry which were cited in the Arabic. However, the great majority of Theodore's and Frederick's abbreviations appear unmotivated by content. The *Kitāb al-Mutawakkilī* consists largely of lists of recipes for the various illnesses of birds. Theodore and Frederick reduce these lists drastically. A typical reduction would consist, for instance, in the listing of seven instead of twelve recipes against a specific illness. There does not seem to be a rationale behind their choice for or against specific recipes, apart from the fact that Theodore and Frederick wanted to thin out a text which they found too long.³¹ It seems they aimed at a concise manual, not a comprehensive treatise.

The case of the *Moamin* differs from the other abbreviations discussed because here the abbreviated translation is the product of a two-step process, which occurs before the text is circulating: a full and literal translation followed by an abbreviating revision.³² The case shows that translator and abbreviator may be different

²⁷ Georges, *Das zweite Falkenbuch Kaiser Friedrichs II*, pp. 339 and 311.

²⁸ Cf. Georges, *Das zweite Falkenbuch Kaiser Friedrichs II*, pp. 121 and 333: 'Incipit liber magistri Moamini falconarii translatus ab arabico in latinum per magistrum Theodorum, physicum domini Federici, Romanorum imperatoris. Et correptus est per ipsum imperatorem tempore obsidionis Faventie' (probably meaning: '[the book] was taken care of by the emperor himself during the siege of Faenza'), as one branch of the manuscripts writes.

²⁹ Georges, *Das zweite Falkenbuch Kaiser Friedrichs II*, p. 335; cf. p. 326.

³⁰ Georges, *Das zweite Falkenbuch Kaiser Friedrichs II*, p. 304.

³¹ Georges, *Das zweite Falkenbuch Kaiser Friedrichs II*, p. 314.

³² On 'translator' as a fluid concept in the context of Arabic–Latin translations, see Charles Burnett, 'John of Seville and John of Spain: A *mise au point*', *Bulletin de philosophie médiévale*, 44 (2002), 59–78, esp. p. 77.

persons. With respect to motives, it is clear that the commissioner and the prospective audience had compilatory or encyclopaedic interests. This is a feature which the *Moamin* translators share with Constantine the African:³³ their interest does not concern a text or an author, but information on a specific topic — be it medicine or falconry. They differ in that Constantine was working within a milieu very much focused on Greek medicine and philosophy, whereas Theodore and Frederick transport a very oriental science to the Latin West: medical falconry.

V

The final example of an abbreviating translator is Paolo Ricci,³⁴ who translated two texts by Averroes from Hebrew into Latin at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Ricci was only one of several Hebrew–Latin translators who worked in Italy at that time, and he was by no means the most prolific one — Abraham de Balmes and Jacob Mantino were much more productive.³⁵ But Ricci is an interesting case because he is the only translator who writes classical Latin in its full, backward-looking sense, and hence we have here a case where the cultural influence on the translation technique is very tangible.

Ricci's translations of the *Middle Commentary on De caelo* and of the *Prooemium to book XII of the Metaphysics* were printed in Milan in 1511. In his dedicatory epistle, Ricci justifies his translations with the celebrity of Averroes, with the importance of the content, and with the fact that the texts are as yet unknown in Latin. A further motive appears when Ricci proceeds to castigate the earlier translators of Averroes: 'The entire Latin version of Averroes, as I have once explained to some of our companion philosophers, abounds in frequent corruptions and errors (*crebris corruptelis erroribusque abundat*)'.³⁶ Note that Averroes by now has

³³ As observed also by Martin-Dietrich Gleßgen, *Die Falkenbeilkunde des 'Moamin' im Spiegel ihrer volgarizzamenti: Studien zur Romania Arabica*, 2 vols (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1996), II, 429.

³⁴ On Ricci, see now Bernd Roling, *Aristotelische Naturphilosophie und christliche Kabbalah im Werk des Paulus Ritius* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2007).

³⁵ On the Renaissance translation movement, see Hasse, 'Social Conditions', and Giuliano Tamani, 'Traduzioni ebraico-latine di opere filosofiche e scientifiche', in *L'Hébreu au temps de la Renaissance: ouvrage collectif recueilli et édité*, ed. by Ilana Zinguer (Leiden: Brill, 1992), pp. 105–14.

³⁶ Paolo Ricci, preface to Averroes, *Hoc opere contenta: De prooemio [...] Averois in Phisico auditu prooemium emendatum, [...] Averois in quattuor De celo et mundo libros paraphrasis [...] de hebraicis latebris in latinum splendorem conversa, Averois in duodecimo Metaphisice prooemium quoque de hebraico decerptum exe<m>plari* (Milan, 1511), fol. 7^r: 'Nec solum eiuscemodi tria

assumed such an authority in the Latin West that his name alone was reason enough to produce a translation. This, obviously, was not the case in the 1220s, when Michael Scot produced his Latin version of the *Long Commentary on the Metaphysics*. In 1511, Averroes is regarded as a philosopher in his own right, not as a mere commentator.

This development, which is visible also in the emergence of an Averroist movement in Renaissance Italy, has left its traces in Ricci's translation technique. This technique can be compared to the earlier translations because the medieval Hebrew version is extremely close to the original. Ricci has a clear tendency to shorten the text, but his abbreviations are the most gentle among the five translations surveyed in this article. He occasionally leaves out additional information. He offers a humanist translation, as did Hermann of Carinthia three centuries before, but he refrains from drastic omissions or curt summaries. The most distinctive feature of his translation is that the linguistic difference between Arabic and Latin is very much felt. Again, the Latin abounds in syntactical relations (causal relations, concessive relations, etc.) that are not in the Arabic. This we have encountered already in Hermann's translation: it is an unavoidable feature of all classicizing translations. A peculiar feature of Ricci's translation is that he has a liking for rare classical terms. Time and again, this liking leads him astray and produces imprecision — as when he translates *wajaba* 'alayhi (Hebrew: רָאִי עָלַי),³⁷ 'it is necessary', with *condecens erat*, 'it is apt'.³⁸

VI

What can we conclude from this survey? It has become obvious that abbreviation was a technique employed in all phases of the Arabic-Latin translations. The techniques themselves differed much, however.

Constantine the African's most important omissions concern Arabic names and titles, so that the text assumes the appearance of a translation from the Greek. His

prooemia, sed universa in Averoi latina editio, ut quandoque aliquibus ex conphilosophis nostris patefeci, crebris corruptelis erroribusque abundat.

³⁷ For the Hebrew, see Bohdan Kieszkowski, 'Les Rapports entre Elie de Medigo et Pic de la Mirandole (d'après le ms. lat. 6508 de la Bibliothèque Nationale)', *Rinascimento*, 4 (1964), 41–91 (p. 81).

³⁸ In his translation of Averroes's preface to book XII of the *Long Commentary on the Metaphysics*, in Aristotle and Averroes, *Aristotelis opera cum Averrois commentariis* (Venice, 1562; repr. Frankfurt a.M.: Minerva, 1962), VIII, fol. 286^{va}.

technique is also compilatory, as is Theodore's and Frederick's: these translators combine several sources in order to produce a concise handbook on a certain topic. Hermann of Carinthia's technique is periphrastic, and thus differs from Constantine's who generally follows the Arabic word order. The result of Hermann's technique is a text about half as long as the Arabic original, which follows Latin linguistic ideals throughout and is hardly ever touched by the Arabic language. Paolo Ricci's periphrastic method resembles Hermann's: his Latin translation is an attempt to present Arabic science in a classical Latin garment. His technique is less dramatically abbreviating, but the result is again a Latin text whose syntactical and thus logical structure differs considerably from that of the Arabic original. A further technique employed is the literal translation combined with frequent omissions of phrases and sentences; one example is Michael Scot, who significantly reduces the size of the text by omitting what he finds unimportant or uninteresting for the Latin reader. Theodore and Frederick also produce a much shorter text than in Arabic by omitting sentences or paragraphs, and especially by thinning out lists; they turn into a manual what was a long treatise. In short, the abbreviation techniques resulted in Greekized or Latinized texts, paraphrases, compilations from several sources, and concise manuals.

The translators' motives for abbreviation likewise differed; they reflect the intellectual surrounding of the translators, the demands of commissioners, and the interests of the prospective audience. Constantine, on the one hand, was influenced by a surrounding in southern Italy very much interested in Greek medicine and natural philosophy; his abbreviations and compilations, on the other hand, attempted to fill in lacunae in Latin medical knowledge. Hermann of Carinthia's principal concern in paraphrasing was stylistic. It seems that he wanted to present a version of Arabic astrology in a Latin style acceptable to the intellectual circles of the French schools. One of Michael Scot's motives was cultural: the adoption of the text to Latin culture. The other motive was pragmatic: he thinned out Averroes's text without paraphrasing it, apparently because he valued Averroes only as a secondary source on Aristotle, or on Aristotelian metaphysics. Paolo Ricci, in contrast, saw the culmination of Averroes's fame in fifteenth-century Padua and tried to rescue Averroes for the humanist movement. Theodore, in all likelihood, followed the orders of the commissioner Frederick when abbreviating; together with Frederick, he was producing a concise and readable text for a very specific expert audience interested in falconry.

It is characteristic of the abbreviating translators, which form a minority within the Arabic–Latin translation movement, that the focus of their attention is the Latin readers: the text should be readable and not too long; it should supply the

information needed in the discipline, but nothing superfluous; it should be welcomed as a text in the tradition of Greek science or as a treatise belonging to the home culture of Latin; it should be of a stylistic *niveau* acceptable to the intellectuals of the day.

In view of these sensible aims, one wonders why the majority of Arabic–Latin translations were full, literal, and hence Arabicizing in syntax and vocabulary. The principal reasons apparently were, first, faithfulness towards the original and, second, an awareness of the linguistic or technical difficulties of free translation. A good number of translators stress that faithfulness is of central importance. An example is the aforementioned Stephen of Antioch, who accuses Constantine of ‘deceit’ when suppressing the name of the Arabic author; the argument here has a moral tone. But faithfulness is demanded not only out of respect for the author, but also because, as Boethius put it, the principal concern when translating a text for the sake of knowledge (*rerum cognitio*) is ‘the unsullied truth’ (*incorrupta veritas*) and not the charm of language.³⁹ Gerard of Cremona’s literal translations seem to be driven by this motive of scientific truth (unfortunately, we do not have statements in Gerard’s own voice on the issue). Indeed, as the evidence in this article shows, all abbreviating translators run the risk of distorting the information provided in the Arabic source. John of Seville is a witness to the second motive: awareness of the difficulties of free translation. John admits that he does not master the disciplines of knowledge he translates, and that he therefore chooses to translate literally lest he be accused of any mistakes.⁴⁰ In addition, we can surmise from John’s extant translations that as an Arabic-speaking Christian his command of Latin was not such that he could write a periphrastic translation on the same stylistic level as Hermann of Carinthia.

Hence, both translation techniques, abbreviating and non-abbreviating, were deliberate and supported by arguments. The issue of abbreviation thus testifies to the high level of self-reflection exhibited by the medieval Latin translators from the Arabic.

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³⁹ Boethius, *In Isagogen Porphyrii Commentorum Editio secunda*, chap. 1: ‘Cuius incepti ratio est quod in his scriptis in quibus rerum cognitio quaeritur, non luculentae orationis lepos, sed incorrupta veritas exprimenda est.’ Here quoted from Burnett, ‘Translating from Arabic into Latin in the Middle Ages’, pp. 55, 72.

⁴⁰ In the preface to the translation of Thābit ibn Qurra, *De imaginibus*; see Burnett, ‘Translating from Arabic into Latin in the Middle Ages’, pp. 64, 78: ‘Nemo ergo me in aliquo diliquisse miretur aut culpet, dum coram omnibus confiteor me totius scientie pati inopiam.’