

13 The Translator's Cut

Cultural Experience and Philosophical Narration in the Early Latin Translations of Avicenna

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The Latin medieval translations of the philosophical magnum opus of Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā, d. AH 428/1037 CE), the *Kitāb al-Shifā'* or *Book of the Cure/Healing*, are interesting in many respects—for example because of their chronological closeness to Avicenna's original work and their cooperative nature. Most importantly for the present purposes, the translations were of only one of Avicenna's philosophical works, and of this they covered a portion that was significant, but in no way complete. In this chapter, I explore the ways in which the translators “pruned” the content of the *Shifā'* and carried into Latin an extensive picture of this highly structured encyclopedia without covering its full scope. The Latin translators of Avicenna's work—especially the earliest ones, discussed here—made their selections according to a discernible design of their own. To use the language of cinematography, and imagining the translators as movie directors, the translations they made are their “translators' cut,” in a double sense. On the one hand, the translations are the result of the translators' careful sorting of parts of Avicenna's work; on the other, in the subsequent process of “distribution” in the “movie theaters” (universities and other cultural centers of the time), they seem to have circulated in a configuration different from that devised by the translators—piecemeal, or in partial aggregations, not in their full scope.

The Latin translations of Avicenna were made in two phases: in the second half of the twelfth century in or in connection with the city of Toledo, and in the thirteenth century in Burgos.¹ Here, I focus on the Toledan phase and the very first two known translators of the *Shifā'* into Latin, the Jewish Abraham ibn Daud (or Avendauth, d. c. 1180), and the Christian Dominicus Gundissalinus (or Gundissalvi, d. probably before 1194).² I only glance at the other two translators of the Toledo phase, Alfred of Sareshel (or Shareshill) and Michael Scot, since they translated parts of the *Shifā'*, or were trained to do so, in the footsteps of Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus. The latter deserve special attention as the true initiators of the enterprise of translating Avicenna's *Shifā'* into Latin.³ Since they worked as a team (most famous is their joint translation of the section of the *Shifā'* on psychology), I study Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus together, ascribing to both of them not only the translations they made

together, but also those that they individually executed on the basis of a shared plan.

The “cut” of Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus as translators of the *Shifāʾ* is an interesting indicator of the intellectual climate in which they lived, their understanding of the *Shifāʾ*’s architecture, and the interreligious environments in which Avicenna’s masterpiece was circulating in contemporary Andalusia. They selected the encyclopedic *Shifāʾ* from Avicenna’s many philosophical works (some of which appear to have been available in Andalusia in the twelfth century) as his most Aristotelian work. Within it, they prioritized some parts and sections over others, preferring natural philosophy and metaphysics over logic and entirely excluding mathematics. In the pivotal final part—the metaphysical section (*Ilāhiyyāt, Science of Divine Things*), the doctrinal and structural pinnacle of Avicenna’s *summa*—their translation choices left visible marks on the beginning (its title) and the end (the last two chapters, on Islamic tenets).

These three kinds of interventions might conceivably be explained as purely contingent, resulting from the unavailability of the other works of Avicenna in Andalusia or the defective manuscripts at the translators’ disposal. I leave this possibility aside. Instead, I would like to follow a more ambitious path, assuming that Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus made deliberate choices. These choices can be explained on the basis of three interrelated, broadly “cultural” experiences, deeply rooted in the translators’ educational upbringing, epistemic approach to reality, and scholarly agenda. First, a sense of school affiliation and the acknowledgment of Aristotle’s paramount authority may have led them to opt for the most Peripatetic work of Avicenna available—their “screenplay.” Second, their scholarly interest in the *philosophia realis* seems to have inspired their selection of natural philosophy, psychology, and metaphysics, above logic and mathematics, as the parts of Avicenna’s philosophical encyclopedia most worthy to be translated—their “shooting and montage.” Finally, their sense of acting as philosophers and of belonging to the philosophical class, together with their awareness of the limited scope of any religious affiliation (be it Jewish, Christian, or Muslim) in comparison to the universal force of *falsafa*, may have determined their “philosophization” of the title of Avicenna’s metaphysics and “de-Islamization” of its last two chapters—their “final close-up and dissolve.”

In all these ways, Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus conveyed to Latin readers an image of Avicenna’s philosophy that was palpably different from its Arabic original as their cultural experience prompted a special narration of the work they were translating. They narrowed Avicenna’s wide range of philosophical genres down to the one they considered most important, the *summa per modum expositionis* (a comprehensive philosophical exposition in which Avicenna reworks the inherited canonical texts on the subject), and chose a single specimen of that genre (the *Shifāʾ*) among the several offered by Avicenna. They disjointed the all-encompassing structure of the *Shifāʾ*, reassembling the Latin translations

of some of its sections with a different balance of disciplines and a new theoretical orientation. Finally, they inserted the *Shifā'* into a non-confessional terrain of philosophical discussion, in which Aristotle's "lay" and universalist philosophy as elaborated by Avicenna was to provide neutral ground for philosophical speculation common to the three "religions of the book."

In so doing, these translators manifested what the movie director Pier Paolo Pasolini called an "ingenious analytical mind."⁴ Paraphrasing Pasolini and applying his analysis of the filming of Kennedy's death to the present case, I argue here that Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus's "work of choice and coordination" produced a novel narration of the *Shifā'* by selecting and assembling the "truly significant moments," and gave a new "objectivity" to Avicenna's work that catered to the cultural needs of their Latin audience. This operation was, in a way, truly Avicennian in spirit: it echoed the kind of updating and reform to which Avicenna himself subjected Aristotle's corpus in the *Shifā'*.

Screenplay

The *Shifā'* (c. 411–18/1020–27) is the only major philosophical work by Avicenna systematically translated into Latin during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance.⁵ Among Avicenna's other seven *summae* of philosophy, only some fragmentary quotations of the *Kitāb al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbihāt* (*Book of Pointers and Reminders*) and of the *Kitāb al-Najāt* (*Book of the Salvation*) are preserved in the thirteenth-century *De pugio fidei adversus Mauros et Judaeos* (c. 1270) by the Spanish Dominican Raimundo Martí. The many other types of philosophical works written by Avicenna (classifications of the sciences, systematic commentaries, etc.) do not appear to have left any trace in Latin medieval culture until the Venetian Andrea Alpago (d. 1521) translated a handful of them, together with some works of medicine by Avicenna, presumably in the first two decades of the sixteenth century. The fact that Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus chose a *summa per modum expositionis* to the exclusion of the other genres of Avicenna's works shows that they were interested in the systematic arrangement of philosophy that Avicenna uses in his *summae*.

Avicenna's medicine presents a different case. His magnum opus *Qānūn fī l-ṭibb* (*Canon of Medicine*) was integrally translated into Latin in the twelfth century and was accompanied quite early by full Latin translations of another two of his medical treatises—*al-Adwiya al-qalbiyya* (*Cardiac Remedies*) and *Urjūza fī l-ṭibb* (*Poem of Medicine*)—between the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century.⁶

Whereas in medicine Avicenna produced a single unparalleled masterpiece, the *Qānūn fī l-ṭibb*, in philosophy many of his *summae* competed for preeminence. Why, then, did Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus select the *Shifā'*, preferring it to, say, the *Ishārāt wa-tanbihāt* and the *Najāt*, two

works by Avicenna that were then enjoying great exegetical attention and doctrinal dissemination in the East?

The reason is unlikely to have been a lack of access to Avicenna's other works.⁷ We may therefore wonder whether the *Shifā'* was selected for translation into Latin as the most extensive, the richest and most complete, exposition of philosophy ever produced by Avicenna. This possibility cannot be discarded, but it does not explain everything: if the translators chose the *Shifā'* because it was Avicenna's most extensive work of philosophy, why would they have decided to translate only some portions of it and skip others, according to the piecemeal strategy I will detail below?

I argue here that the *Shifā'* was selected by the translators because it was the most Aristotelian of Avicenna's *summae*, as Avicenna himself claims in the Prologue. That the Latin translators had some perception of the particularly Peripatetic character of the *Shifā'* within Avicenna's philosophical output is undisputable: one of the first parts of the work they translated was that Prologue, in which Avicenna says that the book is "more accommodating to my Peripatetic colleagues" (*cum participibus de peripateticorum numero plus concordans*) and that Aristotle is "the paradigmatic master" in the discipline of natural philosophy (*praecellens in hac arte*).⁸ Moreover, Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus in their translation of the *Shifā'*'s psychology, followed by Alfred of Sareshel in his translation of some chapters of the meteorology and Michael Scot in his translation of the zoology, stress the connection of these parts of the *Shifā'* with the corresponding writings of Aristotle.⁹ This option in favor of an "Aristotelian" Avicenna by Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus, and by the other translators of the first phase, is congruent with the diffusion of new Latin translations of Aristotle's works and their scholarly and institutional success at the time—a fundamental step in the process that would make Aristotle the acknowledged *Philosophus* and the unparalleled philosophical authority in thirteenth-century Europe.

The Aristotelian narrative, then, seems to have guided the screenplay chosen by Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus and their immediate successors. It will also have left its mark on the decisions made by the later, thirteenth-century translators.¹⁰

Shooting and Montage

Missing Footage

After the Preface (comprising the Introduction to the *Shifā'*, written by Avicenna's disciple, secretary, and biographer Abū 'Ubayd al-Jūzjānī, and Avicenna's own Prologue), the *Shifā'* consists of twenty-two distinct sections (nine on logic, eight on natural philosophy, four on mathematics, plus the single section on metaphysics, which ends with a short appendix on practical philosophy). It fills more than five thousand printed pages

in the standard Cairo edition (1952–83). This *summa* is Aristotelian primarily in its organization, using Aristotle's corpus as its remote source and doctrinal model with the addition of Porphyry's *Isagoge* in logic and the mathematics of Euclid, Ptolemy, and Nicomachus of Gerasa (possibly also of Aristoxenus) to substitute for the mathematics that is missing in the transmitted *corpus Aristotelicum*.

The overall articulation of the *Shifā'* and its dependence on canonical writings in ancient Greek philosophy and science can be seen in the first two lines of each section of Table 13.1. The remaining lines document which of these sections was translated into Latin during the various phases of the translation process: LT 1.1, the translations by Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus; LT 1.2, the subsequent translations of the first phase, by Alfred of Sareshel and Michael Scot; and LT 2, the translations of the second phase.

The Latin translations cover the four main parts of the *Shifā'* differently. Logic was very selectively translated into Latin: only one full section, the first, corresponding to Porphyry's *Isagoge*, and some excerpts of the fifth and the eighth sections, corresponding to the *Posterior Analytics* and the *Rhetoric*, are extant; the remaining six sections were overlooked. Natural philosophy was translated almost completely (with the exception of the final chapters of treatise III and the entire treatise IV on the general principles of physics, mysteriously left untranslated in LT 2, and botany, whose Latin translation is merely attested), but cumulatively—over the course of the three stages of translation considered here. Metaphysics was fully translated at the very start. By contrast, no section of the mathematical part of the *Shifā'* was ever translated.

The selectiveness of the translations appears very clearly in Figure 13.1, which shows the length of the four main parts of the *Shifā'* on the basis of the current edition. In the Cairo edition, logic is by far the longest part, followed by natural philosophy, mathematics, and metaphysics. In the absence of a more precise measurement, a certain lack of uniformity among the four parts should be expected, not only because of the variable length of the canonical writings that Avicenna uses as models, but also because he develops the content of some parts more than of others.¹¹

In the Latin translation, the length of these parts departs considerably from the Arabic original. Aggregating all three translations, we find that only 108 pages of logic were translated, almost the entire natural philosophy (1,265 pages out of 1,388), nothing pertaining to mathematics, and all the 453 pages of metaphysics.

In other words, the decision by the Latin translators, following in the footsteps of Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus, to pay less attention to the *Shifā'*'s logic than its natural philosophy and metaphysics, and to totally neglect its mathematics, does not reflect the importance that Avicenna himself ascribes to these disciplines in his *summa*. In the Arabic work, logic is a very extensive part and mathematics a substantial one, unlike in other, shorter *summae* by Avicenna, where mathematics is absent or

Table 13.1 The Content and Latin Translations of Avicenna's *Shifā'*

Preface and (I) Logic (9 sections)										
<i>Shifā'</i>	Preface	<i>Madkbal</i>	<i>Maqūlāt</i>	<i>'Ibāra</i>	<i>Qiyās</i>	<i>Burbān</i>	<i>Jadal</i>	<i>Safsafa</i>	<i>Khiṭāba</i>	<i>Shi'r</i>
Model	---	Porph. <i>Isag. Logica</i>	<i>Categ.</i>	<i>De int.</i>	<i>An. Pr.</i>	<i>An. Post.</i>	<i>Topica</i>	<i>El. Soph.</i>	<i>Rhetor.</i>	<i>Poet.</i>
LT 1.1	<i>Verba discipuli Avicennae; Verba Avicennae</i>	---	---	---	---	<i>De convenientia et differentia scientiarum II.7</i>	---	---	---	---
LT 1.2	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---
LT 2	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	Fragms.	---
(II) Natural Philosophy (8 sections)										
<i>Shifā'</i>	<i>Samā' ṭabī'ī (I–IV)</i>	<i>Samā' wa-'Ālam</i>	<i>Kawn wa-Fasād</i>	<i>Af'āl wa-Infi'ālāt</i>	<i>Ma'ādin wa-Āthār 'ulwiyya</i>	<i>Nafs</i>	<i>Nabāt</i>	<i>Ḥayawān</i>		
Model	<i>Physica</i>	<i>De caelo</i>	<i>De gen. corr.</i>	<i>Meteor. A.3 B.1–3 Δ</i>	<i>Meteor. A–Γ</i>	<i>De anima Parva naturalia</i>	Ps.-Arist. <i>De plantis I</i>	<i>Hist. Part. Gen. Animal.</i>		
LT 1.1	<i>Liber primus naturalium I–III.2</i>	---	---	---	---	<i>Liber de anima seu Sextus naturalium</i>	---	---		
LT 1.2	---	---	---	---	<i>De miner. I.1 I.5 II.6</i>	---	---	<i>De animal.</i>		
LT 2	III.2–10	<i>De caelo</i>	<i>De gen. corr.</i>	<i>De act. pass. qualit. prim.</i>	<i>Libri metheor.</i>	---	Attested	---		
(III) Mathematics (4 sections)										
<i>Shifā'</i>	<i>Usūl al-handasa</i>	<i>'Ilm al-Hay'a</i>	<i>Ḥisāb</i>	<i>Jawāmi' 'ilm al-mūsīqā</i>						
Model	Euclid <i>Elements</i>	Ptolemy <i>Almagest</i>	Nicomachus of Gerasa <i>Introduction to Arithmetic</i>	Ptolemy (Aristoxenus?) <i>Harmonica</i>						
LT 1–2	---	---	---	---						
(IV) Metaphysics [+ Appendix of Practical Philosophy] (1 section)										
<i>Shifā'</i>	<i>Ilābiyyāt</i>									
Model	Aristotle, <i>Metaphysics</i> [Arist., <i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> ; Bryson, <i>Oikonomikos</i> ; Plato, <i>Republic</i> , <i>Laws</i>]									
LT 1.1	<i>Liber de Philosophia prima sive scientia divina</i>									
LT 1.2–2	---									

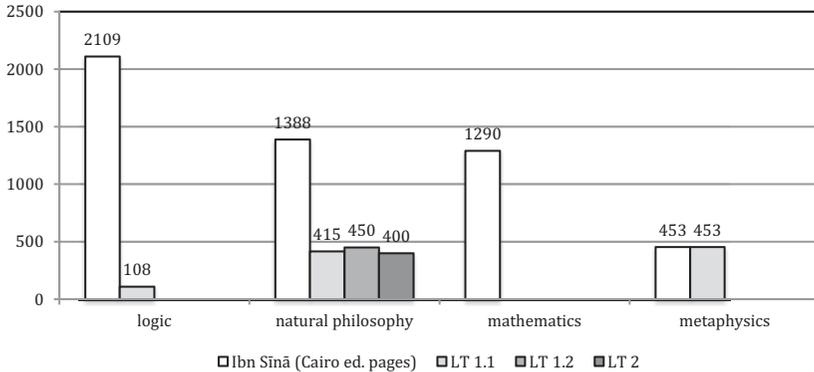


Figure 13.1 The length of different sections of Avicenna's *Shifā'* in the Arabic and the Latin translations.

Source: Author.

simply copied from previous works. In general terms, we can say that, thanks to the translators' choices, Avicenna appeared to Latin readers as a much less prominent logician than he was in his own setting, ceased to be a mathematician at all, and emerged primarily as a physicist and metaphysician.

From this general viewpoint, Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus's seminal choices seem to reflect the distinctive large-scale cultural experience noted above, and an intention of responding, on its basis, to the cultural needs of the intended audience. Within the logic of the *Shifā'*, for example, the translators' decision to privilege the section on Porphyry's *Isagoge* may be seen as a contribution to the debate on universals that had been thriving in Latin philosophy since the time of Roscelin and Abelard in the first half of the twelfth century. The omission of the rest of the logic suggests various explanations. Perhaps the translators understandably hesitated in the face of this part's enormous length and the expertise in logic required for its translation; perhaps, too, they thought that the culture of the day would not benefit inordinately from a logical theory that, despite its originality, was not entirely new in the Latin world—at least in part, it was already available in Latin in the *logica vetus* of Aristotle and its commentaries.¹² The *Shifā'*'s natural philosophy and metaphysics, in contrast, was unprecedented. It seemed capable of flanking the new physics and metaphysics of Aristotle, then being translated from Greek into Latin, with a competent interpretation and a seminal form of commentary. Finally, previous translations meant that Latin readers already had access to abundant material on the Arabic *quadrivium*; the total neglect of the mathematics of the *Shifā'* should be set against this background.

Individual Scenes

Thanks to recent progress in lexicographical analysis, six distinct translations of the *Shifāʾ* can be ascribed to Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus within LT 1.1, as follows.

- (i) Jūzjānī's Introduction with *quaedam capitula intentionum uniuersalium* ("some chapters on general goals" or "on universal concepts") of Avicenna, which can be identified with Avicenna's Prologue and at least chapter I.12 of the *Madkhal* (Introduction: Avicenna's reworking of Porphyry's *Isagoge* in the first section of the logic of the *Shifāʾ*).¹³ The Latin translation of *Madkhal* I.12 is entitled *De uniuersalibus* and is ascribed to Ibn Daud in the manuscript tradition. Ibn Daud translated this group of chapters,¹⁴ wrote a short Foreword, and sent them "privately" to the archbishop of Toledo (arguably John of Castelmoron, in office 1152–66) to attract his attention and gain his support. This translation was probably made at the very beginning of the project and later added, either by its author or in the subsequent manuscript tradition, to translation (ii).¹⁵
- (ii) The rest of the *Madkhal*: an anonymous translation that scholars ascribe either to Ibn Daud or to Gundissalinus, now edited, together with (i), as *Logica*.¹⁶
- (iii) Chapter II.7 (the seventh chapter of the second treatise) of the section on logic that corresponds to the *Posterior Analytics* (*Kitāb al-Burhān, Book of Demonstration*) was published as *Summa Avicennae de conuenientia et differentia subiectorum*. This chapter was probably translated by Gundissalinus, who incorporated it into his *De divisione philosophiae*.¹⁷
- (iv) The first two treatises (I–II), the first chapter of the third treatise (III.1, called *Prologus* in the Latin translation), and some lines of the following chapter (called *Capitulus primus*) of the *Samāʾ ṭabīʿī* (*Natural Auscultation*), which is the first section of the natural philosophy of the *Shifāʾ* in four treatises. This translation is edited by Simone Van Riet as *Liber primus naturalium*, with differing specifications of the individual treatises' subject matter. It is anonymous in all the known manuscripts, but recent lexicographical analysis suggests it can be ascribed to Gundissalinus.¹⁸
- (v) The translation of the *Kitāb al-Nafs* (*Book of the Soul*), the sixth section of natural philosophy of the *Shifāʾ*, was edited as *Liber de anima seu Sextus de naturalibus*. It was made jointly by Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus in teamwork, as Ibn Daud's foreword to the translation attests.¹⁹
- (vi) The translation of the *Ilāhiyyāt* (edited as *Liber de philosophia prima sive Scientia diuina*), the part of the *Shifāʾ* dealing with metaphysics.

Three of the translation's twenty-five manuscripts ascribe it to Gundissalinus, who may be regarded as its probable translator.²⁰

These six translations were made in the course of two decades, between 1161 or 1162, when Gundissalinus came to Toledo, and 1180, when Ibn Daud died there. Scholars disagree on their sequence.²¹ Translation (i) falls naturally at the beginning of the period, not far removed in time from translation (v), since both are dedicated to the same bishop of Toledo, in office until 1164. Translation (iv) can tentatively be placed as the last, if we take its abrupt end, in the middle of the second chapter of the third treatise, as a sign of incompleteness, usually attributed to vicissitudes on the translators' side.²² The time of composition of the other translations is still to be ascertained.

The mismatch between the sequence of the translations and the order of their Arabic sources suggests a gradual understanding of the *Shifā'* by the translators and a translation project refined and updated over time. The *Maqāṣid al-Falāsifa* (*Intentions or Doctrines of the Philosophers*) of al-Ghazālī (Algazel, d. 1111), structured according to the sequence logic–metaphysics–natural philosophy, as opposed to the *Shifā'*'s sequence logic–natural philosophy–metaphysics, may have played a role in this process. This work was translated into Latin by Gundissalinus and a certain Magister Johannes as *Summa theoricæ philosophiæ* or *De philosophorum intentionibus* in the same Toledan environment as the translations LT 1.1.²³

The Plot

Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus translated entire sections or chapters of three of the *Shifā'*'s four main parts—always including the first (or, for metaphysics, only) section. Being the only Latin translators ever to engage with more than one part of Avicenna's work,²⁴ they probably had comprehensive access to the Arabic original of the entire *Shifā'*.²⁵ They also translated at least three fundamental texts explaining how the *Shifā'* is constructed: Avicenna's remarks on the parts of the work and their raison d'être in the Prologue, complemented by al-Jūzjānī's sketch of the work's material genesis in his Introduction; and the overview classification of the different philosophical sciences in the chapters *Madkhal* I.2 and *Burbān* II.7, which also schematically map the parts and sections of the *Shifā'* itself. *Madkhal* I.2 has a prominent place at the beginning of the first part of the *Shifā'* translated by Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus, whereas *Burbān* II.7 achieved widespread visibility in Latin by being inserted into Gundissalinus's own *De divisione philosophiæ*.

All this allows us to go beyond the impression of a translation project planned ambitiously, but realized incompletely and left unfinished, or of a collection of unconnected individual translations, randomly extracted

from the *mare magnum* of Avicenna's *Shifā'*. A more interesting explanation is that the translations ascribed to Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus are the ones they specifically wanted to make, and that a keen understanding of Avicenna's philosophy in the *Shifā'* governed their choice.

The hypothesis advanced here is that Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus gave Latin readers a sampling of the entire *Shifā'*, in which some fundamental connections between the work's distinct parts come to the fore more strongly than in the Arabic original because of the translators' selectivity. A well-defined profile of the *Shifā'* emerges from Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus's selection, emphasizing the main structural junctures or nodal points. A special bond connects the parts of the *Shifā'* they translated—the doctrine of universals in logic, the theory of the general principles of physics, and the doctrine of the soul in natural philosophy, all of which culminate in metaphysics.²⁶

This is hardly a coincidence. The doctrine of universals, the general principles of physics, and psychology are the sections of the *Shifā'* in which Avicenna most often points his readers forward to metaphysics for a definitive discussion, and to which he makes frequent back-references in the *Ilāhiyyāt*.²⁷ This network of cross-references, which Avicenna deploys in order to keep all the elements of his immense *summa* epistemologically interconnected, finds its fullest expression in *Madkhal* I.2 and *Burhān* II.7, chapters that also refer forward to the metaphysics section and are recalled there.²⁸ *Madkhal* I.2 emphasizes the place of logic in the classification of the philosophical sciences; *Burhān* II.7 establishes the status of metaphysics as *regina scientiarum*.

To resume our guiding analogy: putting together the various scenes created during shooting, we obtain a movie with a well-defined plot, one that is encoded in the “trailer” of *Madkhal* I.2 and *Burhān* II.7,²⁹ and finds its doctrinal “happy ending” in the *Ilāhiyyāt*. The metaphysical orientation of Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus's translations is evident on quantitative grounds: as we have seen, the *Ilāhiyyāt* is the only part of the *Shifā'* that was fully translated into Latin (not only in LT 1.1, but also subsequently), and, though shorter than the other three parts in the Arabic original, it was longer than the sections of logic and natural philosophy translated in LT 1.1.³⁰ By connecting the alpha and omega of the *Shifā'* more directly than in the Arabic original, Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus's “cut” encapsulated the quintessence of Avicenna's work. They would go on to use Avicenna creatively as a philosophical source in their own ways, with equal emphasis on metaphysics.³¹

Final Close-up and Dissolve

“Philosophizing” Avicenna's Science of Divine Things

The title of the *Ilāhiyyāt* (*Divine Things*) in LT 1.1 reads *Liber de philosophia prima sive scientia divina* (*Book on First Philosophy or Divine*

Science) in the critical edition of the Latin translation; the first chapter is headed “On beginning to seek after the subject matter of first philosophy so that its whichness [*ayyiyya*; Cairo ed. *anniyya*] among the sciences becomes evident” in the Arabic, and “Capitulum de inquisitione subiecti primae philosophiae ad hoc ut ostendatur ipsa esse de numero scientiarum” (“Chapter on the enquiry about the subject-matter of first philosophy, in order to show that this is one of the sciences”) in the Latin.

Whereas *scientia divina* corresponds to the Arabic *ilāhiyyāt*, the preceding element of the Latin title, *philosophia prima*, has no equivalent at all in the Arabic title, or, if it has in some manuscripts, that equivalent (*falsafa ulā*) comes after, not before, “divine things.”³² In the absence of further evidence in the Arabic, it seems that the Latin translators either added the expression “first philosophy,” projecting back on the entire *Ilāhiyyāt* the status of metaphysics as “first philosophy” that they found in the title of the first chapter of this part of the *Shifā*; or, if they read it in the Arabic title of the *Ilāhiyyāt*, they moved it from second to first position. Either way, they enhanced the status of Avicenna’s metaphysics as a philosophical discipline and its rank at the top of the system of philosophy, also endorsing what was a typically Aristotelian name for metaphysics.³³ Their purpose may have been to avoid from the outset any possible view of the *Ilāhiyyāt* as a theologically inspired *scientia divina* rather than a properly philosophical treatise.

The stress on philosophy in the title of the *Ilāhiyyāt* is not an isolated case in these translations. Ibn Daud calls himself “Avendauth Israelita philosophus” when addressing the bishop of Toledo in the foreword to the Latin translation of *Nafs*.³⁴ There, he also calls Avicenna “Avicenna philosophus.”³⁵ These two epithets can be connected with the reference to Aristotle as “Aristoteles philosophus” in Ibn Daud’s Latin translation of al-Jūzjānī’s Introduction.³⁶ A clear line of philosophical ascendance connects Avicenna with his Greek model (Aristotle) and his Latin translator (Ibn Daud).³⁷ Ibn Daud’s insistence on the philosophical character of Aristotle and Avicenna, as well as his own, matches the emphasis on the philosophical tenor of the *Ilāhiyyāt* in Gundissalinus’s “zoom” onto the title of the section.³⁸

“De-Islamizing” Avicenna’s Science of Divine Things

The last two chapters of the *Ilāhiyyāt* (X.4–5) are summarized and paraphrased rather than translated verbatim, contrary to what happens to the rest of the work. These two chapters deal with practical philosophy (politics, economics, ethics), with many references to Islamic tenets and figures. The role of the Muslim prophet as lawgiver in the domains of civil life, family management, and individual conduct assures the intersection of practical philosophy with issues and figures relevant to the Islamic faith. On these topics, the Latin translation is much shorter than

the Arabic source text.³⁹ The end of the *Ilāhiyyāt*—and thus of the entire *Shifā'*—fades away before the Latin reader's eyes.

A significant example of the looser translation technique adopted by the Latin translators in these two chapters comes at the beginning of *Ilāhiyyāt* X.5. The Arabic title of this chapter is “Concerning the caliph and the imām: the necessity of obeying them; remarks on politics, transactions, and morals,” which is translated in Latin as “Capitulum de eligendo successore et summo sacerdote et de contractibus et de moribus” (Chapter on how to choose the successor and the highest priest, on contracts and morals). We immediately see that the Latin translation of the title is not literal: *imām* is translated in more familiar terms as *summus sacerdos*, and the idea of the necessity of obeying him and the caliph is replaced with that of properly choosing them, a point that Avicenna will develop only later in the chapter.

The changes affecting the first lines of chapter X.5 are even more substantial. There, some parts of the source are heavily interpreted, others are abbreviated, still others completely omitted, such as the passage in which Avicenna recalls the cooperation between the third and fourth caliph, the wise 'Umar and the intelligent 'Alī. The same applies *mutatis mutandis* for the Latin translation of the entire chapters X.4–5. As I have mentioned, Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus's earlier translation of the *Ilāhiyyāt* tended to be more literal.

Several different hypotheses can be advanced to explain this switch of strategy:

- a) Chapters X.4–5 were shortened in the Arabic exemplar of the *Shifā'* used by the translators
- b) Chapters X.4–5 deal with practical philosophy, and are less directly related to metaphysics, the main subject of the *Ilāhiyyāt*
- c) Because of their Islamic content, chapters X.4–5 are difficult to translate for the translators and/or difficult to understand for the audience
- d) Because of their Islamic content, chapters X.4–5 conflict with the religious beliefs of the translators and/or the audience
- e) Because of their Islamic content, chapters X.4–5 conflict with the translators' belief in the universal scope and universalizing force of philosophy.

Given that chapters X.4–5 instantiate (if in a particularly striking way) a more general tendency in the early Latin translations of Arabic philosophy—the translators often omit Islamic accretions on philosophical topics⁴⁰—we can confidentially discard hypothesis (a); anyway, we have no record of Arabic manuscripts of the *Ilāhiyyāt* in which the last two chapters are abridged. All the other hypotheses are viable. With regard to (c), other cases of cultural distance affecting Arabic–Latin translations can be invoked.⁴¹ Hypothesis (d) is supported by other, more

limited and less conspicuous, examples of de-Islamization in the translation of the *Ilāhiyyāt*.⁴² One might also wonder whether Gundissalinus's ecclesiastical function as canon, or the Bishop of Toledo's sponsorship of the translation, played a role in this tendency to reduce or eliminate the Islamic elements of Avicenna's discourse.

Hypotheses (b) and (e) are strictly philosophical and very much congruent with what we have observed about the translators' emphasis on the philosophical character of the *Ilāhiyyāt*, the interreligious environment (Muslim, Jewish, Christian) in which the translations of the *Shifā'* were conceived and first realized, and Ibn Daud's and Gundissalinus's self-identification in the social class of the philosophers.

To Be Continued

The Arabic Ibn Sīnā wrote many philosophical works, both in Arabic and in his mother tongue, Persian. In the most extensive and influential of these, the *Shifā'*, he acted as a logician and a mathematician no less than as a natural philosopher and a metaphysician, and he opened up metaphysics to incorporate practical philosophy with suggestions and motifs taken from Islam. The Latin Avicenna, by contrast, turns out to be the author of only one philosophical work. Seen through the parts of this unique opus selected for translation, he leans much more towards natural philosophy and metaphysics than towards logic, is not at all interested in mathematics, and makes minimal concessions to Islamic religion.

Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus's direct involvement in the trends of twelfth-century European culture, as *engagé* intellectuals, knowledgeable scholars of Avicenna, and holders of a universalistic view of philosophy, determined this transformation. The selection of the Peripatetic *Shifā'* as the only Avicennian work to be translated into Latin, the choice of the portions to be translated, and the joint process of philosophizing and de-Islamizing Avicenna's metaphysics all exemplify their approach. From this vantage point, the acknowledgment of Aristotle's authority in philosophy, the ability to grasp the epistemological scaffolding of Avicenna's work, and the appeal to the universal dimension of philosophy across dogmatic barriers—by means of which the *Shifā'*, written by a Muslim, could be jointly translated by a Jew such as Ibn Daud and a Christian such as Gundissalinus—look like facets of the same prism.

The translation procedures by which Ibn Sīnā's *falsafa* was transformed into Avicenna's *philosophia* help to relativize the famous adage "to translate is to betray." Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus' translations are certainly not the mirror image of the Arabic original of Avicenna's *Shifā'*. Yet it is by these very means that Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus—the true "directors" of the Arabic–Latin translation of Avicenna's *Shifā'*—convey to the historian of philosophy an insightful reading of Avicenna's masterpiece in

philosophy. It is a reading that speaks to the cultural needs of the twelfth-century European readership, contributes to the era's organization of scientific research and of the curricular *ratio studiorum*, and gives a glimpse of the translators' view of themselves as philosophers.

This picture might be prolonged in different directions. In the “distribution” of the movie, for example, something has been lost, since there is a relative dearth of manuscripts of the *Shifā'* in present-day Spain, whether in Arabic or in Latin translation.⁴³ A consideration of “audience reactions” would also be in order. Judging the success of the various translations by the number of extant manuscripts, we obtain a ranking in which the translation of Avicenna's *De anima* is followed, in descending order, by those of the *Philosophia prima*, the *Liber primus naturalium*, and the *Logica*. This documents that the single translations did not circulate *en bloc*, according to the “translators' cut.” It also indicates that the audience's taste somehow amplified the translators' emphasis on natural philosophy and metaphysics within the *Shifā'*, as well as their downplaying of logic.⁴⁴ It should not be forgotten, finally, that this movie received severe, though competent, “reviews” in thirteenth-century Parisian theological circles, at the time of the reiterated Paris prohibitions of philosophical texts and condemnations of philosophical theses.⁴⁵

If taken all together and regarded as translations of one and the same Arabic work, the Latin translations of the distinct parts and sections of the *Shifā'* constitute one of the most extensive Arabic–Latin versions of philosophy ever made during the Middle Ages. In this enlarged perspective, new and fruitful questions arise: the continuities and distinctions between the translations of Avicenna's *Shifā'* discussed here (LT 1.1) and the subsequent ones (LT 1.2; LT 2); the relationship of these translations of the *Shifā'* with Gerard of Cremona's Latin translation—also made in Toledo in the second half of the twelfth century—of the medical work by Avicenna best known in the Middle Ages, the *Canon of Medicine*;⁴⁶ and the interplay between the Latin translations of Avicenna's philosophical and medical works with those of the *Shifā'*'s “companion,” al-Ghazālī's *Maqāṣid al-Falāsifa*,⁴⁷ and its “counterpoint,” the Aristotelian commentaries of Avicenna's arch-critic Averroes.⁴⁸ One could widen the angle even more by taking an intercultural perspective, for instance—because Latin is not the only medieval language in which Avicenna's *Shifā'* was translated. Hebrew and Persian translations of the work are also extant, as are extensive quotations of it in Syriac.

All these overlappings can be grasped only through a synoptic view, capable of detecting analogies and differences and tracing continuities and changes over time. In other words, this key event of the Arabic-to-Latin transmission of philosophical culture should be approached from a comprehensive and multidisciplinary angle. Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus, and their selective translation of the *Shifā'*, have given us a crucial line of orientation in that inspiring network of interrelations.

Notes

- 1 See Bertolacci, "Community"; Bertolacci and Alpina, "Introduction."
- 2 Fontaine and Eran, "Abraham Ibn Daud"; Polloni, "Toledan Translation Movement"; DB-Dominicus Gundissalinus at <https://pagines.uab.cat/gundissalvi/>.
- 3 Ibn Daud took the courageous step of seeking logistical and financial support from alien religious authorities such as the Christian bishopric of Toledo. Gundissalinus probably moved to Toledo around 1161–62 in order to translate Avicenna together with Ibn Daud, and returned to Segovia in 1181 when his collaborator died, probably then ceasing his activity as a translator of Avicenna.
- 4 Pasolini, *Observations on the Long Take*, 5: "Let's suppose that among the detectives who have seen these hypothetical films spliced end-to-end there is one with an ingenious analytical mind. His ingenuity might show itself only in coordination. Intuiting the truth from an attentive analysis of the various pieces, he could gradually reconstruct it by choosing the truly significant moments of the various long takes, thereby finding their real order. One has, simply, a montage. In the wake of such work of choice and coordination, the various points of view would be dissolved and subjectivity would give way to objectivity; the pitiful eyes and ears (or cameras and recorders) which select and reproduce the fleeting and none too pleasant reality would be replaced by a narrator."
- 5 On this work and its pivotal place in Avicenna's oeuvre, see Gutas, *Avicenna*.
- 6 The first of these treatises deals with cardiology; the style of argumentation in the second shifts from prose to poetry. On account of these various Latin translations of Avicenna's medicine, Dante Alighieri and Geoffrey Chaucer, among others, were justified in portraying Avicenna primarily as a physician.
- 7 Raimundo Martí in the thirteenth century could have had access to *Ishārāt wa-tanbihāt* and *Najāt*; Averroes (Ibn Rushd, d. 1198) in the previous century, in the same Andalusian context in which Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus operated, could also refer to Avicenna's *Najāt* in one of his logical treatises, although the *Shifā'* remained his main repository of Avicenna's philosophy. Dunlop, "Averroes," 33.
- 8 Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Shifā'*, *al-Mantiq*, *al-Madkhal*, Cairo ed., 10.14, 11.4; Avicenna, *The Healing, Logic: Isagoge*, 16.22, 16.27; English translation in Gutas, *Avicenna*, 44–45; Latin translation in Avicenna, *Logica*, ed. Hudry (hereafter *Logica*), 115.12–13, 116.10–11.
- 9 See Bertolacci, "Community," 51–52. Polloni, "Aristotle," 185, notes that apart from Aristotle's *De anima*, the two other Aristotelian writings that Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus believed were included in Avicenna's psychology (*De sensu et sensato* and the pseudo-Aristotelian *De intellectu et intellecto*) were never translated in Toledo, suggesting that their incorporation in Avicenna's work made a translation unnecessary.
- 10 The second-phase translators of the section of the *Shifā'* corresponding to Aristotle's *Physics* resumed exactly where the translation had stopped in the first phase, in chapter III. 2. However, they did not complete the translation of the rest of this section, but stopped at the end of chapter III. 10, omitting III. 11–15 and the entire fourth treatise (see Janssens in Avicenna Latinus, *Liber primus naturalium. Tractatus tertius*, 1*–4*). The first omitted chapter (III.

- 11) refers to God with names that allude to creative agency and as the “True One” (*al-aḥad al-ḥaqq*), ending with issues regarding heresy. These non-Aristotelian overtones may have played a role in the translators’ decision to end the translation at III. 10. See Astesiano, “Latin Translation,” 446 n. 20.
- 11 According to al-Jūzjānī’s Introduction, Avicenna expanded on certain sections of the *Shifā’* (especially the logic) more than others because he had more freedom from non-scholarly duties and richer bibliographical resources. We may wonder, however, whether he felt a special predilection for logic, making it, also in extent, the doctrinal foundation of the work.
- 12 Hudry, in *Logica*, 79, supposes that the Toledo archbishop had reservations about the Latin translation of the *Madkhal* of the *Shifā’* not only for stylistic reasons, but also because Boethius’s commentary on Porphyry’s *Isagoge* was already available to Latin philosophers. An important question for future research is the extent of Ibn Daud’s and Gundissalinus’s knowledge of and expertise in logic.
- 13 The expression *quaedam capitula* (“some chapters”) seems to refer neither to the entire *Madkhal* (which is called *liber*, “book,” and cannot be equated to a group of chapters), nor only to Avicenna’s Prologue to the *Shifā’* (= *Madkhal* I. 1), which figures as a single chapter both in the Arabic text and in Hudry’s recent edition of the Latin translation.
- 14 That Ibn Daud was assisted in this translation by some unknown Latinist was first suggested by d’Alverny, “Notes,” 341 and 349, and taken up in later studies (e.g., Burnett, “Arabic into Latin,” 394).
- 15 The Latin text of Ibn Daud’s Foreword, al-Jūzjānī’s Introduction, and Avicenna’s Prologue is in *Logica*, 105–10, 113–17, and see 197–209 for the Latin translation of chapter I. 12 of the *Madkhal*.
- 16 Hudry, “La traduction latine” (cf. *Logica*, 67–71), takes Ibn Daud to be the translator of the entire *Madkhal* on account of his translation of the preliminary chapters and chapter I. 12. Hasse and Büttner, “Notes,” 333–36, regard Gundissalinus as the translator of the *Madkhal* on the basis of lexicographical analysis, corroborating the hypothesis of Alonso Alonso, “Coincidencias.” Based on differences of vocabulary, d’Alverny, “Notes,” 350, finds that the translator is unlikely to have been Gundissalinus, as does Burnett, “Arabic into Latin,” 394.
- 17 Janssens, “Le *De divisione philosophiae*”; Strobino, “Avicenna’s *Kitāb al-Burhān*.” The term *subiectorum* in the title probably stands for *scientiarum*.
- 18 Hasse and Büttner, “Notes,” 333–36.
- 19 The two translators’ interaction has rightly attracted scholarly attention. See d’Alverny, “Les traductions”; Burnett, “Translating”; Polloni in this volume.
- 20 In another manuscript, the ascription is to Gerard of Cremona (see Bertolacci, “Community,” 41 n. 8). Gundissalinus seems to have quoted the Arabic text of the *Ilāhiyyāt* independently of its Latin translation (Polloni, “Aristotle,” 172; Polloni, “Gundissalinus and Avicenna,” 516 and n. 8).
- 21 Hudry (in *Logica*, 83–84) thinks the *Ilāhiyyāt* was translated before *Madkhal* I. 12 due to the reference to the “*Metaphysica Avicenne*” found in the Latin translation of the chapter’s title. Polloni (“Gundissalinus and Avicenna,” 515) takes the *De anima* to be the first translation made by Gundissalinus.
- 22 The death of the translator or of one of the associates is cautiously advanced as an explanation in Janssens, “The *Physics*,” 312; Janssens, “The *Liber primus naturalium*,” 219–20. If Gundissalinus was its translator, the abrupt

- end of (iv) might be related to his sudden flight from Toledo and return to Segovia soon after Ibn Daud's violent death in Toledo in 1180 (see Hudry in *Logica*, 81). Alternatively, the incompleteness of (iv) has been explained by the presence of a complete translation of Aristotle's *Physics* among the Aristotelian works translated by Gerard of Cremona at Toledo at the same time (Polloni, "Aristotle," 185).
- 23 The supposed adoption of a "Ghazalian" order would help explain why translation (iv) was apparently produced at the end of the series, as its incompleteness indicates, despite coming before (vi) in the structure of the *Shifā'*. Why translation (iv) was made after (v) remains to be explained.
 - 24 If the recent attribution of the *De diluviis* to Michael Scot in LT 1.2 is confirmed (Hasse and Büttner, "Notes," 344–47), he would have translated both the *De animalibus* and the *De diluviis*. Magister Johannes Gunsalvi and Salomon in LT 2 are reported as the translators of at least five sections of the natural philosophy of the *Shifā'*. None of these translators, however, went beyond the second part of the *Shifā'* on natural philosophy.
 - 25 There are good reasons to rule out that the selection of the parts for translation arose from the translators' reliance on defective Arabic exemplars of the *Shifā'*, since we lack attestations of Arabic manuscripts of the *Shifā'* that contain only the *Madkhal* in logic, the *Samā' ṭabī'ī* and the *Nafs* in natural philosophy, and the *Ilāhiyyāt* (see <http://avicennaproject.eu/>, section "All *Shifā'* Manuscripts"). Moreover, Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus had more than one exemplar of the work at their disposal, at least for logic (see *Logica*, 106.3–4). The structural connotations of the titles of the translations (iv) and (v), *Liber primus naturalium* and *Liber sextus naturalium*, with their precise indication of the order of the sections within the *Shifā'*'s natural philosophy, indicate awareness of the work's full structure.
 - 26 Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus possibly envisaged a similar foundational relationship in the natural philosophy of the *Shifā'* between the general principles of physics and psychology.
 - 27 See Bertolacci, *Reception*, 272–74, 279–80, 288–92. The further reference to metaphysics that occurs in *Madkhal* I. 4 is analyzed in Di Vincenzo, "A Discipline." On references to *Nafs* in the metaphysical treatment of prophecy in the *Ilāhiyyāt*, see Bertolacci, "Metaphysical Proof." Avicenna's conception of the relationship of psychology with metaphysics in the *Shifā'* and his other philosophical works is analyzed in Alpina, *Subject, Definition, Activity*.
 - 28 Bertolacci, *Reception*, 267, 272, 281, 282–84. It is significant that the *Burhān* is often cited in the first treatise of the *Samā' ṭabī'ī*, within the part of the section translated into Latin by Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus in (iv) (*ibid.*, 282 n. 51), and that *Burhān* and *Nafs* are the only two sections of the *Shifā'* whose title is mentioned in the *Ilāhiyyāt* (*ibid.*, 282, 292, 572–73).
 - 29 In the still uncertain chronology of Gundissalinus's works, we do not yet know the precise position of the *De divisione philosophiae* (where the Latin translation of *Burhān* II. 7 appeared) with respect to the Latin translations of the *Shifā'* considered here—whether it was written before, during, or after LT 1.1.
 - 30 The link between the logical doctrine of universals and metaphysics, and the dependence of logic on metaphysics as regards that doctrine, are made explicit in the full title of the Latin translation of *Madkhal* I. 12: "Incipit liber Avendauth de universalibus asumptus ex quinto *Metaphysice* Avicenne"

- (“Here starts the book of Ibn Daud on universals, taken from the fifth [treatise] of Avicenna’s *Metaphysics*,” *Logica*, 197.1–2). *Madkhal* I. 12 is a pivotal chapter, containing two prospective references to the *Ilāhiyyāt* (Bertolacci, *Reception*, 279–80). *Metaphysica* and *Metaphysica Avicenne de prima philosophia sive scientia divina* are additional titles of the metaphysical part of the *Shifā’* attested in Latin manuscripts (*Liber de Philosophia prima*, 123*–124*).
- 31 Polloni, “Gundissalinus and Avicenna,” 549–50, contends that in his original works, Gundissalinus “enacts a sort of ‘cherry-picking’ upon the Avicennian writings he had at his disposal.”
- 32 Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Shifā’, al-Ilāhiyyāt* (1), 3.3, 3.6–7; Avicenna Latinus, *Liber de Philosophia prima*, 123*, 1.3–4. Among the sixteen Arabic manuscripts selected in www.avicennaproject.eu, only MS Mashhad, Kitābkhānah-i Āstān-i Quds-i Raḍavī, 7347 (copied before 630/1232–33) reports “known as first philosophy,” after “divine things” (the same reading is added in the margin of MS Oxford, Bodleian Library, Pococke 125, 561–571H/1166–75).
- 33 The same applies to the title *Metaphysica* used to designate the metaphysics of the *Shifā’* in other Latin translations of LT 1.1 (see n. 30 above).
- 34 Avicenna Latinus, *Liber de anima seu Sextus de naturalibus*, 3.2.
- 35 *Ibid.*, 4.17.
- 36 *Logica*, 110.9; Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Shifā’, al-Manṭiq, al-Madkhal*, 3.16, Avicenna, *The Healing, Logic: Isagoge*, 8.39 (*Aristūṭālīs al-faylasūf*).
- 37 Likewise, Gundissalinus and Iohannes Hispanus retain the philosophical component of the Arabic title of al-Ghazālī’s *Maqāsid al-falāsifa* (*Intentions or Doctrines of the Philosophers*) in both the attested Latin titles: *Summa theoricæ philosophiæ* and *De philosophorum intentionibus*.
- 38 We do not know the role that Ibn Daud’s bold self-designation as “israelita” vis-à-vis this high-ranking Christian authority may have played in his martyrdom in Toledo some years later (see *Logica*, 81).
- 39 The chapters are excellent examples of abbreviated translation. The contention that Gundissalinus did not abbreviate significantly (Hasse, *Latin Averroes Translations*, 37) applies, of course, to the parts of his translations that are verbatim translations (in the present case, *Ilāhiyyāt* I–X. 3) rather than abridgments, like chapters X. 4–5. See also Hasse, “Abbreviation.”
- 40 For instance, in his *De scientiis*, Gundissalinus, the probable translator of the *Ilāhiyyāt*, also abridges the part of al-Fārābī’s *Iḥṣā’ al-‘ulūm* (Catalogue of the Sciences) most directly addressing Islamic issues. Political science and jurisprudence are shortened, and dialectical theology is totally omitted.
- 41 See, for instance, Di Donato, “I traduttori.”
- 42 One such example is *Ilāhiyyāt* IX. 7, where Avicenna discusses the *post mortem* destiny of human souls. At its beginning, Avicenna remits to Islam the treatment of the non-philosophical topic of the awards and punishments regarding the human body, then commences a philosophical analysis of the destiny of human souls. In this initial tribute, he qualifies Islam as the “true religion” and refers to the prophet Muḥammad not only as “prophet,” but also as “lord” and “master.” In the Latin translation, we find a more neutral “our religion” (“our” refers, of course, to Avicenna, and stands in for the many “our” that refer to Muḥammad in the Arabic text of this passage); the praise of Muḥammad is omitted.
- 43 See Bertolacci, “Migrazione,” 597–99.
- 44 See Bertolacci, “Community,” 47–49.

- 45 On Avicenna and the Paris prohibitions of 1210–15, see Bertolacci, “Latin Reception,” 213–17.
- 46 Polloni, “Aristotle,” remarks that Gerard devoted his translation activity to Aristotelian works, whereas Gundissalinus focused on Arabic and Jewish authors, in a sort of complementary approach. Polloni explains the absence of the *Metaphysics* from Gerard’s translations of Aristotle by Gundissalinus’s translation of Avicenna’s *Philosophia prima*, and the incompleteness of Gundissalinus’s translation of the *Liber primus naturalium* by the existence of a complete version of the *Physics* among Gerard’s translations.
- 47 Al-Ghazālī’s *Maqāṣid* may have influenced the order in which the early translations of the *Shifā’* were produced, as we have seen above. It certainly paved the way for their dissemination in European culture (see Signori, “*Unus de intelligentibus*”).
- 48 Averroes’s polemic against Avicenna in defense of genuine Aristotelian philosophy affected a fundamental aspect of Ibn Daud’s and Gundissalinus’s approach to the *Shifā’*, the idea of Avicenna’s Aristotelianism. The translators’ selection of sections of the *Shifā’*, such as *Madkhal*, *Samā’ ṭabī’ī*, *Nafs*, and *Ilāhiyyāt*, that are more originally Avicennian and less Aristotelian than others, and their neglect of the part of the logic of the *Shifā’* corresponding to Aristotle’s *Organon*, in which Avicenna closely follows the textual evidence and the order of topics proposed by Aristotle, made Averroes’s anti-Avicenna criticism of a lack of adherence to Aristotle more pertinent for a reader of the Latin translation of Avicenna than it had been for a reader of the original Arabic text.

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