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# Reading Aristotle with Avicenna

On the Reception of the *Philosophia Prima* in the *Summa Halensis*<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** The present paper aims to provide some methodological tools for obtaining a more precise understanding of the way Avicenna's metaphysics contributed to shaping the metaphysical views expressed in the *Summa*. More specifically, it will try to offer a detailed assessment of the ways in which the authors of the *Summa* quoted, contextualized, and employed for their own purposes the only metaphysical work by Avicenna available to them, namely, the *Liber de Philosophia prima sive Scientia Divina*, which is the Latin translation of the metaphysical part of Avicenna's magnum opus, the *Book of the Cure* (or: *of the Healing*). The general aim is coherently to situate the *Summa* within the framework of the Latin reception of Avicenna's metaphysics in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and to document its full significance as a remarkable specimen of one of the possible ways of using it as a source, i.e. what has been labelled elsewhere the '*Philosophia prima* and *Metaphysics*' pattern of joint reception of Avicenna and Aristotle.

## Introduction

Avicenna's influence on the *Summa Halensis* has been pointed out in many ways in recent scholarship. So far the investigation has necessarily proceeded in a piece-meal fashion, due to the very wide scope of the work and to the fact that systematic research on the numerous sources of the *Summa* has started only with Lydia Schumacher's ERC project. The present paper aims to provide some methodological tools for obtaining a more precise understanding of the way Avicenna's metaphysics contributed to shaping the metaphysical views expressed in the *Summa*. More specifically, it will try to convey a more detailed assessment of the ways in which the authors of the *Summa* quoted, contextualized, and employed for their own purposes the only metaphysical work by Avicenna available to them, namely, the *Liber de Philosophia prima sive Scientia Divina*, which is the Latin translation of the metaphysical part of Avicenna's magnum opus, the *Book of the Cure* (or: *of the Healing*).<sup>2</sup> As we will

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2 Avicenna Latinus, *Liber de Philosophia prima sive Scientia divina*, 3 vols, ed. S. van Riet (Louvain: Peeters; Leiden: Brill, 1977–83).

see, key doctrines taken from the two main parts of this work by Avicenna (its ontology, with special regard to the primary intelligibles, and its philosophical theology, in connection with issues like creation and emanation) are crucial for the present inquiry. The general aim is to coherently situate the *Summa* within the framework of the Latin reception of Avicenna's metaphysics in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and to document its full significance as a remarkable specimen of one of the possible ways of using it as a source.

## ***Status Quaestionis: A Sketch***

In the wait for the forthcoming publications of Schumacher's team on the issue, two pieces of scholarship on the influence of Avicenna's philosophy in the *Summa Halensis* should be highlighted, since each of them not only provides a valuable account of the Avicennian background of some doctrines of the *Summa*, but also teaches an insightful methodological lesson.

An aspect of Avicenna's influence on the *Summa Halensis* has been investigated by Dag N. Hasse's book on the Latin reception of Avicenna's *De anima*.<sup>3</sup> The focus of Hasse's contribution is obviously psychology. In five extremely dense pages,<sup>4</sup> Hasse points out that the influence of Avicenna's psychology in the *Summa* is uneven, in the sense that some more elaborated and less problematic parts of Avicenna's account are adopted more fully and more faithfully in the *Summa* than other more disputable parts. A case in point is Avicenna's doctrine of the internal senses, on the one hand, and Avicenna's view of the intellect, on the other. Whereas in the former case, the *Summa's* adherence to Avicenna is virtually total, fully developed, and involves recourse to both Avicenna's *De Anima* and his *Canon of Medicine*, in the latter case, the influence of Avicenna is mitigated and modified by the medieval Augustinian inheritance, thus resulting in an instance of what Hasse calls 'Avicennized Augustinianism'. In his analysis, Hasse aptly remarks that in several cases, Avicenna is not mentioned by name, but through the use of the epithet *philosophus*,<sup>5</sup> and that this more opaque reference to Avicenna is due, in the case of the psychology of the *Summa*, to an intermediate source, i.e. John of La Rochelle's *Summa de anima*, which the author of the part of the *Summa Halensis* dealing with psychology presupposed.

The second major contribution in scholarship that should be highlighted here is the masterly essay on the doctrine of primary concepts or transcendentals in Latin medieval

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<sup>3</sup> Dag Nikolaus Hasse, *Avicenna's De anima in the Latin West: The Formation of a Peripatetic Philosophy of the Soul, 1160–1300* (London: The Warburg Institute, 2000), 51–4 (cf. 216–8).

<sup>4</sup> Hasse, *Avicenna's De anima*, 51–4.

<sup>5</sup> Hasse, *Avicenna's De anima*, 53, n. 240.

philosophy by Jan A. Aertsen.<sup>6</sup> In this book, Aertsen documents the *Summa*'s conscious endorsement of Avicenna's ontology and epistemology relating to the transcendentals. In the section of his book specifically devoted to the *Summa*,<sup>7</sup> Aertsen brings to the reader's attention a quotation from Avicenna, which is of central importance for our discussion here, since it represents the main case in which the *Summa* ascribes a distinctly Avicennian doctrine of the *Philosophia prima* to the *Philosophus*. Aertsen notices that, contrary to many other medieval works in which the Avicennian doctrine of the transcendentals is treated, the *Summa* does not hesitate to speak of the primary concepts as *primae impressiones intellectus* ('first concepts imprinted on the intellect'), despite the epistemological implication of some sort of innate knowledge of the transcendentals, since the Avicennian idea of an immediate grasp of the most universal concepts is consonant in the *Summa* with the Augustinian idea of an innate knowledge of God. Moreover, Aertsen underscores several other key ontological tenets in the *Summa*, which display a distinctly Avicennian character. These include the so-called 'onto-theological' conception of metaphysics, namely the structural bipartition into a *metaphysica generalis* dealing with being qua being, and a *metaphysica specialis* dealing with God; the fact that 'being' (*ens*) is said of substance and accidents according to priority and posteriority (*secundum prius* and *posterius*); the independent treatment of the concept of 'one' (*unum*) apart from the concept of 'being'; the priority ascribed to 'being' among the transcendentals; the real identity, and the conceptual difference between 'being' and 'one', and so on<sup>8</sup>. Aertsen does not ascribe to Avicenna any of these tenets, which he instead tends to perceive as signs of the influence of Philip the Chancellor. However, he acknowledges that not all of these ideas can be found in Philip. Since, however, all these topics do in fact constitute a sort of 'system' of Avicennian metaphysics, I think that their number and coherence cannot be accidental, and it might reveal a direct or indirect recourse to Avicenna that future research will need to investigate more closely.

From previous studies, consequently, we learn that the *Summa* makes considerable recourse to Avicenna's philosophy, embracing his natural philosophy, medicine,

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6 Jan A. Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy as Transcendental Thought: From Philip the Chancellor (ca. 1225) to Francisco Suárez* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2012), 135–47.

7 Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy as Transcendental Thought*, 135–47.

8 What seems *prima facie* missing in Aertsen's account is Avicenna's famous distinction between essence and existence, a real cornerstone of Avicenna's metaphysics, to which abundant Avicennian scholarship is devoted. Since the distinction in question pervades both Avicenna's ontology and philosophical theology in their entirety and at all levels, and is the basis of Avicenna's doctrine of transcendentals, future research will need to inspect whether and the extent to which it is included among the other Avicennian doctrines that the *Summa* incorporates, especially the doctrine of the 'one' as primary concept and of God as Necessary Existent. (I thank Lydia Schumacher for calling my attention to this issue and for informing me of a forthcoming publication in which she analyzes the *Summa*'s recourse to the Avicennian distinction of essence and existence in terms of the Boethian distinction between *quo est* and *quod est*.)

and metaphysics at the very least;<sup>9</sup> that in each of these theoretical areas we should expect different degrees of Avicennian allegiance on specific topics; that in metaphysics the endorsement of Avicennian doctrines can be bold and unprecedented; that the influence of Avicenna is sometimes obscured by oblique ways of referring to him (i. e. as *Philosophus* rather than ‘Avicenna’), or it may be totally implicit and silent; finally, that the influence of Avicenna can be either direct, i. e. due to consultation of his texts, or indirect, namely, mediated by intermediate sources.

## Testing a Hypothesis

### The Hypothesis

In a study from 2012, I argued that the reception of Avicenna’s *Philosophia prima* in Latin philosophy remains continuous and uninterrupted from the time of the translation of Avicenna’s work into Latin until the late 13<sup>th</sup> century, and I divided its historical reception before Albertus Magnus into three phases, which I called respectively, ‘*Philosophia prima* without *Metaphysics*’, ‘*Philosophia prima* and *Metaphysics*’, and ‘*Philosophia prima* in the exegesis of the *Metaphysics*’.<sup>10</sup>

In the first phase (‘*Philosophia prima* without *Metaphysics*’), Avicenna’s work is both quoted and silently reproduced within independent treatises, in which it represents the main text, or one of the main texts, on metaphysics. By contrast, recourse to Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* is absent or very scanty, since the first Latin translations of this work were either incomplete, or had a very limited diffusion at the time. The scattered quotations from the *Metaphysics* in this phase are either indirect references, that is, citations of authors who had access to and quoted Aristotle’s work, or supplementary references, in which the name of Aristotle and his work are added to doctrines drawn from the *Philosophia prima* on account of the supposed identity of views of the two authors.

The second phase (‘*Philosophia prima* and *Metaphysics*’) is marked by the joint consideration of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* and Avicenna’s *Philosophia prima* by philosophers and theologians in universities. Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* is now regarded as the main text on the subject, but Avicenna’s *Philosophia prima* represents the privileged means of access to Aristotle’s work and its main tool of interpretation.

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<sup>9</sup> As to natural philosophy, beside the recourse to Avicenna in psychology documented by Hasse, the Index ‘Auctoritates et Scripta’ of the current edition of the *Summa* shows numerous quotations of Avicenna’s zoology (see below, n. 11).

<sup>10</sup> Amos Bertolacci, ‘On the Latin Reception of Avicenna’s *Metaphysics* before Albertus Magnus: An Attempt at Periodization,’ in *The Arabic, Hebrew and Latin Reception of Avicenna’s Metaphysics*, ed. Dag Nikolaus Hasse and Amos Bertolacci, *Scientia Graeco-Arabica*, 7 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 197–223.

In the third phase ('*Philosophia prima* in the exegesis of the *Metaphysics*'), Averroes' *Long Commentary* on the *Metaphysics* replaces Avicenna's *Philosophia prima* as the authoritative interpretation of the *Metaphysics* and as the current exegetical device. Yet, both in Oxford and in Paris, commentators on the *Metaphysics* continue to refer to the *Philosophia prima*, even though their references to Avicenna's work are much less frequent and systematic than those to Averroes' *Long Commentary*.

The second phase is the most interesting for the present purposes. It is documented from the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and it continues even during the third phase which started around 1240, being institutionally linked, in different ways, with the universities of Paris and Oxford. In the aforementioned article I argued that this second phase is represented by thinkers like John Blund, Robert Grosseteste, William of Auvergne, Roland of Cremona, and Roger Bacon, some of whom (like Bacon) were Franciscans or connected with the Franciscan order (like Grosseteste): the *Summa Halensis* remained out of the scope of investigation. I wish now to argue that the *Summa* also belongs to the second phase, and that it offers enlightening evidence regarding the ways in which the paradigm '*Philosophia prima* and *Metaphysics*' took shape.

## The Evidence

The evidence on which my argument is based is limited but, I believe, fairly representative. I am taking into consideration all the explicit quotations of Avicenna's *Liber de Philosophia prima* in the *Summa*, relying on the data provided by the *Index Auctoritates et Scripta* of the current edition of the *Summa* under the entry *allegations explicitae*.<sup>11</sup> The Index corrects in significant ways the notations on the sources of the *Summa* provided in the footnotes of the edition itself, Avicenna being a case in point.

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<sup>11</sup> *Doctoris irrefragabilis Alexandri de Hales Ordinis minorum Summa theologica: Indices in tom. I-IV* (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1979), Index III ('Auctoritates et Scripta'), 110b. Since the Index was composed before the critical edition of Avicenna's work, in it the *Liber de Philosophia prima* is called *Metaphysica* and is cited according to the edition printed in Venice in 1508 (in which the division into chapters does not squarely correspond to that adopted in the critical edition of the 'Avicenna Latinus' series). In the Index, the books of the *Summa* recorded as III and IV are in fact, respectively, the second part of Book 2 and Book 3 of the work (the following table adopts the notation adopted by the Index). The Index includes among the *allegationes explicitae* some references to Avicenna which are not explicit, since in them Avicenna is not referred to either by his name or by substantives like *philosophus*: LPP II.2–3, SH II (n. 54), p. 67, n. 1 (definition of 'one' as undivided in itself and divided from other things); LPP III.6, SH I (n. 75), p. 120, nn. 1–6 (opposition 'one'-'many'); LPP VIII.7, SH III (n. 115), p. 133, n. 11 ('delectatio est apprehensio convenientis'); LPP VIII.7, SH III (n. 123), p. 140, n. 1 ('gaudium est ex apprehensione convenientis'). These cases of implicit quotations, although recorded in the Index, are not included in the table.

The main limitation of my evidential material is that in the *Summa*, in addition to the *allegationes explicitae* of Avicenna, numerous *citationes implicitae* also occur, as the same Index aptly records,<sup>12</sup> and the latter are not less numerous or relevant than the former, in the case of the *Summa* as in that of many other Latin works of philosophy or theology.<sup>13</sup> Despite not being all-inclusive, however, the former type of quotations is frequent and widespread enough to allow some reliable general inferences to be drawn.

**Table 1** – Conspectus of the explicit quotations of Avicenna’s *Liber de Philosophia prima* (LPP) in the *Summa* (SH)

Avic. LPP (= <i>Metaphysica</i> in the Index)	SH libri I; II 1 <sup>a</sup> pars; II 2 <sup>a</sup> pars [= III in the Index]; III [= IV in the Index]	Source’s name	Attitude	Index’s correc- tions of the edition
I.5 ( <i>ens est prima impressio intelligentiae</i> ) <sup>14</sup>	II, p. 3, n. 9 (in contr.)	Philosophus (2x)	qualifying reply ( <i>respondendum est ad hoc</i> )	—
I.8 [I.9 in the Index] ( <i>veritas est adaequatio rei et intellectus sicut generaliter adaequatio signi et significati</i> ) <sup>15</sup>	I, p. 142, n. 2	quidam philosophus	consensus	the philosopher quoted is Avicenna (rather than Averroes)
III.2–3 ( <i>assignatio differentiae unitatis et ratio assignationis</i> ) <sup>16</sup>	I, p. 117, nn. 2–7; pp. 118–9	Avicenna (5x) in <i>Metaphysica</i> sua (1x)	consensus	—

**12** In some cases, however, the implicit references that the Index discloses do not amount to anything more than vague resemblances: see, for instance, the echo of LPP VIII.6 (*Veritas uniuscuiusque rei est proprietas sui esse quod stabilitum est ei*) in SH I (n. 89), p. 142, n. 3 (*Veritas est indivisio esse et eius quod est*).

**13** The importance of a comprehensive analysis of the quotations of Avicenna (including the implicit ones) in the Commentary on the *Metaphysics* by Albert the Great is shown in Amos Bertolacci, “Subtilius speculando”: Le citazioni della *Philosophia Prima* di Avicenna nel Commento alla *Metafisica* di Alberto Magno, *Documenti e Studi sulla Tradizione Filosofica Medievale* 9 (1998): 261–339, and Amos Bertolacci, ‘Le citazioni implicite testuali della *Philosophia prima* di Avicenna nel Commento alla *Metafisica* di Alberto Magno: analisi tipologica,’ *Documenti e Studi sulla Tradizione Filosofica Medievale* 12 (2001): 179–274.

**14** [Being is what is first imprinted on to the intellect].

**15** [Truth is correspondence between the thing and the intellect, just as, generally, it is correspondence between the sign and the signified].

**16** [The assigning of the difference of unity and the reason for assigning].

**Table 1** – Conspectus of the explicit quotations of Avicenna’s *Liber de Philosophia prima* (LPP) in the *Summa* (SH) (Continued)

Avic. LPP (= <i>Metaphysica</i> in the Index)	SH libri I; II 1 <sup>a</sup> pars; II 2 <sup>a</sup> pars [= III in the Index]; III [= IV in the Index]	Source’s name	Attitude	Index’s correc- tions of the edition
III.6 ( <i>omne compositum ex contrariis est dissolubile</i> ) <sup>17</sup>	IV, p. 5, n. 7	Avicenna	consensus	the work quoted is Avicenna’s LPP (rather than the <i>Sufficientia</i> )
VI.2 ( <i>Si fuerit eius esse post non-esse absolute, tunc adventus eius a causa erit creatio etc.</i> ) <sup>18</sup>	II, p. 37, n. 3	Avicenna in sua <i>Prima Philosophia</i>	consensus	—
VI.5 ( <i>quaedam est vis imperans motum (...) et quaedam est faciens vel exsequens motum</i> ) <sup>19</sup>	IV, p. 983, n. 7	Avicenna [Augustinus, ms. Va]	consensus	VI.4–5, fol. 93b (rather than VI.5, foll. 93d [sic]-94a)
VII.3 ( <i>reprobant philosophi ideas</i> ) <sup>20</sup>	II, p. 18, n. 4	Avicenna in sua [ <i>Prima?</i> ] <i>Philosophia</i>	qualifying reply ( <i>sed hic non est intentio illarum formarum exemplarium sive idealium, de quibus nos hic intendimus</i> )	—
VIII.7 ( <i>delectatio est ex coniunctione convenientis cum conveniente et sensu eiudem</i> ) <sup>21</sup>	II, p. 701, n. 9	Philosophus	qualifying reply ( <i>ad illud (...) dicendum</i> )	—
IX.4 ( <i>a Primo, quod est vere unum, non proce-</i>	II, p. 64, n. 5	quidam philosophi	criticism ( <i>Sed haec ratio non congruit</i> )	Avicenna, rather than

17 [Whatever is put together out of contraries can be taken apart].

18 [If its existence will come after its non-existence in an absolute sense, then its coming will amount to a creation by its cause, etc.].

19 [There is a power that orders motion (...) and there is a power that executes it or makes this motion happen].

20 [The philosophers reject the ideas].

21 [Delight comes as a result of a union of two things that harmonize with each other, of which we become aware].

22 [Only [something] one proceeds immediately from the First, which is one in a true sense].

**Table 1** – Conspectus of the explicit quotations of Avicenna’s *Liber de Philosophia prima* (LPP) in the *Summa* (SH) (Continued)

Avic. LPP (= <i>Metaphysica</i> in the Index)	SH libri I; II 1 <sup>a</sup> pars; II 2 <sup>a</sup> pars [= III in the Index]; III [= IV in the Index]	Source’s name	Attitude	Index’s correc- tions of the edition
<i>dit immediate nisi unum</i> ) <sup>22</sup>				Averroes, is the philoso- pher quoted
IX.4 ( <i>ab uno non pro- cedit nisi unum solum immediate</i> ) <sup>23</sup>	II, p. 68, n. 6	Philosophi	criticism ( <i>falsa est propositio (...) nisi in- telligatur</i> )	idem.
IX.4 ( <i>ab uno simplici non provenire imme- diate nisi unum sim- plex</i> ) <sup>24</sup>	II, p. 401, n. 2	antiqui phi- losophi	criticism ( <i>falsa est positio</i> )	idem.
IX.7 ( <i>delectatio cuius- que virtutis plena est acquisitio suae perfec- tionis</i> ) <sup>25</sup>	II, p. 669, n. 1	Avicenna	consensus	—

Table 1 shows that the *Summa* gathers passages of the *Philosophia prima* which span from the beginning of Avicenna’s work (Chapter I.5) to its last part (Chapter IX.7) and that all the three books of the *Summa* contain quotations of this kind. The quotations from Avicenna occur almost invariably in the *pro* and *contra* arguments, rather than in the solutions to the various questions. Besides Avicenna himself, Avicenna’s work is quoted at least twice (3 and 7) under the titles of *Metaphysica* or *Prima Philosophia*; if Quotation 9 should also be regarded as a formal reference to Avicenna’s *Prima Philosophia* (i. e. the work of Avicenna in question), rather than as a generic reference to his *Philosophia* (i. e. the encyclopedia to which this work belongs),<sup>26</sup> then the *Liber de*

23 [Only [something] one immediately proceeds from [something] one].

24 [Only [something] one and simple proceeds immediately from [something] one and simple].

25 [The delight of any power consists in a full attainment of its perfection].

26 Since the doctrine in question in Quotation 9 is surely taken from the *Philosophia prima*, and since, immediately before the quotation of Avicenna, Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* is quoted as *Prima philosophia* (‘sicut habetur in fine *Prima Philosophiae* et similiter ab Avicenna in sua *Philosophia*’), the integration of *Prima* before *Philosophia* is debatable. The expression ‘in sua *Prima Philosophia*’ occurs also in Quotation 5.



*philosophia prima* would be the work of Avicenna most frequently quoted in the *Summa*, surpassing the *De Anima* which is quoted no more than twice.<sup>27</sup>

Three main groups of quotations of Avicenna can be singled out for the present purposes. First, those in which Avicenna is called by his proper name—a typology of quotations which I have elsewhere called ‘explicit nominal’—and connected in a more or less perspicuous way with Aristotle (3, 5, 7); second, those in which the *Philosophus* is referred to in connection with doctrines of the *Philosophia prima* (1, 8), for which the label ‘explicit epithetical’ quotations can be coined; third, those in which Avicenna is grouped with other thinkers (including Aristotle), who are collectively referred to in the plural as *philosophi*, with the occasional addition of *quidam* or *antiqui* (9–11); these can be described as ‘explicit indeterminate’ quotations. It remains to be ascertained whether the *quidam philosophus* in Quotation 2 designates Avicenna or not (I incline towards a negative reply). A subset of quotations, those in which Avicenna is quoted explicitly but with no apparent connection with Aristotle (4, 6, 12), are not analyzed in this chapter.

In what follows, I am going to analyze each of these three main groups of quotations. As far as I can see, each group instantiates a precise mode of employing Avicenna’s *Philosophia prima* together with Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, which corresponds to one of three different ways of understanding the conjunction ‘and’ in the formula, ‘*Philosophia prima* and *Metaphysics*’. In the first case, the conjunction involves an integration: the *Philosophia prima* and the *Metaphysics* remain distinct from one another, but are quoted together and thus become interconnected. In the second case, the conjunction corresponds to a conflation: doctrines of the *Philosophia prima* are projected back in history by the authors of the *Summa* onto the metaphysical thought of Aristotle himself. In the third case, the conjunction implies a cumulation: a doctrine of the *Philosophia prima* is ascribed to an unidentified group of philosophers, which includes Aristotle and Avicenna, without however being limited to them.

### ‘*Philosophia prima* and *Metaphysics*’: Integration

Three of the explicit nominal quotations from Avicenna are especially relevant for our purposes. They are Quotations 3, 5, and 7. Their importance is signaled by the authors of the *Summa* themselves, who in these quotations record the title of Avicenna’s work together with the author’s name.

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<sup>27</sup> For the explicit quotations of works by Avicenna other than the LPP in the *Summa*, see ‘in tractatu de anima’, *SH* II (n. 359), p. 436; ‘in principio de anima’, *SH* II (n. 444), p. 547; ‘de celo et mundo’, *SH* II (n. 453), p. 581; ‘libro I <sc. Canonis>’, *SH* II (n. 477), p. 651; ‘in libro de naturis animalium’, *SH* III (n. 188), p. 200.

Quotation 3—*SH* I, P1, In1, Tr3, Q1, M1, C3 (n. 74), pp. 117–20.<sup>28</sup>

- [a] Item, philosophi alio modo assignant differentias unitatis. Avicenna, in *Metaphysica* sua: “‘Unum’ dicitur ambigue de rebus, quae in hoc conveniunt quod in eis non est divisio in effectu, in quantum unumquodque eorum est id quod est; haec autem intentio est in eis secundum prius et posterius.” Dicitur ergo ‘unum’ secundum accidens et secundum essentiam. ‘Unum secundum accidens’ dicitur tribus modis: uno modo, quia unum accidit alicui, ut album Sorti; alio modo, quia duo accidunt uni, ut grammaticum et musicum Platoni; tertio, quia duobus accidit unum, sicut albedo Sorti et Platoni. Item, ‘unum per essentiam’ dicitur multis modis: unum genere, unum specie, unum comparatione, unum subiecto, unum numero. (...) <sup>29</sup>
- [b] Item, secundum Aristotelem, in V *Metaphysicae*, assignantur differentiae ‘unius’ hoc modo: unum per se et unum per accidens. Et unum per accidens secundum tres modos, sicut prius ab Avicenna. ( ... ) <sup>30</sup>
- [c] Item, Algazel, in sua *Metaphysica*, alio modo distinguit: ( ... ) <sup>31</sup>
- [d] Quaeritur ergo ratio diversarum assignationum. ( ... ) <sup>32</sup>
- [e] Secundum autem Avicennam, qui sequitur Aristotelem, differentiae unius assignantur hoc modo. ( ... ) <sup>33</sup>
- [f] Secundum quem etiam modum assignantur differentiae primae in assignatione Aristotelis, consequentes vero variantur, sicut patet diligenter consideranti. <sup>34</sup>
- [g] Differentiae vero Algazel [*sic*] assignantur secundum differentias eius quod est ‘simpliciter’ et eius quod est ‘secundum quid’, sicut patet diligenter intuenti. <sup>35</sup>

The above text reports the most relevant passages of the chapter of the *Summa* that is devoted to the divisions or ways/modes of the universal concept ‘unity’, with respect

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**28** Alexander of Hales, *Doctoris irrefragabilis Alexandri de Hales Ordinis minorum Summa theologica* (*SH*), 4 vol. (Quaracchi: Collegium S. Bonaventurae, 1924–48).

**29** [Also, the philosophers assign differences of ‘unity’ in another way. Avicenna in his *Metaphysics*: “‘One’ is predicated equivocally of things whose common trait that they share is that there is no actual division in them insofar as each of them is what it is; however, this notion applies to them sequentially.” Therefore, ‘one’ is predicated either in an accidental or in an essential sense. ‘One accidentally’ is predicated in three ways: in one way, when something one happens to be in something, for example, when ‘white’ happens to be in Socrates; in another way, when two things happen to be in something one, for example, when ‘grammatical’ and ‘musical’ happen to be in Plato; third, when something one happens to be in two things, for example, when whiteness happens to be in both Socrates and Plato. Also, ‘one essentially’ is predicated in multiple ways: one in genus, one in species, one relationally, one in subject, one in number].

**30** [Also, according to Aristotle in *Metaphysics* V, the differences of ‘one’ are assigned in the following way: one essentially and one accidentally. And ‘one accidentally’ can be according to three ways, as previously stated by Avicenna].

**31** [Also, Algazel in his *Metaphysics* draws a distinction differently].

**32** [Therefore, one asks about the reason for the different assignments].

**33** [However, according to Avicenna, who follows Aristotle, the differences of ‘one’ are assigned as follows].

**34** [And, as is clear to one who considers the matter diligently, depending on the way in which primary differences are assigned in Aristotle, subsequent differences vary].

**35** [However, as is clear to one who looks into [this matter] diligently, the differences given by Algazel are assigned according to that which exists in an unqualified sense, and that which exists in a qualified sense].

to the views of philosophical authorities (the theological authorities cited in the chapter, which are not reported in the above text, include Pseudo-Dionysius and Bernard of Clairvaux). This quotation is a clear attestation to the pattern of reading *Philosophia prima* and *Metaphysics*. First of all, Avicenna is mentioned first among the philosophical authorities and is quoted at length, with regard to the doctrine of two entire chapters of his *Philosophia prima*. Second, the passages quoted from Avicenna's work (in sections [a] and [e]) precede shorter quotations from Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (in sections [b] and [f]) and quotations from Algazel (al-Ġazālī, d. 1111, in sections [c] and [g]). The latter was considered by Latin philosophers to be a follower of Avicenna, because a limited number of his works were available in Latin translation. In the above passage, the references to Aristotle are enclosed between references to Avicenna himself and to Avicenna's Summarizer, Algazel, and, in this way, they are structurally 'Avicennized'. Third, cross-references interconnect Avicenna and Aristotle: the *Summa* ascribes to Avicenna what looks like a personal version of Aristotle's work on metaphysics (in *Metaphysica sua*, section [a]), and says of Avicenna that 'he follows Aristotle' (*sequitur Aristotelem*, section [e]), but in fact it is Aristotle who is understood and explained in the light of Avicenna's position. This is particularly evident in section [f], in which Aristotle's position is expounded on the footsteps of Avicenna's standpoint (as to the relationship between primary and secondary differences of unity), after a lengthy exposition of Avicenna's view in the previous section, leaving the comparison between the two positions in the background (*sicut patet diligenter consideranti*). In this way, Avicenna functions as the key to the interpretation of Aristotle's position both positively (for the points of convergence) and negatively (for the aspects of divergence). The *Philosophia prima* plays the same overall interpretative function—as should be expected—with respect to Algazel's position.

Quotation 5 – *SH* II, In1, Tr1, S1, Q2, Ti2, M2, C6 (n. 26), p. 37:

Quod etiam videtur per hoc quod philosophi posuerunt Creatorem esse, sicut dicit Avicenna, in sua *Prima Philosophia*: "Si fuerit eius esse post non-esse absolute, tunc adventus eius a causa erit creatio, et hic est dignior omnibus modis dandi esse, quia privatio remota est omnino et inducitur esse. Sed si ponatur privatio taliter quod esse praecedat eam, tunc generatio erit impossibilis nisi ex materia, et inductio esse, scilicet esse rei ex re, quod est debile et futurum."<sup>36</sup>

On a smaller scale and in a more elliptical way, Quotation 5 presents a similar scenario. In this case, Avicenna is quoted alone and neither Aristotle nor Algazel are

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36 [That [the philosophers arrived to the knowledge of creation] is also visible from the fact that they posited the existence of the Creator, as Avicenna says in his *First Philosophy*: "If its existence will come after its non-existence in an absolute sense, then its coming will amount to a creation by its cause, and this way of giving existence is more noble than any other, because privation [in this case] is removed completely and existence is bestowed. However, if privation is posited in such a way that [some] existence precedes it, then the only possibility would be to have generation from matter, and [there will be] a bestowal of existence, namely of the existence of a thing from a [pre-existing] thing, which is weak and occurs in time."

mentioned, but both his belonging to the group of the *philosophi*, and the adjective *sua* which precedes the title of his metaphysical work, alert the reader that another philosopher and another *Philosophia prima*, namely Aristotle and his *Metaphysics*, are lurking in the background. One is entitled to surmise on this basis that, according to the authors of the *Summa*, Aristotle is among the *philosophi* mentioned at the beginning of the quotation, and that Avicenna is meant to be the thinker that develops and unpacks a tenet implicitly present in Aristotle himself. Also in this case, as in the case of Quotation 3, a text of the *Philosophia prima* is quoted. The connection between Avicenna and the larger group of the *philosophi* is relevant for what we are going to see in the third group of quotations.

Quotation 7 – *SH* II, In1, Tr1, S1, Q2, Ti1, M2, C1 (n. 9), p. 18:

Quod autem reprobant philosophi ideas, sicut habetur in fine *Primae Philosophiae* et similiter ab Avicenna, in sua [*Prima?*] *Philosophia*, hoc est quia loquuntur de formis mathematicis, quas ponunt ideales; sed hic non est intentio illarum formarum exemplarium sive idealium, de quibus nos hic intendimus.<sup>37</sup>

In Quotation 7, as in Quotation 3, Aristotle's and Avicenna's positions are cited jointly, but independently from one another, in support of one and the same position (the philosophical rejection of Platonic ideas, conceived in mathematical terms), although this time Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (called *Philosophia prima* with Avicennian nomenclature) is quoted before, rather than after, Avicenna's work. By contrast to the previous two quotations, the issue at stake is this time a 'punctual' doctrine (*reprobant philosophi ideas*) rather than a lengthy position documented by recourse to texts of the *Philosophia prima*. In the light of what we are going to see in the third group of quotations, it is noteworthy that both Aristotle and Avicenna are referred to as main representatives of the larger group of the 'philosophers'.

### **'*Philosophia prima* and *Metaphysics*': Conflation**

In two cases, we find that the *Summa* ascribes doctrines of Avicenna not to Avicenna himself (i.e. to him called by his proper name) but to a *Philosophus*, whose precise identity deserves careful investigation:

Quotation 1.1—*SH* II, In1, Tr1, S1, Q1, C2 (n. 2), p. 3:

[a] Praeterea, dicit Philosophus quod ens est prima impressio intelligentiae; [b] sed quo ordine se habet ens in communitate, eo ordine se habet primum ens in causalitate; [c] ergo et primum ens in ordine causalitatis est prima impressio; [d] se ipso ergo cognoscitur secundum substan-

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<sup>37</sup> [As for the fact that the philosophers reject the ideas, as is stated at the end of the *First Philosophy*, and similarly by Avicenna in his [*First?*] *Philosophy*, this is because they speak of mathematical forms, which they posit as ideal; but they do not mean those exemplary or ideal forms, which we imply here].

tiam ab intelligentia.

Respondendum est ad hoc quod duplex est cognitio: patriae et viae ( ... ) Et sic intelligitur quod habetur a Philosopho.<sup>38</sup>

Quotation 8.1—*SH II*, In4, Tr3, Q2, M1, C2 (n. 496), pp. 701–3:

Ut habetur a Philosopho, delectatio est ex coniunctione convenientis cum convenienti et sensu eiusdem. ( ... )

Ad illud quod obicitur in contrarium, scilicet quod ‘delectatio est ex coniunctione convenientis cum convenienti et sensu eiusdem’: dicendum quod non tantum venit ex coniunctione, sed etiam ex virtutis conversione super delectabile. In statu autem naturae institutae ( ... ).<sup>39</sup>

Quotations 1 and 8 confront us with a dilemma. On the one hand, in both cases the doctrine ascribed to the *Philosophus* is markedly and unmistakably Avicennian, as the comparison with the following two passages of the *Philosophia prima* shows:

Quotation 1.2—Avicenna, *Liber de Philosophia prima* 1.5:<sup>40</sup>

res et ens et necesse talia sunt quod statim imprimuntur in anima prima impressione (...).<sup>41</sup>

Quotation 8.2—Avicenna, *Liber de Philosophia prima* VIII.7:<sup>42</sup>

delectatio non est nisi apprehensio convenientis secundum quod est conveniens; unde sensibilis delectatio est sensibilitas convenientis.<sup>43</sup>

The terminology of *prima impressio* in the former case, and of *conveniens* and of *sensus/sensibilis* in the latter, leaves no doubt that the authors of the *Summa* are referring in these two quotations to two famous doctrines of the *Philosophia prima*.

On the other hand, the possibility that the *Philosophus* mentioned here is Avicenna rather than Aristotle proves problematic to our hypothesis. In fact, one would expect the epithet *Philosophus*—i.e. ‘philosopher par excellence’—to be applied to Aristotle, and not to Avicenna, in a pattern of ‘*Philosophia prima* and *Metaphysics*’,

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**38** [[a] Besides, the Philosopher says that being is what is first imprinted on to the intellect; [b] but the rank that being occupies in the order of commonality, is the same rank that the first being occupies in the order of causality; [c] therefore, the first being in the order of causality is also ‘what is first imprinted’; [d] therefore it is known of itself substantially by the intellect.

One must reply to this that cognition is of two kinds: of the type we have in this life and of the type we have in the life to come (...). This is how the Philosopher’s statement is understood].

**39** [As the Philosopher puts it, delight comes as a result of a union of two things that harmonize with each other, of which we become aware. (...) To the objection to the contrary, namely, that ‘delight comes as a result of a union of two things that harmonize with each other, of which we become aware’, one must reply that it comes not only from a union, but also from the fact that a power turns to the object of delight. However, in the state of established nature (...)].

**40** Avicenna Latinus, *Liber de Philosophia prima*, 1:31.2–32.4 [Arabic, 1:29.5–6]. Cf. Avicenna, *Liber de Philosophia prima*, 1:33.25–7.

**41** [‘Thing’, ‘being’, and ‘necessity’ are of such nature that they are at once imprinted in the soul at first impression (...)].

**42** Avicenna Latinus, *Liber de Philosophia prima*, 2:432.67–9 [Arabic, 2:369.6–7].

**43** [Delight consists entirely in perceiving a suitable object insofar as it is suitable; therefore, delight of the senses consists in sensing a suitable object [of sense]].

namely in a historical phase in which the greatness and authority of Aristotle has fully come to the fore, without obscuring the prestige of Avicenna or his significance as an aid in interpreting Aristotle. From a historical perspective, the identification of the *Philosophus* with Avicenna would seem more congruent with the ‘*Philosophia prima* without *Metaphysics*’ pattern.<sup>44</sup> If Avicenna were the ‘Philosopher’ referred to in Quotations 1 and 8, we would have before us a clear-cut polarity between Quotation 1, dealing with *ens* and apparently invalidating the ‘*Philosophia prima* and *Metaphysics*’ pattern, and Quotation 3, dealing with *unum* and ostensibly supporting this very pattern. Such a polarity within the very same doctrine of primary intelligibles in the *Summa*—*ens* on the one hand, *unum* on the other—would make the issue even more problematic.

It should be remarked that the designation *Philosophus* in the *Summa* fluctuates and that in some cases it appears indeed to refer to Avicenna.<sup>45</sup> Moreover, at least for Quotation 1, previous scholarship has proposed the identification of the *Philosophus* at stake with Avicenna.<sup>46</sup> On the other hand, the authors of the *Summa* show themselves careful to evidence at least some of the cases in which the term *Philosophus* does not designate Aristotle.<sup>47</sup> This, however, does not happen in our case. In view of this contrasting evidence, a more systematic analysis of the issue is certainly needed. Provisionally, I wish to argue that in both our quotations, the epithet *Philosophus* refers, in all likelihood, to Aristotle read with Avicennian lenses, rather than to Avicenna alone.

The main evidence on which I can rely here concerns the fact that shortly after Quotation 1, in the context of the same *quaestio*, the epithet *Philosophus* is surely ascribed to Aristotle:

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<sup>44</sup> In fact, I am aware of only one noticeable mention of the *Philosophus* with reference to Aristotle in the ‘*Philosophia prima* without *Metaphysics*’ pattern (see Bertolacci, ‘On the Latin Reception of Avicenna’s *Metaphysics* before Albertus Magnus,’ 209, n. 42); significantly this reference to Aristotle is drawn indirectly from al-Fārābī.

<sup>45</sup> I wish to thank Lydia Schumacher for bringing to my attention that in a small part of the *Summa* (*SH* II, In4, Tr3 (nn. 469–523), pp. 631–784: ‘De coniuncto humano’) which was added later (around 1255) to the work, one can find many cases where *Philosophus* is used interchangeably to describe Aristotle and Avicenna. This happens also in earlier parts of the *Summa*, but the trend is particularly pronounced in this later part. Interestingly, in this part, the epithet ‘Commentator’ does not refer to Averroes but to Maximus the Confessor.

<sup>46</sup> See Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy as Transcendental Thought*, 141: “‘the Philosopher’ must in this case be identified with Avicenna.’

<sup>47</sup> My gratitude goes to John Marenbon for informing me that the term *Philosophus* designates, rather than Aristotle, the astrologer Abu Ma’shar in *SH* II (n. 430), p. 511b (‘ut ostendit Philosophus, scilicet Albumasar, in *Libro introductorio ad artem astronomiae*’), and Isaac Israeli in *SH* II (n. 438), p. 533a (‘Ut habetur a Philosopho, scilicet Isaac, in *Dietis universalibus*’), as the parenthetical remarks make clear.

Quotation 1.3—*SH* II, In1, Tr1, S1, Q1, C2 (n. 2), p. 4:

Et sic dicit Philosophus quod “intellectus noster se habet ad manifesta naturae sicut visus noctuae ad lumen diei.”<sup>48</sup>

This is a literal quotation from Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* Book 2 (Alpha Elatton), 993b9–10, which has very remote echoes, if any at all, in Avicenna’s works. The fact that a few lines after our first quotation of the *Philosophus*, the same term is rightfully applied to Aristotle in connection with a notorious doctrine of the *Metaphysics*, makes it difficult to think that the *Summa* applies the same term in Quotation 1 exclusively to Avicenna rather than to Aristotle.

The same identification of the ‘Philosopher’ with Aristotle is made shortly after Quotation 8, in the immediately following chapter:

Quotation 8.3—*SH* II, In4, Tr3, Q2, M1, C3 (n. 497), p. 706:

cum motus progressivus in ratione utentibus ortum habeat a ratione sive ab intelligentia practica, sicut vult Philosophus.<sup>49</sup>

In this case the quotation refers to a doctrine expounded in Aristotle’s *De Anima*, Book 3, Chapter 9, as the notes to the edition of the *Summa* indicate.

How can one then explain the ascription of a doctrine of Avicenna to the *Philosophus*? I have three possible explanations to offer. The weakest rationale is to suppose that in Quotations 1 and 8, the *Summa* is generically referring to ‘a philosopher’ (*philosophus* with lowercase ‘p’), rather than to ‘the Philosopher’ (*Philosophus* with capital ‘P’). In this scenario the Avicennian doctrines would be ascribed neither to Avicenna himself, nor to Aristotle, but to a generic representative of the philosophical community. Quotation 2, in which a doctrine by Avicenna looks to be ascribed to ‘a certain philosopher’ (*quidam philosophus*), seems to offer some support to this explanation. Several arguments, however, militate against this hypothesis.

To start with, Quotation 2 is inserted within the Avicennian dossier of the *Summa* by this text’s editors; for this reason it is recorded in the above table. On closer inspection, however, this quotation might not derive from Avicenna’s *Philosophia prima*.

Quotation 2.1—*SH* I, P1, In1, Tr3, Q2, M1, C3 (n. 89), p. 142:

Item, ponitur alia [sc. definitio veritatis] a quodam philosopho: [a] Veritas est adaequatio rei et intellectus, [b] sicut generaliter adaequatio signi et significati.

[c] Sed obicitur: Adaequatio signi ad significatum non est nisi cum significatio est; ergo non esset veritas, si non esset significatio.<sup>50</sup>

**48** [Thus the Philosopher says that “our intellect stands in the same relation to the [most] manifest things of nature as the sight of a bat to daylight”].

**49** [Because, according to the Philosopher, advancing motion in those who use reason originates from reason or practical intelligence].

**50** [Also, some philosopher provides another [definition of truth]: [a] truth is correspondence between the thing and the intellect, [b] just as, generally, it is correspondence between the sign and



In fact, this quotation is the mirror image of a passage of the *Summa de bono* of Philip the Chancellor (written ca. 1225–8), from which it is probably taken:

Quotation 2.2—Philip the Chancellor, *Summa de bono*, Q. II.<sup>51</sup>

Item a quodam Philosopho dicitur: “veritas est adaequatio rei et intellectus”, sive ut generaliter dicatur signi et signati.<sup>52</sup>

Therefore, the issue of the possible identification of the *quidam philosophus* with Avicenna moves back from the *Summa* to its likely source in Philip the Chancellor. However, the most recent studies on the latter’s *Summa de bono* are cautious in making such identification for the passage in question.<sup>53</sup>

The proposal to identify the *quidam philosophus* with Avicenna in the case of Philip’s *Summa* dates back to a pioneering article of H. Pouillon published in 1939, followed, with some provisos, by N. Wicki in his edition of the *Summa de bono* of 1985.<sup>54</sup> On the basis of Pouillon’s article, the curators of the Index of the *Summa Halensis* have proposed to identify the *quidam philosophus* with Avicenna, in an amendment of the previous identification advanced in the edition of the text, where the thinker in question was taken to be Averroes.<sup>55</sup> It should be recalled, however, that both Pouillon and, following in his footsteps, the curators of the *Summa* and Wicki, do regard the idea according to which *veritas est adaequatio rei et intellectus* in section [a] as the doctrinal core of the position of this ‘certain philosopher’, to which they found some correspondence in the *Philosophia prima*. More specifically, Pouillon and Wicki quote the following passage of Avicenna’s work:

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the signified. [c] But it is objected: the sign is not adequate to the signified unless there is signification; therefore there would be no truth if there were no signification].

51 Philip the Chancellor, *Summa de bono*, 2 vols, ed. Nicolai Wicki (Berne: Francke, 1985), 1:10.32–3. Cf. Henri Pouillon, ‘Le premier traité des propriétés transcendantes: La “Summa de bono” du Chancelier Philippe,’ *Revue néo-scholastique de philosophie* 61 (1939): 57, where the passage is reported as follows: ‘Item a quodam Philosopho: “veritas est adaequatio rei et intellectus, sicut, ut generaliter dicatur, signi et signati.”’

52 [Also [is is stated] by some philosopher: “truth is correspondence between the thing and the intellect, just as, as is generally stated, [it is correspondence] between the sign and the signified”].

53 Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy as Transcendental Thought*, 118, for example, does not indicate any source.

54 See Pouillon, ‘Le premier traité des propriétés transcendantes: La “Summa de bono” du Chancelier Philippe,’ 59. For the identification with Avicenna, Pouillon relies on an essay by P. Minges of 1914 (Pouillon, ‘Le premier traité des propriétés transcendantes,’ 54, n. 58). Wicki remarks (Philip the Chancellor, *Summa de bono*, 1:10.32) that section [a] of Quotation 2.1 is found almost *verbatim* in the *Summa aurea* of William of Auxerre (written between 1215 and 1220), where however no indication of provenience is given: ‘Sed potest dici quod (...) veritas dictionis (...) est adaequatio intellectus ad rem’ (William of Auxerre, *Summa aurea in quatuor libros Sententiarum* I, c. 10 (Paris, 1500; repr. Frankfurt: Minerva, 1964), fol. 23ra).

55 *SH* I (n. 89), p. 142, n. 2. Averroes’ *Destructio destructionum* can hardly be the source of the quotation at stake, as the editors of the *Summa* supposed, since this work became available to the majority of Latin readers only in the 14<sup>th</sup> century.



Quotation 2.3—Avicenna, *Liber de Philosophia prima* 1.8:<sup>56</sup>

Veritas ( ... ) intelligitur dispositio dictionis vel intellectus qui significat dispositionem in re exteriore cum est ei aequalis.<sup>57</sup>

to which this other passage, shortly following, should be added:

Quotation 2.4—Avicenna, *Liber de Philosophia prima* 1.8:<sup>58</sup>

Veritas autem quae adequatur rei, illa est certa.<sup>59</sup>

The idea of truth as a correspondence between intellect and reality, however, notoriously (albeit mistakenly) circulated under the name of Isaac Israeli in medieval philosophy, for example in the writings of Thomas Aquinas.<sup>60</sup> More importantly, however, the objection raised to this definition of truth in section [c] of Quotation 2 makes it evident that the doctrinal core of the position in the *Summa* is not only the general point expressed in section [a], for which some Avicennian antecedent can be found, but also the analogy that section [b] establishes, according to which the intellect conforms itself to external things as a sign conforms itself to the thing signified, which has no manifest correspondence in the *Philosophia prima*. There are therefore good reasons to believe that in Quotation 2, Philip the Chancellor and, following in his footsteps, the authors of the *Summa* may not refer to Avicenna, or to another proponent of tenet [a], but to a further philosopher, who adhered to tenets [a] and [b]. The identity of this philosopher remains, to the best of my knowledge, unassessed.

This being the case, Quotation 2 cannot be invoked *sic et simpliciter* to support the first possible explanation of our problem. Rather, the fact that in Quotation 2 the philosopher whose identity remains uncertain is referred to as such, i.e. as a ‘certain philosopher’, makes it likely that the authors of the *Summa* would have felt the need to add a similar qualification, ‘certain’ (*quidam*), to the epithet ‘Philosopher’ in Quotations 1 and 8 as well, should the ‘Philosopher’ in these cases be intended in the same generic sense of the ‘philosopher’ of Quotation 2.

As a second explanation, one might suppose that the term *Philosophus* (with a capital ‘P’) in Quotations 1 and 8 does in fact refer to Avicenna, but that this way of referring to Avicenna derives from a previous source, intermediate between Avicenna and the *Summa*, which still considered Avicenna as the philosopher par excel-

<sup>56</sup> Avicenna Latinus, *Liber de Philosophia prima*, 1:55.58–60 [Arabic, 1:48.6–7]

<sup>57</sup> [Truth (...) is meant to be a status of a statement or of a notion when the latter signifies an external state of affairs and adequately reflects it].

<sup>58</sup> Avicenna Latinus, *Liber de Philosophia prima*, 1:55.64–65 [Arabic, 1:48.10]

<sup>59</sup> [Certain truth is the truth that adequately reflects the thing].

<sup>60</sup> See A. Altmann and S.M. Stern, *Isaac Israeli: A Neoplatonic Philosopher of the early tenth Century: His Works translated with comments and an outline of his Philosophy* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958; repr. Westport Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1979; repr. with a new foreword by Alfred Ivry, Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 58–9. The point is not discussed in the relevant section regarding Thomas Aquinas in Aertsen, *Medieval Philosophy as Transcendental Thought*, 221.

lence according to the ‘*Philosophia prima* without *Metaphysics*’ pattern. In this case, some remnants of the ‘*Philosophia prima* without *Metaphysics*’ paradigm in Quotations 1 and 8 would coexist, on specific and limited points and due to the very peculiar composition history of the *Summa*, with the subsequent pattern of ‘*Philosophia prima* and *Metaphysics*’, witnessed by Quotations 3, 5, and 7. This impression is reinforced by the fact that Quotations 1 and 8 occur in arguments that are later qualified or discarded, and that can therefore be imported from previous philosophical debates. While certainly more reliable than the previous explanation, this second way of clarifying why Avicennian doctrines are ascribed to the *Philosophus* in the *Summa* does not solve the serious difficulty associated with positing in one and the same structural unit of the *Summa* occurrences of the term *Philosophus* which bear different meanings: in one case, Avicenna (supposedly in Quotations 1 and 8, if we take the *Philosophus* there to refer to him); in another case, Aristotle (as in Quotations 1.3 and 8.3).

The third explanation is the one which looks most trustworthy to me: one can surmise that in Quotations 1 and 8, the term *Philosophus* refers to Aristotle, but that the authors of the *Summa* phrase the doctrines that they ascribe to him in the way Avicenna formulates them, drawing the doctrinal material from the *Philosophia prima*, but attributing it retrospectively to Aristotle, called by the epithet ‘Philosopher’ that is proper to him, and treated in this instance as the forerunner of Avicenna. In this third scenario, far from discarding the ‘*Philosophia prima* and *Metaphysics*’ scheme, our passages reinforce it, by making Avicenna the interpreter *toto coelo* of Aristotle and by rendering the *Philosophia prima* as the key to the interpretation and doctrinal quintessence of the *Metaphysics*. In other words, it looks likely that in these cases the first element of the dyad ‘*Philosophia prima* and *Metaphysics*’ has collapsed into the second, and the second has absorbed the first within its own theoretical framework. The fact that the two doctrines of Avicenna in question are not accepted *sic et simpliciter* by the authors of the *Summa*, but are qualified or countered by them (*respondendum est; ad illud dicendum est*), might be the cause of this collapse and absorption, as a sort of defensive strategy put in action on behalf of Avicenna.

### **‘*Philosophia prima* and *Metaphysics*’: Cumulation**

If the interpretation proposed above is correct, this overlapping of the philosophical profiles of Aristotle and Avicenna, with the consequent attribution to the former of metaphysical tenets of the latter, which is observed in the second group of quotations, might anticipate a more sweeping defensive strategy, regarding Avicenna as well as Aristotle, which is clearly displayed in the third group of quotations. Here we confront the attempt to project not on the *Philosophus*, but on a larger and less easily definable group of thinkers, the weight of a doubtful Avicennian doctrine in order to exonerate Avicenna (and, with him, Aristotle) of responsibility for it. This

is what happens in Quotations 9 to 11, in which a doctrine of Avicenna strenuously opposed by the authors of the *Summa* (*haec ratio non congruit; falsa est propositio; falsa est positio*) is ascribed generically, at increasing levels of precision, first to ‘certain philosophers’ (*quidam philosophi*, Quotation 9), then to the ‘philosophers’ (*philosophi*, Quotation 10), and finally to ‘the ancient philosophers’ (*antiqui philosophi*, Quotation 11). In all three cases, the reader can surmise that either Avicenna, or Aristotle, or both, are members of the group, but neither of them is explicitly quoted, and so the reader can only guess about the identity of the philosophers in question.

In all three quotations that fall under the present category, the aforementioned group of philosophers is criticized with regard to a fundamental tenet of the emanation theory of Avicenna, that is, the famous doctrine which posits that only one thing proceeds from one thing, and which is expounded in Chapter IX.4 of the *Philosophia prima*. Since in the three quotations, this doctrine ceases to be the exclusive intellectual property of Avicenna, insofar as he is never named explicitly, being either inserted into the larger group of the *philosophi* (less or more precisely determined), or even moved back in time among the *antiqui philosophi*, it seems clear that the intent of the authors of the *Summa* is to divert from Avicenna the target of the polemic and to spare him, as well as his forefather Aristotle, an unescapable criticism.

A similar connection between Avicenna, Aristotle, and the *philosophi* on a contentious doctrinal issue, in which Avicenna’s and Aristotle’s positions were not considered totally congruent with the truth by the authors of the *Summa*, has already been discussed above in the case of Quotation 7.

## Conclusion

The previous results are based on a limited sampling of evidence and therefore should be taken as provisional. The limited nature of this inquiry is due not only to a restricted focus on the explicit quotations of Avicenna in the *Summa*, to the exclusion of the implicit ones; it also results from the neglect of important indirect sources of Avicenna’s philosophy for Latin medieval culture, like al-Ġazālī and Averroes (d. 1198). As I have remarked elsewhere, the Latin reception of Avicenna cannot be studied without taking into account Avicenna’s follower and epitomizer al-Ġazālī and his arch-enemy Averroes, since both of them, in opposite ways, were transmitters of the views of Avicenna to the Latins.<sup>61</sup> In fact, both al-Ġazālī and Averroes are among the prominent sources of the *Summa*.

Although limited, the chosen vantage point has allowed us to test, successfully, the inscription of the *Summa* into that network of scholars and works, some of which are congruent with the *Summa* in place, time, and intellectual orientation, that still

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61 Amos Bertolacci, ‘The Reception of Avicenna in Latin Medieval Culture,’ in *Interpreting Avicenna: Critical Essays*, ed. Peter Adamson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 242–69.

consider Avicenna to be a solid and insightful interpreter of Aristotle, at least as far as the *Metaphysics* is concerned. This network has been labelled by means of the formula ‘*Philosophia prima and Metaphysics*’, where ‘and’ means either the integration of Avicenna’s and Aristotle’s metaphysical views, or the conflation of the ones with the others under the aegis of the *Philosophus*, or the ascription of Avicennian tenets to a cumulative series of thinkers, crossing time and encompassing the full scope of philosophy. None of these three modes should be regarded as exclusive to the *Summa*.<sup>62</sup> Their joint presence, however, in the work under examination is worth noticing. The reason for the prestige enjoyed by our author in the *Summa* seems obvious: Avicenna remains an interpreter of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics* more suitable than Averroes to bring Aristotle’s work in line with a religious and a theological worldview. Quotations 1, 5, and 7 seem to point clearly in this direction. Quotation 1 lets the ‘Philosopher’ apply to God the idea of ‘first impression of the intellect’ that Avicenna expresses openly only for ‘being’ in general. Quotation 5 positively contends that Avicenna has established a philosophical proof for the existence of a creator. Quotation 7 negatively states that Aristotle’s and Avicenna’s criticisms of the mathematical ideas are inoffensive towards the Augustinian doctrine of the Platonic ideas as God’s thoughts. In other words, the *Summa* fully discloses the reasons for the persistence and appeal of the ‘*Philosophia prima and Metaphysics*’ pattern among Latin theologians, as well as the concrete ways of implementing this paradigm in a *summa* of theology.

Future research on the *Summa*, and in particular the ground-breaking analysis that Lydia Schumacher has undertaken in her project, is needed to corroborate, as I hope, and possibly to revise or subvert, if necessary, the present results.

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<sup>62</sup> Some kind of ‘cumulative’ use of Avicenna’s psychology, for example, can be found in John of La Rochelle; in the *Tractatus de anima*, for instance, he describes views on psychology which he attributes ‘to the philosophers, especially Avicenna’, although the ideas he discusses are genuinely Avicennian (I thank Lydia Schumacher for having brought this point to my attention). See Jean de La Rochelle, *Tractatus de divisione multiplici potentiarum animae: Texte critique avec introduction, notes et tables*, ed. Pierre Michaud-Quantin (Paris: Vrin, 1964).