

A TRANSLATOR'S TALE.

HERMANNUS ALEMANNUS AS TRANSCREATOR OF IBN RUŠD'S MIDDLE COMMENTARY ON THE *POETICS*

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Abstract: The transmission of Aristotle's *Poetics* into Latin through Hermannus Alemannus' translation of Ibn Rušd's Middle Commentary marks a pivotal stage in the transformation of the text across cultures. Rather than a passive intermediary, Hermannus emerges as an active translator whose interventions reshaped, and at times distorted, the work to suit a Latin readership – creating what contemporary translation theory would term a process of transcreation. Taking as a starting point Roger Bacon's often underrated claim that Hermannus did not play the principal role in his translations, this study challenges two historiographical misconceptions: first, that Hermannus was merely a docile and literal transmitter of Ibn Rušd's text; and second, that he single-handedly accomplished his translation of the Commentary. Drawing on textual analysis and Bacon's testimony, I argue that Hermannus was a far freer translator than is usually acknowledged, deliberately adapting his source to make it more accessible to his Latin contemporaries. To accomplish this, he relied on collaboration with cultural mediators versed in Arabic and (arguably) Hebrew. Reassessing his translation strategies and collaborative context, the paper highlights Hermannus' creative agency in the complex process of transmitting to the Latin West a deeply reworked version of Aristotle's *Poetics*.

Keywords: Ibn Rušd; Aristotle's *Poetics*; Hermannus Alemannus; transcreation.

Il n'y a pas de plus éminent service à rendre à la littérature, que de transporter d'une langue à l'autre les chefs-d'œuvre de l'esprit humain. Il existe si peu de productions du premier rang; le génie, dans quelque genre que ce soit, est un phénomène tellement rare, que si chaque nation moderne en étoit réduite à ses propres trésors, elle seroit toujours pauvre. D'ailleurs, la circulation des idées est, de tous les genres de commerce, celui dont les avantages sont les plus certains.

Madame de Staël, *De l'esprit des traductions*¹

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1. Introductory remarks

It is widely recognised that the Medieval transmission of Aristotle's *Poetics* followed a complex historical trajectory. The Greek text, composed in the 4th century by Aristotle, had already been commented on in late antique Alexandria as part of Aristotle's *Organon*.² Through the mediation of a Syriac translation (whose text is now lost),³ the *Poetics* was then translated into Arabic in the 10th century, resulting in a treatise that was substantially different from the one composed by Aristotle. As extensively documented in various scholarly studies,⁴ all the most central subjects typically treated by Aristotle in his *Poetics* (a few of which are tragedy and its elements, comedy, catharsis, recognition and reversal) underwent a radical process of transformation. Such a process, which according to contemporary translation theory shall be understood as a process of transcreation (or transmutation),⁵ led to a new text, which dealt with moral philosophy and framed poetry as a logical discipline belonging to Aristotle's *Organon* – a work ultimately far removed from its original nature. Several Muslim commentators attempted a philosophical interpretation of its pages,⁶ thereby contributing to a process of transmission that progressively distanced the Ar-

team of collaborators on the project I express my sincere gratitude. As such, the present study has profited considerably from invaluable suggestions of colleagues and mentors. In particular, I would like to renew my gratitude to Prof. Beatrice Gründler, who also allowed me to work with her translations of the Arabic poems quoted by Ibn Rušd in his Middle Commentary – several of her translations served as the basis for the present article. I am also grateful to Prof. Samuela Pagani, whose advice significantly improved this study, and to Prof. Andreas Speer and Prof. Fiorella Retucci for their support and valuable suggestions. Needless to say, I alone am responsible for any remaining errors or shortcomings.

1 DE STAËL 1821, 387.

2 Regarding the late antique and medieval interpretation of Aristotle's *Poetics* and *Rhetoric* as parts of Aristotle's *Organon* see: WALZER 1934; HARDISON 1970; BLACK 1990; HUGONNARD-ROCHE 1993.

3 Cf. *infra*, n. 9.

4 ARISTOTLE 1911; TKATSCH 1928; HARDISON 1970; ALLEN 1976; KELLY 1979; HUGONNARD-ROCHE 2003; ARISTOTLE 2012(2).

5 Regarding the concept of transcreation (also known as transmutation) see: LAL 1972; DÍAZ-MILLÓN, OLIVERA-LOBO 2023; for an example of synonymical use of transmutation and transcreation, see: LAL 1972, 23. For an alternative (semiotic) definition of the term, cf: JAKOBSON 1959; for a further analysis of the concept of transcreation applied to Hermannus' translation see the discussion below.

6 ARBERRY 1937–1939; AL-FĀRĀBĪ 1959; AL-FĀRĀBĪ 1971; AL-FĀRĀBĪ 2008; [AVICENNA] IBN SĪNĀ 1966; AVICENNA 1974; KEMAL 2010; BLACK 1990; SAKR 2024.

istotelian text from its initial content. Among them was Ibn Rušd (1126–1198), who largely contributed to this process of transmutation, especially through his Middle Commentary on the text,⁷ in which he introduced his own interpretation of Aristotle’s *Poetics* as dealing with image-evoking statements possessing didactic and pedagogical value.⁸

However, in the history of this text’s transmission in Medieval times, not only the commentators, but also (if not mostly) the translators played a crucial role in reshaping the contents of the Aristotelian treatise. This consideration holds true for the Arabic, as well as the Latin interpreters of the text.⁹

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- 7 The Arabic text of Ibn Rušd’s *talhīs*, which survives in only two manuscripts (Firenze, Biblioteca Mediceo-Laurenziana, Or. CLXXX, 54 and Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, 2073) underwent several critical editions. An edition of the text was first published in 1872 by the Italian philologist Fausto Lasinio (AVERROÈ 1872). Relying on Fausto Lasinio’s edition, the Egyptian historian of philosophy ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī published his edition of the text in his *Aristūṭālīs Fann aš-ši’r* (*The Poetic Art of Aristotle*, ARISTOTELES 1953); then, in 1971 Salīm Sālim published a new edition of the text ([AVERROES] IBN RUŠD 1971). Finally, the critical edition of the *talhīs* offered by C. Butterworth in 1986 (AVERROES 1986(1)) followed the three previous editions – namely ed. Lasinio 1872 (AVERROÈ 1872), ed. Badawī 1953 (ARISTOTELES 1953), ed. Sālim 1971 ([AVERROES] IBN RUŠD 1971). Butterworth also curated an English translation of the text (AVERROES 1986(2)). Yet, as Gerhard Endress expressed in his note to the *Averrois Opera*: “A critical edition, taking due regard of the Latin and Hebrew versions, remains an urgent desideratum,” ENDRESS 1999, 345. To satisfy the *desideratum* expressed by Endress, a new critical edition of the Arabic text (together with an English translation of it) was prepared by D. Gutas within the above-mentioned project: “Aristotle’s *Poetics* in the West (of India) from Antiquity to the Renaissance – A Multilingual Edition, with Studies of the Cultural Contexts, of the Syriac, Arabic, Hebrew, and Latin Translations,” coordinated by Beatrice Gründler at the University of Berlin. For this paper I have consulted the edition prepared by Prof. Gutas together with the two modern editions of the Arabic text of Ibn Rušd’s Commentary: one by Badawī (ARISTOTELES 1953) and one by Butterworth (AVERROES 1986(1)). As Gutas’ edition is forthcoming but is not available yet, in my paper I adopt Butterworth’s edition as a textual reference to the Arabic text. The transcriptions of the Arabic texts presented in the following pages are based on the edition prepared by Gründler and Gutas and have been kindly revised by my dear colleague Dr. Corrado la Martire and by Prof. Samuela Pagani. I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to all of them. I alone remain responsible for any residual mistake.
- 8 Regarding the role of poetry in Ibn Rušd’s Commentary as an educational tool, see the most recent contribution of F. Woerhter: WOERTHER 2024. Remarks on Ibn Rušd’s philosophical interpretation of poetry are also found in BLACK 1990; KEMAL 2010; HALPER 2022; KRIES 2022. For more philological considerations regarding some of the poetic excerpts provided by Ibn Rušd in his Middle Commentary cf. GRÜNDLER 2025.
- 9 It is impossible to extend this judgement to the Syriac translation as well, for no witness of the Syriac translation of the *Poetics* has survived, with the exception of a single yet relevant fragment attested in a work of the Syrian scholar Severus bar Šakko (or Jacob bar Šakko, d. 1241) entitled *The Book of Dialogues*. This fragment relates precisely to the defi-

The Latin translation of the Arabic version of the text was accomplished by the German Hermannus Alemannus in 1256 in Toledo. To be precise, what Hermannus actually translated into Latin was not the Arabic version of Aristotle's *Poetics* proper, but rather Ibn Rušd's Middle Commentary on it.¹⁰ Subsequently, Hermannus succeeded in transmitting Aristotle's *Poetics* to the Latin West accompanied by the clarifications of the Medieval Commentator *par excellence* of Aristotle, thus contributing to the restitution to the Latin world of a text that was greatly detached from the contents of Aristotle's *Poetics*.

2. A starting point: the testimony of Roger Bacon

The documentary evidence at our disposal regarding the life of Hermannus Alemannus (d. 1272) is quite meagre, and over the years, the reconstruction of his life and works has posed a real challenge to scholarly literature.¹¹ Among

dition of tragedy as offered by Aristotle in his *Poetics*. Regarding this, see: MARGOLIOUTH 1887, 77–70; ARISTOTLE 2012(2), 98–101. This excerpt, combined with the testimony of Ibn Sīnā in his commentary on Aristotle's *Poetics* ([AVICENNA] IBN SĪNĀ 1966; AVICENNA 1974) seems to indicate that the Syriac was a rather literal translation of the Greek.

10 Hermannus' translation of Ibn Rušd's Commentary on the *Poetics* is available in two modern critical editions: one completed in 1965 by W. F. Boggess and one published in 1968 by L. Minio-Paluello; see: BOGGESS 1965; ARISTOTELES 1968. For an English translation of Hermannus' text, see: PREMINGER, HARDISON, KERRANE 1974, 349–382; a partial English translation is also found in MINNIS, SCOTT, WALLACE 1988, 289–307. In the present article, I quoted, for the Latin text, Minio-Paluello's edition, while for the English translation I adopted O. B. Hardison Jr.'s one. Where necessary, I will slightly modify Hardison's translation, or I will simply use the English translation of the Latin text (forthcoming) that I have prepared within the above-mentioned project "Aristotle's *Poetics* in the West (of India)," see *supra*, n. 7. A French translation of the text curated by F. Woerther has been published for Vrin, see: WOERTHER 2025.

11 The documentary evidence although meagre is not insufficient; fragments of information regarding Hermannus' biography can be drawn from the *explicit* and *prologue* to some of his translations: for the *explicit* of the translation of Ibn Rušd's Commentary on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, see WOERTHER 2018, 256; for the *explicit* of his translation of the *Summa Alexandrinorum*, see WOERTHER 2020, 390; for the prologue to the translation of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, see BOGGESS 1971, 249–250; for the prologue to the *Didascalia in Rhetoricam Aristotelis ex glossa Alfarabi*, see BOGGESS 1971, 249; for the prologue and *explicit* of Hermannus' translation of Ibn Rušd's Commentary on the *Poetics*, see ARISTOTELES 1968, 41, 74; for Hermannus' own will, see: RODRÍGUEZ LÓPEZ 1907, 286; for the *incipit* of Hermannus' translation of the first 70 psalms of Bible from Hebrew into Castilian, see: DIEGO LOBEJON 1993, 65; finally, for the mention of the death of Hermannus Bishop of Astorga, dated November 20th, 1272, see: RUIZ 1997, 595. Hermannus also appears as an addressee of a letter that Pope Clement IV wrote, see: THUMSER 2022, 198, n. 288 (also in MARTÈNE, DURAND 1717, vol. 2, n. 415, col. 433). For a discussion of the mention of Hermannus in Roger Bacon's

the sources which scholars generally rely on to reconstruct Hermannus' biography – and also one of the most valuable – is the testimony of his contemporary and acquaintance Roger Bacon (1220–1292). Through Bacon's references to Hermannus, scattered among his vast production, we learn, among other things, that Hermannus was commonly acknowledged as a learned man (*magister*)¹² and that he was translating the works of Aristotle from Arabic into Latin – even though, according to Bacon, he had not mastered Arabic. Indeed, in a famous passage from his *Compendium studii philosophiae*, Bacon states:

Nor did he [Hermannus] know Arabic well, as he acknowledged, for he more assisted the translations than was a translator himself, since he retained Saracens with him in Hispania who took the lead in their translations.¹³

work, see later in this paper. The most relevant contributions about Hermannus' biography are: JOURDAIN 1819 (regarding this contribution, a revised version has been published by Charles Jourdain, Amaible's son, in 1843, see: JOURDAIN, JOURDAIN 1843); LUQUET 1901; FERREIRO ALEMPARTE 1983; RUIZ 1997; FORTE 2011; MARTÍNEZ 2015; GONZÁLES 2016. The following is what we can state with relative certainty about Hermannus' life. The son of a priest and a nubile woman, Hermannus Alemannus was born in the German territories either at the end of the 12th century or in the early years of the 13th century. He studied in Paris, most likely between 1210 and 1220, where he became acquainted with Gui Foucois, the future Pope Clement IV (1265–1268). After his studies he moved to Spain, where he allegedly accomplished all his philosophical translations from Arabic into Latin: Ibn Rušd's Commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle (June 3rd 1240, for a partial edition of the text, cf. WOERTHER 2018), the *Summa Alexandrinorum* (April 8th 1243/1244, cf. WOERTHER 2020), Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (cf. WOERTHER 2023), al-Fārābī's *Didascalia in Rhetoricam Aristotelis* (cf. AL-FĀRĀBĪ 1971, translated into English in COPELAND, SLUITER 2009), Ibn Rušd's Middle Commentary on Aristotle's *Poetics* (March 17th 1256, cf. BOGGESE 1965, ARISTOTELES 1968). Hermannus was eventually appointed canon of the Church of Toledo in 1263 and by 1265 he was serving as canon of the Church of Valencia. In 1266, he was elected Bishop of Astorga by Pope Clement IV. After his election at the see of Astorga, he translated a collection of *Psalms* from Hebrew into Castilian. He then died in Astorga between November 10th and November 20th, 1272.

- 12 The term *magister* used by Roger Bacon in his works to refer to Hermannus occurred also in some documents referring to Hermannus' role as Canon of the Churches of Toledo and Valencia and appears in the *incipit* of the translation of the Psalms from Hebrew into Castilian. Such a term is rather generic and can hardly be considered proof of the alleged tenure of Hermannus as a university teacher, as several scholars have claimed. Cf. FERREIRO ALEMPARTE 1983, 42; RUIZ 1997, 591.
- 13 ROGER BACON 2018, 174–175: “Nec Arabicum bene scivit, ut confessus est, quia magis fuit adiutor translationum quam translator, quia Saracenos tenuit secum in Hispania, qui fuerunt in suis translationibus principales.”

Now, in this excerpt Roger Bacon clearly states that Hermannus relied on the assistance of some translator of Arab origins – or simply non-Christian, as the term *saracenus* could also be interpreted. Moreover, Bacon goes so far as to suggest that in reality Hermannus had the role of ‘helper’ with regard to his translations, that is to say, he only played a secondary role in the translation process, while the majority of the work was carried out by the *saraceni* collaborating with him.¹⁴ Scholars never really gave adequate attention to these remarks of Roger Bacon.¹⁵ In the following sections of the present article, I will provide examples from Hermannus’ Latin translation of Ibn Rušd’s Middle Commentary on the

14 Even though it does not directly concern our issue here, it seems to be of some relevance to notice how, in the passage following the one just quoted from Bacon’s report, one can also conclude that Hermannus represents the source which Bacon relies on for his harsh remarks regarding Michael Scot’s translations, as he writes: “Similiter Michael Scotus ascripsit sibi translationes multa sed certum est quod Andreas quidam Iudaeus plus laboravit in his. Unde Michael, sicut Hermanus retulit, nec scivit scientias neque linguas,” ROGER BACON 2018, 172.

15 With the exception of Georges-Henri Luquet (cf. LUQUET 1901, 415–416) and Ugo Monneret de Villard (MONNERET DE VILLARD 1944, 23). Some scholars, despite explicitly undertaking studies on Hermannus Alemannus’ *modus operandi* as a translator, simply did not acknowledge them at all, and therefore seemed to deem as irrelevant the fact that Hermannus might have had helpers assisting him with his translations. For example, cf. SCHMIEJA 1999, HASSE 2010, AKASOY, FIDORA 2002: despite their important influence in the scholarly debates on the matter, these studies do not problematise the issue of Hermannus’ collaborators. Others only considered Bacon’s assertions as *partially* true. While still holding him responsible for the majority of the work, they conceded that Hermannus might have been occasionally helped by some intermediary, though only in certain passages of his translations. For instance, this seems to be the approach of F. Woerther, who gives partial credit to Roger Bacon’s aforementioned claim when she writes: “Non seulement la compétence d’Hermann en arabe semble en effet avoir été bien meilleure que ce que lui-même affirme d’après Roger Bacon [...] mais l’observation de certains passages de ses traductions (ceux où, notamment, il y a eu recours à la translittération) indique une attitude qui n’est pas toujours très cohérente et qui pourrait peut-être s’expliquer par l’exécution d’un travail en équipes parallèles ou en atelier,” WOERTHER 2018, 12. In this passage, F. Woerther seems to suggest that, when it came to the transliteration of some passages of the text, Hermannus would turn to some helper(s) with a better knowledge of Arabic. To be precise, it must be noticed how, later on in the same contribution, F. Woerther seems to maintain another position: “L’hypothèse d’un travail de traduction réalisé en équipes ne peut être longtemps maintenue, dans la mesure où la distribution des termes n’obéit à aucune disposition particulière au sein du texte du Commentaire et que l’on peut même trouver, à quelques lignes d’intervalles seulement, deux traductions latines différentes pour un mot arabe issu de la même racine [...] Il conviendrait plutôt de suggérer – en l’absence d’indices plus probants pour le moment – que cette variété lexicale est seule assignable au choix, purement stylistique, de faire varier l’expression dans le texte latin,” WOERTHER 2018, 74.

Poetics, intended to demonstrate that Hermannus made distinctive choices as a translator – thus challenging Bacon’s claim about his merely secondary role in the translation process. At the same time, an analysis of selected passages will reveal that Hermannus did in fact benefit from collaboration with someone better acquainted with the Arabic language and culture. This, however, does not mean that Bacon’s claim should be accepted unquestioningly and that Hermannus’ role should accordingly be diminished; rather, it suggests that Bacon’s observation – that Hermannus did not accomplish his translation entirely in solitude – deserves to be taken seriously. Indeed, although it is unclear which of Hermannus’ translations Bacon was specifically referring to in the passage reported above, the evidence I will present makes it plausible to believe that among others he had in mind the translation of Ibn Rušd’s Commentary on the *Poetics* discussed here.

3. The craft of translation: five translation approaches

Before analysing some of the most intriguing examples of translation – which reveal, *prima facie*, Hermannus’ knowledge of Arabic language and Muslim cultures, but which, as we will see, might also suggest that he was not working alone at his translation, it might be useful to provide a general overview of Hermannus’ *modus interpretandi*, as it emerges from the analysis of his translation of Ibn Rušd’s Middle Commentary on the *Poetics*. In particular, I will briefly introduce the five translation-techniques which characterise Hermannus’ translations: literal rendering, adaptation, substitution, addition and omission. Examples for each of these translation approaches will be addressed in the present paper. In particular, the cases of adaptations, substitutions and additions constitute the instances where Hermannus proves to be the most creative and represent Hermannus’ typical principle of intervention. As will be evident from the examples presented in the following pages, Hermannus frequently prioritises conveying meaning over adhering strictly to the Arabic source text: he introduces elements that diverge from the original, thereby creating a new version which, while not entirely faithful to its Arabic model, offers greater significance for the Latin reader. Here follows a table that illustrates the most peculiar features of each of Hermannus’ translation-techniques.

Literal rendering	Adaptation	Substitution (Transcreation)	Addition	Omission
Same formal structure	Different formal structure	Different formal structure	Usually explanatory additions, added by the translator in order to clarify the content for the Latin reader.	In Hermannus' translation the quotations of the Qur'ān (only two verses are translated into Latin) and some Arabic poems are usually omitted.
Same reference	Same reference	Different reference		
Same sense	Same sense	Same sense		
Word-to-word translation. The rendering is literal to the point that the Latin at times sounds awkward, since even the order of the words follows that of Arabic syntax. From a quantitative perspective this represents the main criterion adopted in Hermannus' translation.	The Arabic syntax is adapted to the needs of the Latin one and with criteria internal to the translation; the literality is less rigid, nonetheless the reference and the sense contained in the Arabic remain the same.	It is a radical form of adaptation: the Arabic is changed both in terms of form and content; the translator keeps the general sense conveyed by the translated passage, but introduces a new reference. This substitution practice is close to what is referred to as transcreation or transmutation in contemporary translation-theory.		

As indicated in the table, literality, adaptation and substitution are characterised by three common parameters: formal structure, reference and sense. With ‘formal structure’ I am referring to the morphological structure of the original Arabic, and especially the syntactic order of the sentence.¹⁶ With the term ‘reference’ I am indicating the semantic content of the translated passage. With the term ‘sense’ I am referring here to the overall meaning that the translated text originally conveyed.¹⁷ As is apparent, in some cases the terms ‘reference’ and ‘sense’ might coincide, but not always. The difference between these two parameters will be clarified with the following examples. A literal translation is achieved when the formal structure, the reference, and the sense of the original Arabic text are accurately mirrored in the Latin version. If both reference and sense remain consistent but the formal structure is altered, the result is considered an adaptation. Conversely, if only the sense is preserved while both formal structure and reference are modified, this constitutes a substitution.¹⁸

The most evident among these approaches is, of course, the technique of literal rendering. This technique became quite popular in the Middle Ages, and represented a safe method to respect the literality of the translated text. A clear example of it within Hermannus’ translation of Ibn Rušd’s Middle Commentary on the *Poetics* has already been provided by W. F. Boggess, the author of one of the two modern editions of the text:¹⁹

16 A good reference in order to have a better understanding of what I mean here with formal structure is St. Jerome, father of Medieval translation technique, together with Boethius (see: PERETT 2017, 115–120); in the Epistle 57, St. Jerome quotes the *verborum ordo*, which corresponds to what I indicate here as formal structure; see: HIERONYMUS 1910, 508: “Ego enim non solum fateor, sed libera voce profiteor me in interpretatione graecorum absque scripturis sanctis, ubi et verborum ordo mysterium est, non uerbum e uerbo, sed sensum exprimere de sensu.”

17 For the *sensus* of a translated passage, see the use of the term in St. Jerome, *supra*, n. 16.

18 The preceding scheme and the related mentioned criteria should be understood merely as guiding tools, which, at best, may prove useful for understanding Hermannus’ translation techniques. They should in no way be taken as normative models or as an attempt to introduce new definitions into contemporary translation theory, even though it explicitly draws inspiration from it – deriving in particular from some of its features, especially, as already noted, the notion of transcreation.

19 See: BOGGESS 1965, xxxviii–xix.

Eng. Lat	He said	Every	poem	and every	poetic	is	blame	or	praise poetry
Lat.	Dixit	Omne itaque	poe- ma	et omnis	oratio poeti- ca	aut est	vituperatio	aut est	laudatio
Ar.	Qāla	fa- kullu	ši' r	wa- kullu	qawl ši' rī	fa- huwa immā	hiḡā' un	wa- immā	ma- dīḡun
Eng. Ar.	He said	Every	poem	and every	poetic state- ments	is ei- ther	satire	or	praise poetry

Even though an analysis of the implications of such a statement goes beyond the purpose of the present paper, it should be noted that this excerpt is also one of the most emblematic passages of the Arabic tradition of Aristotle's *Poetics*: to state that every poetic statement is either blame or praise poetry implies a rhetorical and ethical understanding of poetry that more or less influences the entire interpretation of the Aristotelian treatise. As the table clearly shows, the literal approach adopted by Hermannus comes to the fore: the formal structure of the Arabic text – the *verborum ordo* – is preserved, along with its content and its overall sense. The Arabic passage is literally mirrored by the Latin translation, and its text is replicated almost identically. Most passages of the Middle Commentary are translated using this technique, with the result that the Latin text can sometimes come across a bit awkward, yet very faithful to its Arabic model. Indeed, the skill with which Hermannus (and his team) managed to translate the Arabic text thoroughly into Latin is remarkable and shows that the translators wanted to maintain, wherever possible, the utmost faithfulness to the Arabic text.

Another example of literal translation may prove illuminating as to the possible risks of such an approach. In a passage where Ibn Rušd cites the poet al-Aswad ibn Ya'fur,²⁰ Hermannus renders the name literally as *niger filius Iofar* ('the black son of Ya'fur').²¹ This represents a very rare instance in which Hermannus chose to literally translate an Arabic proper name rather than simply

20 AVERROES 1986(1), 126; for the spelling of the name of the poet quoted by Ibn Rušd, see PELLAT 2012.

21 ARISTOTELES 1968, 71.

transcribe it. Such literality conveyed a different meaning to the original one and can therefore, precisely because of its literalness, be regarded as a mistranslation. Indeed, despite the formal structure – in virtue of the literality of the translation – being preserved, the reference has been clearly misunderstood: Ibn Rušd did not want to quote some ‘black son of Ya‘fur’, but a poet whose name was al-Aswad ibn Ya‘fur. Indeed, the name al-Aswad ibn Ya‘fur literally means ‘Black, son of Ya‘fur’ which is precisely what we find in the Latin version. However, the choice to translate such a name literally implies a failure to recognise that it is a proper name, rather than a description of a son of Ya‘fur.

A more creative translation approach employed by Hermannus is represented by the technique that I introduced as ‘adaptation’ – i.e. a translation where the reference and sense of the Arabic are maintained, whereas the formal structure is modified. As an example of such an approach, I will provide some of the finest verses created by Hermannus in his attempt to adapting an Arabic poem, which was quoted by Ibn Rušd in his Commentary as a bad case of poetic composition:

Lat.	Et de hac manerie dixerunt quidam de poemate Omrilkaisi, quasi reprehendendo ipsum cum dixit: Ac si non ascendissem unquam causa solacii equum aut non tenuissem puellam ornatam monilibus mecum, et ac si numquam dolium plenum vini meracissimi salutassem, et equos post multos recursus iterum <i>ad cursum non incitasse.</i>	wa-min hādā al-bāb qāla ba‘duhum fī qawl Imri’ al-Qays, <i>ka-annī lam arkab ġawādan li-laddatin /</i> <i>wa-lam atabaṭṭan kā‘iban dāta ḥulḥālī //</i> <i>wa-lam asba‘ī l-ziqqa al-rawiyya wa-lam aqul /</i> <i>li-ḥayliya kurrī karratan ba‘da iġfālī //</i>	Ar.
Eng. Lat.	Someone said the same of the verse of Omrilkaisi (Imru’ l-Qays), almost blaming him when he said: <i>As if I had never ridden a horse only for pleasure,</i>	On this matter also somebody said about the verse of Imru’ l-Qays, <i>As if I had not ridden a fine charger for pleasure,</i> <i>or pressed a fully-breasted ank</i>	Eng. Ar.

or I had never laid with a maiden covered in treasures; and as if I never hailed a wineskin full of most pure wine, nor incited my horses, after much running, to run one more time. ²²	let-wearing girl to my chest Nor bought a full wine-skin, nor said to my horse 'attack again' after it was startled. ²³	
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As demonstrated by this refined poem – crafted in accordance with the Medieval Latin *cursus* –²⁴ the Latin version intentionally altered the original Arabic's formal structure to create harmonious Latin verses. In doing so, Hermannus inevitably made concessions regarding literal accuracy, which led to changes in the formal features of the source material. Nevertheless, the core content and purpose of the poem were largely retained. This stands as the most significant example of adaptation within Hermannus' translation.

A second example of adaptation, whose implications I will examine more closely later in the paper, is Hermannus' adaptation of Ibn Rušd's reference to 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Nāṣir as the 'King of Cordoba' (*rex Kortubii*). In this case, the exotic name is neither transliterated (as Hermannus usually does with almost all the poets mentioned in the Commentary), nor translated (as happened in the case of al-Aswad ibn Ya'fur). Instead, Hermannus cleverly adapts the reference in a way that makes sense to an audience unfamiliar with 'Abd al-Raḥmān himself. In other words, Hermannus preserves the reference and its sense, while changing only its signifier, which here simply becomes 'King of Cordoba' – a designation that indeed corresponds to 'Abd al-Raḥmān's role in the city.

Furthermore, typical examples of Hermannus' technique of adaptation are the so-called double translations,²⁵ i.e. cases in which a single Arabic term is

22 ARISTOTELES 1968, 70; the English translation of the poem is mine, for an alternative translation cf. PREMINGER, HARDISON, KERRANE 1974, 377: "As if a horse I had never ascended / For the sake of pleasure; / As if a girl I had never attended / Adorned with bracelets; / As if a barrel of strong wine / I had never upended / As if a horse after many laps / Back to the race I had not remanded."

23 AVERROES 1986(1), 120; I follow here the reading of the verse gently provided by prof. Gründler; a discussion of these verses is provided by Gründler in GRÜNDLER 2025, 19; for a slightly different reading and transliteration of the Arabic, cf. BOGGESS 1968, 668.

24 SPINAZZE 2014; cf. the definition of medieval *cursus* as "the descendent of classic ways of patterning the ends of sentences where quantity was replaced by stress," in MIKKEL 2011, 698. For a complete study on the matter, see the contribution of NORBERG 1968. I thank Guy Guldentops for introducing me to the medieval use of *cursus*.

25 For an interesting analysis of Hermannus' use of the double translations, cf. WOERTHER

rendered through two (or more) Latin equivalents. Several examples occur throughout his translation. Here I will provide only some emblematic instances.

In one passage, Hermannus translates:

Verumptamen translationes potissime dici possunt concambia ex accidentibus rei sive concomitantibus rem. ²⁶	Nonetheless, metaphors can be said to be substitutions from the accidents of a thing or from [the aspects] that converge to a thing. ²⁷
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Here *accidentes rei* and *concomitantes rem* are two Latin expressions corresponding to the single Arabic construct *lawāḥiq al-šayʿ* ('the concomitants of a thing').

Another illustrative example is the following:

Et unumquodque istorum, quandoque invenitur singulariter per se absque suo conpari [<i>sic</i>] – prout est sonus in tibia seu fistula et pondus in saltatione et representatio seu imitatio in dictione, scilicet in sermonibus representativis seu imaginativis prolatis absque metro seu pondere. ²⁸	And sometimes each one of these aspects is found alone, by itself, without the other parts, like the sound in a flute or pipe, the measure in dance, and imitation or representation in sentences, i.e. imitative or image-evoking statements displayed without metre or measure. ²⁹
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In this passage, Hermannus translates quite literally from Arabic, with a notable use of double translations: *tibia seu fistula* is the translation of the Arabic term *al-mazāmīr* (sing. *al-mizmār*, which indicates a single-pipe); *sermones representativi seu imaginativi* is the translation of *al-aqāwīl al-muḥayyala* ('image-evoking statements'); *metrus seu pondus* translates *al-mauzūna* ('metres').

These cases of double translation are frequent in Hermannus' work and, in most instances, reflect his careful effort to ensure clarity for the Latin reader. The reason why such double translations should be understood as adaptations

2018, 59–65.

26 ARISTOTELES 1968, 42; for the Arabic text, cf. AVERROES 1986(1), 55; the Latin *concambia* translates the Arabic *ʾibdālāt*, which means 'substitutions'.

27 The English translation is mine; for an alternative English translation see PREMINGER, HARDISON, KERRANE 1974, 350: "And metaphors can very properly be called tropes on attributes or characteristics of a thing."

28 ARISTOTELES 1968, 42; for the Arabic text, see: AVERROES 1986(1), 57.

29 The English translation is mine; for an alternative English translation, see PREMINGER, HARDISON, KERRANE 1974, 350: "Each of these elements is sometimes found by itself and without another – as sound in pipe or flute music, and rhythm in dance. And representation or imitation occurs in language alone – that is, in representational or imaginative speeches composed without meter or rhythm."

is clear: *tibia* and *fistula*, for instance, are both valid translations of the Arabic *al-mizmār*. Hermannus, in his effort to accommodate the Latin reader, chose to use two terms instead of only one in order to convey the full semantic range of the Arabic, thus modifying the signifier while preserving the original meaning intended by Ibn Rušd.

Probably the most notable example of adaptation through double translation is represented by Hermannus' choice to associate the concept of *tragoedia* to that of *ars laudandi* in order to translate the Arabic *šinā'at al-madīh* (the art of praise poetry'). Without a doubt, the introduction of the term *tragoedia* in Hermannus' Latin translation of Ibn Rušd's Commentary represents one of the most striking and enigmatic choices in his work, as the term does not appear in Ibn Rušd's text and was clearly introduced by the Latin translator either from another source, or by his own intention.

Hermannus initially associates the Arabic term *šinā'at al-madīh*³⁰ with the Latin *ars laudandi* – as we have seen in the above-mentioned example of literary approach. It is only around what corresponds to chapter six of Aristotle's *Poetics* that the Latin term *ars laudandi* begins to be regularly paired with the term *tragoedia*. In its first occurrence, *tragoedia* is presented as a seemingly straightforward alternative translation for *šinā'at al-madīh*,³¹ which had previously always been rendered as *ars laudandi*. However, the translator quickly clarifies its meaning at the second occurrence, explaining that *tragoedia* refers to 'the art of praise' and pairs it explicitly with *ars laudandi* ("tragedie, id est artis laudandi").³² In most of the subsequent instances of use, the two terms are used together, in hendiadys, to ensure that readers understand that they convey the same concept. It remains unclear why Hermannus chose to introduce the term *tragoedia* at this particular point in the translation. A plausible explanation, if one considers Hermannus' prologue to his translation, is that the introduction of *tragoedia* was influenced by his reading of Horace's *Ars poetica*, where tragedy

30 Concerning the concept of the Arabic praise poetry (*al-madīh*) cf. GRÜNDLER 2003.

31 ARISTOTELES 1968, 47: "Oportet ergo ut habitudo sermonis recitantis et representantis in tragedia sit habitudo et figura certi et non dubii" / "Then the appearance of the declaimer of speech and the story-teller in tragedy ought to be the appearance and figure of one who is certain, and not of the dubious." The English translation is mine.

32 ARISTOTELES 1968, 48.

is indeed mentioned, though not discussed in detail.³³ Be this as it may, the case stands out as an emblematic example of Hermannus' adaptation through double-translation method: by pairing *tragoedia* with *ars laudandi*, he covers the full semantic spectrum of the Arabic term while simultaneously providing helpful interpretative guidance for the Latin reader.

However, the scope of the Latin term *tragoedia* seems to go beyond a faithful Latin adaptation of the Arabic *al-madīh*, as it conveys something more than the mere concept of eulogy. This consideration leads us to the third translation technique employed by Hermannus – namely substitution, which is perhaps the most distinctive one among his translation approaches, and might, in contemporary linguistic terms, be described as a form of transcreation, for reasons I will soon illustrate.

Indeed, when adaptation proved insufficient to convey the meaning of the Arabic text into Latin, Hermannus frequently opted to replace Ibn Rušd's references with concepts more familiar to the Latin audience. This strategy often involved significant departures from the original Arabic source, altering both its formal structure and its references, while managing to preserve the underlying intent. Numerous instances of this method can be found throughout Hermannus' translation, several of which will be examined in the following pages. For the purposes of the present discussion, it might suffice to present the rather unique cases of substitution of four Arabic poems, which were introduced by Ibn Rušd as examples of polysemy and of paronomasia.

As an example of terms that share the same morphology while bearing different meanings (polysemic words), Ibn Rušd provides the following cases in Arabic, which Hermannus brilliantly substitutes – or transcreates – with other references that meet the same requirements.

³³ Regarding the concept of tragedy in the Latin Middle Ages, see: DAHAN 1980; KELLY 1993; regarding the problem of Hermannus' sudden introduction of the term in his translation, cf. KELLY 1979. I would tend to exclude that Hermannus had access to the Greek text of the *Poetics*, from which he might have read the Greek term. Indeed, if that was the case, he might have read in it also the Greek term for Comedy, which though never appears within his translation – in which the concept of Comedy, through the mediation of the Arabic *hiğā'*, was translated into Latin as *satira*, not as *comoedia*.

Lat.	Et exemplum convenientie in tota dictione tantum est ut si dicatur: <i>est canis in castris</i> <i>canis emicat alter in astris.</i>	wa-miṭāl al-muwāfaqa fī kull al-lafẓ fa-qat al-asmā' al-muštaraḳa, miṭl qawl al-Ma'arri: <i>ma ānun min aḥibbatinā ma ānu,</i> [<i>tuḡību al-ṣāhilāti bihi al-qiyānu</i>] wa-miṭal qawlihi: fa-zanduki muḡtālun wa-ṭarfuki muḡtālu.	Ar.
Eng Lat.	An example of agreement in all the term only is as if it was said: <i>One dog with the troops dines</i> <i>Another in the stars shines.</i> ³⁴	An example of agreement in all of the term only is the polysemic words, like the verse of al-Ma'arri: <i>Ma ān is our loved ones' abode (ma ānu) of</i> [<i>where neighing steeds respond to singing slave-girls</i>], and like his verse, <i>Your fore-arm is plump, and your glance is killing.</i> ³⁵	Eng. Ar.

Here, Ibn Ruṣd presents two examples (*ma ān* and *muḡtāl*) of polysemous words (*al-asmā' al-muštaraḳa*), with which he indicates names that agree in form but differ in meaning. The translator demonstrates a clear understanding of Ibn Ruṣd's intent, offering an apt substitution to render the two Arabic verses that Ibn Ruṣd introduces as examples of polysemous terms. Indeed, the Latin term *canis*, used by Hermannus, could refer either to the actual dog or to the constellation in the sky. The example of the equivocality of the dog, meant as the constellation and as the actual animal is drawn from a long-standing tradition of commentators of Aristotle's *Organon*.³⁶ The example of the term 'dog', which indicated the philosopher belonging to the cynic tradition, the terrestrial animal, the constellation of Sirio and the sea animal (which is a species of fish referred to as 'dog') traces back to John Philoponus, Ammonius, Simplicius and in general to the late-antique commentators of Aristotle – indeed, a similar example is also found in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, 1401a13–19. It is hard to determine with precision

34 ARISTOTELES 1968, 69; for the English translation, here slightly modified, cf. PREMINGER, HARDISON, KERRANE 1974, 376.

35 AVERROES 1986(1), 118–119.

36 The history of such a classical example is shortly reconstructed in LICATA 2021.

the source from which Hermannus could have drawn such an example. However, what is certain is that the classic example of *canis signum caeleste* versus *canis animal latrans* as a case of semantic ambiguity clearly inspired Hermannus to compose the striking verse “Est canis in castris; canis emicat alter in astris,” which stands out as an original elaboration by the translator and, to the best of my knowledge, does not appear in this form in any other medieval source.

Another example of Hermannus’ substitutive approach is his translation of Ibn Rušd’s examples of terms that share only part of their form while differing in meaning (paronomasia):

Lat.	Et exemplum convenientie in parte dictionis tantum, ut verbum Seneca: Quod mecum oritur mecum moritur. ³⁷	wa-miṭāl al-muttafiqa fī ba‘ḍ al-lafz fa-qat qawl Ḥabīb: <i>matā anta ‘an duhliyyatin bi-dāhili?</i> , wa-qawl Abī al-Ṭayyib: <i>uqallibu al-ṭarfa bayna al-ḥayli wa-al-ḥawali.</i> ³⁸	Ar.
Eng. Lat.	An example of ‘agreement in some of the term only’ is the verse of Seneca: What begins with me will also end with me.	An example of ‘what agrees in some of the term only’ is the verse of Ḥabīb, When will you ever be indifferent to the woman of the Duhl tribe? and the verse of Abū l-Ṭayyib, I pass my glance back and forth between horses and slaves.	Eng. Ar.

The substitution of Arabic by Hermannus is perfect, as the verses quoted by Ibn Rušd – which play with the terms *duhliyya*/*dāhil* and *ḥayl*/*ḥawal* – were substituted by him with the (pseudo) Senecan *motto*: “quod mecum oritur, mecum moritur.”³⁹ The Arabic poems cited by Ibn Rušd may not have served, in a liter-

37 ARISTOTELES 1968, 69; the translation is mine.

38 In the Butterworth-Haridi’s edition of the Arabic text, the verse of Ḥabīb is reported as follows: “matā anta ‘an duhliyyati l-ḥayyi dāhili,” see: AVERROES 1986(1), 118–119; while in Boggess we find the verse beginning with *mā* instead of *matā*, see: BOGGESS 1968, 659.

39 It is difficult to trace this quotation back to Seneca’s corpus; nonetheless, a modern source contextualises the quotation within an alchemical treatise, cf. MANGET 1702, 434b. The pseudo-Senecan motto is not recorded in the *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Quotations, Proverbs, Maxims, and Mottos* (RILEY 1891). However, a more certain source is Prosper of Aquitaine, a

al Latin translation, as effective examples of paronomasia. Consequently, Hermannus abandoned a strictly literal approach, preserving only the contextual purpose of Ibn Rušd's quotations: to illustrate cases of terms that partially share their morphology but differ in meaning. Hermannus' substitution is particularly striking, as the two Latin terms he employs not only differ in meaning despite their partial morphological similarity, but in fact convey opposite concepts.

The technique of substitution (and, in part at least, also that of adaptation) represents what in contemporary translation theory might be referred to as transcreation: namely the act of "creative inter-/intra-lingual reinterpretation of texts in order to suit the characteristics of an intended audience."⁴⁰ Hermannus' transcreational approach demonstrates not only his ability to grasp the many cultural references embedded in Ibn Rušd's Middle Commentary, but also his willingness to modify, omit, or adapt the Arabic text to his own purpose – that is, to provide a comprehensible version for his Latin contemporaries, who had still to get access to Aristotle's *Poetics*. In other words, the transcreation method allowed Hermannus to produce a text that, while departing from the literal wording of the original Averroean commentary, could nevertheless be read and understood without difficulty by his Latin audience. This transcreational approach marks the distinctive trait of Hermannus' attitude towards Ibn Rušd's Commentary on the *Poetics*. Regarding the techniques of addition and omission, Hermannus frequently employs both throughout his translation.

French monk of the 4th/5th century, who authored the *Epitaphium Nestoriana et Pelagianae Haeresium*. See: PROSPERUS TIRUS AQUITANUS 1846, 154: "[...] Mecum oritur, mecum moritur, mecumque sepulcrum intrat, et inferni carceris ima subit." This very passage is later quoted by Hugh of Miromari (c. 1192–1250) at the beginning of his *De hominis miseria, mundi et inferni contemptu*: "Mecum oritur qui mecum moritur, mecum moritur qui me interfecit," see: HUGUS DE MIROMARI 2010, 5. Prosper indeed wrote something similar to the saying Hermannus attributes to Seneca, possibly inspired by the same Senecan, or pseudo-Senecan, tradition that inspired Hermannus in his translation. Finally, a similar quotation, also attributed to Seneca, is found in an anonymous fragment preserved in the manuscript Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 2186, ff. 58r–59r, edited in BIGNAMI-ODIER 1937–1938. The passage reads: "[...] tepescente enim calore naturali sequitur etas que uocatur senectus, unde Seneca : Qui mecum o[r]itur mecum moritur et qui mecum moritur me interfecit et dum cresco decresco". The editor of such fragment connects the quotation with Seneca (SENECA 1985, 70): "cotidie morimur, cotidie enim demitur aliqua pars vitae et tunc quoque, cum crescimus, vita decrescit"; see BIGNAMI-ODIER 1937–1938, 156. Nonetheless, the reference to this passage in Seneca's works does not seem convincing.

40 DÍAZ-MILLÓN, OLVERA-LOBO, 347.

Additions appear in various passages and generally reflect the translator's interventions aimed at clarifying or adapting Ibn Rušd's Commentary for a Latin audience.

As an exemplary instance of addition I shall briefly mention here the passage where Aristotle/Ibn Rušd discusses the personification of animated objects.⁴¹ In order to make clear to potential Latin reader what the discussion in the text was really about, Hermannus introduced a brief digression on the corresponding Greek/Latin concept of *prosopopea*, adding to the excerpt in question the following remark: "and this [i.e. the personification of animated objects] is a rhetorical figure that in Greek is called 'prosopopoeia', that is, 'invention of a new person'" ("et est figura que Grece prosopopoeia nuncupatur, idest nove fictio persone").⁴² As the quoted excerpt shows, such an addition clearly aims to provide guidance for the Latin reader. This process of explanatory addition is applied by Hermannus throughout the translation, and is in fact one of his most characteristic translation-techniques. Where the Arabic text might have been difficult to comprehend, Hermannus always intervened in the text and added new material, which was meant to assist the reader in understanding the passage.

As for the technique of omission, Hermannus employs it on several occasions. In most cases, these omissions do not compromise the meaning of the Arabic text; rather, they serve to make the work less foreign to a Latin readership, as in the case of omitted Qur'ānic quotations or Arabic poems. Only in a few instances do the omissions in the Latin text appear to reflect difficulties with the Arabic exemplar available to Hermannus. A clear example of such a problematic omission is Ibn Rušd's reference to the Andalusian poetic forms *muwaššahāt* and *azğāl*, which Hermannus neither transliterates nor substitutes; the terms are simply absent from the Latin text, which reads: "as is found among us in the kind of poem called so: ... recently found or discovered [...]" ("prout reperitur apud nos in modo carminis sic nominati ... reperti nuper seu adinven-

41 ARISTOTELES 1968, 61; AVERROES 1986(1), 99.

42 The English translation, slightly modified, is in PREMINGER, HARDISON, KERRANE 1974, 368; for a Medieval definition of *prosopopeia* that probably constituted the source for Hermannus' addition see: *De prosopoeia* in ISIDORUS HISPALENSIS 1911, II.13, 1, 93.

ti [...]"').⁴³ Indeed, this omission may indicate that either a *lacuna* occurred in the Latin transmission or that the manuscript at Hermannus' disposal witnessed a faulty version of the Arabic text.

This concise overview of Hermannus' translation techniques will serve as the epistemological framework for examining several significant examples of translation, potentially leading to the conclusion that Hermannus' work was not undertaken independently by the German translator.

4. Hermannus' knowledge of Arabic history

The most fascinating aspect of Hermannus' translation of Ibn Rušd's Commentary on the *Poetics* is the translator's methodical attempt at rendering, by adopting the several techniques illustrated above, all of the cultural references⁴⁴ that Ibn Rušd introduced in his Commentary to clarify Aristotle's treatise for his readers – an intent that, as we have seen, often takes the form of a transcreation-al approach.

As will be demonstrated below, this distinctive approach implies a level of familiarity with Arabic culture that would have been unlikely for Hermannus to possess. In the following sections of my contribution, I will provide some significant examples of translation, which challenge the idea that Hermannus' creative translations stemmed from his solitary efforts and instead seem to corroborate Bacon's account of him as working in collaboration with experts in the Arabic language.

43 ARISTOTELES 1968, 42; the English translation is mine; Hardison in his English translation ignores the *lacuna* in the Latin text and translates as follows: "This occurs among the Arabs in the so-called 'song' [i.e. the Mozarabic folkforms, muwashshahah and ghazal] recently discovered or invented by the inhabitants of this region [Spain] in their own language, that is, Arabic," see PREMINGER, HARDISON, KERRANE 1974, 350.

44 With the term cultural references I also mean the many poetic examples that Ibn Rušd included in his commentary and that Hermannus decided to translate for the most part. Overall, Hermannus managed to translate, adapt or transcreate 52 Arabic poems. Such a collection of Arabic poems translated into Latin has been correctly described as one of the first Medieval "Latin anthology of Arabic poetry" in BOGGESS 1968, 657 – in the same contribution, one finds the first (and, up-until now, the only) detailed analysis of Hermannus' 'poetic translations'. This is all the more significant when one considers that the other medieval translation of this Commentary into Hebrew – Todroso Todrosi of Arles' version – entirely omits the poems. For the study and the edition of the Hebrew translation, see GORGONI 2017.

Firstly, let us consider the passage already quoted above as a case of adaptation, namely with regards to the mention of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Nāṣir. Indeed, such an example of adaptation might be helpful to introduce further elements to our analysis of Hermannus’ *modus interpretandi*. Below is the Latin translation of the excerpt at stake:

[...] et sunt sermones defectivi in se ipsis et mali, non habentes efficaciam qualem habuit sermo cuiusdam irritare volentis ad iracundiam animum regis Kortubii contra Iudeum quendam procuratorem domus sue, dicentis regi coram magna multitudine populi sui: Ille per quem tu regnas et es sublimatus, pro mendace est a tuo ikonomo iudicatus.⁴⁵	[...] and these are deficient and bad statements in themselves and don’t have the same effectiveness that had the speech of the man who wanted to make angry the soul of the King of Cordoba, against some Jew who was administrator of his house, saying to the king, in the presence of the assembly of his people: He through which you dominate and are elevated, is deemed a liar by your administrator.⁴⁶
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The reported passage showcases not just one, but two examples of adaptations: one concerning the reference to the King of Cordoba and the other one concerning the Arabic poem about the Jew working for the King. Indeed, also the Latin rendering of the verses quoted by Ibn Ruṣd provides a fine case of adaptation, in which the translator succeeds in preserving the literal sense of the Arabic while introducing minor modifications (most notably the introduction of the term *ikonomus*).⁴⁷

45 ARISTOTELES 1968, 64; for the Arabic text, see: AVERROES 1986(1), 107, where it is only said that this poem was recited in front of the assembly of the people of Cordoba (*al-mala’min ahl Qurtuba*).

46 The English translation is mine; an alternative, more poetic rendering of this verse, which preserves the rhyming structure of the Latin, could be: “He by whom you reign and stand so high, / Was judged a liar by your steward’s eye”; for an alternative translation, cf. PREMINGER, HARDISON, KERRANE 1974, 372: “They are defective and bad in themselves and without that efficacy that marked the speech of a certain poet who wanted to stir up wrath in the soul of King Kortubi against a certain steward of his household. Before a great multitude of his people, he said to the king: “He through whom you reign and are exalted is considered a liar by your steward.” Such a translation is though partially mistaken, as it translates the Latin *Regis Kortubi* as ‘the King Kortubi’, while Hermannus clearly understood that the Arabic text was referring to the ruler of Córdoba, and not to a King called Kortub.

47 Indeed, the Arabic text reads: “He due to whom you are honored, / that one claims that

However, more relevant to the present discussion is the rendering of the introductory passage to the Arabic poem. Indeed, in this passage Ibn Rušd explicitly mentions two figures: ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Nāṣir and the Jew Ḥasdāy. However, he specifies neither that ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Nāṣir was the King of Cordoba nor that Ḥasdāy was working at the court of Cordoba (*procurator domus sue*) – because Ibn Rušd took for granted that his contemporaries would recognize such names without any further explanation. In this case at least, the Latin translator opted for the elimination of these obscure names. Here it is important to recall that the primary concern of the translator rendering Ibn Rušd’s Commentary into Latin is to ensure that the text is comprehensible to Latin readers, taking into account both semantic accuracy and cultural context. In order to achieve such a lofty objective, the translator often modified the text to help the reader understand the many references to Arabic culture introduced by Ibn Rušd in his Commentary – references that would have otherwise remained completely obscure to them. In this case, for example, the translator decided to avoid the transliteration of names such as those of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Nāṣir and Ḥasdāy, which would have been meaningless, if not confusing, to a Latin reader. He adapted them into a more generic reference, which mirrored in any case what these exotic names really referred to within the history of the Arabic potentate of 10th-century Córdoba: i.e. the ruler of the city of Cordoba ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III and his Jewish servant Ḥasdāy. This, as indicated above, represents a typical case of adaptation, where only the signifier of the Arabic text is modified by the translator, to ensure it is coherent and meaningful for the Latin readers, whilst both reference and sense remain intact.

This case of adaptation raises the question of Hermannus’ understanding of the poem’s context. How could Hermannus have correctly identified these figures when the passage quoted by Ibn Rušd provides no relevant information on this matter (besides an incidental mention of Cordoba)? Later in his Commentary, a similar case occurs when Ibn Rušd mentions Sayf al-Dawla, the famous Hamdanid ruler of Aleppo. Also in this case, the translator correctly identified the historical figure, introducing him as ‘a certain King of the Arabs’ (*quidam rex Arabum*). The corresponding Latin text reads:

he is a liar” (“inna alladī šurriḥta min aḡlihi / yaz‘amu ḥadā annahu kāḍibu”); on this verse, cf. BOGGESS 1968, 667, n. 47.

Et huius maneriei, dico carmen imaginari faciens et representans anime dispositionem, est dictum Abytaibi describentis nuncium quendam Romanorum accedentem ad presentiam cuiusdam regis Arabum, nominati Sceifu Addeulati, et intendentis per hoc magnificare regem illum [...]. ⁴⁸	Poetry of this type – I mean a poem that causes a quality of the soul to be imagined and represents it – is illustrated by the passage in Abytaibi (Abū l-Ṭayyib) describing a certain messenger of the Romans coming to the presence of a certain Arab king named Sceifu Addeulat (Sayf al-Dawla) and written with the intention of celebrating the king [...]
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As with the case of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Nāṣir and Ḥasdāy, also here the Arabic text of Ibn Ruṣd does not add any information regarding the name of Sayf ad-Dawla,⁴⁹ nor can such a description be easily inferred from the Arabic text on the basis of the quotation’s context alone. Yet again, the Latin translator correctly identifies the historical figure quoted by Ibn Ruṣd, introducing Sayf al-Dawla as a ruler of the Arabs. Here the passage is all the more interesting, due to the fact that the correct identification of Sayf al-Dawla is also coherently repeated in a later passage of the text.⁵⁰

Incidentally, it should be noted that, in contrast to the case of Abd al-Raḥmān III, here Hermannus does not adapt the Arabic reference. Instead, he uses the translation technique of the addition, which means he transliterates the Arabic name and adds an explanatory qualification for the Latin reader, identifying the individual as ‘a certain King of the Arabs’. These passages, where the Lat-

48 ARISTOTELES 1968, 58; the English translation is from O. B. Hardison Jr., with some changes; for the translation cf. PREMINGER, HARDISON, KERRANE 1974, 365.

49 AVERROES 1986(1), 90.

50 See: ARISTOTELES 1968, 62: “Et Mutenebbii poeta probatissimus fuit in hac manerie representationis, prout apparet in eius poematibus. Ideoque, refertur de ipso quod <noluerit> aliqua gesta describere regis Sceifi Addauleti domini sui, quibus ipse non interfuerat cum ipso. Certius enim comprehenduntur a seipso perspecta quam audita ab aliis” / “Mutanabbi the poet was best in this kind of representation, as is clear from his poems. It is said of him that he did not want to describe any deeds of King Saifu ad-Daulati, his master, that occurred when he himself was not present. Indeed, things observed with one’s own eyes are better understood than ones heard by others.” The English translation is from O. B. Hardison Jr., slightly modified, cf. PREMINGER, HARDISON, KERRANE 1974, 369–370. In order to make the text clear, I conjecture here *noluerit* instead of the more attested variant *voluerit*; the text edited by L. Minio-Paluello reads *voluerit*; *noluerit* is attested as a variant only in one manuscript: Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Chig. E.viii 254, as reported by Boggess, in BOGGESS 1966, 83. The Arabic reads: “lā yurīdū” (“he did not want”); for the Arabic text, cf. AVERROES 1986(1), 102.

in translator manages to correctly identify three historical figures belonging to Muslim history, lay the ground for two types of considerations.

On the one hand, one could make the conjecture that Hermannus had consulted some sort of report of Arabic history, from which he could have drawn the pieces of information necessary to correctly identify the figures of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III, Ḥasdāy and Sayf al-Dawla. At the time of Hermannus, as far as we know, there was indeed one possible source accessible to a Latin reader residing in Toledo, which contained a summary of Arabic history, i.e. the *Historia Arabum* of the bishop of Toledo Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada (ca. 1170–1247), with whom, according to Mathias Maser, Hermannus probably had contact before leaving Toledo for Paris in the 1240s.⁵¹ Yet, in this Latin summary of Arabic history, the mention of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān III is cursory⁵² and there is no reference at all to Ḥasdāy, nor to Sayf al-Dawla for that matter. Thus, one should exclude the possibility that Hermannus relied on such source to identify these historical figures.

On the other hand, one could surmise that Hermannus received help from someone with a better knowledge of Arabic history than him and thanks to whom he could eventually clarify the identity of these historical figures. If one believes Roger Bacon’s testimony, then, one might even go so far as suggest that the *saracenos* working on Hermannus’ translation also helped him identify those historical figures, otherwise unknown to the German *magister*. Indeed, it is difficult to believe that a German translator could have had the ability to understand these references on his own, especially given the rudimental knowledge that Christianity had of the Muslim world in the 13th century.⁵³

51 RODRIGO JIMÉNEZ DE RADA 2006, 65; MONNERET DE VILLARD 1944, 23; notably, in the referred passage Monneret de Villard incidentally assumes that Hermannus was indeed helped by an Arab interpreter.

52 RODRIGO JIMÉNEZ DE RADA 2006, 174: “In mehreren Büchern schreibt der *Muqtabis* die Geschichte von al-Andalus auch für die Regentschaften ‘Abd Allāhs, ‘Abd ar-Raḥmāns III., al-Ḥakams II. und Hišāms II. fort. Die hier vermittelte Informationsfülle und die kurze, nur noch skizzenhafte Behandlung der genannten Herrscher in der *Historia Arabum* stehen in einem überdeutlichen Missverhältnis.”

53 MONNERET DE VILLARD 1944; on the knowledge of Islamic culture among Latin scholars between the 11th and 13th centuries – a knowledge that was certainly somewhat limited, yet far from meager – cf. D’ALVERNY 1994(1).

5. The cultural substitutions of poetic references

The fact that Hermannus did not carry out his translation in complete autonomy is demonstrated, I believe, also by the way he understood both the technical aspects of Arabic poetry discussed by Ibn Rušd in his Commentary as well as the cultural references embedded in the poetic examples.

In this regard, the most puzzling aspect is the transcreation that Hermannus made of Ibn Rušd's mention of the *Kalīla wa-Dimna* with a reference to Aesop. Commenting on what is nowadays known as chapter nine of the *Poetics*, where Aristotle famously deals with the epistemological difference between history and poetry, Ibn Rušd mentions the *Kalīla wa-Dimna* as a famous collection of fables.⁵⁴ First of all, Ibn Rušd's understanding of this passage must be analysed within the context of the problematic transmission of the Aristotelian text through the Syriac-Arabic mediation.⁵⁵

The text Ibn Rušd was commenting upon interpreted the Greek term *ιστορία* ('history') as *qiṣaṣ* ('stories'), which later on in the text Ibn Rušd connects to the stronger Arabic term *ḥurāfāt*, i.e. myths, fables, invented stories. Through this mistranslation, the Aristotelian discourse about the opposition between history (dealing with particulars) and the more *philosophical* poetry (dealing with universals)⁵⁶ became in Ibn Rušd's Commentary a distinction between the kind of poetry which deals with real subjects, existing in nature, and poetry which deals with invented ones. The Arabic version of Aristotle concludes that true poetry shall not make use of invented fables (*qiṣaṣ*), which talk about subjects that do not exist in nature. As an example of the kind of poetry that deals with invented contents, Ibn Rušd mentions the *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, an Arabic collection of tales of Indo-Iranian origins, in which the protagonists are normally animals, which portray human vices and virtues.

In order to translate this passage from Ibn Rušd's Commentary, where the reference to the *Kalīla wa-Dimna* occurs, Hermannus makes a double operation.

54 AVERROES 1986(1), 77.

55 For a detailed overview of the Syriac-Arabic tradition of Aristotle's *Poetics*, cf. the introduction of D. Gutas in ARISTOTLE 2012(2), 77–114.

56 *Poetics*, 1451a36–1451b11, see ARISTOTLE 2012(2), 179–180.

First, he translated the Arabic terms *qiṣṣa* and *ḥurāfa* as *fabula*, which he clearly understood as a synonym of the Arabic term *maṭal* – that he translated as *exemplum* and *proverbium*, i.e. exemplary story. Then, coherently with his translation choices, Hermannus decided to substitute this Arabic reference to the *Kalīla wa-Dimna* with that to the Greek fabulist Aesop, better known among the Latin readers for his didactic stories (*exempla*) with animals as the protagonists. Behind the identification of the *fabulae* of the *Kalīla wa-Dimna* and those attributed to Aesop lies the understanding of *fabula* as a conversation of imaginary mute animals recognised as a certain image of the life of humans (“fictorum mutorum animalium inter se conloquio imago quaedam vitae hominum nosceretur”) attested in Isidore’s *Etymologies*.⁵⁷ At the time of Hermannus’ translation, the *Kalīla wa-Dimna* was not known directly in Latin Europe, but only indirectly through Petrus Alphonsi’s adaptation of some parts of it in his *Doctrina clericalis*.⁵⁸

As in the case of the identification of the figures of Sayf al-Dawla, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Nāṣir and Ḥasdāy, here too it seems plausible that Hermannus was helped by someone who could easily understand the reference in the Arabic and explain it to the German translator, who then decided to convert the reference into a very well fitting equivalent in the Latin world – which is precisely what Aesop’s stories is, where human vices and virtues are portrayed through animals, just like in the *Kalīla wa-Dimna*.

It is a possibility that Hermannus independently recognised this reference without the intervention of an intermediary, since by the mid-13th century the content or nature of the *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, although not yet fully translated into Latin, might have nonetheless been known within the Christian community of Toledo. However, the precision of the substitution suggests that Hermannus’ choice did not stem from a superficial knowledge of the collection, but rather

57 See: ISIDORUS HISPALENSIS 1911, I.xl, 80; for the English translation of Isidore cf. ISIDORE OF SEVILLE 2009, I.40.1–7, 66.

58 Indeed, some of the contents of the *Kalīla wa-Dimna* were already known to the Latin world via Petrus Alphonsi’s *Doctrina clericalis* (*The Book of Scholars*), realised in 12th-century Spain. In his work, Petrus Alphonsi wrote moralistic and philosophical tales partially based on and inspired by the *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, among other Arabic sources; cf. PIETRO ALFONSI 2009; BURNETT 2001, 29–62. The first thorough Latin translation of the *Kalīla wa-Dimna* appeared in 1278, when Johannes de Capua rendered into Latin a Hebrew translation of the collection of tales. cf. JOHANNES DE CAPUA 2020.

from a more exact knowledge of its contents and functions.⁵⁹ Moreover, in another instance of Ibn Rušd's Commentary, Hermannus accurately identified the Arabic poetic genre known as the *nasīb* and substituted it with what he viewed as its Latin counterpart, namely the *elegia*. Now, the term *nasīb* indicated the prologue of the most traditional and ancient classical Arabic verse form, the *qaṣīda*, typically representing a form of love poetry.⁶⁰ The same Ibn Rušd, in his Commentary, introduces the *nasīb* as a kind of poetry about "acts of illicit sex,"⁶¹ that the Latin translator understands accordingly as a poetic genre, elegy,⁶² which deals with *actus coituales*. Ibn Rušd's introduction of the Arabic *nasīb* as a form of poetry centred on sexual encounters led Hermannus to translate this exotic term into Latin as *elegia*, and, in all likelihood, 13th-century Latin readers would have readily understood such term as a form of love poetry. Now, as al-

59 Indeed, one might surmise that the substitution of the reference to the *Kalīla wa-Dimna* could have been prompted simply by the textual context of Ibn Rušd's commentary: in the passage, the Commentator is providing examples of fables (*fabulae*) and didactic fictions (*exempla*). Even without prior knowledge of the content of the *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, Hermannus could have concluded it clever to replace such a meaningless reference – which anyway, in his eyes, must have indicated some unknown didactic tale – with a Latin equivalent. Yet among the various *exempla* known in the Latin Middle Ages, Hermannus opted for a collection of *exempla*; furthermore, he did not choose for any collection of *exempla* – indeed, Hermannus could have also chosen Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* or Fulgentius' *Mythologiae* as the Latin equivalent. Hermannus intentionally selected those featuring talking animals, precisely the hallmark of the *Kalīla wa-Dimna*. The sophistication of this substitution suggests that Hermannus' choice was likely informed by an actual awareness of the content of the *Kalīla wa Dimna*.

60 Regarding the Arabic *nasīb* see JACOBI 1971, 13–22; KHANKAN 2002.

61 I thank Prof. D. Gutas for such a translation of the Arabic term *fusūq*; for the Arabic text, cf. AVERROES 1986(1), 61; for a more neutral rendering of the term *fusūq*, cf. BURNETT 1997, 53–54.

62 As for the poetic genre of the elegy, it was of course a very well-known literary genre in the Latin Middle Ages, both in the form of meter and as a genre related to one specific poetic theme, as shown by the account that Isidor gives of it, cf. ISIDORUS HISPALENSIS 1911, I.xxxix, 78; for an English translation of this passage cf. ISIDORE OF SEVILLE 2009, I, xxxix.14–15, 65; on Medieval elegy see also: KRETSCHMER 2013, 271–289. At the time of Hermannus, one of the most famous explicit identifications of elegy as a form of love poetry (as it was under the Ovidian tradition) is attested in Mathew of Vendôme's popular *Ars versificatoria* (end of 12th century), where the author describes the nature of elegy using an Ovidian verse: *pharetratos Elegia cantat amores*. For the passage in the *Ars versificatoria* see: FARAL 1962, 153. This passage, combined with other places where Hermannus seems to rely on the lexicon of these *Artes poeticae* might indicate that Hermannus knew and perhaps used the *Artes poeticae* in his work of translation. Regarding this specific example of cultural translation cf. also the remarks of W. F. Boggess, in BOGGESS 1968, 669. For the identification of elegy as poetry dealing with 'passions' already in Boethius' *Consolatio*, cf. GENTILI 2024, 29–41.

ready shown by Samuel M. Stern, it is unlikely that in the Middle Ages the Latin world had any *specific* knowledge of Arabic poetry and of its technicalities.⁶³ Here it is not disputed whether or not Arabic literature had an impact on Latin (or western vernacular) poetry. The question is, rather, whether a Latin learned man living in 13th-century Toledo such as Hermannus could have had any direct knowledge of technical terms indicating specific kinds of Arabic poetry, in order to then autonomously translate them into their closest Latin equivalent. Adopting Stern's perspective, I would suggest that Hermannus alone could hardly be held responsible for the transcreations, i.e. for the cultural substitutions of these quite specific technical references to the Arabic literary tradition.⁶⁴

This conjecture is also upheld by William F. Boggess, who, at the end of his analysis of Hermannus' poetic adaptations, concludes: "That Hermannus had any knowledge of Arabic poetry or Arabic poets other than from the *Middle Commentary* is untenable."⁶⁵ To state this is the same as saying that *before* translating Ibn Rušd's *Poetics* Hermannus was not acquainted with any of the technicalities and poetic references introduced by Ibn Rušd in his Commentary. Hence, it is in some measure reasonable to conclude that Hermannus relied on some helpers for his transcreation of such specific references, just like Roger Bacon suggested in the *Compendium studii philosophiae*.

6. The cases of mistranslations: a Jewish intermediary?

Besides the cases in which Hermannus successfully adapted or substituted Ibn Rušd's cultural references, it is also important to examine some of his less fortunate translations, which are nonetheless relevant to the present topic. While in certain instances they proved helpful in clarifying cultural references, as in the examples discussed above, it seems that Hermannus' helpers did not always

63 STERN 1965, vol. 2, 640–666. Such assumption is also valid after the publication of works such as Menocal's *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary Theory* (MENOCAL 1987), which tries to demonstrate the influence of Arabic poetry on European poetry (especially troubadour poetry).

64 On this, cf. C. Burnett's remarks: "One has to wait until the sixteenth century before Western scholars obtained any more information about Arabic poetry. Early in that century Leo Africanus, an Arab scholar who had been brought up in Fez, was captured by pirates and presented to Pope Leo X, wrote a treatise on Arabic prosody," BURNETT 2001, 53.

65 BOGGESS 1968, 669.

possess a full understanding of the cultural allusions presented by Ibn Rušd in his Commentary.

Let's take, for instance, the case of the Arabic term *al-sarāb*, which indicates the optical illusion of the mirage. The term occurs in a short passage found towards the end of Ibn Rušd's Commentary: "Similar is their comparison of the lizard to the fish in the place of the mirage (*li-makān al-sarāb*) which exists in their lands (*al-mawğūd fī bilādihim*)."⁶⁶ Boggess' hypothesis is that the translator understood the term *al-sarāb* as a toponymic, and therefore translated the corresponding passage as follows:

[...] as it is for the sandy desert called Zarab [*desertum arenosum quod dicitur Zarab*], where many snakes and lizards live, and to the ones coming from very far it seems that the place is a lake and that the snakes and the lizards are fish. Hence [Hermannus adds] it is usual to say to someone who is deceived like them [viz. like the ones approaching the Zarabi desert]: 'You have seen the fish and lake of Zarab'.⁶⁷

Moreover, William F. Boggess suggested that Hermannus' mistranslation of the Arabic term *al-sarāb* ('mirage') as the name of a certain desert called Zarab was due to a misunderstanding between Hermannus and "his helper" who, Boggess argued, somehow managed to explain to the German translator the meaning of the passage (which indeed did concern the optical effects typically associated with a mirage), but was unable to explain clearly enough that the term *al-sarāb* was the common term indicating the optical illusion called mirage, and not the name of a certain desert. Thus, Boggess concludes that for the translation of this passage Hermannus relied "more on his helper's exegesis than on the actual Arabic texts."⁶⁸

66 AVERROES 1986(1), 128.

67 ARISTOTELES 1968, 72. "Ut est desertum arenosum quod dicitur Zarab, ubi plurii habitant colubri et lacerte, et videtur, de longe venientibus, quod locus ille sit lacus et colubri et lacerte sint pisces. Soliti sunt ergo dicere circa aliquid simile deceptis: 'pisces et lacum aspexisti Zarabi'"; the English translation is mine; an alternative translation is provided by O. B. Hardison Jr, in PREMINGER, HARDISON, KERRANE 1974, 380.

68 BOGGESS 1966, 418; in asserting this, W. F. Boggess was among the first to illustrate a specific case within Hermannus' translation of the *Poetics* that indicate that he might have collaborated with someone to understand the Arabic text. The hypothesis that Hermannus had Arab collaborators with him was already suggested by G.-H. Luquet in 1901; The grounds for Luquet's claim were on the basis of Roger Bacon's testimony and on

This argument of Boggess is far from conclusive. Indeed, it may be illuminating to consider that the term *Zarab* might not have been intended as a toponym, but rather as a foreignism. In this light the note added by Hermannus to his translation could be interpreted as follows: according to the translator *Zarab* designated a sandy desert inhabited by lizards and snakes which, when viewed from afar, appeared as a lake teeming with fish. Hermannus probably understood that it was customary among the Arabs to remark to someone deceived by such an illusion: “you have seen the fish and the lake of *Zarab*.”⁶⁹ Indeed, to explain this, Hermannus adds the note: “soliti sunt ergo dicere circa aliquid simile deceptis: ‘pisces et lacum aspexisti *Zarabi*’,”⁷⁰ as he was dealing with a sort of proverb. Thus, it is possible to argue that *Zarab* functions here as a proper name, not in the sense of a geographical toponym, but as a sort of *antonomasia*. In this way, the note of Hermannus preserves the Arabic term *al-sarāb* in the text and explicates its meaning, emphasizing the desert environment in which the optical illusion occurs, without equating *sarāb* with a specific site and without obscuring to the translators that it denotes a visual phenomenon – then, the case of *Zarab* would be similar to the case of addition that we saw with regard to the reference to Sayf al-Dawla: also in that occasion, the translator decided to transliterate the Arabic name, adding a qualification to it which would clarify the reference.

According to this perspective, one may propose an alternative reading to Boggess’ hypothesis: while Boggess suggested that Hermannus’ rendering of *al-sarāb* as *Zarab* was a mistranslation resulted from a misunderstanding between the translator and his helper, this case can also be seen as a deliberate reflection of the semantic nuances of the Arabic term, preserved in the note added by Hermannus in the Latin text.⁷¹ Both alternatives, however, appear to suggest that

Hermannus’ habit of transcribing Arab names in the text; see: LUQUET 1901, 415–416. An alternative hypothesis could be that of interpreting Hermannus’ translation as the introduction of an Arabism. Indeed the term *Zarab* is reported in the dictionary of Middle French as indicating precisely a mirage (cf. MARTIN 2023). Nonetheless, Hermannus in his translation of the *Poetics* never uses Arabisms, and only transliterates from Arabic proper names. Therefore, adopting Boggess’ perspective, I tend to consider such as a very interesting case of mistranslation.

69 The translation is mine, cf. *supra*, n. 67.

70 ARISTOTELES 1968, 72.

71 I am grateful to Prof. Samuela Pagani and to Prof. Beatrice Gründler for their essential

this instance of translation (or mistranslation, if one follows Boggess) attests to Hermannus' collaboration with an interpreter.

And yet, even if we reject Boggess' considerations of 'the sandy desert called Zarab' as a case of mistranslation attributed to the misinterpretation occurred between Hermannus' and his helper, another significant element emerges from a later passage and adds complexity to the issue here discussed. Indeed, Boggess seemed to have overlooked that the (mis)interpretation of the term *al-sarāb* as the name of a certain desert is repeated right after the quoted passage, where a verse of the Qur'ān containing the same term *al-sarāb* is adapted into Latin as follows: "Those who drop off their deeds are like the watchers of Zarab."⁷²

First of all, this excerpt represents one of the very few translations provided by Hermannus of a passage explicitly drawn from the Qur'ān – a rare case in Hermannus' translation, since he translates only two of the fourteen quotations from the Qur'ān introduced by Ibn Rušd in his Commentary.⁷³ Now, if we take the example of the Zarab desert as evidence that Hermannus was assisted by someone more versed in Arabic, we should at least exclude the possibility that this helper was a Muslim Arab. This is clear not just from the fact that he might have failed to explain the term *al-sarāb* correctly to Hermannus, but that he also provided an inaccurate translation of the Qur'ānic verse or anyway, as it seems, an imprecise understanding of its meaning.

As I have tried to demonstrate, when confronted with a cultural reference, Hermannus tended either to (creatively) substitute it or to translate it literally, but in any case to seek assistance in understanding the text in order to translate it. For some reason, this Qur'ānic quotation captured Hermannus' suggestions on this issue.

72 The English translation is mine, for the Latin cf. ARISTOTELES 1968, 72: "Qui intentum opus derelinquunt similes sunt aspectoribus Zarabi." The Qur'ānic quotation presented by Ibn Rušd reads instead: "As for the unbelievers, their works are *as a mirage (ka-sarāb)* in a spacious plain [Q:24–39]," ARBERRY 1996, vol. 2, 51. For the *locus* in the Arabic text of Ibn Rušd, cf. AVERROES 1986(1), 128.

73 Indeed, the Qur'ān is translated one other time only by Hermannus (see: ARISTOTELES 1968, 71), while all the several Qur'ānic quotations inserted by Ibn Rušd in his Commentary are omitted by Hermannus. Both the translated quotations seem to witness a direct translation of the text and to indicate that Hermannus did not consult any other translation of the Qur'ān to translate the verses quoted by Ibn Rušd, but he simply interpreted what the Arabic text said. For a broad overview of the Latin translations of the Qur'ān available at the time, RIVERA LUQUE 2021, 123–138.

interest, and he decided to translate it. In light of the previous discussion, it is highly plausible that, in order to do so, he sought the help of a mediator. Thus, I believe, Boggess was probably correct in suggesting that this passage shows a collaboration between Hermannus and some helper expert in the Arabic language. However, at least on a hypothetical level, one is tempted to attribute such a mistranslation directly to the helper, who probably did not completely understand the reference to the Qur'ānic verse. Although speculative, this suggestion proves useful in raising questions about the nature of Hermannus' helper, since it might point to the possibility that his first language was not Arabic, as further evidence seems to indicate. If we pursue this possibility, we might surmise that Hermannus received assistance not from an Arab, but from a Mozarab or a Jew with a strong knowledge of Arabic, yet with limited or indirect access to Arabic culture, and who could identify only some of the technical references presented by Ibn Rušd in his Commentary. It is difficult to provide substantial evidence in support of this conjecture; nevertheless, certain indications may be adduced in its favour.

In order to be more specific, I will now illustrate two cases of mistranslation of the Arabic and one peculiar case of transcreation that seem to be relevant to this point: the mistranslation of the adversative connective *lākin* ('but') as *ideo* ('therefore'),⁷⁴ of the adversative *bal innamā* ('but rather') as *ergo* ('therefore')⁷⁵ and the translation of the Arabic term *adab* as *bonitates operabiles*.⁷⁶

Let's start with the most compelling of these instances, namely the case of the Arabic adversative *lākin* ('but') translated as *ideo* ('therefore'). Such a mistranslation could hardly be due to the transmission of the Arabic text, which contains in both surviving manuscripts the Arabic *lākin*. Nor is it plausible that this mistake occurred in the tradition of the Latin transmission of the text: we don't have any variant in neither of the two modern editions of the text. Furthermore, since Hermannus correctly translated *lākin* in each one of its many occurrences throughout the text, I exclude that the translator could have mis-

74 ARISTOTELES 1968, 51: "Ideo poete non pertinet loqui nisi in rebus que sunt aut quas possibile est esse."

75 ARISTOTELES 1968, 73: "Oportet ergo ut fiat representatio per rem existentem aut per rem que putetur existens."

76 ARISTOTELES 1968, 44: "[...] aut quaslibet alias bonitates operabiles aut scientiales."

understood the meaning of the Arabic term. One possible approach to addressing this problem appears in William Chomsky's work on medieval translations from Arabic to Hebrew. According to Chomsky, mistakes connected to the morphological or phonetic commonalities between Hebrew and Arabic were very common among Andalusian Jewish translators.⁷⁷ The case being discussed here, i.e. the mistranslation of the term *lākin* as *ideo*, seems to perfectly represent this phenomenon. Indeed, in the case of *lākin* mistranslated as *ideo* instead of being correctly translated as *sed*, for example, the mistake seems to be due to the fact that to the ears of a Jewish translator the Arabic *lākin* ('but') sounded similar to the Hebrew *laken*, which means 'therefore'.⁷⁸ Such similarity might have caused Hermannus' helper to suggest (or somehow generate) *ideo* as the Latin correspondent – *ideo* being the correct translation of the Hebrew *laken* and not of the Arabic *lākin*.⁷⁹ What seems to be clear in the case of the *lākin-laken-ideo*, in which an adversative particle is translated with an explicative one, is not as clear in the case of the adversative *bal innamā*, also translated with the explicative *ergo* – and yet, in principle, it should not be ruled out that also this mistake is due to a similar reason. This, of course, may point to an element of orality in the process of translating the Arabic: the text was read as *lākin*, misheard as *laken*, and subsequently rendered as *ideo*.

The presence of some orality in the translation process seems to be indicated by at least two additional instances, in which the Arabic particle *ka-* – serving in one instance to introduce a term of comparison and in another as the first syllable of the term *kalmā* – was rendered into Latin as a personal pronoun indicating possession. This error is easily explained if the text was recited to someone, rather than being read directly and individually by the translator. Let us examine these two episodes in detail.

77 For a broader view on this phenomenon, cf. CHOMSKY 1967, 121–136. I wish to express my gratitude towards Dr. Vasiliki Chamourgiotaki for aiding my discovery of the research of William Chomsky on the matter.

78 Other examples of similar cases of misinterpretations of Arabic due to phonetic and morphological reasons can be found in CHOMSKY 1967, 126–127; SHEHADEH 2004, 329–337.

79 I am also grateful to my colleagues Oded Horezky and Diana Di Segni for confirming this hypothesis and for helping to validate my suspects regarding the Hebrew mediation.

Towards the middle of Ibn Rušd's Commentary, one reads the poem: *A bay [steed, her back] a weaver's shuttle (kumaytin ka-`annahā hirāwatu minwālī).*<sup>80</sup> The particle *ka-* in *ka-`annahā* indicates that there is a comparison between the bay (*kumayt*) and the *weaver's shuttle* (*hirāwatu minwālī*). However, if one reads the Latin text, one realises that the *ka-* was read not only in combination with *`annahā*, but also connected to *kumayt*, that then became *kumayti-ka*, i.e. 'your bay'. In other words, the particle *ka-* which in Arabic represents a proclitic preposition that introduces the comparison, was understood by the Latin interpreter also as an enclitic preposition specifying a possessive adjective. Consequently, the Latin adaptation of the verse reads: "Your mare is like the haft of an old spear" ("Equa tua est quasi manubrium lancee vetuste"),⁸¹ because the Arabic was read 'kumaytika ka-`annahā [...]' instead of 'kumaytin ka-`annahā.'⁸²

A similar case is found in the translation of a poem presented by Ibn Rušd towards the final part of his Commentary:

You stood, and for one standing there is no doubt about death, as if you were in the eyelid of perdition while it slept; <i>Heroes passed you, wounded, defeated, while your face was shining and your mouth smiling.</i>⁸³	waqafta wa-mā fī l-mawti šakkun li-wāqifin / ka-annaka fī ġafni al-radā wa-hwa nā'imū // <i>tamurru bika al-abṭālu</i> kalmā hazīmatan / wa-waġhu-ka waḍḍāhun wa-ṭaġruka bāsimū. //
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The Latin translation of this passage reads:

You stayed, and your death was certain if you stayed As if you were in the eye of sleeping danger. <i>Your strongest men</i> passed through you, wounded and defeated; Because of your calm expression, they were encouraged.⁸⁴	Perstitisti et non erat dubitatio de morte persistentis ac si conclusus esses intercilia periculi dormientis transierunt per te <i>fortissimi tui</i> vulnerati et evicti et vultus tui a propria constantia non sunt derelicti.
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80 AVERROES 1986(1), 91; cf. also Baffioni's translation of this verse: "[Una cavalla dal corpo solido] come una spola di tessitore," AVERROÈ 1990, 88.

81 ARISTOTELES 1968, 59.

82 AVERROES 1986(1), 91.

83 AVERROES 1986(1), 121. An analysis of this verse within Ibn Rušd's Commentary is provided by Gründler in GRÜNDLER 2025, 18–19.

84 ARISTOTELES 1968, 70; the English translation is by O. B. Hardison Jr., cf. PREMINGER, HARDISON, KERRANE 1974, 377.

It is clear that aside from some minor inconsistencies, the Latin translation is a very good adaptation of the Arabic. A point that interests us is the translation of the verse which reads: “Heroes passed you, wounded, defeated.” This was rendered into Latin as “Your strongest man passed through you, wounded and defeated.” Here, the term *abtāl* (‘heroes’, sing. *batāl*) was translated as *fortissimi* in Latin, which appears to interpret the Arabic word as a plural form of the term *batāl*. Notably, the *fortissimi* are qualified in the Latin by the possessive adjective *tui* (‘your’), as if Hermannus had read the following *ka-* as connected to *abtāl*, thereby reading *abtālu-ka* (‘your heroes’) and translating it as *fortissimi tui*. However, in this case *ka-* is not a particle, but is simply part of the following term *kalmā* (‘wounded’). This translation, as in the previous instance, might be the result of an oral mediation in the translation process: the reciter of the passage might have read *abtāluka kalmā* instead of *abtālu kalmā*, thus causing confusion during the translation. Therefore, these mistranslations seem to suggest a form of orality in the process of translation; this, on its turn, could support the hypothesis that the mistranslation of *lākin* as *ideo* originated during a phase of translation characterised by orality.⁸⁵

Further evidence that might be interpreted in sustain of the hypothesis of assistance from a Jewish intermediary includes Hermannus’ translation of the Arabic term *adab* as *bonitates operabiles*.⁸⁶ To the Arabic term *adab* corresponds several meanings: ‘belles-lettres’, ‘necessary general culture’, ‘high quality of soul’, ‘good upbringing’, ‘urbanity’, ‘courtesy’, ‘etiquette’.⁸⁷

Among the many nuances this term could entail, the ethical one was surely the one favoured by the Jewish translators of al-Andalus, who tended to render this concept with the Hebrew term *musar*. Indeed, under the entry “Spanish Hebrew Poetry” in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, it is reported that the Arabic *adab* used to be translated into the spoken Hebrew of Medieval al-Andalus as *musar*,

⁸⁵ As already known, orality might have represented one of the translation methods used in Spain in the 12th and 13th centuries to translate philosophical texts from Arabic into Latin, according to Gundissalinus’ own testimony, reported in the preface of his translation of Ibn Sīnā’s *De anima*; Regarding the translation methods in 12th- and 13th-century Spain, cf.: MONNERET DE VILLARD 1944; PIDAL 1951; D’ALVERNY 1989.

⁸⁶ ARISTOTELES 1968, 44.

⁸⁷ Regarding the above-mentioned meanings of *adab* see: GABRIELI 2012.

whose primary meaning is ‘right conduct’,⁸⁸ which was perfectly mirrored by the Latin *bonitates operabiles*. In other words, Hermannus’ translation of the Arabic *adab* as *bonitates operabiles* could be interpreted as the result of the mediation of the Hebrew term *musar* meaning ‘right conduct’. Indeed, it results at least curious that, among all the possible translations of the arabic term *adab*, Hermannus decided to translate it precisely with *bonitates operabiles*, which perfectly corresponds to the Hebrew *musar* – a very popular term among Andalusian Jewish translators to translate *adab*.⁸⁹

Despite representing a minority within Hermannus’ entire work, these cases should not be disregarded as meaningless. On the contrary, they might be interpreted as indications in favour of the hypothesis that not only did Hermannus collaborate with someone who had a better knowledge of the Arabic language than him (as suggested by Bacon), but that such a helper might have used the Hebrew language to mediate between the Arabic of Ibn Rušd and the Latin of Hermannus. After all, it was relatively common for Christian translators to prefer Jewish (or Mozarabic) intermediaries when it came to the translation of Arabic texts into Latin, and this might have been the most practical option also for Hermannus.⁹⁰ Moreover, one should take into account that a translation of 70 Psalms of the Bible from Hebrew into Castilian is also attributed to *magister* Hermannus. This was probably accomplished around 1272 – and represents the last known project of the German translator.⁹¹ The attribution of such a translation raised more than a few doubts, because it implies that Hermannus mastered both Hebrew and Castilian, to the point of being able to translate several Psalms into vulgar.

88 SKOLNIK, BERENBAUM 2007, vol. 8, 658; GORGONI 2023, 137–160.

89 Of course, this might simply indicate that Hermannus’ helpers chose to explain the concept in its didactic and moral dimensions, in such a way that he, acting independently, decided to render it as *bonitates operabiles*; for the equation between the Latin *disciplina*, the Arabic *adab* and the Greek παιδεία see DI CESARE 2015, 96.

90 Concerning the possibility of Jewish intermediaries within Hermannus’ translations of the *Rhetoric* and of the Middle Commentary of Ibn Rušd on the *Poetics* (through the possible the mediation of vernacular), see: D’ALVERNY 1994(2), 198–199; On the method of translations *a quattuor manibus* at the court of Alphons the Wise in the middle of 13th century, cf. ROMANO 1971, 677–711.

91 WINCEUSLADA DE DIEGO LOBERJON 1993.

This expertise represents an exceptional case of a non-Spanish translator rendering a classical text such as the Bible from a non-Latin source into Castilian, i.e. into a vernacular of which he was not a native speaker.⁹² The fact that Hermannus had some knowledge of the Spanish vernacular is known due to Roger Bacon's testimony. In a passage of his *Compendium studii philosophiae* Bacon reports an episode that happened during his own period of teaching at the University of Paris:

Very many words from the Lombard language, the Hispanic, and the other languages of the Latins have been placed in the translated books, like that term contained in the *De vegetabilibus* of Aristotle, *belenum* – something very noxious in Persis but when transplanted in Jerusalem became edible. When I lectured on this in my classes but did not know how to explain it, as was required, my Spanish students derided me. I later learned from them that [the name] was not Arabic, as all the doctors believe, but Spanish, and – the translator Hermannus told me – it indicates the seed of *cassilago* [i.e. *henbane*].⁹³

In this excerpt, Roger Bacon discusses the importance of being aware of different international dialects that can influence the translation of a text and he does so by recounting an anecdote from his time as *magister artium* in Paris. While the text does not explicitly state the location of this episode, it is known that the work mentioned, the *De vegetabilibus*, corresponds to the pseudo-Aristotelian *De plantis* translated into Latin by Alfred of Sareshel⁹⁴ and was among the texts taught by Bacon in Paris.⁹⁵

92 To my knowledge, the only intellectual in the 13th century who attempted a similar task was Brunetto Latini, an Italian philosopher who managed to condense Aristotelian treatises – most notably the *Nicomachean Ethics* – into the French vernacular, within his *Tresor*.

93 The translation is by Thomas S. Maloney, slightly modified; cf. ROGER BACON 2018, 162–163: “Sunt etiam vocabula quam plurima de lingua Lombardica, et Hispanica, et aliis Latinorum linguis posita in libris translatis, ut est illud de vegetabilibus Aristotelis, *belenum*, in Perside perniciosissimum, transplantatum Hierusalem factum est comestibile. Quod cum legi in scholis meis, et nesciretur interpretari, ut oportuit, deriserunt me Hispani scholares mei, a quibus postea didici quod non fuit Arabicum, ut omnes doctores credunt, sed Hispanicum; et est semen *cassilagini*, Hermanus translator mihi dixit”; Bacon reports the same episode two other times in his *Opera*, but this is the only place where he explicitly connects the episode to Hermannus Alemannus; for the other two occurrences of the episode cf. ROGER BACON 1964, III, 82.

94 NICOLAUS DAMASCENUS 1989; regarding the history of the work and of its various translations (Syriac, Arabic, Hebrew Latin and Greek) see the introduction offered by Maria Fernanda Ferrini in her modern edition of the *De plantis*: see ARISTOTELE 2012(1).

95 EASTON 1952, 60; LONG 1985, 125–128. The example of the Spanish vernacular term *belenum*

Bacon narrates how he introduced his audience to the term *belenum* as a word of Arabic origin, because at the time that was the common understanding of the term among Latin scholars. As a result of this explanation, his students of Spanish origin all burst into laughter, since they knew for sure that *belenum* was not an Arabic term, but rather the Latin adaptation of the Spanish *beleño*:⁹⁶ “Deriserunt me hispani scholares mei, a quibus postea didici quod non fuit Arabicum, ut omnes doctores credunt, sed Hispanum.” This passage ends with the statement: “Hermannus translator mihi dixit.”⁹⁷ What Bacon learned from Hermannus was not the Spanish origin of the term *belenum*, but rather the correct identification of it with *cassilago*. Recognising that the vernacular term *belenum* corresponded to *cassilago* already presupposes some knowledge of the Spanish vernacular on Hermannus’ part. Nonetheless, the ability to identify specific Castilian terms and the capacity to translate several Psalms into Castilian (and from Hebrew, no less) are two very different undertakings.

From Roger Bacon’s testimony we learn that Hermannus possessed *some* knowledge of Castilian, and thus, in light of this testimony, his contribution to the translation of the Psalms from Hebrew into Castilian should be received with less scepticism. However, the most reasonable conclusion is that Hermannus had only a certain competence in Castilian, without ever mastering it. It’s likely that he knew enough vernacular to coordinate the translation of the Psalms, but not enough to carry it out independently.

On a similar point, possible traces of Hebrew influence in his translation of Ibn Rušd’s Commentary might suggest at least some familiarity with Hebrew. This impression is reinforced by the attribution to him of the translation of the Psalms from Hebrew. Nevertheless, it seems unlikely that he mastered the language; a more plausible explanation is that he relied on collaborators who could communicate with him in Castilian or Hebrew (which Hermannus probably understood, though only to a certain extent) and they assisted him in the translation process. Taking into account these considerations, a similar conclusion

reported here by Bacon is well-known and has been used by contemporary research to suggest that Alfred of Sareshel, translator of *De plantis*, worked in Spain; cf. LONG 1985, 126; for further remarks on the peculiarities of Alfred of Sareshel’s translations, with regards to his translation of the ‘Avicennian’ *De minerabilibus*, cf. RUBINO 2016, 23–87.

⁹⁶ LONG 1985, 126.

⁹⁷ Cf. *supra*, n. 93.

may be drawn regarding his translation of Ibn Rušd's Commentary on the *Poetics*. Hermannus surely possessed sufficient knowledge of Arabic to engage with the text, yet required support in the demanding task of rendering such a complex work as that of Aristotle's *Poetics*. The cases analysed above appear to substantiate this interpretation and suggest the hypothesis that Hebrew had been used as an intermediate language – arguably in a phase of the translation characterised by orality.

7. Concluding remarks

Unfortunately, it remains difficult to determine with any certainty the identity of Hermannus' assistants. However, as demonstrated through the numerous examples provided above, it is at least plausible – following Roger Bacon's account – that such assistance did occur and largely contributed to Hermannus' work. Such help would have been particularly crucial in the challenging task of translating Ibn Rušd's Middle Commentary on the *Poetics* from Arabic into Latin. The available evidence suggests that Hermannus' translation should be regarded as the product of a collaborative effort rather than that of a single translator. Faced with technical or uncommon terms – which are not infrequent in Ibn Rušd's Commentary – it is likely that Hermannus relied on external assistance, with varying degrees of success, as illustrated above.

His translation process reflects the working dynamics of a team, probably based in Toledo, where most of his translations were completed. This team, comprising of Hermannus and other translators, collectively developed what can generally be described as a transcreation of Ibn Rušd's Commentary on Aristotle's *Poetics*.

Bacon's claim that Hermannus played only a secondary role in his translation is therefore partially true, in that it implies a collaboration between the German translator and some *saraceni* with a better knowledge of Arabic. However, if anything in Bacon's statement should be rejected, it is the downsizing of Hermannus' role within the translation. As we have seen, in particular Hermannus appears responsible for providing brilliant transcreations of Arabic references: the substitution of the *nasīb* with *elegia* and of *Kalīla wa-Dimna* with Aesop are

excellent examples of this point. These cultural adaptations suggest an ongoing dialogue between Hermannus, the Latin translator, and his Andalusian assistants – a dialogue that, as we have seen, led to inconsistent outcomes.

In some instances, Hermannus' understanding of the Arabic text is remarkably accurate (e.g., 'Abd al-Raḥmān, Sayf al-Dawla, *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, *nasīb*), while in others, it is more problematic (*Zarab*, *niger filius Iofar*).

By now, it should be clear that Hermannus' success in handling the numerous Arabic references relied heavily on the support of intermediaries. The precise nature of this collaboration remains uncertain. However, certain translation errors – such as the misinterpretation of *lākin* as *laken* – suggest an oral mediation process, akin to the one already described by Luquet and M.me d'Alverny.⁹⁸ Nevertheless, this isolated instance alone is not sufficient to draw definitive conclusions.

Ultimately, given the fact that no institutional Arabic language school for Christians existed in al-Andalus before the mid-13th century,⁹⁹ it seems unlikely that Hermannus, despite his evident erudition, as implied by the title of *magister* (a term that is often associated with Hermannus in Latin sources) – could have independently mastered not only the linguistic complexities but also the cultural references embedded in Ibn Ruṣd's Commentary.

His reliance on Andalusian collaborators was therefore not just probable but, in many respects, essential and the idea that he accomplished the translation of Ibn Ruṣd's Commentary on the *Poetics* in autonomy, should be rejected or at least reassessed. I was not able to demonstrate, in the strong sense of the

98 LUQUET 1901, 415–416: “Quel procédé employa Hermannus pour faire ses traductions? On connaît le procédé constant des traducteurs du moyen âge. Un juif converti traduisait en langage vulgaire, en espagnol par exemple, la traduction arabe du texte grec, et c'était cette seconde traduction que traduisait en latin celui qui signait la traduction définitive. Hermannus suivit une méthode analogue, avec cette différence qu'il employa, non des Juifs, mais des Arabes. Le témoignage de Bacon, qui le dit expressément, se trouve confirmé par certaines particularités de ces traductions, notamment dans la transcription des noms propres, qui montrent qu'elles sont l'oeuvre de musulmans connaissant la langue savante”; on this, see also D'ALVERNY 1989.

99 The only examples of institutionalised teaching of Arabic in Europe are confined to North Africa and Spain, and were usually limited to the Dominican Order. Regarding the *studia linguarum* in 12th-century Spain, see M. Michèle Mulchahey's remarks (MULCHAHEY 1998, 344–350); on the experimental establishment of Arabic teaching at the University of Seville by order of Alfonso the Wise in 1254, see MONNERET DE VILLARD, 51.

term, that Hebrew constituted the intermediate language between the Arabic of Ibn Rušd and the Latin of Hermannus; yet, the cases provided above, combined to the attribution to Hermannus of a translation of the *Psalms* from Hebrew into Castilian indicate that such a hypothesis cannot be completely ruled out.

Modern scholarship has often underestimated or downplayed Bacon's testimony, yet the textual evidence emerging from a close reading of Hermannus' translation appears to support it, at least in part. Indeed, the evidence I illustrated suggests that Bacon's assertion may indeed be closer to the truth than usually acknowledged: Hermannus' work seems to have been carried out with the assistance of intermediaries more proficient in Arabic than him. A close reading of such evidence also shows that Hermannus Alemannus' translation cannot be dismissed as a marginal or unimpressive step in the transmission of Aristotle's *Poetics*. On the contrary, it represents a significant stage in the text's transformation – and, to some extent, distortion – into a version that unexpectedly came to include references to elegy, Aesop, Seneca, and (ironically so) satire and tragedy, and that, especially in the instances discussed above, represents a unique case of transcreation of Ibn Rušd's Commentary of Aristotle's *Poetics*.

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