

TRADITION AND SUCCESS OF A PHYSICAL TREATISE  
THE RECEPTION OF CONTARINI'S *DE ELEMENTIS*  
IN THE LAST XVI<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY\*

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*Abstract*

This article aims to reconstruct the tradition of Gasparo Contarini's physical treatise *De elementis*, comparing all the extant witnesses. In the second part of the article, it is explored how the treatise reached a widespread diffusion and success in the universities, thanks to its clear exposition of Aristotle's doctrine. A special attention is devoted to those Renaissance philosophers and professors who quoted Contarini in order to defend Aristotle's natural philosophy against the new theories of Telesio and Campanella.

*Key Words*

Manuscripts, Natural Philosophy, Gasparo Contarini, elements, Aristotelianism.



I. *Introduction*

For most of the last seventy years, the historical research devoted a careful investigation only to two aspects of Contarini's thought: his treatise *De immortalitate animae*, due to the controversy with his master Pietro Pomponazzi,

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and his *De magistratibus et republica venetorum*, due to the birth of Venetian myth.<sup>1</sup> In this general background, Carlo Giacon offered a unique contribution in 1960, with an article concerning Contarini's treatise of metaphysics and its peculiar interpretation of the Aristotelianism based on Avicenna.<sup>2</sup> However, Giacon didn't open a new path of inquiry: since then, there have been no studies on Contarini's philosophical thought until the very last decades<sup>3</sup> and even the most recent

- <sup>1</sup> About the dispute *de immortalitate animae* see LUCA BURZELLI, « Aspetti della tradizione aristotelica nel *De immortalitate animae*: Gasparo Contarini lettore di Avicenna », *Rinascimento*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ser., 59 (2019), p. 365–390; GIOVANNI DI NAPOLI, *L'immortalità dell'anima nel Rinascimento*, Società Editrice internazionale, Torino 1963; ÉTIENNE GILSON, « Autour de Pomponazzi: problématique de l'immortalité de l'âme en Italie au début du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle », *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge*, 28 (1961), p. 163–279; MARTIN PINE, *Pietro Pomponazzi: Radical Philosopher of the Renaissance*, Antenore, Padova 1986 (Saggi e testi, 21); VITTORIA PERRONE COMPAGNI, « L'Apologia: bilanci, anticipazioni, polemiche », in PIETRO POMPONAZZI, *Apologia*, ed. VITTORIA PERRONE COMPAGNI, Leo S. Olschki, Firenze 2011 (Immagini della Ragione, 14); EAD., « Introduzione », in PIETRO POMPONAZZI, *Trattato sull'immortalità dell'anima*, Leo S. Olschki, Firenze 1999 (Immagini della Ragione, 1). The bibliography concerning *De magistratibus* is very wide. See at least the recent work of MARIA STELLA FLORIO, « *So Flourishing a Commonwealth*. Some Aspects of Lewkenor's Translation of Contarini's *La Republica e i magistrati di Vinegia* (1544) », Ph.D. Diss. University of Venice 2008/9 (tutor prof. VALERIO DE SCARPIS); WILLIAM J. BOUWSMA, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty. Renaissance Values in the Age of the Counter Reformation*, University of California Press, Berkeley – Los Angeles 1969, p. 144–153; FELIX GILBERT, « Religion and Politics in the Thought of Gasparo Contarini », in THEODORE K. RABB, JERROLD E. SEIGEL (eds.), *Action and Conviction in Early Modern Europe. Essays in Memory of E. H. Harbison*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1969, p. 90–116; HERMANN HACKERT, *Die Staatschrift Contarinis und die Politischen Verhältnisse Venedigs im 16. Jahrhundert*, C. Winter's Universitätsbuchhandlung, Heidelberg 1940 (Heidelberger Abhandlungen zur mittleren und neueren Geschichte, 69); FRANCO GAETA, « Alcune consideraz. sul mito di Venezia », in *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance*, 23 (1961), p. 58–75; JOHN G. A. POCKOCK, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition*, Princeton University Press, Princeton – London 1975; STEFANO SIMONETTA, « 'Evere man for the most parte ys lyke to them wyth whome he ys conversant'. Thomas Starkey, Gasparo Contarini e Venezia », in LUCA BIANCHI, ONORATO GRASSI, CECILIA PANTI (eds.), *Edizioni, traduzioni e tradizioni filosofiche. Studi per Pietro B. Rossi*, Aracne, Roma 2018 (Flumen sapientiae, 7), p. 515–531.
- <sup>2</sup> CARLO GIACON, « L'aristotelismo avicennistico di Gasparo Contarini », in *Aristotelismo padovano e filosofia aristotelica, Atti del XII Convegno internazionale di filosofia*, Sansoni, Firenze 1960, p. 109–119. A critical inquiry on this article can be found in ANDREA ROBIGLIO, « Una nota su Gasparo Contarini e il problema del male », in BIANCHI, GRASSI, PANTI (eds.), *Edizioni, traduzioni e tradizioni filosofiche*, p. 502–513, esp. p. 507; ELIZABETH GLEASON, *Gasparo Contarini: Venice, Rome, and Reform*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1993, p. 76.
- <sup>3</sup> New studies have been recently offered by ENRICO PERUZZI, « Gli allievi di Pomponazzi: Girolamo Fracastoro e Gasparo Contarini », in MARCO SGARBI (ed.), *Pietro Pomponazzi. Tradizione e dissenso. Atti del Congresso internazionale di studi su Pietro Pomponazzi. Mantova, 23–24 ottobre 2008*, Leo S. Olschki, Firenze 2010 (Biblioteca Mantovana, 9), p. 349–364; ID., « Natura e destino dell'anima umana: le critiche di Gasparo Contarini al *De immortalitate animae* di Pietro Pomponazzi », in FERDINANDO LUIGI MARCOLUNGO (ed.), *Fenomeno, trascendenza, verità. Scritti in onore di Gianfranco Bosio*, Il Poligrafo, Padova 2012, p. 169–183. PIETRO BASSIANO ROSSI, « 'Sempre alla pietà et buoni costumi ha exortato le genti': Aristotle in the milieu of Cardinal Contarini († 1542) », in LUCA BIANCHI (ed.), *Christian Readings of Aristotle from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance*, Brepols, Turnhout 2011

essays on Contarini cannot cover entirely this huge field of research. Therefore, some remarkable works and aspects of his production, like the treatises concerning his theology (*Scholia in epistolas divi Pauli, Instructio christiana, De sacramentis christianae legis*) are still almost unknown.<sup>4</sup>

A similar fate befell the treatise *De elementis*, whose five books were composed around the end of the Twenties and the beginning of the Thirties, as an ideal prosecution with *Compendium primae philosophiae* (1527): the former adds an exposition of the sublunar world and its elementary constitution to the latter which deals with the emanation from the first cause and ends with the rise of the human mind.<sup>5</sup> The purpose of this article is to fill the gap in the bibliography about Contarini's *De elementis* and hopefully facilitate a future critical edition of the treatise.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, this research will explore first the material transmission of the text, and second its success among other authors of the sixteenth century. Since we don't aim to provide now a critical edition but just some advises concerning the relations between witnesses, we decided to reduce the list of

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(*Studia Artistarum*, 29), p. 317–395; Id., « *Vita activa/vita contemplativa: l'ideale etico e civile di Gasparo Contarini* († 1542), patrizio veneziano e cardinale », in ALEXANDER FIDORA, ANDREAS NIEDERBERGER, MERIO SCATTOLA (eds.), *Phronêsis – Prudentia – Klugheit*, Brepols, Turnhout 2013 (*Textes et Etudes du Moyen Âge*, 68), p. 203–226; ROBIGLIO, « Una nota su Gasparo Contarini e il problema del male »; ELIZABETH BLUM, « Gasparo Contarini's double access to the one truth, as seen in his letter on predestination », *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie*, 64/1 (2017), p. 82–87; ELIZABETH BLUM, PAUL R. BLUM, « Gasparo Contarini philosopher », in BIANCHI, GRASSI, PANTI (eds.), *Edizioni, traduzioni e tradizioni filosofiche*, p. 487–500; BARBARA BARTOCCI, « Plato's Parmenides as Serious Game: Contarini and the Renaissance Reception of Proclus », in DRAGOS CALMA (ed.), *Reading Proclus and the Book of Causes*, vol. I: *Western Scholarly Networks and Debates*, Brill, Leiden 2019 (*Studies in Platonism, Neoplatonism, and the Platonic Tradition*, 22), p. 466–479. For an up-to-date bibliography of philosophical studies on Contarini, see LUCA BURZELLI, « Contarini Gasparo », *Encyclopedia of Renaissance Philosophy*, (2020) *ad indicem*.

<sup>4</sup> An important exception in this general lack of theological studies is the *De officio episcopi* (1516), which was analyzed by GIGLIOLA FRAGNITO, « Cultura umanistica e riforma religiosa: il *De officio episcopi* », *Studi Veneziani*, 11 (1969), p. 75–189 (repr. in EAD., *Gasparo Contarini. Un magistrato veneziano al servizio della Cristianità*, Leo S. Olschki, Firenze 1988 [Biblioteca della « Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa ». Testi e Documenti, 9], p. 79–206).

<sup>5</sup> It seems interesting to underline Contarini's conviction that a good scholar of Metaphysics must have been also educated to natural philosophy (*Compendium primae philosophiae*, VI, in GASPARIS CONTARENI *Opera*, apud Nivellium, Parisiis 1571, p. 159 B: « *Idoneus primae philosophiae auditor is iure existimari debet qui naturali scientiae non tantum operam dederit, verum etiam in ea excelluerit: innata nanque nobis via doctrinae est a notioribus nobis. Huiusmodi autem sunt sensibilia entia: omnis enim nostra cognitio ortum habet a sensu. Repetamus ergo a Physicis indeque id quod superest ordiamur* »). In addition, many topics of the last book of *Compendium* are present along the exposition of *De elementis*.

<sup>6</sup> The only analysis of this edition in vulgar and its success can be found in LYNN THORNDIKE, *A History of Magic and Experimental Science*, vol. V, Columbia University Press, New York 1941, p. 555–556, quoted even by GLEASON, *Gasparo Contarini*, p. 87.

variants selecting the most significant cases, while leaving aside the cases of typically polygenetic mistakes.

## II. *Recensio*

The treatise *De elementis* has been transmitted by twelve witnesses, of which seven are manuscripts and five are printed editions. There is also an additional printed edition, which is anonymous and mutilated of the books III–V. Our *recensio* will give specific information about each of the first twelve witnesses, but it will also devote some attention to the last one.<sup>7</sup>

### Manuscripts

#### L. London, British Library, ADD. MS. 10707<sup>8</sup>

Sixteenth century. Paper, bound by scroll, 155 × 210 mm, 178 folia. It contains only Contarini's treatise, under the name «*De elementis simplicibus et compositis libri V*». The folia are numbered with Arabic numbers, in a modern handwriting, from 1 to 88, added with pencil in a second time. The computation of quires is made by quoting the first words of the following file. The watermark represents a flower or a star between two letters, B/P and R. Even though it was difficult to recognize it, it seems possible to say that this watermark looks like Briquet's nn. 9674–5, dated in Verona around 1550 (but this dating is too late for the treatise). The text was written by one hand, except for fol. 5r–v which seems to be added to the rest in a second time and written by a second hand. This hypothesis is confirmed by the text of fol. 5: the *recto* was left with no words, while the *verso* contains a second version which appears in parallel with the ordinary text. It is important to underline that the correspondent variant of fol. 6r–v is quashed (by underlining) – more information about these two drafts of the text will be given later (see *infra*, p. 317). Thus, two alternatives seem possible: in one case, the copyist might have read two different redactions of the treatise and decided to put them together, due to the difficulty to choose the one or the other; in the other case, the copyist copied the first text and then, after discovering (or

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<sup>7</sup> It might be useful to observe preliminarily that, due to the linguistic and syntactic features of the text, the edition of Manuzio (1557) cannot be considered for the constitution of the critical text. It is translated in Italian vernacular and every single proposition is cut and reordered in a new disposition. Therefore, this edition seems irrelevant for the reconstruction of the relationships between witnesses, even if very interesting for the evolution and transmission of the text.

<sup>8</sup> See *Addition to the manuscripts in the British museum in 1836–40*, George Woodfall and Sons, London 1843, vol. II, p. 9.

composing) the new draft, he deleted the previous one and added the new paragraph.

**M. Bologna, Archivio di Stato, Fondo Malvezzi-Campeggi, serie IV 55/715**

Sixteenth century. Paper, 240 × 180 mm, [4], 86, [10] folia. It contains only Contarini's treatise, but without any reference to the name of the author or to the original title. There is no numeration of the folia, nor a computation of the single books and files. The text was written by one hand. The watermark represents two crossing arrows with a star above; Briquet dates it in Florence between 1521 and 1528 (nn. 6295–6). The manuscript might have belonged to Giovanni Battista Campeggi (1507–83), bishop of Maiorca and son of the famous cardinal Lorenzo Campeggi.<sup>9</sup>

**O. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS. Latin 6555<sup>10</sup>**

Sixteenth century. Paper, 215 × 285 mm, [10], 123 folia. It contains only Contarini's *De elementis* (fol. 1r–123r). At the beginning of the manuscript, ten pages were ripped out, as it is evident from the flaps of paper imbedded in the binding. The pages are numerated by Roman numbers, starting from the first page of *De elementis*. The computation of files (all quaternions, except for the last one) is made by Latin letters ([A]–[R]). The watermark represents the letter A, surrounded by a circle; it seems to correspond to Briquet's n. 7931, dated in Tuscany around 1502. The text was written by one hand. The manuscript belonged to the Florentine nobleman Alberto del Bene, whose name appears on the first page [*Alberti Benij*].<sup>11</sup>

**P. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS. Latin 6738<sup>12</sup>**

1539 ca. Paper, 145 × 205 mm, [4], 139, [9] folia, numbered with Arabic numbers (from 1 to 277). There is no computation of quires. The manuscript contains

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<sup>9</sup> For Giovanni Battista Campeggi see ADRIANO PROSPERI, « Campeggi Giovanni Battista », *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 17 (1974), *ad indicem*.

<sup>10</sup> This manuscript was mentioned by CHARLES LOHR, *Latin Aristotle Commentaries*, vol. II: *Renaissance Authors*, Leo S. Olschki, Firenze 1988, p. 102.

<sup>11</sup> Little information concerning Alberto Del Bene comes from a letter of Pietro Bembo (see *Delle lettere di Messer Pietro Bembo*, presso Piero Antonio Berno, Verona 1743, vol. III, p. 336, letter dated in Rome on June 27<sup>th</sup>, 1542, to Del Bene in Padua). Another mention can be found in a letter of Annibal Caro, dated in Rome on March 10<sup>th</sup>, 1538, to Benedetto Varchi in Padua (see *Delle lettere familiari del commendatore Annibal Caro*, presso i fratelli Masi, Bologna 1820, vol. V, p. 117). Even in this case we know that Del Bene belonged to the entourage of Pietro Bembo.

<sup>12</sup> This manuscript was mentioned by LOHR, *Latin Aristotle Commentaries*, vol. II, p. 102. I apologize for not controlling its watermark. However, the text can be exactly dated in Rome in 1539.

Contarini's *De elementis* (p. 1–257) and an anonymous dialogue, titled *De fortitudine* (p. 159–277). The treatise *De elementis* presents many annotations in the margin. The manuscript probably belonged to the bibliophile Jean-Baptiste Hautin (1580–1640), as it appears from a sign on the lining [*J. B. Hautin*].<sup>13</sup> The treatise *De elementis* was copied in Rome in 1539, as it ends on p. 277 with the date: « 1539 | Romae ».

**Q. Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS. Latin 6557**

Ante 1539. Paper, 185 × 260 mm, [3], 197, [2] folia, numbered with Arabic numbers (from 1 to 197). It contains only Contarini's *De elementis*, but it doesn't mention the name of the philosopher. There are two watermarks. The first one represents a lamb holding a flag, surrounded by two circles; Briquet dates it in Rome between 1535 and 1543 (n. 59). The second one represents a shield containing a bird, surmounted by a star; Briquet dates it in Rome between 1534 and 1546 (n. 12235). Both these watermarks can be recognized in other papers of Contarini: n. 59 can be found in Contarini's autograph draft of *De poenitentia* (Archivio Apostolico Vaticano, *Archivium Arcis, Arm. n. I-XVIII*, MS. 6461, fol. 132r–144v); n. 12235 can be found in Aleandro's copy of Contarini's *De potestate pontificis in usu clavium* (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 3918) and in the Vatican copy of *De elementis* (here, witness **R**). The text was written by one hand. Due to the analysis of variants, it seems possible to date this manuscript before 1539; however, close to the first draft of *De elementis*, since other manuscripts copied in 1539 already contain a second and definitive draft of the text.

**R. Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, MS. Vat. lat. 3165<sup>14</sup>**

Sixteenth century. Paper, 140 × 205 mm, 138 folia. The numeration is made by printer numbers down on the right. The first and the last folia are not numbered. Folio 94 was repeated with the number 94a added in pencil. The computation of quires was made with Arabic numbers. The watermark represents a shield containing a bird, surmounted by a star with six points. Briquet dates it in Rome between 1534 and 1546 (n. 12235). The same watermark can be recognized in MS. Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. Lat. 3918, containing Contarini's *De potestate pontificis in usu clavium* and owed by card. Girolamo Aleandro. The manuscript

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<sup>13</sup> For more information about Jean-Baptiste Hautin see JEAN-CHRÉTIEN-FERDINAND HOEFER, *Nouvelle Biographie Général*, Firmin Didot, Paris 1858, vol. XXIII, col. 557; EDMOND BONNAFFÉ, *Dictionnaire des amateurs français au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Israël, Amsterdam 1884, p. 135–136; KEITH BUSBY, TERRY NIXON, ALISON STONES, LORI J. WALTERS (eds.), *Les Manuscrits de Chrétien de Troyes*, Rodopi, Amsterdam – Atalanta 1993, vol. I, p. 135.

<sup>14</sup> This manuscript was mentioned by LOHR, *Latin Aristotle Commentaries*, vol. II, p. 102.

contains only Contarini's *De elementis*; the name of the author is written at the beginning of fol. 1r, in a different handwriting. The text was written by one hand.

**S. Napoli, Biblioteca Nazionale 'Vittorio Emanuele III', Fondo Principale, MS. VIII F 30<sup>15</sup>**

Sixteenth century. Paper, 145 × 210 mm, [1], 154, [1] folia. The fol. 1–25 present Arabic numeration by a hand of the sixteenth century; the following folia until fol. 100 were numbered by a second and modern hand with pencil, up on the right; the rest (fol. 101–149) presents modern Arabic numeration by pencil down on the right. It contains two guard sheets and 15 quires, generally quaterns, except for the first (ternion), the seventh (seven sheets) and the fifteenth (six sheets). The watermark represents a lamb holding a shield; Briquet dates it in Naples between 1528 and 1536 (n. 1131). The manuscript contains Contarini's *Compendium primae philosophiae* (fol. 6r–68v) and his *De elementis* (fol. 70r–149r). The fol. 69 and 150–154 are white. The two treatises were written by different hands. The first one was copied in Naples, in the convent of San Giovanni a Carbonara (at the time, lead by Girolamo Seripando) at the beginning of September 1537. It seems possible that also the second treatise comes from the same convent, in a close date. The *Compendium* seems far more complete, showing name of the author, title and division of books; in addition, it contains plenty of glosses. On the contrary, *De elementis* lacks all that information and presents no glosses. The witness is also mentioned by the ancient catalogue of the books which were owned by San Giovanni a Carbonara before 1570: the catalogue describes it unitedly, as « compendium primae et naturalis philosophiae, forma pulo enchyridii maiore ».<sup>16</sup>

Printed editions

**D. Lutetiae Parisiorum, apud Nicolaum Divitem 1548**

Fol. [i]r: GASPARIS CONTARENI CAR-| DINALIS. AMPLISS. PHILOSOPHI SVA | *aetate praestantissimi de Elementis et eorum mixtioni-| bus libri quinque, cum indice copiosiss. nunc primum | in lucem aediti. | Scipionis Capitij de principijs rerum poema. | In geminam anchoram. | Fundabat satis Aonias anchora puppes, | Dum tantum Ausoniis mus nataret aquis. | Nunc quam Palladiae sulcant maria omnia naues, | Visa quod una parum est*

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<sup>15</sup> This manuscript was mentioned by LOHR, *Latin Aristotle Commentaries*, vol. II, p. 102.

<sup>16</sup> DAVID GUTIÉRREZ, *La biblioteca di San Giovanni a Carbonara di Napoli*, Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, Roma 1966, p. 137. I am grateful to Maria Gabriella Mansi, director of the manuscript department of Biblioteca Nazionale di Napoli, and to Andrea Improta, for introducing me to the material features and the catalogues of the books owned by San Giovanni a Carbonara.

*anchora facta duplex. | Lutetiae Parisiorum per Nicolaum Diuitem, uia sa-| cerdotum, ad diuae Genouefes, sub insigni ge-| minae ancorae. | CVM PRIVILEGIO REGIS. | 1548. ||*

Between *poema*. and *In geminam* there is an engraving, surrounded by the writing: NON SATIS VNA TE. | NET CERATAS | ANCHORA PUPPES.

Fol. [i]v: royal privilege of printing.

Foll. iir–viiiiv: INDEX RERVM INSIGNIO-| *rum in quattuor libros de elementis*.

Fol. A[i]r–v: Dedication of Johannes Gaignaeus, cancellarius parisiensis, to cardinal Marcello Cervini.<sup>17</sup>

Fol. Aiiir–v: *errata corrige*.

Fol. Aiiir: DE ELEMENTIS EORUM'-| *que mixtionibus, Authore Gaspa-| re Contareno Cardinale do-| ctiss. Liber I. |*

Incipit: nEmo est hominum, Matthaeae Dandule, in-| genij adeo tardi, aut stupidi, qui non singu-| larem quandam voluptatem capiat ex re-| rum naturae contemplatione...

Explicit, fol. 89v: quorum praestan-| tissimum iure existimari debet philo-| sophia quae nos efficit | propre diui-| nos. | FINIS. | Deo optimo maximo laus inexplicabilis. ||

In-8°, VIII–119 fol. The edition is composed by 16 files, each of which is a quaternion. The files are computed with Roman capital letter [A–P] and numbers [i–iiij], except for the first file, which presents only Roman numbers [i–iiij].

### **W. Parisiis, apud Andrea Wechelum 1564**

Fol. [a]r: GASPARIS | CONTARENI CAR-| DINALIS AMPLISS. | philosophi sua aetate praestan-| tissimi de Elementis & eorum | mixtionibus libri quinque. | Diligentiss. Denuo recogniti & emendati. | *Scipionis Capitij de principiis | rerum poëma. | Cum Indice rerum copiosissimo. | PARISIIS, | Apud Andream Wechelum. | 1564.*

Between *copiosissimo*. and *Parisiis* there is an engraving.

Fol. [a]v: white.

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<sup>17</sup> Jean de Gagny was rector and Chancellor of the University of Paris from 1546 until 1549, when he died. For more information, see JEAN-CHRÉTIEN-FERDINAND HOEFER, *Nouvelle Biographie general*, Firmin Didot, Paris 1858, vol. XIX, col. 165–6, s.v. 'Gagni ou Gagnee, ou Guieni (Jean de)'; JOHANN HEINRICH ZEDLER, *Grosses vollständiges Universal-Lexicon aller Wissenschaften und Künste*, Paris 1913, vol. LVI, col. 497–500, s.v. 'Gagny (Jean de)'. For an interesting historical analysis of this edition and its political consequences see PAOLO SACHET, *Publishing for the Popes. The Roman Curia and the Use of Printing (1527–1555)*, Brill, Leiden – Boston 2020 (Library of the Written Word, 80), p. 187–188.



Fol. 2: DE ELEMENTIS EO-| RVMQUE MIXTIONI-| bus, Authore Gaspare Contareno |  
*Cardinale doctiss. Lib. I.*

Incipit: NEMO est hominum, Matthaee | Dandule, ingenij adeò tardi, aut | stupidi,  
qui non singularem quan-| dam voluptatem capiat ex rerum | naturae  
contemplatione...

Explicit, fol. 99v: quorum prestantissi-| mum iure existimari debet philosophia  
quae nos efficit propre diuinos. | FINIS. | Deo optimo maximo laus inexplicabilis. ||

Fol. Rir-Rviiv: INDEX RERVVM INSI-| GNIORVM IN QVA- | tuor libros de ele- |  
mentis. ||

In-8°, 128 fol. Folia are numerated with Arabic numbers; files are quaternions  
computed with Latin capital letters [A-R] and Arabic numbers [i-iiij].

#### **N. Parisiis, apud Sebastianum Nivellium 1571**

Fol. [a]r: GASPARIS | CONTARENI | CARDINALIS | OPERA. | *PARISIIS.* | Apud  
Sebastianum Niuellium, sub Ciconiis in via Jacobaea. | 1571 | CVM PRIVILEGIO  
REGIS. |

Between OPERA. and *PARISIIS* there is an engraving.

Fol. [a]v: white.

Fol. a iir: dedication of Alvisè Contarini to cardinal Alessandro Farnese.

Fol. a iiv: summary of the works published in the volume. Then, academic  
approvals: the first dated 1 December 1570, was signed by «HVGONIS.  
AYMONIS.»; the second, dated 11 February 1570, was signed by «DAHY.  
HVGONIS.» Both the approvals certificate that in Contarini's works regarding  
Lutherans there is nothing misleading from Catholic doctrine.

Fol. a iiijr: royal privilege of printing, dated 17 March 1571.

Fol. a iiijv: white.

Fol. br-d iiijr: GASPARIS CONTARENI | *VITA* | A IOANNE CASA CONSCRIPTA. |

Fol. [d iiij]v: white.

Files are computed with letters (A-Z; Za-Zz; AA-II). Every page is numbered, from  
p. 1 to p. 627. Each page is internally divided into sections, computed with capital  
letters (A-D on the *recto*; E-H on the *verso*). The edition concludes with:

Fol. [GG iiij]v-[II iij]r: RERVVM AC VERBORVM, | QVAE HOC VOLVMINE CONTI  
|NENTVR, INDEX COPIOSISSIMVS. |

Fol. II iijv: *erratacorrige*.

Fol. II iiijr: conclusion of *erratacorrige*; *index quaternionum*.

Fol. II iiijv: white.

The format is *in folio*, 20 + 627 + 11 pages, 59 ternions e 4 duerns.

The treatise *De elementis* occupies p. 1–90. The text is preceded by a frieze with an Aries: DE ELEMENTIS. | LIBER PRIMVS.

Incipit: NEMO est hominum, Matthaeae Dandule, ingenij à-deo tardi, ac fere stupidi, qui non singularem quan-dam voluptatem capiat ex rerum naturae contemplatio-ne...

Explicit: quorum praestan-tissimum iure existimari debet philoso-phia, quae nos efficit propè | diuinos. | GASPARIS | FINIS. ||

### **E1. Venetiis, apud Aldum 1578**

The first Venetian edition of 1578 (Gasparis Contareni *Opera*, Venetiis, apud Aldum, 1578) reprints the French edition Nivelles 1571 for text, lay out, number of pages, computation of files. It adds only a new censor-review which deletes some propositions.<sup>18</sup>

### **E2. Venetiis, apud Damianum Zenarium 1589**

Also the printed edition of 1589 (Gasparis Contareni *Opera omnia*, Venetiis, apud Damianum Zenarium, 1589) reprints the French edition Nivelles 1571 for the entire text, to which it adds a new censure (see *infra*, n. 18).

## III. *Transmission of the text*

It was still not possible to complete a full collation of the entire text, which only would give a truthful and concrete image of the relationships between witnesses. Nevertheless, in this analysis we propose the full collation of a significative part of it: namely, the first book, which means 20 % of the entire treatise. The importance of this part is due to the quality of variants, as it will be shown. This work, even though not complete, can give some clear information about the transmission of the text.

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<sup>18</sup> For a more detailed reconstruction of these editions and their censure see CLAUS ARNOLD, *Die römische Zensur der Werke Cajetans und Contarinis (1558–1601): Grenzen der theologischen Konfessionalisierung*, Schönigh, Paderborn 2008 (Römische Inquisition und Indexkongregation, 10), p. 171–332; GASPARO CONTARINI, *Gegenreformatrische Schriften*, ed. FRIEDRICH HÜNERMANN, Aschendorffschen Verlagsbuchhandlung, Aschendorff 1923 (Corpus Catholicorum. Werke katholischer Schriftsteller im Zeitalter der Glaubens Spaltung, 7), p. XXXII–XXXVII.

### III.1. Different drafts

The first aspect with which a future critical edition of *De elementis* will have to deal is the presence of a double redaction, at least for the first book. A first draft of book 1 (mss. **L**, **Q**) explains the Platonic theory of triangles in an easy and fast way, concluding soon with the identification of geometrical solids and elements:

Haec Plato in Timaeo obscure admodum complexus est, seu potius innuit. Inquit enim proportionem maioris lateris ad minus triplam esse; ac paulo infra, proportionem maioris ad minus secundum potentiam esse duplam. Subticit autem proportionem sesquilateram, quae est maximi laterum ad medium. Verum tum ex his quae diximus, tum etiam certissima ratione compertum esse potest, si ad latus minimum latera duo quae restant, eas proportiones habeant ut alterum triplum sit, alterum duplum, necessario sequi quod proportio lateris habentis triplam, ad latus quod duplam habet ad minimum proportionem, erit proportio sesquialtera.<sup>19</sup>

This first version was soon modified by the author, who composed a second draft that appears in the rest of the manuscript tradition (**O**, **R**, **S** and **M**). In the British manuscript **L**, for example, the piece of argumentation corresponding to draft 1, was underlined. Then, in a jointed page (fol. 5v) a new hand transcribed the new draft, which is coherent with the second branch of the manuscript tradition:

Hanc rationem, ut arbitror, Plato in Timaeo innuit, quamvis ipsam subticerit maiorisque negotii esse dixerit, quam ut ibi explicari potuerit; cui scilicet Deus elegerit illud scaleni genus quod postea diuersa quadam ratione exponit. Inquit enim in eo scaleno unum latus esse in potentia triplum ad minus. Et aliquanto infra inquit, in eo hypotenusam esse longitudine duplam ad minorem lineam. Hoc autem est in eo scaleni genere, cuius meminimus, in quo ordine quaedam est proportio trium, duorum et unius. Nam hypotenusa est verbigratia sex cubitorum, minima linea trium erit, ut ostendam. Quadratum hypotenusae erit triginta sex; minoris vero lineae quadratum erit novem, quae si demantur a triginta sex, relinquuntur viginti septem (quod erit quadratum tertiae lineae, quae simul cum minori continet angulum rectum). Viginti septem vero sunt tripla ad novem. Hoc patet, quoniam in triangulo rectangulo quadratum hypotenusae est aequale duobus quadratis simul sumptis duarum linearum continentium angulum rectum. Quod autem hypotenusa sit dupla longitudine minoris lineae ostenditur: nam si illi scaleno circumscribatur circulus, utique hypotenusa erit diameter, centum inquam et viginti graduum, minor linea (quae est chorda sexaginta graduum) est latus hexagoni descripti in eodem circulo. Erit igitur semidiameter sexaginta scilicet

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<sup>19</sup> See **D**, f. [Avii]v; **L**, fol. 6r–v; **Q**, fol. 5r–v. On the Platonic theory of triangles see PLATO, *Timaeus*, 56b and 63c–d; CALCIDIUS, *Commentarium in Timaeum*, § 39.

graduum, ut ostensum est in Geometria. Erit igitur hypotenusa dupla longitudine minoris lineae.<sup>20</sup>

It is evident that in the second draft Contarini expanded the geometrical exposition, in order to make the argument more precise. With regards to **Q**, we might be allowed to conclude that it contains draft 1 without corrections, because it was copied and circulated before the composition of draft 2. It is finally interesting to see that also the first printed edition **D** contains the draft 1: this might prove its dependence from an *interpositus* manuscript with the first draft of *De elementis*. Edition **W** is dependent on **D**. Something very different happened with the edition **N**, in 1571. The analysis of variants permits us to conjecture that the editor of **N** was taking into accounts both the editions **D-W** and a manuscript with draft 2: however, it descends from the second branch.

### III.2. Group L–M

The collation of the first book of **L** and **M** permits to conclude that they form a unitary group, since they contain separative variants which divide them from the rest of the manuscript tradition. In this list we find *saut du même au même*, inversions of words or mistakes of haplography in the Latin words, due to little attention of the copyist. It is not possible to exclude even a revision of the text, since the *lectiones* are often deeply different from draft 1 to draft 2:

**P.**<sup>21</sup> **1B.** ex] *O, P, Q, R, S*; in *L, M*; quam] *O, P, Q, R, S*; quod *L, M*. **1C.** in conscribenda] *O, P, Q, R, S*; introscribenda *L, M*. **2E.** adveniam] *O, P, Q, R, S*; deveniam *L, M*. notitiam] *P, Q, R, S*; rationem *O*; notionem *L, M*. **2F.** verborum] *O, P, Q, R, S*; versorum *L, M*. **2G.** quo] *O, P, Q, R, S*; hoc *L, M*. remanet post] *O, P, Q, R, S*; remaneret potest post *L, M*. **2H.** orationis... pronuntiat] *O, P, Q, R, S*; orations, quae voces pronunciantur *L, M*. **3A.** Dictiones... resolvuntur] *O, P, Q, R, S*; *omm. L, M*. **3C.** esse] *O, P, Q, R, S*; etiam *L, M*. **4F.** pares] *O, P, Q, R, S*; partes *L, M*; **4G.** certa] *O, P, Q, R, S*; extra *L, M*. **5A.** Dupla... oppositorum] *O, P, Q, R, S*; *omm. L, M*. **5D.** efficietur] *O, P, Q, R, S*; efficiatur *L, M*. **6H.** cummentitium] *O, P, Q, R, S*; cummentionem *L, M*. **8G.** recedit] *O, P, Q, R, S*; excedit *L, M*. **9B.** permeat] *O, P, Q, R, S*; promeat *L, M*. **9C.** mentibus] *O, P, Q, R, S*; mixtionibus *L, M*. **10F.** quampiam] *O, P, Q, R, S*; quipiam *L, M*. **10H.** ex se] *O, P, Q, R, S*; *omm. L, M*. **11B.** a] *O, P, Q, R, S*; *omm. L, M*. **11C.** at] *O, P, Q, R, S*; ut *L, M*. rationale] *S*; ratione *O, P, Q, R*; omne *L, M*. **11D.** proximum] *O, P, Q, R, S*; *omm. L, M*. **12F.** gerunt] *O, P, Q, R, S*; ferunt *L, M*. **12G.** inesse] *O, P, Q, R, S*; esse *L, M*. **12H.** subtilitatis] *O, P, Q, R, S*;

<sup>20</sup> GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, p. 5 A–C. I have emended the text according to the analysis of variants, of which I give here some indications: l. **12.** cum] *D, N, L, M*; in *S*; tamen *O, R*; <sup>cum</sup>tamen *P*. **13.** patet] *D, N, P, R, S, L, M*; pacto *O*. **16.** illi] *om. D, N*; *add. L, M, O, P, R, S*. **18.** viginti] *L, M, O, P, R, S*; triginta *D, N*. **21.** minoris] *N, O, P, R, S*; minus *L, M*; *om. D*.

<sup>21</sup> The page number refers to the printed edition of Paris, 1571. The following capital letters refer to the *recensio* of manuscripts and editions, already described.

substantialitatis *L, M*. **13D**. dat] *O, P, Q, R, S*; datur *L, M*. **14F**. sistat] *O, P, Q, R, S*; distat *L, M*. **15A**. quondam] *O, P, Q, R*; quempiam *S, L, M*. **15B**. eorum] *O, P, Q, R, S*; *omm. L, M*. vero] *O, P, Q, R, S*; mixto *L, M*. **15C**. diffitemur] *O, P, Q, R, S*; differemur *L, M*. Item] *O, P, Q, R, S*; tera *L, M*. **16E**. adscribunt] *O, P, Q, R, S*; attribuunt *L, M*. **18E**. vinculo et nodo] *O, P, R, S*; circulo et modo *L, M*; vinculo et modo *Q*. **19D**. si quis] *O, P, Q, R, S*; sibi *L, M*. **20E**. utrumque] *O, P, Q, R, S*; utrique *L, M*. indeque] *O, P, Q, R, S*; idemque *L, M*. **20G**. nixum] *O, P, Q, R, S*; mixtum *L, M*. **20H**. portio] *O, P, Q, R, S*; proportionibus *L, M*.

The second question concerning group **L–M** has to do with their order. The analysis of variants permits to say that **M** is a *codex descriptus* of **L**, since it contains some new mistakes that **L** does not contain. In some cases, it is even possible to prove the misinterpretation of the text **L** by the copyist of **M**:

**P. 11D**. urgent] *L, O, P, Q, R, S*; vegent *M*. **12C**. ei] *L, O, P, Q, R, S*; si *M*. **14G**. maior] *M, D, N*; et maior *S*; etiam maior *L, O, P, R*; enim maior *Q*. **15B**. vis] *omm. L, O, P, Q, R, S*; *ad. M*. **16G**. tueantur] *L, O, P, Q, R, S*; sueantur *M*. **20F**. mundi] *L, O, P, Q, R, S*; *om. M*.

In cases 11D and 16G, **M** misinterpreted **L**, since in both instances the reading of **L** is not very clear. In case 15B, **M** copied *vis* from the upper line of the page. While variants in 14F could be easily emended, there is no doubt that the omission in 14G and 20F must determine the dependence of **M** on **L**.

### III.3. Group O–P–R–S

This large group of manuscripts can be isolated, since it contains the draft 2 of the first book. In addition, the analysis of joining variants permits to prove that they all depend from the same branch of the tradition. Anyway, it seems impossible to make any of these manuscripts depend from another, since each of them presents some significative splitting variants from the others.

The case of **O**: p. **5B**. patet] *D, N, P, R, S, L, M*; pacto *O*. **10E**. hic] *his L, M, P, Q, R, S*; illis *O*.

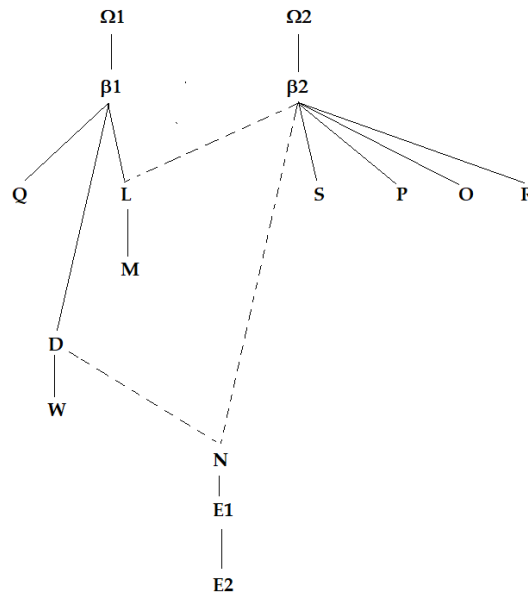
The case of **P**: p. **5B**. cum] *D, N, L, M*; in *S*; tamen *O, R*; <sup>cum</sup>tamen *P*. **7C**. neque forma...habet] *D, N, O, Q, R, S, L, M*; *om. P*. **14H**. posset] *D, N, O, Q, R, S, L, M*; potest *P*. **15C**. demas] *D, N, O, Q, R, S, L, M*; demat *P*.

The case of **R**: p. **3C**. vocare] *D, N, O, P, Q, S, L, M*; appellare *R*. **5D**. inquam] *D, N, R, L, M*; inquit *O, P, Q, S*. **10G**. movetur] *D, N, O, P, Q, S, L, M*; movetve *R*. **20H**. ipsi] *D, N, O, P, Q, S, L, M*; sibi *R*.

The case of **S**: p. **1B**. fecisse] *D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M*; ferisse *S*. **2G**. prima] *D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M*; *om. S*. **3A**. tractatio] *D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M*; oratio *S*. **3C**. hisce] *D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M*; his *S*. **3D**. de caelo] *D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M*; de caelo et mundo *S*. **7A**. a] *D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M*; de *S*. **8F**. proprietates] *D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M*; proprie *S*. **9A**. evenire] *D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M*; *om. S*. attente] *D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M*; *om. S*. **9B**. naturalis motus] *D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M*; naturalis corpus *S*. **10E**. illi] *D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M*; *om. S*. **10G**. nullique] *D, N, O, P,*

Q, R, L, M; nulleque S. potius] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; scilicet S. **11A.** illud... motus] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; om. S. **11B.** efficiens] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; sufficiens S. **11D.** cuius nixu] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; nisu S. **12F.** quidam] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; om. S. conantur] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; conantes S. **12D.** quo] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; scilicet quo S. **14E.** adversario] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; adverso S. **14F.** in motu] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; in momento S. **14H.** ullo] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; alio S. **16F.** ferri] N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; fieri D; fit S. **16G.** passum] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; om. S. **17A.** inferiorem] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; inferioris S. impetum] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; impetus S. **17B.** velocior] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; velocius S. quoque] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; om. S. **17C.** quam] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; aquam S. **17D.** quotnam sint] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; quondam sunt S. primo rerum] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; summo S. **18E.** vero illud] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; autem S. refert] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; refertur S. **19C.** simplices] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; simplici S. **19D.** essent] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; esset S. accomodari] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; om. S. **20H.** expansa] D, N, O, P, Q, R, L, M; extensa S.

Note to the text: for the *recensio* and the article I have always quoted from the Parisian edition of 1571 (**N**), which was officially cured by the family and is the most reliable witness. I have emended the text only in its graphical layout: abbreviations were dissolved and letters -u- and -v-, as much as punctuation and capital letters, were restored according to modern use.



#### IV. Success of the treatise

In his *History of Magic* Lynn Thorndike listed some of the main reasons of the first success of Contarini's *De elementis*: the treatise seems « a very clear and readable work », and in many cases it deals with its topics with « no little acumen ».<sup>22</sup> Indeed, Contarini chooses a successful rhetoric style for his work, in order to facilitate the understanding of physical issues. He provides the arguments in a clear and consistent structure, writing in an easy style without any syntactical or lexical tangle.<sup>23</sup> The argumentation seems fluid and organic, which is something completely different from the structure of the medieval *quaestio*: as a matter of fact, Contarini doesn't want to complicate it by quoting always *pro* and *contra*, but he rather prefers to choose an interpretative path for his reader.<sup>24</sup>

Every time he must face a controversial question (for example, the permanence of elements' shape in the mixture), he lists the diverging positions, and he adds arguments or critiques to each one. However, he mentions only few fundamental authorities, without any overabundant list of thinkers. Compared to other treatises on the same topic (Achillini's *De elementis*; Pomponazzi's *De incantationibus*), the list of authorities and philosophical positions is far more concise, and always limited to ancient philosophers (Plato, Aristotle, Euclid, Ptolemy) or medieval interpreters (Avicenna, Averroes, Thomas of Aquin).<sup>25</sup> Such

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<sup>22</sup> See THORNDIKE, *History of Magic*, vol. V, p. 552, 554.

<sup>23</sup> See the quotation from GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, p. 2 E-F: « Verum ut, omissa longiori praefatione, ad rem deveniam, illud tantum lectorem admonitum esse volo: nos huic opusculo nullum eloquentiae fucum aut verborum ornatum esse adhibuituros, sed satis nos facturos putare si res alioqui difficiles atque obscurae suapte natura tractentur a nobis ea dicendi forma eoque orationis genere, ut intelligi dilucide queant »; GASPARIS CONTARENI *Compendium*, 1571, p. 96 F: « [...] nunquam mihi hac operam adsumendam esse decrevi, ut opusculum hoc nostrum elegantius facerem. Unum ne in eo orationis fucum adhiberem. Verum in eo autem opere tantum elaborandum mihi esse duxi, ut quanto possem, ac compendii modus pateretur, perspicue dicerem de rebus hisce eminentissimis et que suapte natura obscurae nobis sunt aciemque mentis facile effugiunt ».

<sup>24</sup> The discussion about the 'originality' of Contarini seems still nowadays not concluded. By one side, there are scholars who maintains Contarini's mediocre originality of his philosophical arguments (GLEASON, *Gasparo Contarini*, p. 81–82; GILBERT, « Religion and politics », p. 102; GIOVANNI DI NAPOLI, *Studi sul Rinascimento*, Giannini, Napoli 1973, p. 300); by the other side, those who underline a peculiar critical attitude which reveals a true philosophical care (E. BLUM, P. R. BLUM, « Gasparo Contarini Philosopher », p. 488, p. 494). A medium position can be read in ROSSI, « Sempre alla pietà », p. 325.

<sup>25</sup> Fundamental information about Contarini's philosophical studies were given by LUDOVICO BECCADELLI, *Vita del cardinale Contarini*, in GIAMBATTISTA MORANDI, *Monumenti di varia letteratura tratti dai manoscritti di Monsignor Lodovico Beccadelli arcivescovo di Ragusa*, t. I/2, nell'Istituto delle Scienze, Bologna 1799, p. 123: « la professione principale delle sue lettere fu philosophia et theologia, le quali accompagnò con le mathematiche, cioè con quella parte che tratta Euclide nelli *Elementi*, et la considerazione del moto de' cieli ». In a polemic letter of Pietro Giustiniani to Contarini, dated in Camaldoli on May 12<sup>th</sup>, 1512, the monk lists Euclid, Aristotle and Avicenna as

a reduction makes the text very easier to follow for a casual reader, who might not be acquainted with every member of the Scholastic tradition.

There are two further aspects of the text which might have contributed to its success. Firstly, Contarini shows a critical attitude towards his sources. He never embraces entirely one doctrine or one philosophical system, but he rather prefers to analyze every single topic according to empirical evidence. This peculiar attitude is particularly evident in relation to Thomism: Contarini never hesitates to underline Aquinas' theological insufficiency and to embrace opposite positions (the most evident examples are the permanence of elementary shapes in the mixture – taken from Averroes – and the emanative system – which he explicitly found in Avicenna).<sup>26</sup>

Secondly, Contarini tries to provide concrete clarifications of the difficult concepts, by exemplifying them with daily examples. The second book of *De elementis*, which should expose the structures of the four elements, is combined with an autobiographical empiric method. When Contarini describes water and the movements of the sea, he cannot but address his readers, pointing at the ordinary experience of maritime tide which every Venetian perfectly knew.<sup>27</sup> In Contarini's view, the description of natural philosophy goes always in parallel

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fundamental authorities for Contarini (the letter was edited by GIOVANNI BENEDETTO MITTARELLI, *Annales camaldulenses, aere monasterii sancti Michaelis de Muriano* 1760, vol. IX, p. 552). Another important source was the brother-in-law and close friend, Matteo Dandolo, who in a biographical draft lists Plato, Aristotle, Homer, Vergil, Horace and Lucretius (see GIGLIOLA FRAGNITO, *Memoria individuale e costruzione biografica: Beccadelli, Della Casa, Vettori alle origini di un mito*, Argalia, Urbino 1978 (Pubblicazioni dell'Università di Urbino, Serie di lettere e filosofia, 39), in part. p. 179; EAD., *Gasparo Contarini*, p. 123–124; JOHANNES BARTUSCHAT, « The Bibliographies of Gasparo Contarini by Giovanni Della Casa and Ludovico Beccadelli and the Ideal of Christian Humanism », in ELLEN DE DONCKER, TOMÁŠ NEJESCHLEBA, ANDREA ALDO ROBIGLIO (eds.), *Philosophy and Biography in the Age of Charles V*, vol. I: *Gasparo Contarini and His World*, University of Cordoba Press, Cordoba 2020 (forthcoming).

<sup>26</sup> Many scholars underlined – sometime even too much – Contarini's debt to the Thomism. See for example DI NAPOLI, *L'immortalità dell'anima nel Rinascimento*, p. 180 and p. 291; EUGENIO GARIN, *Storia della filosofia*, Einaudi, Torino 1966, vol. II, p. 30. I advanced some remarks to this conclusion in BURZELLI, « Aspetti della tradizione aristotelica », p. 365–390.

<sup>27</sup> Contarini first composed a brief treatise on the movement of the seas [*De aestu maris*] and offered it to his brothers, who were sea-merchants. This text disappeared soon after the composition, since Contarini lent it and was never able to get it back (see IOHANNIS CASA *Vita cardinalis Contareni*, in GASPARIS CONTARENI *Opera*, 1571, p. Diiijr: « Quin etiam eodem honesto desiderio incensus ut utilitatibus fratrum suorum serviret, qui crebro mercaturis faciendis operam dantes navigabant, confecit libellum de aestu maris et quam causam reciproca illa fluctuum agitatio haberet diligenter monstravit. Qui tamen liber amico ipsius commodatus, magno adhibito studio recuperari nunquam potuit »). The only hypothetical source of it is a little anonymous fragment concerning tides, conserved in Milan, Venerabile Biblioteca Ambrosiana, MS. R 104 sup., already noticed by DITTRICH, *Regesten und Briefe*, p. 361–363. This work shows Contarini's attitude to 'pragmatic inquiry' of physical phenomena: an inquiry that should be useful for his community.



with the concrete experience of natural phenomena; and he invites his reader to follow him in the inspection of these natural laws. It is not by chance that the words *experiential-experimentum-experire* recur 27 times in *De elementis* and in some cases they help solving old philosophical problems: the Aristotelian question on whether equatorial areas were habitable or not, is finally resolved by mentioning the recent Portuguese explorations.<sup>28</sup>

#### V. A case of plagiarism (?)

The treatise *De elementis* had, as we have seen, five printed editions (1548, 1564, 1571, 1578, 1589). In parallel, it was object of a unique case of plagiarism between Venice and Paris. In 1557 Paolo Manuzio published a book in the volgare, titled *De gli elementi e di molti loro notabili effetti*. This edition, containing some excerpts of *De elementis* together with two arguments about the immortality of the soul by Rinaldo Odoni, was dedicated to Paolo Giustiniani, abbot of S. Andrea di Busco – not to be confused with Contarini's close friend Paolo Giustiniani, addressee of his *Compendium primae philosophiae*. The text of *De elementis* is deeply transformed in this edition. It is vulgarized, it lacks the books III–V and, for the remaining parts, it is cut and recomposed. The only way to identify the two text is to consider each single proposition and its correspondent in the Latin text.

We may ask if it represents real case of plagiarism, as Lynn Thorndike and Elizabeth Gleason maintained. Thorndike focalized on the intention of the Venetian editor:

Since Manutio not only does not mention Contarini whom he often repeats verbatim, but in his preface professes to state in Italian “what the most learned philosophers have said on this subject in diverse books”, his volume must be regarded as an overt and shameless piece of plagiarism, although as an abbreviated translation it is not unskillful.<sup>29</sup>

As a matter of fact, the edition might have seemed less ‘shameless’ than Thorndike said, if he had noticed that his quotation about the ‘learned philosophers’ was quite imprecise. Manuzio didn’t write this proposition in his preface, but rather in the text (fol. 4r), without presenting it as *his own* collection of philosophical authorities – as it would have appeared from a preface. The *learned philosophers* are simply those authorities recalled by Gasparo. We do not

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<sup>28</sup> GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, p. 39D–40E: « Hanc quaestionem, quae multis iam annis versata est inter maximos philosophos, nostris temporibus experientia dissoluit. Nam ex hac nova Hispanorum ac praecipue Lusitanorum navigatione compertum est sub circulo aequinoctiali et inter tropicos habitationem esse [...]. Ergo sub aequinoctiali circulo est habitatio, quod nemo negare potest; non tamen temperatissima omnium, ut putavit Avicenna ».

<sup>29</sup> THORNDIKE, *History of Magic*, vol. V, p. 555–556.

have sufficient evidence to demonstrate that Manuzio himself was maliciously pretending to publish *his own* treatise on elements, instead of an anonymous treatise on elements. And we might list three arguments proving this second possibility: first of all, the frontispiece of the edition never mentions Manuzio as author of the treatise, which appears clearly anonymous; second, the edition contains other two texts, so that it looks more like a collection of other people's works than a personal treatise; third, the text was published in Venice, where the family Contarini was moving to protect Gasparo's works from unauthorized editions (like Paris 1548; or Florence 1553 for *De potestate pontificis*).<sup>30</sup> Thus, we wonder if Manuzio really thought to publish the treatise of his old friend Contarini, with the certainty that no one would have noticed the similarity – a clear similarity, even if the text shows none of Gasparo's biographical digressions.

In conclusion, we should be more careful in talking about a 'shameless' case of plagiarism for Manuzio's edition. Instead, a real case of plagiarism happened to the translation of Manuzio himself. One year after the publication, Jacques Charpentier, professor at the university of Paris, published the same text in France, but translated back into Latin, without any reference to Contarini or Manuzio.<sup>31</sup> Lynn Thorndike finally mentions a Parisian surgeon, François Rassius Noëns, who soon realized the illicit act and annotated on his copy «he [Charpentier] is an impudent plagiarist».<sup>32</sup> However, Noëns referred the book to Manuzio instead of Contarini.

## VI. A useful exposition of maritime movements

One of the main topics which explains the success of Contarini's *De elementis* is the description of maritime movements. This description occupies a big part of the second book of *De elementis*, and it is entirely based on a direct experience of those movements: Contarini gives the example of oceanic sea-flows that he experienced during his travels in England and Spain, and of the tides he observed in Venice and Flanders.<sup>33</sup> The first quotation of this description can be found in

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<sup>30</sup> Significantly, FRAGNITO, *Gasparo Contarini*, p. 310–313, observed that the family had a strong interest in an official publication of Gasparo's works, which could front the heterodox interpretation of some of his arguments.

<sup>31</sup> See *De elementis et variis eorum effectis iisque potissimum quae in meteoris apparent liber ex Italarum vernaculis Latinus factus per Jac. Carpentarium Bellouacum, ex typographia Matthaei Davidis via amygdalina ad veritatis insigne, Parisiis 1558*.

<sup>32</sup> THORNDIKE, *History of Magic*, vol. V, p. 556.

<sup>33</sup> Many letters and parts of *De elementis* are full of descriptions of physical phenomena around Europe. See, for examples, the description of tides in Belgium (Contarini al Senato, 16 novembre 1525, p. 23: « La marea poi che cresce dal mare gonfia l'acque talmente, che sino in Bruselles io ho veduto il fiume ritornare in suso »); Eiusd. *De elementis*, II, 1571, p. 31A–B: « Vidi ego in

Giulio Sirenio's *De fato libri novem*.<sup>34</sup> Facing the problem of the causal chain (book III, c. 56), Sirenio list a group of arguments which belong to the Aristotelian school. The movement of the First Cause determinates the consequential movement of the celestial spheres and, through them, of the sublunar world. As a terrestrial sign of this divine influence, Sirenio quotes a big excerpt from Contarini's *De elementis*, book II, concerning the movement of the oceans and of Mediterranean sea, from East to West.<sup>35</sup> It is important to notice that, due to a lack of other texts, Sirenio could only quote from the Parisian edition of Divites 1548.

Only few years later, also Francesco Patrizi took information from Contarini's *De elementis*, quoting his position on the movement of the sea in connection with the drainage of the river Po nearby Ferrara (1579). The Venetian philosopher became in turn a new authority, whom Patrizi quotes after old philosophers (Aristotle) and historians (Polybius). The reason for this reference is the great advantage of the experiential evidence which Contarini can count on in his treatise, due to the narrations of the sailormen and to his own experiences on the sea:

Et se egli non crede a me, che questi mari corrano, rilegga i luoghi di Aristotile et di Polibio da me sopra addotti, et di più il libro del mondo et il libro degli elementi del Cardinale Contarini et ragioni con marinai che gli habbiano navigati [...].<sup>36</sup>

It is important to underline the association between Contarini's *book of the elements* and the *book of the world*. This connection seems to show that Contarini's methodology in *De elementis* was appreciated exactly for its concrete concern for

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Belgica, quae nunc Flandria nuncupatur, flumina crescente maris aestu retrofluere eorumque refluxum percipi in locis etiam a mari valde distantibus. In Britannia vidi Tamisim fluvium ingentem Londini, quod a mari distat quinquaginta fere millibus passuum, sursum ad fontes refruere cursu praecipiti ».

<sup>34</sup> IULII SIRENI *De fato libri novem, in quibus inter alia, de contingentia, necessitate, providentia, praescientia divina, prophetia, et divinatione, tam secundum philosophorum opinionem, quam secundum catholicorum theologorum sententiam*, ex officina Iordani Zileti, Venetiis 1563. For more information concerning Giulio Sirenio (Brescia 1553–1593), professor of metaphysics and theology in Bologna, see ANTHONY OSSA-RICHARDSON, *The Devil's Tabernacle: The Pagan Oracles in Early Modern Thought*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 2013, p. 112. It is interesting to underline that the printer Giordano Ziletti, who published Sirenio's treatise in 1563, had already published just one year before also some of Contarini's works in an unauthorized edition (*Gasparis Contareni card. amplissimi De potestate pontificis, quod divinitus sit tradita commentarius. Eiusdem Conciliorum magis illustrium summa*, 1562). This proves a widespread circulation of Contarini's treatises and ideas among intellectuals in the north of Italy.

<sup>35</sup> IULII SIRENI *De fato libri novem*, 1563, fol. 49r–v. The quotation of Contarini corresponds to GASPARIUS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1548, fol. 32r–33v (EIUSD. *De elementis*, 1571, p. 30G–31 D).

<sup>36</sup> FRANCESCO PATRIZI DA CHERSO, *Sopra l'arenamento del Po di Ferrara*, in ID., *Lettere ed opuscoli inediti*, ed. DANILO AGUZZI BARBAGLI, nella sede dell'Istituto, Palazzo Strozzi, Firenze 1975, p. 288.

the empirical state of things, far more than on the rightness of philosophical doctrine.<sup>37</sup> Patrizi's interest in the work of Contarini can be proved by some references in *Nova de universis philosophia* (1591), still concerning the movement of the water. In the third part of the section *Pancosmia*, Patrizi quotes Contarini on two different issues. First, Contarini's account is useful to describe the circulation of water [*littorum circuitione*], which moves from Black Sea to Gibraltar, and then it goes back along the African coasts.<sup>38</sup> Second, in a short quotation concerning the elevation of the earth, Patrizi considers explicitly Contarini as one of the most representatives of the Renaissance Aristotelianism [*nostro saeculo peripateticus summus*].<sup>39</sup> This – apparently neutral – evaluation will be useful to understand Contarini's controversial relationship with Bernardino Telesio and Tommaso Campanella.

### VII. *With or against Aristotle*

Despite some arguments, which are evidently not aristotelian (on the form of elements; on the habitable zones), Contarini composed his *De elementis* in accordance to the treatises of Aristotle: this is evident when we consider the theory of the four qualities and their contacts, which is related without any doubt to Aristotle's exposition of *De generatione et corruptione*, II. This general accordance justifies the epithet of *peripateticus summus* which Patrizi attributed to Contarini, and in this direction we might consider the entire reception of *De elementis* in the second half of the sixteenth century. Therefore, it is interesting to analyze a complex debate between pro and anti-Aristotelians, which involved posthumously Contarini himself against Bernardino Telesio.

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<sup>37</sup> In this respect, it is useful to remember the question on equatorial regions in *De elementis* II. In that case the methodology of Contarini appears clearly: he lists Aristotle's and Averroes' positions and then he concludes with the experience of Portuguese sailors.

<sup>38</sup> FRANCISCI PATRITI (DE CHERSO) *Nova de universis philosophia*, apud Benedictus Mammarellus, Ferrariae 1591, fol. 147v: « Si vero verum sit, quod iam retulimus, et quod Gaspar Contarenus cardinalis retulit, mare quod a Ponto fluit, ea quam descripsimus littorum circuitione, per africana et hispanica littora in Oceanum exit ». See GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, p. 31C–D: « Is maris motus iuxta littora a solertibus nautis ubique fere deprehenditur in mari hoc Mediterraneo: quo videri potest mare hoc veluti in gyrum moveri. Nam ab Hellesponto occidentem versus flectitur ac perpetuo eius cursus tenore circuit uniuersam oram continentis ad columnas usque Herculeas unde vero per oras Africae, Aegypti, Syriae flectitur ad Solis ortum ».

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, fol. 152r: « Sed eo modo, quo Gaspar Contarenus cardinalis, nostro seculo peripateticus summus, demonstravit terram nullibi nullaque sui parte esse simplicem, praeter quam circa centrum ». GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, p. 35 A: « Terram puram, neque aliena qualitate adfectam, neque immixtam alienis corporibus inueniri posse iuxta mundi centrum ».

Telesio published the first edition of *De rerum natura* in Rome in 1565, then in Naples in 1570 with substantial revisions.<sup>40</sup> In this work, he develops a difficult question concerning the qualities of fire, namely heat and dryness. Aristotle had distinguished the two qualities of dryness and moisture on the basis of the possibility to delimit the body by means of an intrinsic or external agent: we call *dry* what can be delimited by its own limit but it is not limitable by external one; on the contrary, we call *moist* what cannot be delimited by its own limit, but only by an external one.<sup>41</sup> The distinction can be observed also empirically in the shape of things: a dry body, like a skeleton, conserves his form/shape more constantly and its alteration depends from the intrinsic dryness; on the contrary, a moist body, like fog, shows no form/shape, but it assume a form thanks to external agents.<sup>42</sup>

Now, according to Aristotle, fire is composed by the conjunction of heat and dryness, and thus it is the driest and hottest of the four elements. However, empirical evidence shows that it represents a problematic case for the previous distinction: everyone can verify that fire has no shape, but rather it gets the shape of the container. Therefore, we must face a contradiction: a body that is driest – and thus it should not admit extrinsic determination – seems also determinable by external agent. Contarini himself encountered difficulties when he had to face the problem: «fire is very dry. However, it is determined and defined easily by external limit: namely, by the container».<sup>43</sup> First, Contarini expounded a solution but he confessed that he had no arguments to approve or disapprove it. According to this anonymous position [*nonnulli summi viri*], fire cannot be determined since it is the most rarefied body.<sup>44</sup> Then Contarini

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<sup>40</sup> See BERNARDINI TELESII *De rerum natura iuxta propria principia liber primus, et secundus, denuo editi*, apud Iosephum Cacchium, Neapoli 1570 [in ID., *La natura secondo i suoi principi*, trans. ROBERTO BONDI, La Nuova Italia, Firenze 1999 (Paperbacks. Classici, 36)]. For more information see the entry of MICHAELA BOENKE, «Bernardino Telesio», *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2019), ad *indicem*.

<sup>41</sup> ARISTOTLE, *De generatione et corruptione*, II, 2, 329b30–32 [apud Iunctas, Venetiis 1562, fol. 373 B]: «Humidum id videtur, quod proprio quidem termino indeterminabile est, alieno vero bene determinabile. Siccum contra quod proprio quidem termino bene terminabile est, alieno vero indeterminabile». Cf. BERNARDINI TELESII *De rerum natura*, p. 285–286.

<sup>42</sup> The question concerning the shapes can be found in the commentary of Telesio to Aristotle's words. See BERNARDINI TELESII *De rerum natura*, p. 285–286. The examples of skeleton and fog are not by Telesio.

<sup>43</sup> GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, III, p. 51 A: «ignis siccissimus est: tamen formatur et terminatur facile termino alieno, continentis inquam».

<sup>44</sup> GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, III, p. 51 A: «nonnulli summi viri [...] inquitque propterea siccum ignis et terrae non terminari termino alieno, humidum vero aquae, et aëris facile terminari posse: quoniam ignis, licet possit densari, rarefieri tamen amplius nequit (maxima etenim raritas omnium corporum est raritas ignis); item terra, quamvis possit fieri rarior, fieri tamen densior nequit (densissima namque omnium est). Contra, humiditas aquae et aëris possunt deduci in utram partem volueris: vel scilicet ad maiorem raritatem, vel ad

proposed his own solution, which completes the previous one by radicalizing the Aristotelian analysis:

It belongs to dryness in virtue of its nature and per se to concentrate the body in which it is per se the primary quality, and consequently dryness makes it so that it can hardly be delimited and bound by an external limit. Thus, [the body] where dryness is not first [quality], but rather following – where the first [quality] faces the concentration of dryness – there is nothing strange if that body is delimited by an external limit. [...] Therefore, earth cannot be delimited or defined by an external term. [But] dryness in the fire is secondary, almost dependent on heat. As a matter of fact, fire is first and per se very hot, and dryness makes this heat greater. Thus, fire must be dry, but it is not concentrated by dryness.<sup>45</sup>

According to Contarini, fire is dry, but dryness is not its first quality: for this reason, fire can be determined by external limit or agent.

Contarini's solution is based on two principles: first, fire represents the highest level of heat and dryness, and it must exclude moisture; second, fire grows up from the combination of two qualities, heat and dryness (of which the first is necessary, while the second is accidental). These two aspects of the analysis are radically reconsidered by Bernardino Telesio. He devotes book II, chapter 19 of this treatise to prove that heat cannot combine with dryness: against Aristotle, who misinterpreted nature and senses [*naturae itemque sensuique discors*], Telesio maintains that heat is always combined with moisture.<sup>46</sup> In this way Telesio breaks one of the fundamental laws of Aristotelian physics, since he admits at the same time more than two qualities in the same element: fire should be then hot, dry but also moist. This conclusion arrived at book II, chapter 25, which is rightly titled «fire is not dry, but moist».<sup>47</sup>

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maiolem densitatem. Ideoque terminabilis est alieno termino ». It is fundamental to quote this first position, since the readers of Contarini's treatise, as we will show, made a big mistake, quoting a wrong text.

<sup>45</sup> GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, III, p. 51 B–C: « Siccitati suapte natura et per se convenire ut constipet corpus illud in quo primo per se est; indeque efficiat ut aegre terminari queat et definiri termino alieno, sed ut proprium terminum suamque finitionem obtineat, alienam respuat. Sic ubi vero sit siccitas non primo, sed per sequelam quandam (ubi id quod primo inest illi corpori obstiterit constipationi siccitatis) nil mirum si corpus id alieno termino terminabile est. [...] Ideoque non terminabilis aut finibilis est terra termino alieno. In igne vero siccitas est secundario quasi assecla caloris. Etenim ignis primo et per se calidissimus est; at siccitas calorem acuit: ideo oportuit ignem esse siccum; non tamen a siccitate constipatur ».

<sup>46</sup> BERNARDINI TELESII *De rerum natura*, II, c. 25, p. 256: « Propria igitur caloris et caloris opus humiditas, quae ubicunque calor adest agens vertensque, vel integra ipsa adest puraque, vel imminuta saltem atque impura ».

<sup>47</sup> BERNARDINI TELESII *De rerum natura*, II, c. 25, p. 288: « Quoniam igitur Aristoteli imprimis humida quae sunt contingenti cedere et locum praebere videntur, mollia omnino esse, sicca contra reniti obsistereque locum abnegare, dura omnino esse, Aristoteli imprimis sublunarium

Such a radical reinterpretation of the doctrine of the qualities couldn't but mobilize the academic philosophy. Plenty of official philosophers, but even heterogeneous intellectuals with a philosophical formation, started writing against Telesio, and put Contarini into the foreground of their argumentations. The first who shouted against Telesio was Jacopo Mazzoni, the philosopher who in 1588 would become professor in Pisa and Rome: his lessons in Pisa were attended even by a young physician, Galileo Galilei.<sup>48</sup> In 1576 Mazzoni printed in Cesena a large book, titled *De triplici hominum vita*, in which he collected 5197 philosophical and theological questions to be discussed. Contarini is explicitly mentioned twice: first, together with Alessandro Achillini in question 3751, concerning weight and lightness; second, in question 3787, concerning the disposition of water and earth for the benefit of human and animal life.<sup>49</sup>

In his argumentative strategy, Jacopo Mazzoni does not only quote explicitly Contarini, but rather he uses him also silently, as source of new arguments. In questions 3786–3790, Mazzoni put together many arguments by quoting the second book of Contarini's *De elementis* in a new order and without the name of their original author:

Mazzoni, <i>De triplici hominum vita</i>	Contarini, <i>De elementis</i>
Praeter hanc rationem a fine sumptam, aliam quoque non incommode adducit. Cum enim Solis, Lunae, caeterorumque omnium siderum radij, quin potius universi coeli lumina in unum cogantur in hoc mundi centro, ubi terram aquam attingit, nimirum vi caloris siderum fieri quandam	Caeterum, praeter hanc rationem a fine sumptam, alia etiam (ut reor) non incommode adduci potest. Etenim cum Solis, Lunae, caeterorumque omnium syderum radij, quin potius universi coeli lumina in unum cogantur in hoc mundi centro, ubi terram aqua attingit; nimirum

omnium ignis purus praesertim ille syncerusque; qui coelo subiacet sublunarium omnium mollissimus maximeque cedens humidissimus videri debet, non aliis modo omnibus, sed aere etiam ipso tenuior illi visus, eaque ratione aerem tenuitate excedere, qua aer aquam et aqua Terram ».

<sup>48</sup> For more information on Jacopo Mazzoni, see DAVIDE DALMAS, « Mazzoni Jacopo », *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, 72 (2008), *ad indicem*.

<sup>49</sup> For the first question, see JACOBI MAZZONI *De triplici hominum vita*, p. 282: « [...] cum vero gravitas et levitas sint principia motus naturalis intrinseca elementis, erunt igitur eorum natura: sed non materia, ut perspicuum est; ergo erunt natura quae est forma. Quam sane sententiam cardinalis Contarenus doctissimus vir labefactare conatus est ». Cf. GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, II, p. 12 G, where Contarini defines weight and lightness like *proprium* of the bodies. For the second question, see JACOBI MAZZONI *De triplici hominum vita*, p. 285r: « Pro cuius rei declaratione multa et recte dixit cardinalis Contarenus; et primo ratione finis id fuisse factum asseruit, ut ad conservationem animalium perfectorum terrae haec superficies emeretur, praeter aquae et terrae nexum – quemadmodum in animalibus multa constituent praeter naturam materiae ratione finis, ut sinciput os durissimum et terreum, ac propterea grave, positum tamen nest ratione finis in suprema hominis parte ». Mazzoni quotes from GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, vol. II, p. 35 H.

terrae et aquae mixtionem, ac quandam terraei elementi fermentationem exteriorem hanc terrae partem rarescere et intumescere, quod quotidie fieri cernimus in panis confectione a pistoribus, fermento apposito. <sup>50</sup>	necessum est vi caloris syderum fieri quandam terrae et aquae mixtionem, ac quadam terrei elementi fermentatione exteriorem hanc terrae partem rarescere et intumescere: quod quotidie fieri cernimus in panis confectione a pistoribus fermento apposito.
Praeterea, ut exactius quaestionem hanc absolvamus, dicere possumus in mari minime contineri omnem aquarum copiam, sed infra terram in maximis specubus maximam vim aquae contineri. Item universam hanc quam incolimus terram, quae tot fontibus, tot fluminibus irrigetur, quae ubique vestitur herbis et plantis, aqua plenam esse veluti spongiam quondam. <sup>51</sup>	[...] quo fit, ut recte dixerimus, in mari minime contineri omnem aquarum copiam, sed infra terram in maximis illis specubus maximam vim aquae contineri. Item uniuersam hanc, quam incolimus, terram, quae tot fontibus, tot fluminibus rigatur, quae ubique vestitur herbis et plantis, aqua plenam esse veluti spongiam quondam.
Postremo, cum aer hic quem colimus omni ex parte semper innumeris vaporibus plenus sit, vapor vero sit aquae disgregatio nimirum hoc pacto haec quoque terrae superficies, quam maria non tegunt ambitur aquis. <sup>52</sup>	Nam cum aër hic, quem colimus, omni ex parte semper innumeris vaporibus plenus sit; vapor vero sit aquae disgregatio, nimirum hoc pacto haec quoque terre superficies, quam maria non tegunt, ambitur aquis, id est vaporibus qui sunt aqua disgregata et rarior effecta.
Corollarium: hinc et Homerus cecinit (licet alio in sensu haec accipiat Aristoteles) fluvium Oceanum, undique terram circumfluere. <sup>53</sup>	Praeterea, uniuersus hic aër plenus vaporibus est, unde Homerus cecinit (ut bis superius diximus) fluvium Oceanum undique terram circumfluere.
Propterea nobis facile persuadere possumus, si omnis haec copia in unum colligeretur aquam longe maiorem terra futuram esse, pulchreque servari eam proportionem inter haec duo elementa, qua mundus perdurare queat. <sup>54</sup>	Propterea facile nobis persuadere possumus, si omnis haec aquae copia in unum colligeretur, aquam longe maiorem terra futuram esse; pulchreque seruari eam proportionem inter haec duo elementa, qua mundus perdurare queat.

Suddenly, from q. 3792 Mazzoni introduces the question on fire, proposed by Bernardino Telesio, *vir acutissimus*. First, he mentions Philoponus' vain attempt to resolve the question; then he observes that, according to Telesio, fire is moist and

<sup>50</sup> JACOBI MAZZONI *De triplici hominum vita*, fol. 285r, q. 3786. Cf. GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, p. 35 H.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, q. 3787. Cf. GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, p. 36 G.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, q. 3788. Cf. GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, p. 36 F.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, q. 3789. Cf. GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, p. 36 G.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, q. 3790. Cf. GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, p. 36 G–H.



hot. The solution of this question is exposed in qq. 3793–3794, and in both cases he quotes directly Contarini’s text without mentioning him.

Mazzoni, <i>De triplici hominum vita</i>	Contarini, <i>De elementis</i>
Cui, ut diximus rationi cum Philopono minime satisfecerit, recentiores nonnulli conati sunt melius satisfacere. <u>Dicunt enim ignem et terram facile terminari posse</u> , quoniam ignis, licet possit densari, rarefieri tamen amplius nequit (maxima enim raritas omnium corporum est raritas ignis); item terra, quamvis possit fieri rarior, fieri tamen densior nequit. Densissima namque omnium est. Contra, humiditas aquae et aeris possunt deduci in utram partem volueris: vel scilicet ad maiorem raritatem, vel ad maiorem densitatem, ideoque terminabilis est alieno termino. Putamus nos melius responderi posse. <sup>55</sup>	nonnulli summi viri quaestionem hanc ita solvunt inquitque propterea siccum ignis et terrae <u>non terminari termino alieno, humidum vero aquae, et aëris facile terminari posse</u> : quoniam ignis, licet possit densari, rarefieri tamen amplius nequit (maxima etenim raritas omnium corporum est raritas ignis); item terra, quamvis possit fieri rarior, fieri tamen densior nequit (densissima namque omnium est). Contra, humiditas aquae et aëris possunt deduci in utram partem volueris: vel scilicet ad maiorem raritatem, vel ad maiorem densitatem. Ideoque terminabilis est alieno termino
Dicamus itaque siccitati suapte natura per se convenire ut constipet corpus illud in quo primo et per se est; <u>indeque non effici ut terminari queat</u> et definiri termino alieno, sed ut proprium terminum suamque finitionem obtineat, alienam respuat. Sicubi vero si siccitas non primo, sed per sequelam quandam, ubi id quod primo inest illi corpori obstiterit constipationi siccitatis, nil mirum si corpus illud alieno termino, terminabile est. In igne vero siccitas est secundario, quasi assecla caloris. <sup>56</sup>	Siccitati suapte natura et per se convenire ut constipet corpus illud in quo primo per se est; <u>indeque efficiat ut aegre terminari queat</u> et definiri termino alieno, sed ut proprium terminum suamque finitionem obtineat, alienam respuat. Sic ubi vero sit siccitas non primo, sed per sequelam quandam (ubi id quod primo inest illi corpori obstiterit constipationi siccitatis) nil mirum si corpus id alieno termino terminabile est. [...] Ideoque non terminabilis aut finibilis est terra termino alieno. In igne vero siccitas est secundario quasi assecla caloris.

We underlined some words in the quotation from *De elementis*, since they highlight some interesting problems in the comprehension of the text. Without a doubt Mazzoni quoted those sentences from one of the French editions of *De elementis* (1548 – 1564), since only these editions present the gap in q. 3792, [... *non terminari termino alieno, humidum vero aquae, et aëris...*] as much as the mistake of *non effici* instead of *efficiat*.<sup>57</sup> The first gap is probably due to a *saut du même au*

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, q. 3792. Cf. GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, p. 51 A.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, q. 3793. Cf. GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, p. 51 B–C.

<sup>57</sup> See GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1548, fol. 52r–v.

*même*, while every other printed edition and manuscript contains the correct variants. However, this *saut* is relevant, for it changes deeply the meaning of the text: indeed, it wrongly associates the term *dry* with the definition of *moist*. Therefore, we cannot but highlight the scarce originality and attention of Mazzoni in the redaction of his argumentation: he merely lists plenty of Contarini's arguments – without mentioning the author or respecting their order – but, above all, he seems not to be aware of copying a wrong text, which defends exactly what Mazzoni is writing against: namely, he is not aware that admitting the extrinsic determinability of fire is exactly the purpose of Telesio.<sup>58</sup>

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The quotations of Contarini's argument must have contributed to make him one of the main representatives of the academic Aristotelianism, fighting against Bernardino Telesio. One of Mazzoni's readers was Jacopo Antonio Marta, a philosopher from Naples who in 1587 published a *Propugnaculum Aristotelis adversus principia Bernardini Telesii*.<sup>59</sup> It is not an original work, since it is mostly composed out of arguments taken from other authors defending Aristotle. However, among this arguments Marta set also the quotation of Contarini.

There is no possibility to prove that Marta knew directly the treatise *De elementis*. The mention of Contarini appears only once in *Propugnaculum* and it concerns the question of weight and lightness which had been discussed also by Mazzoni. As a matter of fact, Marta quotes together Achillini, Averroes, Mazzoni and Contarini, and it is reasonable to believe that he was looking only at Mazzoni's book:

Tell how weight and lightness can be substantial forms of the elements, if we have said that they do not feel. Alexander Achillini and Mazzoni, question 3751, said that substantial forms have been assumed in relation to weight and lightness, which do not perceive in any way. Cardinal Contarini understood this very well in the first book of *De elementis*.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> For an evaluation of Mazzoni's *De triplici hominum vita* see GARIN, *Storia della filosofia italiana*, vol. II, p. 607, who describes the treatise as a « massa caotica di erudizione non dominata ».

<sup>59</sup> JACOBI ANTONII MARTAE *Propugnaculum Aristotelis adversus principia Bernardini Telesii*, Typis Bartholomaei Bonfadini, Romae 1587. For information about Marta, see MATTEO BARBIERI, *Notizie storiche dei mattematici e filosofi del Regno di Napoli*, Vincenzo Mazzola-Vocola, Napoli 1778, p. 99; SALVATORE SPIRITI, *Memorie degli scrittori Cosentini*, nella stamperia dei Muzi, Napoli 1750, p. 91.

<sup>60</sup> JACOBI ANTONII MARTAE *Propugnaculum*, p. 99: « Dices quomodo gravitas et levitas possunt esse formae substantiales elementorum, si dictum est ipsas non sentiri. Alexander Achillinus et Mazonius, quaest. 3751, dixerunt quod sunt substantiales formae sumptae pro gravitatione et levitatione, quae nullo modo sentiuntur; quod optime olfecit cardinalis Contarenius, primo libro de elementis ».

In addition, Marta tries to answer to the question of fire. He mentions Telesio's argument concerning the combination of heat and moisture in fire. Then he proposes his own position, which repeats literally the text of Contarini, according to the French edition 1548–64:

Ut evellamus has philosophicas freneses, ordinate respondendo ad primam, quae fuit soluta ab illustrioribus viris, me satis praecedentibus ante, quomodo ignis facile caedat. Dico quod siccitati convenit ex sui natura ut constipet illud in quo primo et per se est; et inde non efficitur ut possit terminari termino alieno, sed tenet adhuc proprium terminum et propriam definitionem et aliam reiiciat; sed si siccitati non primo, sed per accidens, ubi id quod primo inest illi corpori obstiterit constipationi siccitatis, nil mirum si illud terminatur termino alieno, prout bene Mazonius.<sup>61</sup>

It seems almost evident that Marta is quoting from Mazzoni, whom he mentions at the end of the paragraph, since the variants and the mistakes of the text are the same. Marta presents the paragraph as an exposition of the theories of eminent intellectuals who preceded him [*illustrioribus viris me satis praecedentibus*]. This permits us to understand why Contarini is not mentioned here, but somewhere else: probably, Marta ascribed this argument only to Mazzoni.

The last step in this controversial tradition of the text is Tommaso Campanella, who engaged in a polemic dialogue with Marta, in order to defend the philosophy of Bernardino Telesio.<sup>62</sup> In Campanella's *Philosophia sensibus demonstrata* (1589–91) we find once more the text of Contarini, but quoted from the pamphlet of Marta; by the way, Campanella seems absolutely unaware he is quoting the Venetian cardinal:

Iterum, respondet Marta, ignis, inquiens, et terra facile terminantur, quia ignis licet possit densari, nequit tamen rarefieri; maxima enim raritas omnium corporum est illa ignis, et terra quamvis possit fieri rarior, tamen nequit fieri

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<sup>61</sup> JACOBI ANTONII MARTAE *Propugnaculum*, p. 81–82. The exposition goes on quoting Contarini's text: « Dicimus ignem et terram facile terminari posse, quia ignis, licet possit densari, tamen nequit rarefieri (maxima enim raritas omnium corporum est illa ignis) et terra, quamvis possit fieri rarior, tamen nequit fieri densior (sensissima namque omnium corporum est). Et humiditas aquae et aeris possunt duci in quam partem volueris, vel ad maiorem raritatem, vel densitatem. Ideoque terminabile est alieno termino ».

<sup>62</sup> This polemic is contained in THOMAE CAMPANELLAE *Philosophia sensibus demonstrata*, apud Horatium Salvianum, Neapoli 1591 [ed. LUIGI DE FRANCO, Vivarium, Napoli 1992]. On Campanella see GERMANA ERNST, « Tommaso Campanella », *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ad indicem. On the treatise, see GIOVANNI DI NAPOLI, *Tommaso Campanella*, Cedam, Padova 1947, p. 331 sgg.; BERNARDINO M. BONANSEA, *Tommaso Campanella*, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington 1969, p. 25–26, 189–193; GERMANA ERNST, *Tommaso Campanella. The Book and the Body of Nature*, Heidelberg – London – New York, Springer 2010 (Archives internationales d'histoire des idées, 200), p. 8–14.

densior. Nam densitas sua est maxima; humiditates aquae autem et aeris possunt in quamlibet duci partem.<sup>63</sup>

The quotation of Marta's book itself seems proved by the transmission of the corrupted text on the words [*ignis et terra (...) facile terminantur*]. However, Campanella answers the old argument of Contarini by supporting the position of Telesio and adding plenty of ancient authorities.

### VIII. Contarini, Galileo and the Collegio Romano

The last part of Contarini's success in sixteenth century has to do with the Collegio Romano, the Jesuit school founded in Rome by Ignatius of Loyola in 1534.<sup>64</sup> As we can prove from the list of the classes of natural philosophy, many professors of Physics resorted to Contarini's *De elementis* in order to explain the issue on the substantial forms of the elements. Three names are particularly important: Antonio Menu (class of natural philosophy in 1577–1578), Paolo Valla (class of natural philosophy in 1588–1589) and Ludovico Rugerio (class of natural philosophy in 1590–1591).<sup>65</sup> The analysis of the *reportationes* of these classes shows that Contarini was often quoted by the Jesuits among the main authorities (Thomas, Albert, Jandun, Achillini). In addition, William Wallace recently proved that also the young Galileo may have been influenced by these professors, from which he got information and authorities concerning physical issues – and, among these, Contarini.<sup>66</sup>

When he still was student in Pisa, Galilei composed a treatise, titled *De elementis*, which is now contained in his *Juvenilia*.<sup>67</sup> At the beginning of the work, the physics student lists the major authorities who dwelt with the problem of

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<sup>63</sup> THOMAE CAMPANELLAE *Philosophia sensibus demonstrata*, disp. IV, p. 339 [ed. DE FRANCO, p. 472].

<sup>64</sup> It might be useful to repeat here that in 1538 Contarini had been mediator of Loyola to the pope and that the document which authorizes the birth of the Society of Jesus shows Contarini's autograph sign on the last page (see Città del Vaticano, Archivio Apostolico Vaticano, *Archivium Arcis, Arm. I-XVIII*, MS. 6461, fol. 145r–148r: 148r).

<sup>65</sup> A list of the academic years and the classes is available in WILLIAM WALLACE, *Galileo and his Sources. The Heritage of the Collegio Romano in Galileo's Science*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1984, p. 60, but also p. 61–70 (on the three professors); ID., *Domingo de Soto and the Early Galileo: Essays on Intellectual History*, Routledge, London 2018, p. 18; ID., *Prelude to Galileo. Essay on Medieval and Sixteenth-Century Sources of Galileo's Thought*, Reidel, Dordrecht – Boston – London 1981, p. 243–249.

<sup>66</sup> Wallace compared Galilei's your treatises and the *reportationes* of the Collegio Romano and showed the literally correspondence of the texts. See WALLACE, *Galileo and his Sources*, p. 74–84; ID., *Prelude to Galileo*, p. 267–281. In any case, we must underline that Wallace never recognized or quoted the name of Gasparo Contarini, nor he observed that Galilei gave also wrong references to Contarini's works.

<sup>67</sup> GALILEO GALILEI, *Tractatus de elementis*, in *Le opere di Galileo Galilei*, ed. ANTONIO FAVARO, G. Barbera, Firenze 1968, vol. I ('*Juvenilia*'), p. 122–177.

elements: in this list we find first Aristotle, Hippocrates and Galenus; then Gregory of Nyssa, Avicenna and al-Gazali; more recently, Peter of Abano, Alexander Achillini, Gasparo Contarini, Charpentier (who, as we saw, plagiarized Contarini's Venetian edition from Manuzio), Francesco Valleriola and Girolamo Cardano.<sup>68</sup>

The first interesting question concerns those authorities who maintained that the form of the elements is a substantial form: here we can see how Galileo was influenced by the professors of the Collegio Romano. Indeed, he lists as authorities Thomas, Albert, the *Conciliator*, Jandun, Zimara and, strangely, Contarini's *De elementis*, book 1 and 7 (which doesn't exist; Galilei might have been referring to book 3).<sup>69</sup> Thanks to Wallace's recovery, we can say that this list is composed on the basis of some Jesuits' lists (Menu, Valla, Rugerio).<sup>70</sup> However, we might wonder why Galileo added a reference to the 'seventh' – inexistent – book of Contarini, together with the authority of Giles of Rome, both not mentioned by the Jesuit professors. These supplemental authorities could be the proof of Galileo's own revision of the tradition.

A more interesting quotation can be found in the *quaestio quarta*, concerning the intention and remission of elementary forms. Again, we can see that the list, as much as the following argumentation, are entirely copied by the *reportationes* of Menu and Valla. The Jesuit professors and Galileo name the authorities which support the physical position (Averroes, Niphus, Nicoletti, Zimara, Jandun, Achillini, Aphrodisias, Scotus) and, among them, they mention also Contarini – considered as a supporter of Averroes. Then they observe that, even if they agree

<sup>68</sup> GALILEO GALILEI, *Tractatus de elementis*, p. 122. The little information about Francesco Valleriola can be found in *Biografia medica piemontese*, dalla tipografia Bianco, Torino 1824, vol. I, p. 242–250.

<sup>69</sup> GALILEO GALILEI, *Tractatus de elementis*, p. 130–131. Cf. THOMAE AQUINATIS *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 76 a. 4 ad 4; *De mixtione elementorum*; ALBERTI MAGNI *Meteora*, lib. 4, t. 1, c. 1, [Aschendorff, in *Monasterii Westfalorum* 2003, p. 211]; PETRI DE ABANO *Conciliator*, d. 13 [ed. Venetiis, Luceantonii de Giunta 1520, fol. 18v–19v]; AEGIDIJ ROMANI *De generatione*, q. 19 [ed. Venetiis 1518, fol. 61r];

<sup>70</sup> For the class of Menu (1578) see Überlingen, Leopold-Sophien-Bibliothek, MS. 138 (*Quaestiones in philosophiam naturalem*), t. IV, s. 1, d. 1, c. 4: « Ita Albertus Magnus, secundo De generatione, tr. 2, cap. 7, et. D. Thomas, primo De generatione super t. 18, Conciliator, differentia 13, Iandunus, libro De sensu et sensibili, quaestione 25 ». More information can be found in the class of Paolo Valla (1585 ca.) in Roma, Pontificia Università Gregoriana, *Fondo Collegio*, MS. 1710, tr. V, d. 1, p. 1, q. 3: « Ita tenent [...] D. Thomas, secundo De generatione in t. 24 et primo De generatione, lect. 8, Conciliator, differentia 13, Albertus Magnus, secundo De generatione, tr. 2, cap. 7, Iandunus, De sensu et sensibili, quaestione 15 [...] ». The last authorities are exposed by the class of Rugerio (1592), now in Bamberg, Staatsbibliothek, MS 62–4, fol 230v: « Haec sententia [...] Alberti hic, tr. 2, cap. 7, D. Thomas, primo De generatione 18 et secundo De generatione 6. Legite Conciliatorem, differentia, 13, Iandunum, De sensu et sensibili, quaestione 28, et quinto Physicorum, questione 4, Zimaram in Tabula [...] Contarenum in primo libro De elementis, et alios ». All these excerpts are published by WALLACE, *Galileo and his Sources*, p. 82–83; ID., *Prelude to Galileo*, p. 278.

on the general theory, however they are not unanimous on the issue of intensification. There are at least two different positions, which are represented respectively by Contarini and by Achillini: the former maintains that elementary forms grow up only from a certain level of intensity of the first qualities; the latter argues that elementary forms are present in the mixture in a minimal part and in an instant, and in a second moment they get intensity.<sup>71</sup> At the end Menu, Valla and Galileo quickly mention a third anonymous position [*alii* – who could be the other authorities listed], which has no quotation: these last ones believe that intention and remission are altered in a second moment, due to the alteration of primary qualities.

The quotation of Contarini's position seems very interesting for the analysis of his posthumous impact. The Jesuits and Galilei united a group of authorities but then they quoted only the words of Achillini and Contarini. We can consider this choice in a double way. On the one hand, Contarini could appear so representative of that group, that his exposition seemed enough clear and comprehensive for the list of Aristotelian thinkers; thus, the professors mentioned only him. On the other hand, Contarini could appear not representative of that philosophical group, but at the same time enough interesting and 'peculiar' to merit the quotation, due to his own originality. We timidly lean toward the second possibility but, nevertheless, even in the first case we cannot but underline the relevant position assumed by Contarini in the canon of philosophical authorities of his time.

There is still one last quotation that regards Contarini, and it probably depends only on Galilei's own readings, not from the Jesuits' *reportationes*. This last quotation has nothing to do with the form of elements, but rather with their

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<sup>71</sup> For the class of Paolo Valla (conserved in Roma, Pontificia Università Gregoriana, *Fondo Collegio*, MS. 1710, tr. V, d. 1, p. 1, q. 4) see WALLACE, *Galileo and his Sources*, p. 74: « In hac tamen sententia sunt vari modi dicendi. Primus est Contarenus, qui ait formas elementorum non induci successive ad introductionem qualitatum, sed fieri alterationem usque ad eum gradum ex quo sequitur formam mixti, et sub quo formae elementorum integrae esse non possunt; tunc autem, introducta forma mixti, introducuntur etiam formae elementorum in esse refracte [...] ». For the class of Antonio Menu (1578) see WALLACE, *Galileo and his Sources*, p. 84: « Quo vero modo intenduntur et remittuntur dissentiunt inter se Averroistae. Contarenus enim dicit formas elementorum non successive introduci ad introductionem dispositionum, sed fieri alterationem usque ad talem gradum ad quem sequitur forma mixti, sub quo forma elementi conservari non possit et introducta forma mixti tum primum incipiunt formae elementorum esse in actu refracto ». Finally, see GALILEI, *Tractatus de elementis*, p. 133: « In modo vero quo formae intenduntur et remittuntur, non conveniunt. Contarenus enim dicit, formas elementorum non introduci successive ad intentionem qualitatis, sed fieri alterationem qualitatum usque ad certum gradum, ad quem sequitur forma mixti et sub quo formae elementorum non possunt esse integrae; et adveniente forma mixti, tum primum formae elementorum incipiunt refrangi ». Cf. GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, III, p. 46, *passim*.

movement.<sup>72</sup> In his *De motu* Galileo summarizes Contarini's position on acceleration of a falling body together with Burley's: they both believe that the movement becomes more intense due to the parts of air which are touched by the body during its fall.<sup>73</sup> Burley and Contarini were not the first philosophers who introduced the analysis of the end [*finis*] as an agent of movement. A positive role for the goal in acceleration is maintained by Burley, but in accord with Thomas and Gilles of Rome. In addition, Pietro Pomponazzi attributes the same position to Averroes' commentary on *De caelo*.<sup>74</sup> Instead, Contarini believes that the single *ratio finis* is not enough to justify the movement, and thus he presents his multifactorial approach, which combines *ratio finis* and the role of air.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>72</sup> For a good exposition of the problem, see ANNELIESE MAIER, *An der Grenze von Scholastik und Naturwissenschaft. Studien zur Naturphilosophie des 14. Jahrhunderts*, Essener Verlagsanstalt, Essen 1943 (Veröffentlichungen des Kaiser Wilhelm- Instituts für Kulturwissenschaft im Palazzo Zuccari, Rom. Abhandlungen, 40), p. 181–219.

<sup>73</sup> GALILEO GALILEI, *Tractatus de motu*, in *Le opere di Galileo Galilei*, a cura di ANTONIO FAVARO, Firenze, G. Barbera 1968, vol. I 'Iuvenilia', p. 251–419: 411: « Burleus, super tex. 76, 8 Phys., et Contarenus, 1 lib. De elementis, tribuunt causam accelerationis motus naturalis in fine, aeris partibus, tum praecedentibus tum subsequentibus ». Cf. GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, I, p. 16 G–17 A: « Cum ergo gleba terrae deorsum descenderit, utique aerem secat, et deorsum pellit, partes vero aeris divulsae concurrunt ad terga glebae eamque vicissim deorsum pellunt: quo fit ut naturali nixui etiam hic addatur, ac propterea velocius gleba moveatur; quae item velocius mota maiore nixu aere pellit et secat; vehementius divulsi aeris partes concurrentes ad terga et plures quam priores et velocius motae, magis adhuc et magis glebam impellunt: quo fit ut citius gleba descendat parique ratione semper citius, quousque ad solum pervenerit in quo quiescit ».

<sup>74</sup> PIETRO POMPONAZZI, *De motu gravium et levium*, in Id., *Corsi inediti dell'insegnamento padovano*, ed. ANTONIO POPPI, Antenore, Padova 1970 (Saggi e Testi, 6), vol. II, p. 272: « Est etiam, ut ibidem recitat Commentator et in II et in IV *De caelo*, altera opinio asserens elementa moveri effective a suis locis, sicuti ferrum movetur a magnete », probably referring to AVERROIS *In De caelo*, I, comm. 81. See also THOMAE AQUINATIS *In Physic.*, lib. 7 l. 3 n. 7: « Uno modo sicut finis movet; unde et finis dicitur trahere [...]. Sic igitur magnes attrahit ferrum non solum sicut finis, sed etiam sicut movens et alterans »; AEGIDIJ ROMANI *Super Physicam*, VIII, l. xxvi, [Venetiis, per Andream de Torresanis de Asula, 26 septembris 1502; reprinted by Minerva, Frankfurt a.M. 1986, fol. 216v–217r]; GUALTIERI BURLAEI *Super Physicam*, VIII, t. 76 [Venetiis, Johannes Herbort de Almania 1482, fol. Rv–R2r].

<sup>75</sup> GASPARIS CONTARENI *De elementis*, 1571, I, p. 16 F–G: « Nonnulli alterari atque affici elementa putant a proprio naturalique loco: quae quo magis eo appropinquant, eo magis afficiuntur. [...] Caeterum, si ab his quaeras cur nam [...] nimirum silent neque aliquid habent, quo positionem causamque suam tueantur. Ideo dicimus nos huiusce rei plures causas esse, quae (ut reor) in unum conveniunt faciuntque motum velociorem ad finem usque ». Doing this, he agrees with AVERROIS *In De caelo*, VIII, c. 82, [1562, fol. 430 C–F]; GUALTIERI BURLAEI *Super Physicam*, VIII, t.c. 82 [ed. Venetiis, apud Petrum de Farris 1609, col. 1109]: « Intelligendum quod de ratione aeris et aquae est, quod cum impellunt a priuscente, non statim cessant a moveri quando impellens cessat a movere. Immo quiescente impellente adhuc movetur aer impulsus ab eo et ille aer impulsus impellit aliam partem aeris, et illa pars aliam partem. Partes vero aeris successive impellentes impellunt illam rem proiectam, donec perveniatur ad aliquam partem aeris ita debiliter motam quod licet impellatur et moveatur, non tamen potest ulterius movere et

### IX. Conclusion

The purpose of this article was to set some reference points for the history of transmission and the success of Contarini's treatise *De elementis* in a short range of time, from the middle to the end of the sixteenth century. It doesn't expect to fulfill the usual standards of a critical edition, but it hopes, more humbly, to help a future one. In addition, a study on the transmission of the text seemed very useful also for the analysis of its success. As we have seen, the treatise circulated in manuscripts and printed editions, which sometimes diverge since they contain mistakes or different drafts of the text. The possibility to understand which one of the exemplars could be read by readers is fundamental in order to understand the reactions of intellectuals to this work. Generally, Contarini is always associated with academic Aristotelianism, since he clearly expounds the Aristotelian theory of the elements in a way faithful to the Greek philosopher. Contarini is an original and subtle expositor, and he never refuses to criticize or review a theory which seems inconsistent to him. His success depends on the clear exposition of the contents (especially concerning the movement of the sea) as well as the interpretation of Aristotle's doctrine (on the nature of the elementary form): thanks to these two aspects Contarini could get into the pantheon of Aristotelian authorities, quoted by scholars and professors against the new interpretations of natural philosophy.

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impellere rem proiectam [...]»; In this text Burley copies literally from AEGIDI ROMANI *Super Physicam*, VIII, l. xxix, fol. 222r.



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