

ARTÍCULOS / ARTICLES

**IN THE MARGINS OF THE *POSTERIOR ANALYTICS*:
ROBERT GROSSETESTE AND THE “LATIN PHILOPONUS”**

**EN LOS MÁRGENES DE LOS *ANALÍTICOS POSTERIORES*:
ROBERTO GROSSETESTE Y EL “FILÓPONO LATINO”**

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Abstract

Robert Grosseteste’s utilization of Greek and Arabic Aristotelian commentators represents an intriguing aspect of his approach to Aristotle. This study centres on Grosseteste’s quotations from John Philoponus’ *Commentary on Posterior Analytics*, which Grosseteste employed to complement his own commentary on this Aristotelian work. After revisiting the debated medieval circulation of segments of Philoponus in connection with James of Venice’s Aristotelian translations, the article delves into the Renaissance Latin versions of Philoponus’ commentary. This includes the previously overlooked translation by Maurizio Zamberti (1516, unpublished) and the initial Venetian editions (1534, 1539, 1542). The Venetian prints were derived from an anonymous and unfamiliar Latin version that followed James of Venice’s translation and terminology. This distinctive feature, along with the marginalia referencing *Lincolniensis* (i.e., Grosseteste) in Philippus Theodosius’ revised text (Venice 1542), allows for a comparison of passages from Grosseteste and Philoponus to validate their correspondences. The final segment of this study investigates Grosseteste’s sparse and elusive references to Aristotle’s *On the Soul* in light of the possibility that they may stem from fragments of Philoponus’ commentary accompanying James of Venice’s translation of that Aristotelian work.

Keywords

Robert Grosseteste; John Philoponus; Aristotle; *Posterior Analytics*; James of Venice; Philippus Theodosius

Resumen

El uso que hace Roberto Grosseteste de comentaristas aristotélicos griegos y árabes es un aspecto intrigante de su aproximación a Aristóteles. El presente estudio se centra en las referencias de Grosseteste al *Comentario a los Analíticos posteriores* de Juan Filópono, que Grosseteste utilizó para complementar su propio comentario a la obra aristotélica. Después de examinar la controvertida circulación medieval de partes del texto de Filópono junto con las traducciones aristotélicas de Jacobo de Venecia, el artículo profundiza en las versiones latinas renacentistas del comentario de Filópono. Estas incluyen la traducción hasta ahora inadvertida de Maurizio Zamberti (1516, sin imprimir) y las primeras ediciones venecianas (1534, 1539, 1542), basadas en una versión latina, anónima y desconocida, que siguió la traducción y la terminología de Jacobo de Venecia. Esta característica, junto con las notas marginales que se refieren al *Lincolniensis* (es decir, a Grosseteste) en la versión revisada de Philippus Theodosius (Venecia 1542), nos permite comparar pasajes de Grosseteste y de Filópono para verificar sus correspondencias. En la última parte del estudio se examinan las pocas y esquivas referencias de Grosseteste a *Sobre el alma* de Aristóteles a la luz de la posibilidad de que puedan derivar de fragmentos del comentario de Filópono que acompañó la traducción de Jacobo de Venecia de dicha obra aristotélica.

Palabras clave

Roberto Grosseteste; Juan Filópono; Aristóteles; *Analíticos posteriores*; Jacobo de Venecia; Philippus Theodosius

At the beginning of the thirteenth century, the corpus of Aristotle's works on natural philosophy still needed to be properly examined and understood by Latin philosophers. Among them was Robert Grosseteste, who helped himself in this demanding task by attentively inspecting not only the Latin translations of Aristotle, but also the glosses and notes accompanying these works in the manuscripts he could access. Grosseteste copied some of these materials in his reading notes and in his own commentaries and, once he had learned Greek, accompanied his translations with supplementary Greek materials he also translated.¹ This practice is certainly not original and exclusive of Grosseteste:

¹ The bibliography on Grosseteste's Aristotelian commentaries and translations is large. Here, I limit the references to the pioneering study by Ezio Franceschini, "Roberto Grossatesta, vescovo di Lincoln, e le sue traduzioni latine", *Atti del Reale Istituto Veneto di Lettere, Scienze e Arti*, 93 (1933), 1-138; published also in Ezio Franceschini, *Scritti di filologia latina medievale*, Medioevo e Umanesimo (Padova: Antenore, 1976), 409-544. For the list of Grosseteste's translations, commentaries and works and their manuscript transmission, see S. Harrison Thomson, *The Writings of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln (1235-1253)* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940), with the caveat that, to date, this catalogue is yet to be updated and revised. Other references will be given in the course of this study. On Aristotle in the Latin Middle Ages and

interpreters and exegetes always recurred to previous interpretations for understanding, commenting and lecturing on thinkers from the past. Nonetheless, Grosseteste seems to be the first among Latin medieval scholars to use some of these sources in the works he wrote during the first decades of the thirteenth century. The most striking cases include Averroes and John Philoponus of Alexandria. The case of Averroes has received attention in past years with regard to Grosseteste's *Commentary on Physics* and, more recently, to his treatise on heavenly movements (*De motu supercelestium*), which turns out to be a collection of passages from the *Great Commentary on Metaphysics*, book 12.² Instead, the case of Philoponus has been given attention after the discovery by Pietro B. Rossi of a long quote and a few other parallel passages derived from the Alexandrian's *Commentary on the Posterior Analytics* in Grosseteste's commentary on the same work.³ The present paper points attention, again, to Philoponus.

1. Robert Grosseteste's "Apology"

The majority of studies on the Greek sources of Grosseteste concern his activity as a translator, which occupied the last twenty years of his life, spent as bishop of Lincoln.

the translating movement, see Joseph Brams, *La riscoperta di Aristotele in Occidente* (Milano: Jaca Book, 2003); *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy. From the Rediscovery of Aristotle to the Disintegration of Scholasticism (1100-1600)*, edited by N. Kretzmann, A. Kenny, and J. Pinborg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), Part II. Aristotle in the Middle Ages, 45-98.

² For the *Commentary on Physics* see, also for previous bibliography, Neil Lewis, "Robert Grosseteste's Notes on the *Physics*", in *Editing Robert Grosseteste. Papers given at the Thirty-sixth Annual Conference on Editorial Problems, University of Toronto, 3-4 November 2000*, edited by E. A. Mackie and J. Goering (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 103-134. For Grosseteste's *opuscula* and, in particular, his *De motu supercelestium*, which is made up of quotes from Averroes' *Great Commentary on Methaphysics*, book 12, see Cecilia Panti, *Moti, virtù e motori celesti nella cosmologia di Roberto Grossatesta. Studio ed edizione dei trattati De sphaera, De cometis, De motu supercelestium* (Florence: Sismel-Edizioni del Galluzzo, 2001), especially the Appendix: *Averroè in Occidente. Il caso di Roberto Grossatesta*, at 347-383. On the chronology of Grosseteste's short writings, see Cecilia Panti, "Robert Grosseteste and Adam of Exeter's *Physics of Light*: Remarks on the Transmission, Authenticity, and Chronology of Grosseteste's Scientific *Opuscula*", in *Robert Grosseteste and His Intellectual Milieu*, edited by J. Flood, J. R. Ginther, and J. W. Goering (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies 2013), 165-190.

³ Pietro B. Rossi, "Tracce della versione latina di un commento greco ai *Secondi Analitici* nel *Commentarius in Posteriorum Analyticorum libros* di Roberto Grossatesta", *Rivista di Filosofia Neo-Scolastica* 70 (1978): 433-439; Pietro B. Rossi, "Introduzione" in *Robertus Grosseteste, Commentarius in Posteriorum Analyticorum Libros*, edited by P. Rossi (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 1981), 20-21, 72. Further study on these quotes is due to Sten Ebbesen, in the context of his wide research on the entrance of Philoponus in the Latinate world. See in particular Sten Ebbesen, "Fragments of 'Alexander's' Commentaries on *Analytica Posteriora* and *Sophistici Elenchi*", in *Greek-Latin Philosophical Interaction: Collected Essays*, vol. 2, edited by S. Ebbesen (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), 187-201 [revised and augmented version of "New Fragments of 'Alexander's' Commentaries on *Analytica Posteriora* and *Sophistici Elenchi*", *CIMAGL* 60 (1990): 113-120]. Other bibliographic references are given in the course of the present study.

In line with contemporary practice, Grosseteste developed a strictly word-to-word translation method.⁴ Still, he knew his translations would have been unintelligible if they were not accompanied by and clarified through reliable explicatory materials. In particular, he held that the most problematic passages should be explained in the light of interpretations by commentators who knew the original language, as he openly declares in a passage – or *apologia*, as James McEvoy calls it – from the *prolegomena* to his translation of the Pseudo-Dionysian corpus:

It must also be recognised that in a Latin translation, and especially in one that is made word for word ... there must be occasions on which a lot of expressions will occur which are said ambiguously and with many meanings ... It follows that someone who comments on this book without having the Greek text before him or who does not know Greek, when he comes across such ambiguous meanings cannot but be in very many cases ignorant of the mind of the author in those expressions. ... For this reason, I say that even if people who do not know Greek may upon occasions expand upon ambiguous meanings ... and bring out true interpretations, or more subtle ones than [were proposed by] those who do know Greek ... when it comes to ambiguities, they [who know Greek] are better at guessing and conjecturing.⁵

This methodological manifesto fits well also with Grosseteste's approach to the Aristotelian writings. The necessity to scrutinise Aristotle's thought by means of reliable interpretations, which – as Grosseteste openly declares – are mainly those that originated in the Greek language, clarifies why he supplemented his version of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* with passages taken “from Greek commentaries interpolated with his personal notes” (*graecorum commentis proprias annectens notulas*)⁶ and why his partial translation of *De caelo* is, in turn, accompanied by Simplicius'

⁴ H. Paul F. Mercken, “Robert Grosseteste's Method of Translating. A Medieval World Processing Programme?”, in *Tradition et Traduction: Les textes philosophiques et scientifiques Grecs au Moyen Age Latin: Hommage a Fernand Bossier*, edited by R. Beyers, J. Brams, D. Sacré, and K. Verrycken (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1999), 323-370; see also Anna C. Dionisotti, “On the Greek Studies of Robert Grosseteste”, in *The Uses of Greek and Latin. Historical Essays*, edited by A. C. Dionisotti, A. Grafton and J. Kraye (London: The Warburg Institute, 1988), 19-39. See Appendix II (at 36-39) for the ‘Grosseteste Greek Library’.

⁵ See James McEvoy, “Thomas Gallus Vercellensis and Robertus Grossatesta Lincolniensis. How to Make the Pseudo-Dionysius Intelligible to the Latins”, in *Robert Grosseteste. His Thought and Its Impact*, edited by J. P. Cunningham (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2012), 3-43, on 19-21. The Translation is at 21.

⁶ See H. Paul F. Mercken, *The Greek Commentaries on the Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle in the Latin Translation of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln (†1253)*, vol. 1, *Corpus Latinum Commentariorum in Aristotelem Graecorum VI,1* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 39*. The quotation is from Herman the German (*Hermannus Alemannus*) and is translated into English by Pieter Beullens, “Robert Grosseteste and the Fluid History of the Latin *Nicomachean Ethics*”, *Revista Española de Filosofía Medieval* 30/1 (2023): 177-198. Beullens presents a detailed analysis of Grosseteste's version of the *Nicomachean Ethics* with special attention to the elements that determined changes, variants and interferences in textual transmission.

corresponding commentary.⁷ However, Grosseteste’s “apology” also justifies the presence of interpolations from Greek sources in his commentaries on the *Physics* and the *Posterior Analytics*, which are the first commentaries on these Aristotelian works in the Middle Ages. Both commentaries are based on James of Venice’s translations and were written in the 1220s, namely before Grosseteste learned Greek. In particular, the *Commentary on the Physics*, book 6, transmits passages from Proclus’ *Elementatio Physica*, which Grosseteste likely accessed thanks to the anonymous twelfth-century translation originated in Sicily, while Grosseteste’s *Commentary on the Posterior Analytics* (hereafter: *On PAn*) quotes from Themistius’ paraphrasis, which circulated in the Latin version by Gerard of Cremona from an Arabic translation.⁸

But Grosseteste’s *On PAn* also presents interpolations from Philoponus’ commentary on the same Aristotelian work, which according to modern scholarship was not yet translated into Latin at Grosseteste’s time. Pietro B. Rossi first discovered and examined these *loci*, which include a verbatim quote and some other similar passages (“un luogo tradotto alla lettera ed alcune coincidenze fra i due commenti”).⁹ He suggests that Grosseteste might well have started to learn Greek while he was attending to his commentary, but excludes he had already reached a capacity for autonomous comprehension and ability to translate. Consequently, Rossi suggests that Grosseteste copied the verbatim quote and adjusted the other occurrences directly from a Latin source transmitting fragments or glosses from Philoponus’ commentary.¹⁰ The possibility that James of Venice might have been the translator of these and other passages taken from Philoponus – not only from his commentary on the *Posterior Analytics*, but also from those on the *Prior Analytics* and *Elenchi sophistici* – has been discussed at length by Sten Ebbesen and, more recently, other scholars, as we see below.

⁷ See, also for previous bibliography, Cecilia Panti, “Il *De caelo* nel medioevo: le citazioni e la translatio di Roberto Grossatesta”, *Fogli di filosofia* 12/2 (2019): 67-107; Pieter Beullens, “Robert Grosseteste’s Translation of Simplicius’ Commentary on Aristotle’s *De caelo*. Tracking Down a Second Manuscript and the Greek Model”, *Mediterranea*, 8 (2023): 565-59.

⁸ James of Venice’s translation is edited in: Aristoteles, *Analytica Posteriora*, in Aristoteles Latinus, IV 1-4, edited by L. Minio-Paluello and B. Dod (Leiden: Brill 1968). For Proclus see Pietro B. Rossi, “*Intentio Aristotelis in hoc libro*. Struttura e articolazione degli *Analytica Posteriora* secondo Roberto Grossatesta”, and Sokratis-Athanasios Kiosoglou, “Divergent Reconstructions of Aristotle’s Train of Thought: Robert Grosseteste on Proclus’ *Elements of Physics*”, *Revista Española de Filosofía Medieval* 30/1 (2023): 127-148. See also Lewis, “Robert Grosseteste’s Notes on the *Physics*”, 118-119. For Themistius’ *Paraphrasis* see J. Reginald O’Donnell, “Themistius’ Paraphrasis of the *Posterior Analytics* in Gerard of Cremona’s Translation”, *Mediaeval Studies* 20 (1958): 239-315. It is worth noticing that fragments from this paraphrasis are transmitted as glosses in a thirteenth-century copy of the *Posterior Analytics* in ms Assisi, Biblioteca del Sacro Convento, fondo antico 658, fols. 256v-257r. See *Catalogus Translationum et Commentariorum. Mediaeval and Renaissance Latin Translations and Commentaries*, vol. 8, edited by V. Brown (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 73.

⁹ Rossi, “Tracce della versione latina”, 435. See the bibliography at note 3 above. These passages are examined in detail in part 4 of the present study.

¹⁰ See Rossi, “Introduzione”, 20-21.

Thus, if Grosseteste came upon scholia of Greek provenance translated into Latin, he could not but be attracted by the potential “good interpretations” of difficult passages they might offer, as his “apology” asserts. In light of these considerations, it is not far-fetched to think that these materials were collected by him among his personal notes and used, when necessary, in his commentaries.

Grosseteste’s *modus operandi* by means of reading notes and glosses is at the basis of much of his literary and philosophical production.¹¹ The Franciscan master William of Alnwick offers first-hand evidence concerning his personal inspection of Grosseteste’s notes preserved in slips of parchment and in the margins of the books he left at the library of the Oxford convent. William mentions specifically that these included a copy of the *Physics* with “numerous glosses in Grosseteste’s hand” and several slips of parchment (*multas cedulas*) bearing “not entirely authentic” writings.¹² We know that one of these *cedulae* actually contained a “not entirely authentic” writing, namely a demonstration of the squaring of the circle translated from Simplicius’ *Commentary on Physics*, I.2. The existence of this *cedula* is testified by the colophon of a late-thirteenth-century direct copy: “I found this demonstration at Oxford <library>, in a certain slip of parchment of the Bishop of Lincoln” (*Hanc demonstrationem inveni Oxonie in quadam cedula domini Lincolniensis*), but it is unclear whether Grosseteste himself translated it from the Greek or copied a previous translation, given that Simplicius’ demonstration circulated independently from the entire commentary.¹³ Perhaps, Grosseteste’s interest in this mathematical problem emerged from his reading about Bryson’s proof in *Posterior Analytics* I.9 (75b37-76a3).¹⁴ Now, similarly to what happens with Simplicius’

¹¹ His *Dicta*, for instance, is a good example in the field of theology of how *cedula*-materials were authorially gathered by Grosseteste in order to have a ready-to-hand textual collection for sermons or teaching. See Robert Grosseteste, *Dicta* (e cod. Oxoniense, Bodley 798), edited by J. W. Goering and E. J. Westermann (<https://ordered-universe.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/dicta-1-147-bodley.pdf>): “In hoc libello sunt 147 capitula, quorum quedam sunt brevia verba dum in scolis morabar scripsi breviter et incomposito sermone ad memoriam; nec sunt de una materia, nec ad invicem continuata, quorum titulus posui ut facilius quod vellet lector possit inveniri. Spondentque plerumque plus aliquo tituli quam solvant capitula lectori. Quedam vero sunt sermones quos eodem tempore ad clerum vel ad populum feci.”

¹² See Richard C. Dales, “Introduction”, in Robert Grosseteste, *Commentarius in VIII libros Physicorum Aristotelis*, edited by R. C. Dales (Boulder: Colorado: University of Colorado Press, 1963), XI; reported also in Rossi, “Introduzione”, 16. This passage is from ms Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Pal. lat. 1805, fol. 10v.

¹³ For Simplicius’ and Grosseteste’s demonstrations see *Aristoteles Latinus. Codices pars posterior*, edited by G. Lacombe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1955), 789, 798-799. There is another Latin version of Simplicius’ demonstration (incipit: *quadratura circuli per lunulas hoc modo est*) as evidenced by Thomson, *A Catalogue*, 113. See also Marshall Clagett, *Archimedes in the Middle Ages*. vol. 1 (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1964), at 40 and 597, n. 17. Regarding the possibility that Grosseteste was not the translator of the fragment see Lisa Devriese, “The history of Robert Grosseteste’s translations within the context of *Aristoteles Latinus*”, *Revista Española de Filosofía Medieval* 30/1 (2023): 199-222.

¹⁴ I will briefly mention Bryson’s proof again in section 2 of this study.

demonstration, Grosseteste's *cedule* might have also transmitted fragments from Philoponus, which circulated in Latin in scattered and fragmentary extracts, either anonymously or under the name of "Alexander", as we see in the following paragraph.

2. The "Latin Philoponus" and James of Venice's Translations of Aristotle

John Philoponus of Alexandria (d. 565ca), who is also known by the epithet "the Grammarian" (*grammatikos*), was a Christian Monophysite, Neoplatonic philosopher and scientist who attended the influential school of Ammonius. Philoponus widely contributed to the diffusion of Ammonius' lectures on the *Organon*, but also on the *Physics*, *De generatione et corruptione*, *De anima*, and possibly *Meteorologica*, which he elaborated in huge commentaries that are partly genuine and partly a gathering of his master's courses. A noteworthy characteristic of these commentaries is that they incorporate numerous citations of different authorities, including poets and mathematicians, such as Proclus, Euclid, Themistius, "the Pythagoreans" and several others. Moreover, they introduce a critical view of the most controversial Aristotelian doctrines, among which are the eternity of the world, the quintessence and the projectile motion.¹⁵ Philoponus' works circulated in the ninth-century intellectual circle of Baghdad, where his ideas against the eternity of the world influenced Al-Kindi's attack on eternalism.¹⁶ At the beginning of the twelfth century, they played a pivotal role in the context of the Byzantine revival of Aristotle promoted in Constantinople at the court of Princess Ann Comnena by Michael of Ephesus, who had the habit of gathering commentaries to facilitate and complement the reading of the Aristotelian works. It was in this context that, at about 1120-1130, James of Venice likely accessed the Greek exemplars of Aristotle's works used for his Latin translations.¹⁷ With them, therefore, he had also access to the Greek commentaries, including those by

¹⁵ For a comprehensive study on Philoponus, especially on his critical attitude towards Aristotle's thought, see *Philoponus and the Rejection of Aristotelian Science, Second edition*, edited by R. Sorabji (London: Institute of Classical Studies – School of Advanced Studies – University of London, 2010), in particular the two large sections by Richard Sorabji, "New Findings on Philoponus Part 2 – Recent Studies", 11-40, and "Chapter I, John Philoponus", 41-81.

¹⁶ Sorabji, "New Findings", 13-14.

¹⁷ Sten Ebbesen, "Greek-Latin Philosophical Interaction", in Ebbesen, *Greek-Latin Philosophical Interaction*, 7-19. This study was originally published in the volume *Byzantine Philosophy and its Ancient Sources*, edited by K. Ierodiakonou (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002, 15-30), 13-15. On James of Venice's biography see Lorenzo Minio Paluella, "Iacobus Veneticus Graecus: Canonist and Translator of Aristotle", *Traditio* 8 (1952): 265-304, also published in Lorenzo Minio Paluella, *Opuscula. The Latin Aristotle* (Amsterdam: Hakkert, 1972); Lorenzo Minio Paluella, "Giacomo Veneto e l'aristotelismo latino", in *Venezia e l'Oriente fra tardo Medioevo e Rinascimento*, edited by A. Pertusi (Florence: Sansoni, 1966), 53-74. See also Pietro B. Rossi, "Fili dell'Aristoteles latinus", in *Petrarca e il mondo greco. Atti del convegno internazionale di studi, Reggio Calabria 26-30 novembre 2001*, edited by M. Feo et alii (Le Lettere: Firenze, 2007) [= *Quaderni petrarcheschi*, 12-13 (2002-03)]: 75-98, at 88-90.

Philoponus, which were sources “that James of Venice could find in Michael’s study”.¹⁸ Indeed, the translator could find not only manuscripts with these commentaries, but also, as Ebbesen underlines, a kind of manuscript where Aristotelian texts and their exegesis were already combined:

In Constantinople whole commentaries were often written in the margins; in the West this was rarer, but all the well-known elements may be found: glosses on single words and phrases, indications of argumentational structure, even *quaestiones*, but then miniaturized, as it were.¹⁹

The particular layout of these manuscripts would have provided not only a template, but also a valuable tool to better understand Aristotle’s works in view of their translation into Latin. This seems to be the case as regards the *Posterior Analytics*, for which “apart from Themistius’ paraphrase, the only ancient commentary available in Byzantium was Philoponus’ on book 1”.²⁰ It is important to note that the authorship of book 2 has been rejected since Wallies, the modern editor of Philoponus’ commentary, had argued against it.²¹ Thus, it seems that Philoponus started his circulation among Westerners through James of Venice’s translations of Aristotle, which bore fragments of these commentaries likely in imitation of the layout of the Greek exemplars he used. Evidence of this early “marginal” circulation of Philoponus had already been discovered by Lorenzo Minio Paluello, in his studies on the Latin Aristotle. Minio Paluello showed that several Latin glosses with sections of the Alexandrian commentary on *Prior Analytics* and also on *Elenchi sophistici* sometimes provided with attribution to “Alexander” – though the identification with Alexander of Aphrodisias is untenable – frame a group of manuscripts from the late twelfth century.²² Significantly for the present study, two fragments of a *Commentary on*

¹⁸ Sten Ebbesen, “Philoponus, ‘Alexander’ and the Origins of Medieval Logic”, in Ebbesen, *Greek-Latin Philosophical Interaction*, 157-170: 162; the text was originally published in *Aristotle Transformed*, edited by R. Sorabji (London: Duckworth, 1990), 445-461. See also David Bloch, “James of Venice and the Posterior Analytics”, *Cahiers de l’Institut du Moyen Âge Grec et Latin* 78 (2008): 37-50, who discusses at length and rejects Ebbesen’s view that James might have composed commentaries of his own. Bloch argues for considering these commentaries to be sections of Philoponus’ *On PAn* translated by James.

¹⁹ See Sten Ebbesen, “Late Ancient Ancestors of Medieval Philosophical Commentaries”, in Ebbesen, *Greek-Latin Philosophical Interaction*, 97-106, at 103-104.

²⁰ Sten Ebbesen, “Review of *Interpreting Aristotle’s Posterior Analytics in Late Antiquity and Beyond*, edited by F.A.J. de Haas, M. Leunissen and M. Martiin (Boston and Leiden: Brill, 2010)”, *Aestimatio* 9 (2012): 355-366, at 364.

²¹ John Philoponus, *In Aristotelis Analytica Posteriora Commentaria cum anonymo in librum II*, in *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca*, vol. 13.3, edited by M. Wallies (Berlin: Reimer, 1909), v-vi for the authorship of book 2.

²² Lorenzo Minio Paluello, “Note sull’Aristotele Latino Medievale XIV – Frammenti del commento perduto d’Alessandro d’Afròdisia ai *Secondi Analitici* tradotto da Giacomo Veneto, in un codice di Goffredo di Fontaines (Parigi, B. N. Lat. 16080)”, *Rivista di Filosofia Neo-Scolastica* 54/2 (1962): 131-147, at 131-137. The studies and wide discussion concerning these manuscripts, including Florence, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Conv. Soppr. J.VI.34, and Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud. Misc. 368 (*Anonymus Laudianus*) bearing scholia and marginalia with parallelisms with Philoponus

Posterior Analytics also attributed to “Alexander” but in fact taken from Philoponus’ commentary are present in a manuscript bearing the logical works by Aristotle (Paris, BnF, lat. 16080) which once belonged to Godfrey of Fontaines. These scholia are part of a wide corpus of glosses framing Moerbecke’s revision of James of Venice’s translation of the *Posterior Analytics*, and including, by the way, also glosses from Grosseteste’s commentary.²³ Around 1240, Richard of Fournival lists in his *Biblionomia* two manuscripts transmitting, respectively, *On Elenchi* and *On Posterior Analytics* by “Alexander of Aphrodisias”; but, as already mentioned, this name seems to hide, in reality, Philoponus.²⁴ Other recent and ongoing research corroborates the presence of Philoponus/“Alexander” in Albert the Great’s commentary.²⁵ The reconstruction of the scholarly debate on this implicit transmission goes far beyond the limits and scope of the present study. Incidentally, however, I should recall that the same confusion in ascribing texts by Philoponus to Alexander also occurred among the Arabs, in relation to fragments taken from Philoponus’ *Against Proclus*.²⁶

Further evidence concerning James of Venice’s role in the translation of Greek commentaries on Aristotle is also offered in the famous prologue of the Graeco-Latin version of the *Posterior Analytics* by “John” (*Iohannes*), a mid-twelfth-century translator whose version survives in a single manuscript.²⁷ This preface informs us that James of Venice’s translation circulated among “masters in France” (*Francie magistri*) together with “Greek commentaries that James also translated” (*illam translationem et commentarios ab eodem Jacobo translatos*), though those masters “do not venture to manifest knowledge of that work (*i.e.* the *Posterior Analytics*)” because of its “being wrapped in impenetrable obscurity”.²⁸ The expression “commentaries that James also translated” merits, in fact, attention. The adjective *translatos* clearly refers, here, to Greek commentaries that James of Venice actually *converted* from Greek into Latin.

has been summarised by Christina Thomsen Thörnquist, “Introduction” to *Anonymus Aurelianensis III in Aristotelis Analytica priora. Critical edition, introduction, notes, and indexes*, edited by C. Thomsen Thörnquist (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2014); 1-12.

²³ See Minio Paluello, “Note sull’Aristotele Latino Medievale XIV”. I have not been able to check this manuscript, and have no idea of the extent of these glosses, particularly those from Grosseteste.

²⁴ For these references, see the already mentioned studies by Minio Paluello, Ebbesen and Rossi.

²⁵ See Amos Corbini, “Alexander of Aphrodisias and the Medieval Exegetical Tradition of the *Posterior Analytics*”, in *Alexander of Aphrodisias in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, edited by P. B. Rossi, M. Di Giovanni, and A. A. Robiglio (Turnhout: Brepols, 2021), 95-107.

²⁶ Ahmad Hasnawi, “Alexandre d’Aphrodise vs Jean Philopon: Notes sur quelques traités d’Alexandre ‘perdus’ en grec, conservés en arabe”, *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 4 (1995): 53-109.

²⁷ For this version and the context of the entrance of the *Posterior Analytics* among Latins see Rossi, “Fili dell’Aristoteles latinus”, 81-83 on the hypotheses about the identity of *Iohannes*.

²⁸ This famous prologue is printed in *Aristoteles Latinus. Codices. Pars prior*, edited by G. Lacombe (Rome: La libreria dello Stato, 1939), 122-123 (after Haskins’ *Studies*, 229): “quamvis illam translationem et commentarios ab eodem Jacobo translatos habeant [the subject is *Francie magistri*], tamen notitiam illius libri non audent profiteri”.

Indeed, had these commentaries been his own, they would not have needed to be translated. Yet, the possibility that James also *composed* commentaries emerges from two later pieces of information. The first one reports that James “commented on” (*commentatus est*) the *Topics*, *Prior* and *Posterior Analytics* and *Elenchi*; the second one attests that “in the commentary on *Posterior Analytics* James states” (*affirmat Jacobus in commento super Posteriora Analytica*) that Bryson demonstrated the squaring of the circle, though the proof is sophistic.²⁹ Without entering into details about these much debated passages, one wonders if these commentaries might have started to be ascribed to James of Venice simply because they accompanied his Aristotelian translations.³⁰ Be that the case or not, it seems clear that a wide apparatus of *marginalia* if not entire commentaries in Latin – and in particular sections from Philoponus’ *Commentary on Posterior Analytics*, book 1, which is relevant for the present study – accompanied the first circulation of James’ translations of the Aristotelian *Organon*.

Modern scholars agree in considering the “golden age” of Philoponus’ legacy to be the Renaissance, when fresh Latin translations and first printed editions of his commentaries and treatises spread the fame of the Alexandrian philosopher among academic masters, humanists and scientists.³¹ Thus, apart from a sparse – and again much debated – resurfacing of the Alexandrian commentator in the late Middle Ages in connection with the criticism of the Aristotelian doctrines of the eternity of the world and the projectile motion, there is a gap of about three hundred years between Philoponus’ full Latin circulation and his obscure and “fragmented” first entrance in the Latin world. During these centuries, segments of his commentaries circulated anonymously or under the name of “Alexander” or also as glosses or interpolated materials within copies of Aristotelian translations. Robert Grosseteste’s implicit use of Philoponus – and, perhaps, of other Greek commentators he labels *expositores* in the *Commentary on Posterior Analytics* – happened in the context of this unaccounted and, regrettably, mostly unreconstructible transmission. Unfortunately, apart from Grosseteste’s *Commentary*, no preceding Latin text known to me transmits the same fragments from Philoponus that I suppose Grosseteste accessed, either independently or in

²⁹ For the squaring of the circle and Grosseteste’s interest in it see also what is said at note 15. The passage is from the *Anonymus Laudianus* – a commentary on *Elenchi sophistici* that refers to “Alexander’s commentaries” (see note 24) and was first examined by Sten Ebbesen, “Jacobus Veneticus on the *Posterior Analytics* and Some Early 13th Century Oxford Masters on the *Elenchi*”, *Cahiers de l’Institut du Moyen Âge Grec et Latin* 21 (1977): 1-9.

³⁰ See in particular Bloch, “James of Venice”, for an updated examination and revision of these Philoponian references and James’ involvement in their translation.

³¹ See for instance A. C. Lloyd, “Athenian and Alexandrian Neoplatonism”, in *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy*, edited by A. H. Armstrong (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 302-325, at 316. See also Richard R. K. Sorabji, *Time, Creation and the Continuum* (London: Duckworth, 1983), 193-231. To give a sole example, scholars in history of science have much debated whether the fourteenth-century theory of impetus might have been derived directly from Philoponus, or developed independently from him. For bibliographic references on this issue see, for instance, Christian Wildberg, “John Philoponus”, in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2021 Edition), edited by E. N. Zalta.

association with James' translation of the *Posterior Analytics*. To the best of my knowledge, the first complete Latin versions of Philoponus' commentary date back to the Renaissance, as examined hereafter.

3. The First Latin Translations of Philoponus' *Commentary on the Posterior Analytics*

In 1504, the Greek text of Philoponus' *Commentary on the Posterior Analytics* (hereafter *On PAn*) was published by Aldus Manuzio, in the context of his great project of editing the Greek Peripatetic tradition. After this date, some Latin versions of the work begin to appear, but their number, possible connections and diffusion are still to be fully examined. Their reconstruction, indeed, "does not seem to be fully clarified" as Rossi asserts in reconsidering the conclusions advanced by Charles H. Lohr and Koenraad Verrycken in the preface to the anastatic reprint of Venice 1542 (number 5 below).³² Hereafter, I list the translations and editions in chronological order, on the basis of the first results of my study.

(1) 1516, translated by Bartolomeo Zamberti, unprinted

München, Bayerische Bibliothek, Clm 112

Title: *Joannis Alexandrini grammatici cognomine Philoponi philosophi platonici postillae et annotationes ex commentibus ammonii hermei platonici cum nonnullis propriis obiectionibus in primum Posteriorum Aristotelis, sive de demonstratione, bartholomeo zamberto veneto interprete.*

To my knowledge, no modern scholar has given notice of this complete Latin version of Philoponus' *On PAn*, so far. Hereafter, I cannot but offer a brief presentation of this interesting work, which survives in single manuscript.³³ This translation is by the Venetian Bartolomeo Zamberti (1453-1539). The online description dates it to 1501, but the colophon states, in fact, that it was completed in 1516, so that the Aldine edition might have been its Greek exemplar. The text is entirely in Zamberti's hand. He was a mathematician and translator, and editor of several works of Greek science and optics, including a complete Latin version of Euclid's work, issued in 1505. Other translations by him are preserved at the Bavarian Library.³⁴ The most striking feature of his version of Philoponus' commentary is

³² Pietro B. Rossi, "New Translations of Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* and the Cultural Milieu in Fifteenth-Century Florence", in *Raison et démonstration. Les commentaires médiévaux sur les «Seconds analytiques»*, edited by J. Biard (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), 199-222, at 207-208.

³³ The translation is registered in the data base MIRABILE at: <https://www.mirabileweb.it/calma/bartholomaeus-zambertus-n-1473-m-1556-1559/1542>. I intend to present a more attentive description and study of this work on another occasion.

³⁴ See *Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Regiae Monacensis*, vol. 3/1 (München: Sumptibus Bibliothecae Regiae, 1894). These manuscripts are Clm 6 (Euclid's *Elements*, *On mirrors* and *Phenomena*, with commentaries by Proclus, Barlaam, and Hypsiclis); 117 (Alexander of Aphrodisias' and Philoponus' *On Prior Analytics*); 119 (Ammonius' *On Isagoge* and *De interpretatione*); 120 (dated 1524, Alexander of Aphrodisias' *On Sophistical Refutations*); 121 (dated 1521, Aphrodisias' *On Topics*; Zamberti's *On Topics*); 129-130 (Aristotle's *Methaphisics* and *Posterior Analytics*); 176 (dated 1508,

exactly its being rendered into Latin by a mathematician, who included exceptionally rich *marginalia* concerning technical aspects of the science of demonstration and numerous, polished and detailed geometrical figures and schemes. Moreover, the Aristotelian lemmas are subdivided into short textual fragments, each followed by the relevant section of Philoponus' comment. Each text plus comment is numbered and clearly evidenced by repeating the names "Aristoteles" and "Iohannes Grammaticus" at the beginning of, respectively, lemma and comment. Finally, the last forty pages of the manuscript are a huge alphabetically-ordered index of *res notabiles* referring to the entire commentary by Philoponus. Basically, this translation establishes a strict connection between Aristotle's text, Philoponus' commentary and Bartolomeo's glosses, so as to form a unit of sense that "translates" the *Posterior Analytics* and Philoponus' exegesis into a coherent geometrical exposition – at least as it seems at first sight. Again, on a basis of a very cursory examination, I have noticed that his other translations maintain very similar characteristics.

(2) 1524, translated by Eufrosino Bonini, unprinted

Charles Lohr pointed out that in 1524, likely on the basis of the Aldine version, Eufrosino Bonini, a pupil of Politian, realised the first complete Latin translation, which survives in two manuscripts. Pietro Rossi has given a very detailed description of this version.³⁵ Now, since Zamberti's version is eight years older than Bonini's, the latter is now the second translation to be realised. At first glance, it seems that the two translations are independent of one another.

(3) 1534, printed in Venice by Ottaviano Scotti (junior)

Title: *Ioannis Grammatici Alexandrei Cognomento Philoponi Expositiones dilucide in Primum et Secundum Posteriorum Aristotelis: iam pridem latinitate donate: nunc primum vero in commune utilitatem studentium in lucem edite. Cum textu ipsius Aristotelis quam diligentissime rivo ad veram lectionem Grecam nuper recognito.*

Venetiis apud Octavianum Scotum MDXXXIII

Nicomachus of Gerasa, *Arithmetics*, book 1). I hope to offer a more detailed description of this collection on another occasion. On Bartolomeo himself there is not much literature. I have fruitfully consulted the master thesis by Anna Bernante, *L'Euclide di Bartolomeo Zamberti e il Rinascimento della matematica e delle arti a Venezia tra la fine del Quattrocento e l'inizio del Cinquecento*, Laurea Magistrale 2019/2020 Università Ca Foscari Venezia (online on the repository on: dspace.unive.it).

³⁵ Rossi, "New Translations of Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*. The first part of the study examines the humanistic translations of the *Posterior Analytics*, while the second section, at 205-208, deals with the editions of Philoponus' *On PA*n. See also Pietro B. Rossi, "Commenti agli *Analytica Posteriora* e gli umanisti italiani del Quattrocento. Una prima indagine", *Rivista di Filosofia Neo-Scolastica* 108 (2016): 759-774, which presents a wide analysis of the humanistic Latin translations of Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*, and their continuities and breaks with the medieval transmission.

The dedicatory epistle is by an unidentified *Marinus Gru. (?) Catarensis* to bishop Giovanbattista Casali (d. 1536), ambassador of king Henry VIII in Venice. “Marinus” states that a few days after he had left Casali’s house and came back to Padua, he found by chance a Latin version of Philoponus’ commentary by an unknown translator (“Paucos enim post dies quum abs te discedens Patavium revertissem, Ioannis cognomento Philoponi in Aristotelis Posteriora Commentarii ab incerto auctore latinitate donati, fato quodam ac potius divinitus in manus nostras inciderunt”). Marinus asserts to have transcribed this version and, in agreement with the printer Ottaviano Scotti – i.e., the nephew of Ottaviano the elder, who had already died at that time – printed that work, which Ottaviano himself complemented with the Aristotelian lemmas.

(4) 1539, printed in Venice by Girolamo Scotti

Title: identical to Venice 1534.

Venetiis, apud Hyeronimum Scotum MDXXXIX

The dedicatory epistle is identical to Venice 1534.

Lohr and Verrycken indicated this edition as the earliest to be realised, but Rossi rightly points out that it is nothing but a new release of Venice 1534, with the dedicatory epistle “reconstructed by the printer”, that is, Girolamo, another nephew of the elder Ottaviano Scotti.³⁶

(5) 1542: printed in Venice by Girolamo Scotti

Title: *Commentaria Ioannis Grammatici Alexandrei cognomento Philoponi in libros posteriorum Aristotelis. Recens cum Graeco exemplari per doctissimum Philippum Theodosium collate. Ad Primarios celeberrime Academie et civitatis Maceratae.*

Venetiis, apud Hyeronimum Scotum 1542

This edition became the standard text of Philoponus’ *On PAn*, and was reprinted several times. The anastatic reprint was published in 1995, with a preface by Lohr and Verrycken.³⁷

The dedicatory epistle is by Philippus Theodosius to the authorities of the city of Macerata. Theodosius was a doctor of philosophy from Parma, who graduated in 1537

³⁶ Rossi, “New Translations of Aristotle’s *Posterior Analytics*”, 208. For Lohr and Verrycken see the next note.

³⁷ John Philoponus, *Commentaria in Libros Posteriorum Aristotelis*, übersetzt von Andreas Gratiolus und Philippus Theodosius, Neudruck der Ausgabe Venedig 1542 mit einer Einleitung von K. Verrycken und C. Lohr (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1995). In the preface, Lohr and Verrycken briefly examine Philoponus’ Latin translations and editions in the Renaissance.

and taught at Bologna in the subsequent years.³⁸ In the epistle, he asserts to have revised a previous Latin translation, damaged and corrupted. After complaining about the difficult task of reworking such a text, he asserts he had to check the Greek text on several occasions in order to emend that Latin version. However, Theodosius' version is mostly identical to Venice 1534. The online copy I have inspected presents the misplacement of a folder, covering pages 49 to 55. Lohr and Verrycken suggest that Theodosius reworked Bonini's translation of book 1 of the commentary (namely, the genuine work by Philoponus) while the translation of the spurious commentary on book 2 is, in their opinion, a reworking by Andrea Grazioli, who also translated Eustratius' *Commentary on the Second Book of the Posterior Analytics*.³⁹ Hence, they indicate both names in the frontispiece of the anastatic reprint ("übersetzt von Andreas Gratiolus und Philippus Theodosius"), though there is no mention of Grazioli either in this or in the preceding Venice editions.

The main conclusions by Lohr and Verrycken, partly corrected by Rossi, about the connections of these early versions are, in brief, that Eufrosino Bonini's translation was actually the "anonymous Latin translation accessed by chance in Padua" mentioned in the dedicatory epistle of Venice 1539 – in reality, Venice 1534 as Rossi points out. Lohr and Verrycken refer to Venice 1542 as "the edition by Gratioli", but Rossi rightly underlines that "his name does not appear". Besides, they attribute no role to "Marinus" as regards Venice 1534/1539, though Rossi, again, underlines that "the narrative of the discovery of the translation and the decision to revise the text – in his view, too, it was Bonini's translation – is made by an unidentified 'Marinus Gru. Catarensis' in the dedicatory epistle".⁴⁰

It seems to me that these conclusions are inaccurate. First, there is no mention of Gratioli in the three Venice editions. However, his translation of Eustratius' *Commentary on the Posterior Analytics* was also published in Venice in 1542 by Girolamo Scotti: that is, the same year and printer of Philoponus' *On PAn* (see item 5 above). Hence – I guess – this coincidence induced Lohr and Verrycken to think at Gratioli as the translator of the spurious book 2 of Philoponus' *On PAn*, as well. However, Gratioli's Eustratius is very different from the spurious commentary on book 2 in Philoponus. Instead, Theodosius'

³⁸ Rossi, "New Translations of Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*", 208. On Theodosius' teaching, see Umberto Dallari, *I rotuli dei lettori, legisti e artisti dello Studio bolognese dal 1384 al 1799*, vol. 2 (Bologna: Regia Tipografia dei Fratelli Merlani, 1890), 85, 88, 91, 116, 119, 121, 124, 127, 130.

³⁹ The title is: *Eustratii Episcopi Nicaeni Commentaria in secundum librum Posteriorum resolutivorum Aristotelis ... Andrea Gratiolo Tusculano ex Benaco interprete. Venetiis apud Hyeronimum Scotum 1542*. Grazioli was a physician from Brescia who studied at Padua. See also Rossi, "New Translations of Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*", 208, with reference to Charles H. Lohr, "Renaissance Latin Translations of the Greek Commentaries on Aristotle", in *Humanism and Early Modern Philosophy*, edited by J. Krayer and M.W.F. Stone (London: Routledge, 2000), 24-40.

⁴⁰ Rossi, "New Translations of Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*", 208.

inspection of Gratioli's Eustratius might well justify the presence of glosses referring to Eustratius along Philoponus' *On PAN* book 2, as specified later.

Second, Marinus' narration deserves more attention. Unfortunately, the identity of "Marinus Gru." is unknown and the only unquestionable element for his identification remains his birthplace *Cattaro*, i.e. Kotor, a city of the Venetian Albania.⁴¹ Marinus neither presents himself as a "professional" translator, nor states that he had checked the Greek text of Philoponus. He only says that he *transcribed* the Latin version he happened to find in Padua and that he had passed on his work to Ottaviano Scotti junior for a joint homage to bishop Casali. He adds that Ottaviano was a student in philosophy ("in philosophia ... versatus") – indeed, Ottaviano actually studied philosophy and medicine. Marinus also underlines that the lemmas of the *Posterior Analytics* were added by Ottaviano "from the current Latin text" ("textum praeterea Aristotelis quem communem appellant apposuit") after a revision that Ottaviano himself had made on a Greek exemplar ("cum graeco exemplari collatum atque ... emendatum"). In my opinion, the "current" Latin text of the *Posterior Analytics* was James of Venice's *antiqua translatio* that also Venice 1534 (and Venice 1539, consequently) follows quite verbatim. Moreover, Marinus' statement confirms that only Aristotle's text was emended on a Greek exemplar. Indeed, Philoponus' commentary reproduces again the mysterious "Latin version" found by Marinus in Padua.

Third, no indication points to identifying Bonini's version with that "Latin anonymous translation". According to my cursory comparison, neither Bonini's nor even Zamberti's versions – which, incidentally, are not "anonymous" – can be the Latin translation on which Venice 1534/1539 and again Venice 1542 are based. In my view, that version transcribed by Marinus resembled more a medieval than a humanistic translation. It followed James' *Posterior Analytics* as a guide for vocabulary and phrasing, a feature that the Venice editions actually reproduce. Instead, Bonini's and Zamberti's versions are humanistic translations, pretty far from the Venice editions' model.

Fourth, Theodosius' dedicatory epistle of Venice 1542 offers additional news. The scholar asserts that he had translated Philoponus' commentary on the basis of "a version not reliably translated and distorted in several parts" ("opus non fideliter translatum et multis locis depravatam"), so he had to recur to the Greek version – likely, the Aldine of 1503 – in order to re-establish it correctly ("maxima ex parte sui similem reddere") after numerous interventions ("misere discerptum antea depravatamque locis innumerabilibus restitutum vobis damus"). Yet, contrary to his declaration, Philoponus' text faithfully reproduces Venice 1534, from which the *marginalia* are also

⁴¹ To my knowledge, the only Croatian author who matches the time is Marino Darsa (Marin Držić, 1508-1567), author of pastoral dramas and comedies, though he was born in Ragusa (Dubrovnik), near Cattaro. Marino lived mostly in central and northern Italy and died in Venice, but there is no evidence of any involvement with Ottaviano Scotti or bishop Casali. See for instance Rita Tolomeo, "Marino Darsa e il suo tempo", in *Marino Darsa e il suo tempo. Marin Držić i njegovo vrijeme*, edited by R. Tolomeo (Venice: La Musa Talia, 2010), 7-21.

taken, though with fundamental additions, as we see below. It seems to me, therefore, that Theodosius, likely in agreement with Girolamo Scotti, renovated paratexts and layout alone of Girolamo's release (Venice 1539) of Ottaviano's first edition (Venice 1534). The enterprise caused him to add several *marginalia* not present in Venice 1534/1539 reporting Greek lemmas, a quite detailed division of the commentary into texts and sections, and additional references to sources mentioned by Philoponus, such as Themistius, Proclus and Alexander of Aphrodisias. Moreover, Theodosius also added glosses independent from Philoponus and referred to Simplicius and Eustratius. The latter's name repeatedly appears in the second book, and this suggests that Theodosius looked at Gratiani's translation of Eustratius' commentary, printed in the same year by Girolamo, as mentioned above.

Finally, and most importantly for our purpose, Theodosius also introduced references to *Lincolniensis*, namely Grosseteste's *On PAN*. It is not surprising that he might have known Grosseteste's commentary, as its transmission and fame were uninterrupted up to the Renaissance and the Scotto family printed it several times, from 1494 to 1552.⁴² The surprising and highly interesting aspect is that Theodosius envisaged a number of parallelisms between Grosseteste and Philoponus. Let us now examine them in detail.

4. A Latin-to-Latin Comparison Between Grosseteste and Philoponus According to the References to *Lincolniensis* in Venice 1542

Grosseteste's quotes from Philoponus first examined by Rossi and also discussed by Ebbesen include a long verbatim passage, other less extended parallel passages and a couple of corresponding texts transmitted only in single manuscripts of Grosseteste's *On PAN*.⁴³ The majority of the quotes refer to book 1 of Philoponus' *On PAN*, which, as mentioned, is surely authentic. These quotes attest that Philoponus implicitly influenced some aspects of Grosseteste's interpretation of Aristotle's theory of science. Now, if those quotes came from *scholia*, Grosseteste may well have labelled them as "comments" (*expositiones*) and their author/authors as "commentators" (*expositores*), whose identity remained unknown to him. Now, Theodosius' glosses referring to *Lincolniensis* broadly correspond to the passages where Grosseteste mentioned these

⁴² Rossi, "Introduzione", 74-77. On the authority of *Lincolniensis* in the Humanistic period and the Renaissance see also Pietro B. Rossi, "Grosseteste's Influence on Thirteenth- and Fourteenth-Century British Commentaries on *Posterior Analytics*", in *Robert Grosseteste His Thought and Its Impact*, edited by J. P. Cunningham (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2012) 140-166; Rossi, "Commenti agli *Analytica Posteriora* e gli umanisti italiani".

⁴³ Rossi, "Introduzione", 19-21; Ebbesen, "Philoponus, 'Alexander' and the Origins of Medieval Logic", 160-161. Hereafter, I examine some of these parallelisms, adding a few others and excluding those transmitted in single manuscripts of Grosseteste's *On PAN*. The latter excerpts are analysed by Corbini, "Alexander of Aphrodisias", in his detailed reconstruction of Rossi's and Ebbesen's findings.

expositiones, offering a “guide” to Theodosius’ inspection. This does not mean that each reference implies that Grosseteste *quoted* from Philoponus; rather, he *accessed* the Alexandrian’s (and others’) comments, and either transcribed, revised or critically discussed them.

The eight instances hereafter presented reproduce (in bold) Theodosius’ glosses mentioning *Lincolniensis* in Venice 1542. Philoponus’ corresponding texts – also from Venice 1542 – are identified according to Wallies’ edition. Grosseteste’s related passages reproduce Rossi’s edition. Aristotle’s lemmas are in italics. A brief comment about the parallelism under examination accompanies each example.

4.1. Demonstration *ex necessariis*

The first marginal note on *Lincolniensis* in Venice 1542 associates Grosseteste with Themistius for their shared position *contra* (against) Philoponus on Aristotle’s statement that “the things that belong per se to things are necessary” (*PAn* I.6.74b6-9). Clearly, this *contra* does not imply that Grosseteste quotes Philoponus, but only that he agrees with Themistius. However, Grosseteste’s and Philoponus’ passages run somehow in parallel. Philoponus states: “if everything belongs to something either per se or accidentally, and what does not belong accidentally belongs of necessity, and what belongs per se does not belong accidentally, it therefore remains that the things that belong of necessity belong per se. He (Aristotle) will infer the present point through a categorical deduction, in this way: every demonstration is based on necessary things; necessary things are per se; therefore, every demonstration is based on things that are per se” (Philoponus *On PAn* I.6, transl. 87).⁴⁴ Grosseteste, in turn, consider Aristotle’s passage as if it were the latter’s “sixth conclusion”, that is: “demonstration is a syllogism based on predicates that inhere per se to the subject”, and concludes by confirming that “every demonstration is a syllogism based on necessary things; all and only what inheres per se is necessary; therefore, every demonstration is a syllogism based on things that inhere per se”.⁴⁵ Since the entire passage is quite long, I reproduce only the sentence referred to Aristotle’s explanation:

Philoponus <i>On PAn</i> , 82.25-31; Venice 1542, 30 <i>in marg.:</i> Contra Themistius et Lincolniensis	Grosseteste <i>On PAn</i> , I.6, 129
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⁴⁴ Here and below, the reference “transl.” indicates the English translation from the series *Ancient Commentators of Aristotle*, edited by R. Sorabji. Specifically: Philoponus, *On Aristotle Posterior Analytics* 1.1-8 and 1.9-18, translated by R. McKirahan (London, New Delhi, New York, and Sidney: Bloomsbury, 2008 and 2012); and Philoponus, *On Aristotle Posterior Analytics* 1.19-34, translated by O. Goldin and M. Martijn (London, New Delhi, New York, and Sidney: Bloomsbury, 2012).

⁴⁵ Grosseteste’s commentary, as fully examined in Rossi, “Intentio Aristotelis in hoc libro”, is partly structured in the form of explanations of Aristotelian *conclusiones*. Translations from Grosseteste’s *On PAn* are mine.

Concludet igitur propositum per syllogismum cathegoricum hoc modo. Omnis demonstratio est ex necessariis. Necessaria autem sunt per se, omnis ergo demonstratio est ex his quae sunt per se, quod monstrare proposuerat.	Et ostenditur hec VI conclusio hoc modo. Omnis demonstratio est sillogismus ex necessariis, omnia et sola per se inherentia sunt necessaria, ergo omnis demonstratio est sillogismus ex per se inherentibus.
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4.2. Sophistic Syllogisms

This parallel passage also refers to *PAn* I.6, specifically to the sentence: “The sophists assume that knowing is having knowledge” (74b24). Philoponus explains this tenet through a sophistic syllogism: “Some explain this passage more sophistically, as follows. If knowing is having knowledge and having knowledge has knowledge, therefore knowing has knowledge” (transl. 91). Grosseteste repeats the syllogism as if it were the sophists’ wrong explanation of, again, an Aristotelian “conclusion”. Here, Theodosius’ marginal note recites “others’ exposition”. It is not clear to me if he actually refers to Grosseteste:

Philoponus <i>On PAn</i> , 86.9-11; Venice 1542, 31 <i>in marg.</i> : Comm. 19 Expositio aliorum	Grosseteste <i>On PAn</i> , I.6, 131.58-61
Quidam autem exponunt hunc locum magis sophisticae sic: si scire est scientiam habere. Scientiam autem habere est scire, scire igitur scientiam habet.	verbi gratia sophiste credunt se demonstrare hanc conclusionem: sciens novit quid est scientia, hoc modo: scire est scientiam habere, sed habens aliquid novit illud quod habet, sciens igitur novit quid est scientia.

4.3. A Synthesis Concerning the Middle Term

This example concerns Theodosius’ marginal note on Grosseteste’s summary of a section of Philoponus’ commentary, again, on *PAn* I.6 (75a1-7), on the issue that “when the conclusion is of necessity, nothing prevents the middle through which it was proved from being non-necessary” (transl. 94). Given that Philoponus’ explanation is quite long and rich in exemplifications while Grosseteste offers only a summary of it, the parallel passage does not amount to a verbatim quote. I reproduce hereafter only a few extracts:

Philoponus <i>On PAn</i> , 89.25-91.23; Venice 1542, 32-33 <i>in marg.</i> : Comm. 32 Sic Lincolniensis brevius ⁴⁶	Grosseteste <i>On PAn</i> , I.6, 130.29-35
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⁴⁶ Here, Venice 1534 presents the note “Commentum 32m”, but not the reference to Lincolniensis.

Quoniam demonstravit quod necesse est ex necessariis propositionibus esse demonstrationem ... Possibile enim est et ex non necessariis necessarium concludere. ... Ex necessariis quidem propositionibus impossibile est non necessariam esse conclusionem, contingens autem ex contrario se habet cum necessario. Propositiones enim etiam si sint contingentes concludent aliquam conclusionem necessariam ...	Hec propositio: demonstratio est sillogismus ex necessariis, supra ostensa est ... quia quod scitur impossibile est aliter se habere. Ex hoc tamen non plene sequitur premissa in sillogismo demonstrativo esse necessaria, quia premissa non semper sunt scita secundum premissam diffinitionem eius quod est scire, et possibile est necessarium sequi ex contingentibus sillogistice.
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4.4. Four Kinds of Deductions and the Moon Eclipse

This fourth example of parallel passages is worth presenting in full.⁴⁷ Indeed, it shows how Grosseteste changes the order of presentation (see numbers 7 and 8, here evidenced in bold) of a long text by Philoponus. The issue under discussion, still from *PAn* I.6 (75a12-16), is again about how deductions must be obtained through “a middle term that is necessary”, whether or not the premises are immediate (as in the causal or ‘why’ deductions) or mediate (as in the inductive or ‘that’ deductions). Philoponus distinguishes these four kinds of deductions by means of *ad hoc* syllogisms concerning the Moon eclipse, establishing in turn (see numbers 3 to 6): the ‘that’ based on immediate premises, the ‘that’ on mediate premises, the ‘why’ on immediate premises, and the ‘why’ on mediate premises. Grosseteste faithfully repeats the examples, though, rightly, he collocates them at the end of the explanation. Theodorus’ marginal note states: “exposition of text 35 according to the Latins”:

Philoponus <i>On PAn</i> , 92.13-31, Venice 1542, 33 <i>in marg.</i> : Expositio tex. 35 secundum Latinos	Grosseteste <i>On PAn</i> , I.6, 134.110-16
(1) Quoniam igitur si scit demonstrative oportet de necessitate inesse, manifestum quoniam et per medium necessarium demonstrationem habere ...	Quoniam igitur si scit aliquis demonstrative, manifestum est quod oportet eum habere demonstrationem, id est, sillogismum ex necessariis.
(7) ... Quid rursus dicit hoc loco tale est, quod neque syllogismum probantem quia sciet, neque probantem propter quid, si contingens erit medius terminus per quem demonstratio facta est. Aut enim non sciens opinabitur scire, ignorans, quoniam contingens est medium terminus aut sciens quod contingens, non opinabitur scire.	... Dicit itaque quod oportet demonstrative scientem habere sillogismum ex necessariis aut non sciet propter quid conclusio est necessaria neque quia est necessaria, sed aut opinabitur se scire cum nescit si accipiat medium contingens tamquam necessarium, aut nec forte opinabitur se scire, ut si noverit medium esse contingens.

⁴⁷ Parallel comparison with the Greek text in Rossi, “Tracce della versione latina”, 437-438.

(2) Ex syllogismis hi quidem aliqui quia probant, hi vero propter quid. Et ex his qui probant quia hi quidem sunt ex immediatis propositionibus, hi autem ex mediatis. Eodem modo et ex his qui propter quid.	Et per unam similitudinem currit res in hoc quod oportet scientem habere syllogismum ex necessariis sive ipse sciat quia per mediata vel per inmediate, sive sciat propter quid per mediata vel per inmediate.
(8) ... Hoc autem loco distinguit et immediatus quidem, in probante propter quid ordinavit. Mediatum autem in probante quia	Uterque enim syllogismus est tam mediatus quam immediatus, licet proprie dicatur syllogismus propter quid qui demonstrat per causam immediatam, et dicatur communiter syllogismus quia non solum qui ostendit per effectum, sed qui ostendit per causam mediatam.
(3) Verbi gratia Si enim sic dicam luna umbram non facit, umbram autem non faciens deficit, luna ergo deficit. Probavi quod deficit	Syllogismus quia mediatus est iste: luna umbram non facit, planeta umbram non faciens deficit, ergo luna deficit.
(4) Verbi gratia quod in plenilunio sit luna. In plenilunio autem existens non facit umbram. Umbram autem non faciens, in plenilunio deficit, luna igitur deficit. Hic igitur est immediatus syllogismus ...	Syllogismus quia immediatus est iste: plena luna cum sit, umbram non facit, non faciens umbram in plenilunio deficit, ergo luna deficit.
(5) Simili modo in propter quid, mediatus erit syllogismus talis luna per diametrum est soli. Per diametrum autem existens deficit, luna igitur deficit. ...	Syllogismus propter quid mediatus est iste: luna secundum diametrum est cum sole, secundum autem diametrum cum sit deficit, luna igitur deficit.
(6) syllogismus talis luna per diametrum existens impeditur a terra, impedita vero deficit, luna igitur deficit, et est hic immediatus.	Syllogismus propter quid immediatus: luna cum sit secundum diametrum a sole obicitur ei terra, ex obiectu autem deficit luna, ergo luna deficit.

4.5. Three Kinds of Definitions, the Example of Anger and the *Liber de anima*

This long parallel passage is the quote reported entirely by Rossi.⁴⁸ The commented text is from *PAn* I.8 (75b30-32), stating that a definition may be either a principle of demonstration or a demonstration, which can be of three kinds: from matter, from form or from both. Each kind of demonstration is illustrated by way of examples concerning the definition of anger: from matter it is “the boiling of the blood around the heart” and from form it is “the desire to cause grief in return of grief”. Philoponus refers to Aristotle’s *On the Soul*, namely *De anima* I.1 (403a30-33), where the definitions of anger are given. However, he repropose the example of anger in a similar fashion also in

⁴⁸ Parallel comparison with the Greek text in Rossi, “Tracce della versione latina”, 436-437.

commenting on *De anima* II.2 (413a16).⁴⁹ Even though the passage is quite long, Theodosius did not notice the equivalent in Grosseteste. This parallelism reveals the strong similarities between Philoponus' Latin texts in, respectively, the Venice editions and Grosseteste's quote. There are just two main differences between them: *appetitus vindictae* instead of Grosseteste's more literal *appetitus contrarii doloris* (i.e., *antilupesis*), also used by James of Venice ("Hic quidem enim appetitum contrarii doloris"); and *forma* (Venice 1542) instead of *species* (in Grosseteste).⁵⁰ Hence, this parallel passage shows that the anonymous Latin translation that the Venetian editions reproduced was actually close to the fragments from Philoponus that Grosseteste had accessed. The passage, eventually, is also useful for reconstructing a few *loci critici* of Grosseteste's text, here indicated in bold, concerning two misread words and two omissions.⁵¹

Philoponus <i>On PAn</i> 109.9-110.3, Venice 1542, 38	Grosseteste <i>On PAn</i> I.7, 142
Dictum autem est <u>in anima</u> quod tres sunt species diffinitionum. Haec enim sunt materiales, haec <u>formales</u> , haec autem simul ex utroque. Verbi gratia iram diffiniens materialiter fervorem esse sanguinis circa cor, <u>formaliter</u> autem appetitum <u>vindictae</u> , ex utroque autem fervorem sanguinis circa cor ob appetitum <u>vindictae</u> .	Dictum est <u>in libro de Anima</u> quod sunt tres species diffinitionis. Alie vero ex materia sunt, alie vero <u>ex specie</u> , alie autem ex utroque, ut iram diffiniens ex materia dicis accensum sanguinis esse circa cor, sed <u>ex specie</u> appetitus <u>contrarii doloris</u> ; ex utroque autem accensum sanguinis circa cor propter appetitum pro <u>dolore</u> .
<u>Formales</u> igitur diffinitiones principia sunt demonstrationum. Demonstrationes enim causata ex causis syllogizant. Causa enim est materiae <u>forma</u> , per talem enim <u>formam</u> talis materia est. Ad demonstrationem igitur irae utetur quis in ratione principia <u>formali</u> diffinitione, hoc modo aliquis appetit <u>vindictam</u> , appetentem vindictam fervet sanguine circa cor , fervet igitur aliquis sanguine circa cor. Ecce igitur in his	<u>Ex specie</u> igitur principia sunt demonstrationum, demonstrationes enim ex causis causata syllogizant, causa autem materie <u>species</u> est; propter autem huiusmodi <u>species</u> et tales erunt omnino . In demonstratione igitur ut usus est in principio a <u>specie</u> diffinitione hoc modo. Quidam appetit <u>econtra tristari</u> <...> accendit qui est circa cor sanguinem. Ecce igitur in his que est a <u>specie</u> diffinitione in principio demonstrationis usi sumus,

⁴⁹ John Philoponus, *In Aristotelis De anima libros commentaria*, Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca, vol. 15, edited by M. Hayduck (Berlin: Reimer, 1897), 231, 5-28. English transl.: Philoponus, *On Aristotle's "On the Soul 2.1-6"*, translated by W. Charlton (Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 2005), 32.

⁵⁰ See *De anima* I.1.403a30. The Renaissance Latin translation of Philoponus' *Commentary On the Soul* (Venice 1547 by Girolamo Scotti) for which see the note 63 below, translates "ira est fervor sanguinis circa cor ex ultioni impetu" and adopts "forma" (fol. 39vb).

⁵¹ Rossi, "Tracce della versione latina", 437, Rossi rightly points out the two omissions, suggests *olos* as the Greek wrong reading which generated *omnino* in place of *materia* (*yle*) and suggests *ire* (the reading of Venice 1542) in place of *ut*, an error likely incurred in the Latin transmission alone, from a wrong reading of *ire*.

diffinitione <u>formali</u> ad principium demonstrationis usus sum.	
Materialem autem conclusionem fieri demonstrationis, non enim possibile est demonstrantes principium demonstrationis materialem facere, conclusionem autem formalem. ...	que vero est ex materia conclusionem fecimus. Sed non est possibile demonstrantem a materia principium facere <...>;
diffinitio autem ex utraque eadem est cum demonstratione, positione sola differens, propterea quod in diffiniendo a materia incipientes definimus in <u>formam</u> . Iram esse dicentes fervorem sanguinis circa cor ob appetitum <u>vindictae</u> . In demonstratione autem econtrario utimur ex <u>forma</u> incipientes et definientes in materiam. Si igitur omnis diffinitio principium est demonstrationis aut conclusionis aliqua demonstrationis aut demonstratione positione sola differens.	sed tamen ex utroque diffinitio idem erit cum demonstratione sola positione differens, quoniam in diffiniendo a materia incipientes pervenimus in <u>speciem</u> , iram esse dicentes accensum sanguinis circa cor propter appetitum <u>contrarii doloris</u> . Sed in demonstratione econtrario utimur, ex <u>specie</u> incipientes in materiam pervenimus. Si igitur omnis diffinitio est principium demonstrationis aut conclusio aut demonstratio sola positione differens
Ostensum autem est quod corruptibilium non est demonstratio, simul ostensum erit quoniam neque diffinitionem corruptibilium possibile est dare.	ostensum est quod corruptibilium non est demonstratio, simul ostensum est quod neque diffinitionem corruptibilium assignare possibile est.

4.6. First Philosophy and Common Principles in Superior and Subordinate Sciences

This marginal reference in Theodosius' translation indicates a double exposition of a passage of *PAn* I.9 (76a15) asserting that the principles of superior and subordinate sciences have a common feature. I think that the parallelism between Philoponus and Grosseteste can be envisaged in the assertion that these sciences may share common principles from what is common to both, namely "first philosophy" (transl. 21), that is, "metaphysics".

Philoponus <i>On PAn</i> , 118.21; Venice 1542, 40 <i>in marg.</i> : Duplex expositio. Prima sic commenta magna, secunda omnia hic Linconiensis ⁵²	Grosseteste <i>On PAn</i> , I.8, 152.110-16
Talia inquit, id est, quae per principia generalioris scientiae demonstrantur simili	Dictum est quod demonstratio est ex appropriatis principiis, cui dicto subiungit

⁵² Here, Venice 1534 presents the marginal note *Expositio Simplicii*; hence, *Commenta magna* might indicate Simplicius' commentary.

modo monstrantur cum aliis quae ex propriis principiis demonstrantur ... Sed horum principia habent commune pro eo quod est principia horum et inferiorum et superiorum ad communes omnium reducuntur, id est, ad primam philosophiam.	Aristoteles quod, licet ipsa principia sint appropriata, habent tamen commune, id est, habent communem philosophiam explanantem ipsa principia ut metaphysicam vel topicam. ⁵³
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4.7. Fallacious Arguments Are Not in Sciences

This example stems from *PAn* I.12 (77b27-28) in which Aristotle states that fallacious argument does not occur in mathematics. After having distinguished among questions that are ungeometrical and not appropriate to the science, Philoponus observes that fallacious arguments (*paralogismi*) do not occur in sciences (*doctrinae*) in the same way as in dialectical conversations, since “falsehood is less troublesome in sciences than in dialectical procedures” (transl. 54). This happens because the middle term is employed twice. Grosseteste’s explanation differs from Philoponus’ but the marginal note in Theodosius’ translation remarks to “look at the bishop of Lincoln, who says the same thing <as Philoponus>, and appropriately”. Actually, Philoponus introduces a number of examples, while Grosseteste summarises and simplifies the explanation. I have reproduced only the opening of both texts, given that this case is not a quote, but rather a reworking.

Philoponus <i>InPostAn</i> , 154,13-20, Ven 1542, 51-52 <i>in marg.</i> : Expositio texti 60. Vide Lincolnensem qui idem videtur dicere et bene	Grosseteste <i>InPostAn.</i> , I.11, 178-179
<i>In doctrinis autem non est similiter paralogismus, quoniam medium semper est duplex. Cum dixerit quae sint non geometricae interrogationes ...</i>	<i>In doctrinis autem non similiter est paralogismus et cetera. Dictum est in proxima littera quod in terminis doctrinalibus fiunt sillogismi ...</i>

4.8. Twinkling Stars

Our last example is a parallel passage first outlined by Rossi and later discussed by Ebbesen, as it has an equivalent in Alexander Neckam.⁵⁴ The correspondence has been

⁵³ I wish to thank a reviewer of my paper for evidencing that reference to *Topics* is also in Themistius, *Paraphrasis of the Posterior Analytics*, ch 7. See O’Donnell, “Themistius’ Paraphrasis”, 264-265.

⁵⁴ Ebbesen, “Philoponus, ‘Alexander’ and the Origins of Medieval Logic”, 160; for Alexander Neckam’s passage (*De Naturis Rerum* lvi, 37-38), see also Richard Southern, *Robert Grosseteste: The Growth of an English Mind in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 154-155.

used to prove the early-thirteenth-century diffusion of Philoponus in association with James of Venice's Aristotelian translations. The topic under discussion is from *PAN* I.13 (78a34-38), where Aristotle distinguishes between induction and perception and exemplifies a case of induction referring to the twinkling of stars as depending upon their distance: "since it is not because they do not twinkle that they are near, but because they are near that they do not twinkle" (transl. 68-69). Philoponus explains that stars – or better planets such as Venus – do not twinkle because the visual rays are stronger when acting at a shorter distance. Thus, the more distant the bright body is, the more it twinkles to sight. Grosseteste reworks Philoponus' line of reasoning by introducing the parameter of angular vision: a wider visual angle and a nearer object allow the visual rays to focus on details, so that one may have a clear and stable sight; conversely, a narrow visual angle and a greater distance cause a trembling of the visual spirits, so that the distant stars seem to twinkle. Curiously, the marginal note by Theodosius deems Grosseteste's argument to be more consistent than Philoponus': "For why stars seem to twinkle see the bishop of Lincoln, who better and more clearly argues about this <than Philoponus does>, that is, in the digression to comment 65". Again, I present only the opening words of both texts, as Grosseteste's reworking – and partial rejection of Philoponus' explanation – impedes accommodating the passages in facing texts:

Philoponus <i>On PAN</i> , 109.9-110.3, Venice 1542, 56 <i>In marg.:</i> Quare errantes stellae videntur scintillare vide Linconiensem qui melius ac clarius de hac re dicit, scilicet in digressionem commenti 65⁵⁵	Grosseteste <i>On PAN</i> ., I.12, 190
<i>Quae autem prope sint non scintillare, ex inductione inquit et sensu sumatur. Verbum enim non disiunctive...</i>	<i>Quid autem sit dictum: prope existens non scintillat sic exponitur. Corpus dicitur distare longe a visu cum propter distantiam sui sub parvo angulo videtur et non subtiliter potest a visu discerni,...</i>

The parallelisms and reworkings examined above present an interesting scenario, which lets us envisage the presence of other possible borrowings or reworkings from Philoponus in Grosseteste's *On PAN* and, perhaps, elsewhere in his writings.⁵⁶ This possibility must be supported with due attention to the texts. Regarding Grosseteste's *On PAN*, in particular, other Greek *expositores* were used, among whom indeed is included Themistius. Accordingly, a similarity with Philoponus, compared with Themistius' paraphrase, may suggest the latter as Grosseteste's source. This happens, for instance, in the comment on Aristotle's reference to "the puzzle in the *Meno*", which introduces

⁵⁵ Here, Venice 1534 presents the gloss: "Quare errantes stelle videntur scintillare". Again, Theodosius expands on it by introducing the reference to Grosseteste.

⁵⁶ On this issue, I am presently conducting research which will be published elsewhere.

the statement “you learn either nothing or what you already know” in *PAn* I.1 (71a29-30). Grosseteste (*On PAn*, I.1, 94-101) refers to it after mentioning that the sentence “what is known according to the universal and ignored according to the particular [literally: in self person]” is not by Aristotle but by commentators (*exponentes*). In this case, the commentator turns out to be Themistius, whose text is followed quite closely by Grosseteste. In particular, it is worth noticing that Grosseteste could hardly understand how the “puzzle” works, unless by accessing the *Meno*. Both Themistius and Philoponus explicate what Aristotle says by mentioning the slave, which Grosseteste also mentions but surely not from Aristotle, who does not explicitly refer to the episode narrated by Plato. Now, while Philoponus rightly mentions the slave’s remembering of the “mathematical theorem”, Themistius proposes, as a mere example of his own, the case of a fugitive slave, who cannot be captured unless the seeker knows his face. Grosseteste, who did not know the *Meno*, presents, in turn, Themistius’ example as if it were the genuine explanation by Plato! Hereafter, I put in parallel, in English, how the examples run in the three authors:⁵⁷

Philoponus <i>On PAn</i> I.14, 13, transl. 26	Themistius <i>On PAn</i> , transl. Achard, 24	Grosseteste <i>On PAn</i> I.1.97-98 (my transl.)
In response to this, Socrates brought Meno’s slave and by asking him questions made him discover a theorem which he did not know....	... just like in the case, I <u>suppose</u> , of a household slave who has run away: if we do not know him, we cannot search for him, but if we know him, we are able both to search for him and to discover him.	And <u>Plato proposed</u> the example of the lord from whom a slave has run away; if the seeker does not know him [the slave], the seeker will not gain knowledge of him more than of any other person the seeker may meet.

In conclusion, the parallel passages examined so far show that Grosseteste quoted only two long passages from Philoponus (4.4 and 4.5), while the other occurrences are more elusive, being reworkings or summaries, at least according to Theodosius’ glosses. Yet, both quotes demonstrate that the “Latin Philoponus” of the Venetian editions is pretty similar to Grosseteste’s parallel passages. Rossi had already noted that Grosseteste’s quotations from Philoponus “have the characteristics of James’ versions”.⁵⁸ Now, given that the Venice editions derive from a preceding Latin translation remained unidentified – in my opinion, neither Bonini’s nor Zamberti’s versions correspond to it –, one may wonder where this conformity came from, if not by a Latin translation similar to

⁵⁷ Themistius’ translation is by Martin Achard, “Themistius’ Paraphrase of *Posterior Analytics* 71a17-b8. An Example of Rearrangement of an Aristotelian Text”, *Laval théologique et philosophique* 64/1 (2008): 19-34. On the early diffusion of Themistius’ example see also Costantino Marmo, *Semiotica e linguaggio nella scolastica. Parigi, Bologna, Erfurt 1270-1330: La semiotica dei Modisti* (Rome: Istituto Palazzo Borromini, 1994), 21, note 5.

⁵⁸ Rossi, “Introduzione”, 19, note 53: “I brani rinvenuti nel *Commento* non sono tradotti da Grossatesta, perché hanno le caratteristiche delle versioni di Giacomo Veneto”.

the fragments accessed by Grosseteste three centuries earlier. May this translation have been a wider collection of James of Venice's glosses from Philoponus' commentary, or even his alleged (see above, at section 2) complete translation? I cannot but leave this question unanswered. For now, the *loci paralleli* examined so far allow us only to grasp Grosseteste's familiarity with the Greek commentator and his capacity to accommodate Philoponus' excerpts in his own line of reasoning. Indeed, Grosseteste was not a mere copyist of marginal glosses, but looked at them with a curious and critical eye, in search of the best "guess" in interpreting Aristotle's difficulties.

5. Concluding Remarks: Traces of Philoponus in Grosseteste's References to *De anima* and a Quote from Philoponus via Averroes

In conclusion of my examination, I want to discuss the three references to Aristotle's *De anima* in Grosseteste's *On PAN* and, briefly, consider a last indirect quote from Philoponus, this time accessed by Grosseteste through Averroes.

Let us first consider the references to the *Liber de anima* in Grosseteste's *On PAN*. Since the first quote opens the longest excerpt from Philoponus (passage number 4.5 above), one wonders if the two other mentions may derive from Philoponus as well. The second reference by Grosseteste (*On PAN* I.9, 166) pinpoints an example of how natural philosophy adopts conclusions "made up from opposite statements" (*contexte ex oppositis*). Grosseteste remarks that "of this kind is this conclusion from the *Book of the Soul*, namely that common sense is both divisible and indivisible" ("qualis est hec conclusio in libro De Anima: sensus communis est divisibilis et indivisibilis"). This passage indicates *De anima* III.2 (427a2-3), and, interestingly, introduces a division in "conclusions", in line with the system Grosseteste adopted in his commentaries *On PAN* and *On Physics*.⁵⁹ The passage, however, does not seem to have a correspondence in Philoponus' *On PAN* nor, as far as I have seen, in his *Commentary On the Soul*. The third and last reference to *De anima* in Grosseteste's *On PAN* (I.19, 286) states, in turn, that human passions are not considered in the science of logic, but "physical science deals with some of them in the *Book on the Soul*, and the science of ethics deals with others" ("in quasdam de aliis pertractat physica in libro de Anima, quasdam vero Ethica"). Here, Grosseteste is referring to *PAN* I.33 (89b7-9), where Aristotle states that opinion, prudence, wisdom and so on are partly pertaining to physics and partly to ethics. A vague connection with Philoponus is in the latter's remark that "physics" means, here, the study of beings *qua* beings, including both physical beings and those "above them".⁶⁰ Thus, if Grosseteste had read this passage, he might have credited those

⁵⁹ See note 45 above.

⁶⁰ Philop *On PAN* 33.30, 333.1. In Venice 1542, 112: "Haec quidem physicae illa vero etichae considerationis sunt magis. Physicam speculationem dicit non quia de rebus physicis tractet, quam proprie vocamus physiologiam, sed quae simpliciter de entibus tractet quatenus entia sunt sive physica sint, sive supra ista".

physical and “intellectual” beings to be the human beings, i.e., the subject of Aristotle’s *De anima*. However, at present this is nothing more than a vague suggestion.

To my knowledge, there are no other explicit references to Aristotle’s *De anima* in Grosseteste’s writings. Contrary to contemporary scholars such as John Blund and Alexander Neckam, the bishop of Lincoln did not nourish a special interest in this Aristotelian work, and did not write a work dealing specifically with the human soul.⁶¹ Moreover, his insights into the nature and functions of the soul and its relation to the body remained over the years strongly dependent upon Augustine, the pseudo-Augustinian *De spiritu et anima* and, partially, Avicenna, as James McEvoy convincingly concluded.⁶² Nonetheless, Grosseteste’s early treatise *On Sound Generation* shows an implicit presence of Aristotle’s *De anima*, emerging from terminological correspondences with James of Venice’s translation: the word *sonativum* (for *psophetikon*, “having the capacity to sound”), and the syntagm *connaturalis aer edificatus in auribus*, namely “the air of the same nature <as external air> built up in the ears”, where *edificari* is for *egkatoikodomeo* (i.e. “to build in”) and *connaturalis* for *sumphues* (“inborn”).⁶³ This key expression is also present in Grosseteste’s earlier *On the Liberal Arts* (*De artibus liberalibus*), where, similarly to what happens in *On Sound Generation*, it is inserted within an Augustinian frame.⁶⁴ Now, though the single terms of this expression

⁶¹ The *Tractatus de anima* attributed to him is generally credited to be spurious. See Thomson, *A catalogue*, 89-90. It is basically a reworking from Philipp the Chancellor’s *De anima*.

⁶² See James McEvoy, *The Philosophy of Robert Grosseteste* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 225-238.

⁶³ See Robert Grosseteste, *De generatione sonorum/On the Generation of Sound*, edited and translated by S. O. Sønnesyn, in *The Scientific Works of Robert Grosseteste*, vol. 1. *Knowing and Speaking: Robert Grosseteste’s De artibus liberalibus ‘On the Liberal Arts’ and De generatione sonorum ‘On the Generation of Sounds’*, edited by G. E. M. Gasper, C. Panti, T. McLeish, and H. E. Smithson (Oxford University Press: Oxford 2019), 244-255. Grosseteste follows partially Aristotle’s *De anima* book 2, ch. 8. He first considers the movement of vibration transmitted to the air, then how it reaches the air internal to the ears, and finally the human voice. Grosseteste is silent on relevant topics that Aristotle dwells on, such as the distinction between sound in potency and actuality, soft and hard bodies in sound production, and high and low tones. Moreover, he develops in an original way the mechanism of oscillation needed to put in movement the air.

⁶⁴ In the *De generatione sonorum*, 244, this expression is followed by the Augustinian definition “an affection of the body not hidden to the soul”, plus the conclusion “and so the sensation of hearing takes place” (“Et cum tremunt partes sonativi movent aerem sibi contiguum ad similitudinem sui motus, et pervenit usque ad aerem connaturalem in auribus edificatum et fit passio corporis non latens animam, et fit sensus auditus”). In *De artibus liberalibus/On the Liberal Arts*, edited and translated by S. O. Sønnesyn, in *The Scientific Works of Robert Grosseteste*, vol. 1. *Knowing and Speaking: Robert Grosseteste’s De artibus liberalibus ‘On the Liberal Arts’ and De generatione sonorum ‘On the Generation of Sounds’*, edited by G. E. M. Gasper, C. Panti, T. McLeish, and H. E. Smithson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 74-93, at 82, Grosseteste refers to the Augustinian idea of the “numbers” as means of the soul’s action in sense perception. Consequently, he asserts that the “number issued from the soul” meets and senses the “sounding number” produced by the vibration of the external air “in the air built up into the ears” (“cumque sonus auri illabitur, exercet anima numerum in aere connaturali in auribus edificato; quo numero exercito numero sonanti occurrit et sentit numerum sonantem”). This juxtaposition between Aristotle and Augustine may sound naïve, but Grosseteste assigns them a different place in the

are in *De anima*, the expression itself is a Latin transposition of an analogous syntagm in Philoponus' *Commentary on the Soul*.⁶⁵

Evidence of the presence of this commentary by Philoponus in the Latin world dates back to after Grosseteste's death (1253), given that in 1268 William of Moerbeke translated the chapter on intellect from the third book, and not earlier than 1267 a few Latin excerpts from the first book were added to Moerbeke's version of Themistius' paraphrasis.⁶⁶ Hence, the possibility of a pre-existing Latin translation that Grosseteste might have accessed has no evidence. Unfortunately, the first complete Latin translation of Philoponus' *On the Soul*, printed at Venice in 1547 by Girolamo Scotto, lacks a preface and, to my knowledge, has never been studied accurately.⁶⁷ The heading (on fol. 5v) gives the name of the translator: *Matthaeo à Boue Veronensi interprete*. Now, if this "Matthew from Verona" is the humanist Matteo Bosso, born in Verona in 1427 and died in Padua in 1502, the translation dates back to more than half a century earlier than the Venice edition. In this case, Girolamo Scotto accessed Matteo's manuscript – presently not identified – and reproduced his translation.⁶⁸ Similar to the Venice

explanation of sound: Aristotle clarifies the mechanism of sound production, i.e. how the external vibration passes into the ears, and Augustine responds to how the soul perceives it as sound.

⁶⁵ This correspondence has been first envisaged by Sigbjørn Olsen Sønnesyn, Tom C. B. McLeish, and Giles E. M. Gasper, "Aristotle in *On the Liberal Arts*: An Exploration of Possibilities", in *The Scientific Works of Robert Grosseteste*, vol. 1. *Knowing and Speaking: Robert Grosseteste's De artibus liberalibus 'On the Liberal Arts' and De generatione sonorum 'On the Generation of Sounds'*, edited by G. E. M. Gasper, C. Panti, T. McLeish, and H. E. Smithson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 152-165, at 157 note 14.

⁶⁶ Carlos Steel, "Newly Discovered Scholia from Philoponus' Lost Commentary on *De anima* III", *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie Médiévales* 84/2 (2017): 223-243. According to Steel, Moerbeke translated the chapter *On intellect* using a Greek manuscript with the entire text of Philoponus. Moerbeke had already translated part of the first book of Philoponus before 1267, since excerpts are found in the margins of his translation of Themistius' paraphrase (completed on 22 November 1267). This indicates that the entire Greek commentary by Philoponus already circulated before that year. As Steel also remarks, the Greek manuscript used by Moerbeke "may probably be identified with the *commentum Iohannis Philoponi super librum de anima* mentioned in an old catalogue ... of the papal library ... composed in 1295". Interestingly, Grosseteste in his references to *De anima* in *On PAN* adopts the title *Liber de anima*, as well. The last analysis of these fragments from Philoponus' *On the soul* is by Fabio Acerbi and Gudrun Vuillemin-Diem, *La transmission du savoir grec en Occident. Guillaume de Moerbeke, le Laur. Plut. 87.25 (Themistius, «in De an.») et la bibliothèque de Boniface VIII* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2019), part VI. The essay proves that the Greek model used by Moerbeke for his translation of Themistius' paraphrase did not contain such excerpts from Philoponus' commentary.

⁶⁷ As remarked by Steel, "Newly Discovered Scholia", Philoponus' *On the soul* is actually a collection of Ammonius' teachings titled: "Scholarly notes taken by John the Alexandrian on Aristotle's treatise *On the Soul* from the courses of Ammonius, son of Hermias, with some critical remarks of his own". The frontispiece of the Venetian Latin edition adopts the same Greek title: "Ioannis Alexandrei philosophi in tres libros De anima Aristotelis breves annotations ex dissertationibus Ammonii Hermei cum quibusdam propriis meditationibus, nuper e Greco in linguam Latinam conversae".

⁶⁸ This consideration, by the way, also explains why the text lacks a dedicatory epistle.

editions of Philoponus' *On PAN*, also this translation gives the Aristotelian lemmas according to James' translation of *De anima* and maintains a Latin terminology quite close to that model, at least at a first inspection.

The Latin-to-Latin comparison between these few passages of Grosseteste's *On Sound Generation* and the corresponding phrases in the Venice edition evidences the correspondence of the term *sonativum* and a similar rendering for the expression *aer connaturalis in auribus edificatus*, which in Venice 1547 is: *aer in concavitatibus aurium inaedificatus*. Moreover, it is interesting to note that Philoponus adopts a theory of sense perception grounded on the Neoplatonic view of the activity of the soul, which perceives bodily passions by means of the *pneuma* (i.e. *spiritus*), the primary sense-organ for sight, hearing and smelling.⁶⁹ Grosseteste follows a similar theory.⁷⁰ However, he mentions the "moving spirits" (*spiritus motivi*) of the voice, while Philoponus refers to the *spiritus* of the eardrum.⁷¹ We can find a correspondence also in the term adopted for qualifying the stroke needed for generating a sound: *violenter* in Grosseteste and *violenter/violento ictu* in Venice 1547. The word *violenter/violentus* is missing from James of Venice's version of *De anima* and, again, Grosseteste might have intercepted it from a gloss bearing this fragment from Philoponus, as the term is repeated on several occasions (needless to say, once we exclude other potential sources, and one of these, for instance, could be Algazali's *Physics*).⁷² The chart below shows these few parallelisms and their English translations:⁷³

Philoponus, <i>On the Soul</i>	Philoponus, <i>Comm. De anima</i> (Venice 1547)	Grosseteste, <i>De gen. son.</i>	Grosseteste, <i>On Sound Gen.</i>
364.12-13, 50: For there is certain air that is inborn and built into the cavity of the ears ...	f. 60ra: Est enim congenitus quidam <u>aer in concavitatibus aurium inaedificatus</u> ...	§2. 244: ... et [motus] pervenit usque <u>ad aerem connaturalem in auribus edificatum</u> et fit passio corporis	§2: 245. thus, it [i.e. the movement] reaches the air of the same nature built up in the ears, and a passion of the body takes place,

⁶⁹ The "spirit" (*pneuma*) in Philoponus is the vehicle for the soul as attached to the human body, and a substance compounded of air and fire filling the nerves and transmitting vital and cognitive functions. See H. J. Blumenthal, "Body and Soul in Philoponus", *The Monist* 69/3 (1986): 370-382.

⁷⁰ See Cecilia Panti, "The Quadrivium and the Discipline of Music", in *The Scientific Works of Robert Grosseteste*, vol. 1. *Knowing and Speaking: Robert Grosseteste's De artibus liberalibus 'On the Liberal Arts' and De generatione sonorum 'On the Generation of Sounds'*, edited by G. E. M. Gasper, C. Panti, T. McLeish, and H. E. Smithson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 112-151.

⁷¹ Grosseteste, *On PAN.*, I.12, 190, as expressed, for instance, in the passage (referred to at 4.8) on stars' twinkling due to the "trembling of the spirits which receive the species of the visible thing" (*propter tremorem spirituum recipientium speciem rei visibilis*).

⁷² Panti, "The Quadrivium and the Discipline of Music", 135.

⁷³ Philoponus, *On Aristotle's "On the Soul 2.7-12"*, translated by W. Charlton (Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 2005).

366.35-37, 53 ... the air in the ear is built in unmoving	f. 61ra: Id est eo quod <u>inedificatus</u> auditui <u>congenitus aer</u> ... in auribus aer immobilis <u>inaedificatus</u>	non latens animam, et fit sensus auditus.	which is not hidden to the soul, and the sensation of hearing takes place.
364.14-16 ... and transmits them to the primary thing that perceives. This is the acoustic pneuma that resides in the eardrum itself.	f. 60ra: et sonorum operationes suscipiens ad primum sensitivuum transvehit, id est, autem <u>sensitivuum spiritus</u> , qui in ipsa est membrana collocatus.	§4. 246: Sed cuidam voci dat speciem et perfectionem ... figuratio motus <u>spirituum</u> <u>motivorum</u> instrumentorum vocalium.	§2: 247 [my translation]. Sed the active shaping itself of ... the movements of the moving spirits gives its species and perfection to a certain voice...
... he defines what it is that sounds: it is that he says which can change air keeping it one and continuous up to hearing	est <u>sonativum</u> nempe id quod potest unum et continuum aerem servatum ad auditum usque movere ...	§2. 244: Et cum tremunt partes <u>sonativi</u> movent aerem sibi contiguam similitudinem sui motus	§2: 245. And when the parts of the sounding body vibrate, they move the air surrounding them according to their movement;
355.1-2 (transl. 40): For the air that is caught up in them being forced out violently all at once makes the noise. 356.25 (transl. 42) ... but the air once pushed by the violent blow ...	fol. 59vb: ... in his enim qui intercipitur aer, conglobatus et <u>violenter</u> expressus, sonum facit. fol. 60 ra: ... et <u>repercussus</u> et <u>violenter</u> revolutus ...	§1. 244. Cum <u>sonativum</u> <u>percutitur</u> <u>violenter</u> , partes ipsius sonativi egrediuntur a situ naturali ...	§1. 245. When a sounding body is struck violently, the parts of the sounding body escape from their natural place...

These hints are not sufficient for envisaging a direct borrowing from Philoponus' *Commentary On the Soul*. Nevertheless, if we consider them in relation to the possibility that James of Venice might have accompanied his translations with glosses or interpolations taken from Philoponus, particularly when some terms are repeated more than once, the scenario changes. Indeed, if that is the case, it seems fairly plausible that Grosseteste might have intercepted these fragments in the margins of the copy of *De anima* he accessed, similarly to what happened in his *Commentary on Posterior Analytics*.

Grosseteste did not know “who” was Philoponus, the *expositor* hidden behind the fragments he quotes. However, he had met the name “John the Grammarian” (*Iohannes Grammaticus*) at least once. This happens in the context of another of Grosseteste's ‘interpolations’, namely a passage from Averroes' comment 41 of the *Great Commentary on Metaphysics*, book 12, that Grosseteste inserts in his *De motu supercelestium*. The latter,

indeed, includes extensive – and, again, unacknowledged – passages from comments 36 and 41 of Averroes’ commentary.⁷⁴ Averroes, in turn, mentions Philoponus several times.⁷⁵ One of these occurrences is precisely in comment 41 on book 12, where Averroes exposes a difficulty that “John the Grammarian” poses about the corruptibility of the heaven, as a consequence of its being a body of finite power. Grosseteste quotes the entire passage, including Philoponus’ objection. But, curiously, he avoids mentioning “John the Grammarian” and turns the sentence into a neutral form (“This statement poses a difficulty”), as we can see in the parallel words, hereafter underlined, which open the long quotation:⁷⁶

Grosseteste, <i>De motu supercelestium</i> , 336	Averroes, <i>Comm. in Metaph. XII</i> , comm. 41, 324B-C
<u>Sed in hoc sermone est difficultas</u> : si enim omne corpus habet potentiam finitam, et celum est corpus, ergo habet potentiam finitam. Sed, cum omne habens potentiam finitam sit corruptibile, erit celum corruptibile ...	<u>Iohannes autem Grammaticus movit magnam quaestionem et difficilem Peripateticorum. Dicit enim</u> si omne corpus habet potentiam finitam et coelum est corpus, ergo habet finitam potentiam, et omne finitum est corruptibile, ergo coelum est corruptibile...

In this case, too, Philoponus enters into Grosseteste’s writings silently and namelessly.

Glosses and interpolations, as it seems, governed the early, anonymous, and fragmentary circulation of sections of Philoponus’ commentaries. These elusive and sparse traces attracted Grosseteste because of their collocation “in the margins” of Aristotelian works, from where, as he states in his “apology” mentioned above, they offered valuable conjectures in interpreting the difficult theories of Aristotle.

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⁷⁴ See Panti, *Moti, virtù e motori*, 187-204. For Grosseteste’s use of Averroes see also above, note 2.

⁷⁵ On Averroes’ references to Philoponus see for instance ‘Abdurrahman Badawi, *Averroès (Ibn Rushd)* (Paris, Vrin 1998), Appendix 1: “Averroès face au texte qu’il commente”.

⁷⁶ See Panti, *Moti, virtù e motori*, 377-378. The edition of Grosseteste’s *De motu supercelestium* is on 329-346. Averroes’ commentary is edited in *Commentaria magna in Aristotelis Metaphysicorum libri XIII cum Averrois Cordubensis in eosdem commentariis*, in *Aristotelis opera cum Averrois Commentariis*, vol. 8 (Venetiis apud Iunctas, 1562).

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