

AMOS BERTOLACCI

The Latin Translation and the Original Version of the *Ilāhiyyāt (Science of Divine Things)* of Avicenna's *Kitāb al-Šifā'**

The Latin translation of the *Ilāhiyyāt (Science of Divine Things)*, namely of the metaphysical section of Avicenna's *Kitāb al-Šifā'* (*Book of the Cure*, or: *of the Healing*, according to another possible interpretation of the key-term of the title), is not the specular image of the Arabic text of the work¹. This translation — penned in all likelihood in Toledo in the second half of the XII century, ascribed to Dominicus Gundissalvi or Gundissalinus in some Latin manuscripts, and edited by Simone Van Riet between 1977 and 1983 with the title *Liber de Philosophia Prima sive Scientia Divina* (henceforth: *Philosophia prima*) — differs from the Arabic text available in the standard printing published in Cairo in 1960 in a few respects². Since the Latin translation is among the most ancient extant witnesses of the *Ilāhiyyāt* presently available — more precisely, it is one

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¹ AVICENNA LATINUS, *Liber de Philosophia prima sive Scientia divina*, I-IV. Édition critique par S. VAN RIET. Introduction par G. VERBEKE, Peeters - Brill, Louvain - Leiden 1977; AVICENNA LATINUS *Liber de Philosophia prima sive Scientia divina*, V-X. Édition critique par S. VAN RIET. Introduction par G. VERBEKE, Peeters - Brill, Louvain - Leiden 1980; AVICENNA LATINUS *Liber de Philosophia prima sive Scientia divina*, I-X. Lexiques par S. VAN RIET, Peeters - Brill, Louvain-la-Neuve - Leiden 1983 (pp. 6*-14*: *addenda et corrigenda* regarding the previous two volumes).

² IBN SĪNĀ, *Al-Šifā', al-ilāhiyyāt* (1), edd. Ġ. Š. QANAWATĪ, S. ZĀYID, al-Hay'a al-'amma li-šū'ūn al-maṭābī' al-amīriyya, Cairo 1960; IBN SĪNĀ, *Al-Šifā', al-ilāhiyyāt* (2), edd. M. Y. MŪSĀ, S. DUNYĀ, S. ZĀYID, al-Hay'a al-'amma li-šū'ūn al-maṭābī' al-amīriyya, Cairo 1960.

of the sixth oldest surviving testimonia of the work currently known³ — any peculiarity of its text is worth special attention.

By comparing the edition Van Riet of the *Philosophia prima* and the Cairo printing of the Arabic text, one notices two major differences. First, the last two chapters of the work, which are a sort of appendix on practical philosophy with many Islamic underpinnings, are summarized rather than translated into Latin, differently from what the translator does with the rest of the work, whose translation is very literal. This first difference is, in all likelihood, intentional⁴, although the reasons behind the translator's choice of summarizing rather than translating chapters X.4-5 can be various (for example, the awareness that these chapters, though appended by Avicenna to metaphysics, were extraneous to this discipline; the reluctance to convey non-Christian, i.e. distinctly Islamic, notions and ideas; the inability to translate unfamiliar Islamic tenets or the intention of sparing the readers notions and ideas hardly understandable by them, etc.)⁵.

The second main difference of the *Philosophia Prima* with respect to its Arabic counterpart, on the contrary, does not seem to be imputable to the translator's intervention, since — contrary to the first one — it regards a topic surely belonging to metaphysics, with no direct religious implication: it is the disposition of chapters in the fifth treatise of the work, dealing with universals, and the resulting order of exposition of topics regarding this theory. This variation is shared by both the so-called 'Ancient text' and 'Revised Text' of the *Philosophia Prima* distinguished by Van Riet, and does not seem to be involved in the phenomenon of 'double translations' that affects otherwise single terms or

³ See the Appendix, below. It is worth remarking that the Latin translation (second half of the XII c.) represents only the terminus *ante quem* for the dating of its Arabic exemplar, and that nothing prevents this latter to stand higher in the chronological classification of witnesses.

⁴ No Arabic manuscript known to date summarizes in the same way the text of the last two chapters of the work.

⁵ See S. DI DONATO, *I traduttori di fronte alle citazioni coraniche: errori ed estraneità culturale. Il caso di un trattato di Averroè*, in J. HAMESSE, O. WEIJERS eds., *Écriture et réécriture des textes philosophiques médiévaux. Volume d'hommage offert à Colette Sirat*, Brepols, Turnhout 2006, pp. 45-61; D. N. HASSE, *Abbreviation in Medieval Arabic Translations from Arabic*, in R. WISNOVSKY, F. WALLIS, J. C. FUMO, C. FRAENKEL eds., *Vehicles of Transmission, Translation, and Transformation in Medieval Cultures*, Brepols, Turnhout 2011, pp. 159-172. Also in his *De scientiis*, Gundisalvi — the probable translator of the *Ilāhiyyāt* — abridges the part of Fārābī's *Iḥṣā' al-'ulūm* (*Catalogue of the Sciences*) most involved with Islamic issues (political sciences and jurisprudence are shortened, whereas dialectical theology is totally omitted). One may wonder whether Gundisalvi's ecclesiastic capacity of canon, or the bishop of Toledo's sponsorship of the Latin translation of the *Šifā'*, played any role in this tendency to omit the Islamic elements of Avicenna's discourse. The contention « Dominicus Gundisalvi ... did not abbreviate in any significant manner » (D. N. HASSE, *Latin Averroes Translations of the First Half of the Thirteenth Century*, Georg Olms Verlag, Hildesheim - Zürich - New York 2010, p. 37) applies, of course, to the parts of his translations that are *verbatim* translations, rather than abridgements.

phrases of the translation⁶. In other words, all Latin witnesses of the *Philosophia Prima* presently known convey the variation at stake, and its origin cannot be imputed to any stage of the transmission history of the Latin translation itself. This is the only ‘structural’ variation of the roster of chapters within a treatise of the *Ilāhiyyāt* that one finds in the Latin translation, and appears to be rooted in the Arabic background of the translation, as we are going to see. The present contribution deals with this second difference. For the sake of convenience, I label ‘Versio Latina’ the outlook of treatise V that the Latin translation exhibits. The term of comparison is the content of Treatise V that one can read in most of the manuscripts and in all the Arabic printings of the *Ilāhiyyāt*, which I call ‘Versio Vulgata’.

I have already documented elsewhere that the Latin translation witnesses a version of the structure of treatise V of the *Ilāhiyyāt* remarkably different from the one transmitted by the Versio Vulgata, and that some Arabic testimonia attest alternative structural variations of this same treatise⁷. In this previous contribution, I advanced the hypothesis that at least some of the variations taken into account — all of which look deliberate, rather than accidental — might amount to distinct stages of composition and diffusion (what I called, for the sake of brevity, ‘recensions’) of the work, as is the case with other writings of Avicenna⁸; that Avicenna did not necessarily authored all the documented versions of treatise V, so that some accounts of the structure of this treatise might not be due to him; and that the non-authorial versions of treatise V possibly originated in Avicenna’s *atelier*, with particular regard to the role played therein by the secretary and biographer of Avicenna, Abū ‘Ubayd al-Ġūzġānī.

The aim of the present article is to corroborate, widen, and refine the outcomes of previous research in three directions. First, by showing that among the structural variations of the Versio Vulgata of treatise V of the *Ilāhiyyāt* known to date, the Versio Latina is the most relevant. Second, by enlarging

⁶ On the issue of the precise nature and correct interpretation of the phenomenon of ‘double translations’ in the *Philosophia Prima* and in the other parts of the Avicenna Latinus, see the article by R. Arnzen in the present volume.

⁷ A. BERTOLACCI, *How Many Recensions of Avicenna’s Kitāb al-Šifā’?*, « Oriens », 40/2, 2012, pp. 275-303. The Latin translation is taken into account on pp. 287-290.

⁸ The treatise *Fī l-Aḡrām al-‘Ulwiyya* (*On the Supernal Bodies*) whose two recensions are documented in D. GUTAS, *The Study of Avicenna. Status Quaestionis atque Agenda*, « Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale », 21, 2010, pp. 45-64 (esp. pp. 60-61; cf. BERTOLACCI, *How Many Recensions* cit., p. 276, n. 1), is not an unique case: see, for instance, the multiple recensions of Avicenna’s commentary on the *Theology of Aristotle* (AVICENNE, *Commentaire sur le livre Lambda de la Métaphysique d’Aristote*, edd. M. GEOFFROY, J. JANSSENS, M. SEBTI, Vrin, Paris 2014) and of Avicenna’s work on phonetics mentioned by A. BAUSANI, *L’enciclopedia dei fratelli della purità. Riassunto, con Introduzione e breve commento, dei 52 trattati o Epistole degli Ikhwān aş-şafā’*, Istituto Universitario Orientale, Napoli 1978, p. 196.

the evidence that points at the existence of an Arabic counterpart of the Versio Latina. Third, by suggesting that the tendencies of Avicenna's school during the master's lifetime and shortly afterwards can shed light on why and by whom the account of the structure of treatise V of the *Ilāhiyyāt* originally devised by Avicenna might have been modified, strengthening the hypothesis of an intervention by Avicenna's direct disciples in general, and of al-Ġūzġānī in particular. On all these accounts, we are now in a better position to evaluate the relationship of the Versio Vulgata with the Versio Latina, both in a chronological and in a genetic perspective, and to formulate some sensible hypothesis on their respective positions in the compositional history of the *Ilāhiyyāt*.

I divide the exposition into three parts. In the first, I summarize preliminarily the outlook of treatise V in the Versio Vulgata. In the second, I take into account how treatise V is structured in the Versio Latina, according to the Latin translation and the various Arabic testimonia of this way of structuring it. In the third, I discuss a series of interrelated issues. About some of them I am more positive, arguing (i) that the Versio Latina is probably more original than the Versio Vulgata; (ii) that the Versio Vulgata might respond to a deliberate intention to make the content of treatise V more compliant with the account of universals provided by Avicenna himself in the logic of the *Šifā'* and, in general, with the traditional pre-Avicennian ways of expounding the doctrine of universals; (iii) and that the Versio Vulgata was arguably the product of Avicenna's school, as the result of shared concerns and theoretical debates that prompted the decision of modifying Avicenna's original text through the intervention, in all likelihood, of al-Ġūzġānī. I am more dubitative, instead, about some further issues, namely (iv) how precisely the Latin translation relates to the Arabic background from which it stems, (v) and whether the Versio Latina can be taken as the outlook of treatise V intended and licensed by Avicenna, or it also conveys elements of later, non authorial modifications with regard to the original plan of the treatise. The Appendix contains a list of the earliest extant dated Arabic manuscripts of the *Ilāhiyyāt* of Avicenna's *Kitāb al-Šifā'* in the first two centuries of its manuscript transmission (V-VI/XI-XII c.), among which the exemplar of the Latin translation should be included.

I. THE VERSIO VULGATA

In the current printing of the *Ilāhiyyāt*, published in Cairo in 1960, the fifth treatise of the work consists of nine chapters, whose content is summarized in their respective titles. Whereas the text of the titles — in this case, as in the rest of the work — comes in all likelihood from Avicenna, the precise way of numbering the chapters in the Cairo printing is largely due to the editors'

intervention⁹. Numeration apart, the amount and order of chapters of treatise V that the Cairo printing conveys is attested by the majority of codices: beside the manuscripts used by the Cairo editors and the Tehran lithograph of 1885, it is also found in a variety of other manuscripts, some of which are quite ancient. This surely justifies calling ‘Versio Vulgata’ the outlook of treatise V that one finds in the Cairo printing.

Treatise V in the Versio Vulgata

V.1: Chapter on common things [= universals] and the modality of their existence (pp. 195-206)

V.2: Chapter on the modality according to which universality belongs to universal natures (completion of the discussion of this [topic]) and on the difference between whole and part, universal and particular (pp. 207-212)

V.3: Chapter on the distinction between genus and matter (pp. 213-219)

V.4: Chapter on the modality according to which the notions external to the genus enter into its nature (pp. 220-227)

V.5: Chapter on the species (pp. 228-229)

V.6: Chapter on determining and ascertaining the differentia (pp. 230-235)

V.7: Chapter on determining the relationship between the definition and the thing defined (pp. 236-242)

V.8: Chapter on the definition (pp. 243-247)

V.9: Chapter on the relationship between the definition and its parts (pp. 248-252)

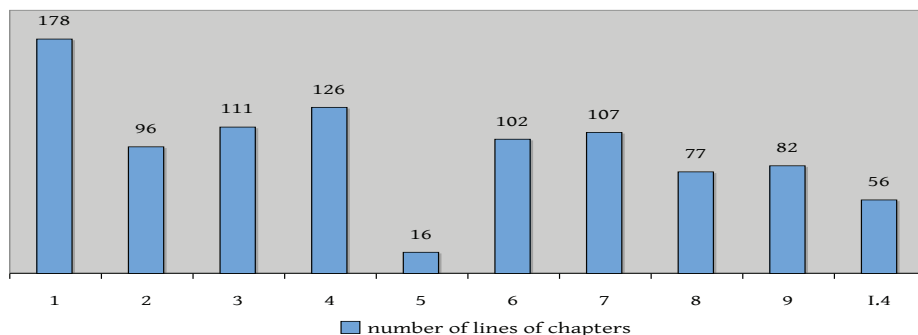
⁹ The Cairo editors place two kinds of numeration before each of the chapters of treatise V (as well as of the other treatises of the *Ilāhiyyāt*): first, they report between square brackets the term ‘chapter’ (*faṣl*) followed by an ordinal number written in letters (only in the case of chapter V.7 the square brackets are absent, possibly because of a misprint); second, they add between round brackets a cardinal numeration by means of the *abjad* system (on this system of numeration, see A. GACEK, *Arabic Manuscripts. A Vademecum for Readers*, Brill, Leiden 2009, pp. 11-13); finally, they report again the term ‘chapter’ and the corresponding title. The first type of numeration (without square brackets) is adopted in some places of the Tehran lithograph of the *Ilāhiyyāt* published in 1885 and used in the Cairo printing (see, for example, chapters I.1 and I.2). The second kind of numeration is attested, without round brackets, in ms. Cairo, Maktabat al-Azhar al-Šarīf, Beḥīṭ 331 *falsafa*, also used in the Cairo printing: it is placed above the various occurrences of the term ‘chapter’ followed by the corresponding title (see for instance, chapters V.1 and V.2). These two kinds of numeration, however, are not frequently attested in the text of manuscripts, where often only the term ‘chapter’ and the corresponding title appear; they occur, in various extents, in the lists of chapters occasionally added to the text of the *Ilāhiyyāt* in manuscripts, or in numerations appended to the single chapters in the margins. Other codices place cardinal consecutive Arabic numerals, not *abjad* letters, above the various occurrences of the term ‘chapter’ in the text (see, for instance, ms. London, India Office [now: British Library, Oriental and India Office Collections], Islamic 1811).

The structure of the treatise at stake in the *Versio Vulgata* looks *prima facie* straightforward: two introductory chapters (V.1-2), regarding universals in general, are followed by a series of chapters dealing with the universals that constitute the essence of things, namely genus (V.3-4), species (V.5) and differentia (V.6); the last three chapters (V.7-9), on the other hand, focus on issues concerning the definition. Whereas chapters V.1-6 are the resumption and the ontological ‘foundation’ in metaphysics of topics already discussed in the logical part of the *Šifā*’ (especially, in the first section of logic, which corresponds to Porphyry’s *Isagoge*), the last two chapters (V.8-9) are Avicenna’s reformulation of themes expounded by Aristotle in *Metaphysics*, book Zeta, chapters 4-6, 10, and 15¹⁰.

On closer inspection, however, the arrangement of the nine chapters of the fifth treatise is less coherent than it may seem at first sight. In particular, three structural problems emerge. (a) First, chapter V.5 is unexpectedly very short (less than one page and half, i.e. sixteen lines, in the Cairo edition), being in this way the shortest chapter of the treatise. Since it is pivotal in the layout of the treatise because of its centrality, and considered the importance of its topic, as expressed by its title (the species, namely the most important of the essential universals), one would expect this chapter to be much lengthier. The impression of an anomalous shortness is confirmed by the comparison of chapter V.5 with the chapters of the rest of the work: chapter V.5 is by far the shortest chapter not only of treatise V, but also of the *Ilāhiyyāt* in its entirety: more precisely, it ranges over less than one third of the extent of the chapter that follows it in the rank of shortness, i.e. chapter I.4, which covers fifty-six lines. It should be recalled, however, that chapter I.4 is an introductory chapter devoted to summarize preliminarily the content of the *Ilāhiyyāt*; its relative shortness, therefore, is not at all surprising. The exceptional brevity of chapter V.5, by contrast, is incongruous with the average length of the chapters of treatise V and of the other chapters of the *Ilāhiyyāt*, as the following chart shows.

¹⁰ For further information on Avicenna’s dependence on *Metaphysics* Z in chapters V.8-9 of the *Ilāhiyyāt*, see the notes to the translation in *Libro della Guarigione, Le Cose Divine* di Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā), a cura di A. BERTOLACCI, UTET (Unione Tipografico-Editrice Torinese), Turin 2007, pp. 481-496.

Treatise V and Chapter I.4



(b) Second, the respective position of chapters V.7 and V.8 is troublesome. Chapter V.8, according to its title, deals with definition in general. Nonetheless it follows, rather than preceding, chapter V.7, whose topic is a particular aspect of definition, namely the relationship of the definition with the thing defined. On the basis of its title, therefore, chapter V.8 would be more suitable than chapter V.7 to initiate the treatment of definition within treatise V. (c) Third, the initial sentence of chapter V.8 (« What we must now make known is the manner in which *things are defined*, *the relation of definition to them*, and the difference between a thing's quiddity and form », emphasis added) resumes expressly the topic mentioned in the title of chapter V.7, and stresses the continuity of the two chapters, rather than their distinctness, making their separation problematic.

With regard to these problems a further observation is in order: two of the 'anomalous' chapters of the *Versio Vulgata* recalled before, namely the extremely succinct chapter V.5, and the chapter V.8 that stands in close continuity with the preceding textual unit, bear very short titles ('Chapter on species', 'Chapter on definition', respectively) in comparison with the more comprehensive and articulated titles of the other chapters of treatise V. These latter invariably integrate the mention of their main topics (like universals, genus, differentia) with supplementary notations, according to a tendency whose climax is reached in chapter V.2. Brevity in titles of chapters is not totally unusual in the *Ilāhiyyāt*¹¹, but represents, both in treatise V and in the *Ilāhiyyāt tout court*, the exception to the rule¹².

¹¹ See, for example, the equally short title of chapter IX.7 'Chapter on the [celestial] destination [of human souls after death]', *faṣl fī l-ma'ād*).

¹² In some manuscripts, chapter V.8 bears a longer title ('Chapter on definition and its parts') that echoes the title of chapter V.9: this might reinforce the impression of an uncertain and problematic status of the title of chapter V.8.

It can be hardly coincidental that exactly the three chapters (V.5; V.7; V.8) that present the structural difficulties just recalled figure in the *Versio Latina* in a radically different way with respect to the *Versio Vulgata*, thus producing an overall layout of treatise V that is largely peculiar in terms of articulation and disposition of chapters.

II. THE *VERSIO LATINA*

II.1 *The Latin Translation*

The *Versio Latina* finds in the Latin medieval translation its most accomplished representative, although it is witnessed also by Arabic testimonia (see below, section II.2). Taking the Latin translation as model, we get the following picture of treatise V:

Treatise V in the *Versio Latina* (according to the Latin translation)

I Capitulum de rebus communibus et quomodo est esse earum [= V.1 in the *Versio Vulgata*]

II Capitulum qualiter naturas comitatur universalitas et completur dictio in hoc et deinde de differentia universalis et particularis ad totum et partem [= V.2]

III Capitulum de assignanda differentia inter genus et materiam [= V.3]

IV Capitulum de intellectibus qui sunt extra intentionem generis quomodo recipiuntur intra naturam generis [= V.4 + V.5]

V Capitulum de assignanda comparatione definitionis et definiti [= V.7 + V.8]

VI Capitulum de differentia et eius certitudine [= V.6]

VII Capitulum de comparatione definitionis cum partibus suis [= V.9]

The first three chapters of the Latin translation (I-III) faithfully reflect chapters V.1-3 of the *Versio Vulgata*. The fourth chapter (IV), on the other hand, is the result of the conflation of chapters V.4 and V.5. Two other consecutive chapters (V.7 and V.8) are not only conflated in a single chapter but also placed as the fifth unit (V) of the treatise, i.e. they are moved before the chapter that precedes them in the Cairo edition (V.6), which becomes the sixth chapter (VI) of the treatise. The seventh, last, chapter (VII) of the Latin translation corresponds to chapter V.9 in the *Versio Vulgata*. The variations with respect to the *Versio Vulgata* are hence of three types: to start with, a first pair of consecutive chapters (V.4, V.5) is conflated; second, a further pair of consecutive chapters (V.7, V.8) is conflated; finally, the second pair of consecutive chapters is transposed before the chapter that precedes them in the *Versio Vulgata* (chapters V.7-8 are placed before chapter V.6). In this way, the Latin translation presents treatise V in its entirety as consisting of only seven chapters.

By means of this arrangement of chapters, the Latin translation provides a sufficiently coherent outlook of treatise V. After the two introductory chapters

on universals in general, the reader finds two chapters dealing with the genus, one chapter devoted to the species/definition, one chapter taking into account the differentia, and one chapter facing the relationship between the definition and its parts (one of which is, of course, the differentia). In this way, the three structural problems that the *Versio Vulgata* presents — namely (a) the succinctness of chapter V.5; (b) the structural priority of a chapter (V.7) dealing with a particular aspect of definition with respect to a chapter (V.8) dealing with definition in general; and (c) the unnatural severing of chapter V.8 from chapter V.7 on account of the affinity of their content — do not subsist anymore: (a) the annexation of chapter V.5 to chapter V.4 considerably extends chapter V.5 *ex parte ante*; (b) in so far as chapter V.8 is the continuation of chapter V.7, it does not bear any title and the impression — conveyed by its title — of a *hysteron proteron* of its topic with respect to the topic of the preceding chapter vanishes; (c) being merged with chapter V.7, chapter V.8 is perfectly allowed to show thematic similarities with the preceding chapter. Moreover, not being independent units and not bearing therefore any title, chapters V.5 and V.8 are saved from the troublesome excessive shortness of their titles with respect to Avicenna's normal usage.

The rearrangement of the chapters of treatise V that occurs in the Latin translation is too complex to be coincidental. It is hard to believe that the two conflations and the transposition are produced by bare mechanical accidents of the process of copy, which would recur and concentrate in Treatise V, be it on the Arabic or the Latin side of the textual transmission: the elaborated character of the outlook of Treatise in the Latin translation with respect to the *Versio Vulgata* excludes its accidental nature. On the other hand, it is equally hard to believe that the Latin translator(s) used an Arabic manuscript (or a sample of Arabic codices) in which the series of chapters of treatise V was as it is in the *Versio Vulgata*, but decided on his (their) own to give a new arrangement to the structure of the treatise. A similar case never happens again in the *Philosophia prima* (in which the last two chapters are abbreviated, as we have seen, but maintained in their original order one after the other), and one wonders why it should occur only in Treatise V if it depended on a deliberate action of the Latin translator(s).

That the *Versio Latina* is neither an accidental result of the process of copy, nor the effect of the Latin translator's creativity, is confirmed by the evidence provided by Arabic manuscripts.

II.2 *The Arabic Evidence*

Besides the Latin translation, a significant sample of the Arabic manuscripts of the *Ilāhiyyāt* presently known bears traces, in various extents and amounts, of the *Versio Latina*. In the wider framework of the manuscripts of the work known to date, about two-hundred and thirty codices contain a portion of Treatise V

sufficient to evaluate the presence, or lack thereof, of the Versio Latina¹³. The majority of these manuscripts witness the Versio Vulgata of this treatise, as I have already pointed out; others, however, document relevant differences with respect to the Versio Vulgata, which are tantamount to similarities with respect to the Versio Latina, in an ascending line of structural variation that brings some manuscripts to be structurally very similar to the Latin translation and, therefore, suitable to be considered testimonia of the Versio Latina. Pieces of evidence of the Versio Latina are spread in more than fifteen manuscripts, so as to make the amount of evidence in question, though small with respect to the overall number of witnesses of the Versio Vulgata, considerable in itself.

The following types of data are discussed in the present section. 1) Some manuscripts of the *Ilāhiyyāt* report, in marginalia or in preliminary indices, lists of chapters of treatise V squarely identical to the Versio Latina. 2) Some manuscripts show evident similarities between the actual content of treatise V and the Versio Latina. 3) Some aspects of the Versio Latina appear to govern also the way in which treatise V was quoted by early and authoritative followers of Avicenna. Testimonia of type 1) and 2) are not always distinct, although not all witnesses of type 1) are also witnesses of type 2) and vice-versa.

II.2.1 Lists of Chapters

The first type of evidence considered here puts us in front of a very precise correspondence: some manuscripts report lists of chapters of treatise V in which exactly the same seven chapters that we find in the Latin Translation are mentioned, according to the same order, by means of their respective titles. This happens not only in marginal glosses written in correspondence of the beginning of treatise V — as in the case of ms. Berlin, Deutsche Staatsbibliothek, Minutoli 229, copied in 1083H/1672-3 in Iṣfahān and already considered in the aforementioned article — but also into the main text of manuscripts immediately before treatise V, i.e. as a transition between the end of treatise IV and the beginning of treatise V¹⁴.

¹³ See www.avicennaproject.eu, section 'Manuscripts/List (per nations)', as of July 2017. An overview of the manuscripts of the *Ilāhiyyāt* of Avicenna's *Šifā'* (with a special focus on the codices preserved in Turkey) is provided in A. BERTOLACCI, *Avicenna's Kitāb al-Šifā'* (Book of the Cure/Healing): *The Manuscripts Preserved in Turkey and Their Significance*, in *The Reception of the Classical Arabic Philosophy in the Ottoman Empire*. Proceedings of the Workshop of the International Associated Laboratory 'Philosophie dans l'aire ottomane', Istanbul, 2-4 November 2015, ed. J. JABBOUR, *Mélanges de l'Université Saint Joseph*, 67, 2017, forthcoming.

¹⁴ In the first case, the lists are often written by hands that are different from the main hands of the manuscripts, whereas in the second case the hands of the lists and the hands of the

The following table compares the roster of chapters of treatise V in the Latin translation with (a) an example of marginal gloss appended to treatise V, similar to the one found in the Berlin manuscript, and (b) an instance of a preliminary account of the contents of treatise V in seven chapters, placed between treatise IV and treatise V. The most ancient manuscripts known so far that bear evidence of (a) and (b) have been chosen as witnesses. If one observes the three cases synoptically, the correspondence is evident and striking.

| Latin Translation | (a) Marginal List of Chapters at the beginning of treatise V in Ms. Ankara, Üniversitesi İlahiyyat Fakültesi Kütüphanesi 36910-11 (1077H/1666-7), fol. 134r ^a | (b) List of Chapters between the end of treatise IV and the beginning of treatise V in Ms. Kolkata, Asiatic Society of Bengal Library, Ar. 102 (469H/1076-7; the date of copy probably refers not to this ms., apparently copied in XI/XVII c., but to its exemplar), fol. 1144r [686r] ^b |
|--|---|--|
| I Capitulum de rebus communibus et quomodo est esse earum [= V.1] | [1] (l) On common things and how their existence is | [1] The first [chapter]: Chapter on common things and how their existence is |
| II Capitulum qualiter naturas comitatur universalitas et completur dictio in hoc et deinde de differentia universalis et particularis ad totum et partem [= V.2] | [2] (ـ) On the modality according to which universality pertains to universal natures (completion of the discussion of this [topic]) and on the difference between whole and part, universal and particular | [2] The second [chapter]: On the modality according to which universality pertains to universal natures (completion of the discussion of this [topic]) and on the difference between whole and part, universal and particular |
| III Capitulum de assignanda differentia inter genus et materiam [= V.3] | [3] (ج) On the distinction between genus and matter | [3] The third [chapter]: On the distinction between genus and matter |

manuscripts are usually identical. In the second case, the lists of chapters of treatise V are usually preceded and followed by analogous lists of chapters of the other treatises of the work at the beginning of these latter. A third case of preliminary overviews of the contents of treatise V is given by the tables (rather than lists) of chapters that one finds in some manuscripts: these tables, however, do not provide significant evidence for the issue at stake, since they often report treatise V according to the Versio Vulgata, with some occasional variations.

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| IV Capitulum de intellectibus qui sunt extra intentionem generis quomodo recipiuntur intra naturam generis [= V.4 + V.5] | [4] (٤) On the fact that the notions external to the genus supervene upon the genus' nature | [4] The fourth [chapter]: On the fact that the notions external to the genus supervene upon the genus' nature |
| V Capitulum de assignanda comparatione definitionis et definiti [= V.7 + V.8] | [5] (٥) On determining the relationship between the definition and the thing defined | [5] The fifth [chapter]: On determining the relationship between the definition and the thing defined |
| VI Capitulum de differentia et eius certitudine [= V.6] | [6] (٦) On the differentia and its ascertainment | [6] The sixth [chapter]: On the differentia and its ascertainment |
| VII Capitulum de comparatione definitionis cum partibus suis [= V.9] | [7] (٧) On the relationship between the definition and its parts | [7] The seventh [chapter]: On the relationship between the definition and its parts |

^a The similar marginal gloss in Ms. Berlin, Minutoli 223 (1083H/1672-3), fol. 67r, reports incompletely the titles of the chapters numbered as first ('Chapter on common things') and as fifth ('Chapter on determining the definition and the thing defined'), and inserts a mistake in the title of the chapter numbered as second ('On the modality according to which quantity [*kammiyya*, instead of: universality, *kulliyya*] pertains to universal natures etc.'): see BERTOLACCI, *How Many Recensions* cit., p. 289 (where the mistake in the title of the fifth chapter is overlooked). Both the ms. Berlin and the ms. Ankara at the beginning of treatise V originally report this treatise as consisting of eight chapters ('The fifth treatise in which eight chapters [are]', ms. Berlin; 'The fifth treatise [of] eight chapters', ms. Ankara), a numerical indication corrected into 'seven' after the insertion of the marginal gloss at stake.

^b Cf. the similar list in Ms. Mashhad, Kitābhānah-i Āstān-i Quds-i Razavī, 7347 (before 630H/1232-3), fol. 118r, and Ms. Paris, BNF Ar. 6829 (Dū l-ḥiġġa 1054H/January-February 1645), fol. 431r: in both cases, the term 'chapter' after the ordinal number at the beginning (omitted by ms. Kolkata) is always explicitly given.

The relevance of these lists of chapters of treatise V that agree with the Latin translation should not be underestimated, since they might be somehow related to the overall conspectus of topics which, according to his biography, Avicenna used to compose most of the *Ṣifā'*.¹⁵

¹⁵ « The Master wrote down the main topics (*ru'ūs al-masā'il*) in approximately twenty quires of one-eighth [octavo?] size, continuing on it for two days, until he had written down the main topics without the presence of a book or source to consult, but entirely from his memory and by heart. Then he placed these quires before him, took a sheet of paper, examined each problem and wrote a

This first type of evidence is somehow corroborated by a related, though much weaker, kind of evidence. Manuscripts sometimes indicate that treatise V is made of seven chapters, as in the Versio Latina, rather than nine, as in the Versio Vulgata; this indication can be found either at the beginning of the *Šifā'*, or at the beginning of the *Ilāhiyyāt*, or at the beginning of treatise V itself, by means of the sole numeral 'seven' (written in letters), without any list of titles¹⁶. This evidence, however, is feeble: first of all, number 7 and number 9 can be easily confused in the process of copy because of their graphic similarity when they are written without dots ('seven', سبعة, *sab'a*; 'nine', تسعة, *tis'a*); moreover, the number seven, taken by itself, indicates the lack of any two chapters whatsoever of treatise V according to the Versio Vulgata, not necessarily of the two chapters that are absent in the Versio Latina¹⁷.

II.2.2 Actual Content of Manuscripts

Passing now from external elements, like the lists or counts of chapters seen in the previous section, to more internal features, namely the actual content of

commentary on it. He would write fifty pages every day, until he had finished all of the "Physics" and "Metaphysics", with the exception of the book on Animals and Plants. He then began on the "Logic" and wrote one section of it » (*The Life of Ibn Sina. A Critical edition and Annotated Translation* by W. E. GOHLMAN, State University of New York Press, Albany, New York 1974, p. 59, modified; for the inclusion of botany, besides zoology, among the parts of the natural philosophy not written by Avicenna in this phase, see *ibid.*, the critical apparatus of the Arabic text). The precise extent of the conspectus of topics of the *Šifā'* that Avicenna wrote is uncertain: it cannot be excluded that it was all-inclusive, encompassing not only the parts of the work written immediately after it according to this passage — namely the main bulk of natural Philosophy (with the exception of zoology and botany), metaphysics, and probably the first section of logic — but also those written before and afterwards.

¹⁶ See, for example, Ms. Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Damat Ibrahim Paşa 823 (697H/1297-8), where the number 'seven' applied to the chapters of treatise V occurs at the beginning of the *Šifā'*.

¹⁷ A sequential numeration of the chapters of treatise V that mirrors the Versio Latina rather than the Versio Vulgata is occasionally found in the margins of manuscripts in correspondence with the chapters of this treatise relevant for the Versio Latina: this happens, for instance, in the already mentioned Ms. Mashhad, Kitābhānah-i Āstān-i Quds-i Razavī, 7347, in which a marginal numeration by means of ordinal numbers (written in letters) is added by a different hand to chapters V.1-4, 6-7, and 9, to the exclusion of chapter V.5 (which the manuscript nonetheless contains as independent unit; see point d) of the present section). But since this manuscript contains a list of seven chapters in accordance with the Versio Latina at the beginning of treatise V (see above, p. 492, n. b), the marginal numeration of chapters of treatise V that reflects the Versio Latina might derive from this list, rather than being an additional piece of evidence. Marginal numerations in eight chapters, rather than seven, are also found: see, for instance, Ms. Cairo, Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, 826 *ḥikma wa-falsafa* (15 Šawwāl 1084H/23 January 1674), in which the marginal *abjad* numeration of chapters, provided by a different hand, does not take into account Chapter V.5. At the beginning of treatise V (fol. 62r), the main hand of this manuscript reports in the left margin that this treatise consists of eight chapters (« and in it eight chapters [are] »).

treatise V, we find a further type of evidence: some Arabic manuscripts present a layout of treatise V similar to the one displayed in the *Versio Latina*. In this case, however, the correspondence between the Latin Translation, on the one hand, and the Arabic manuscripts, on the other, is not exact. We rather observe that the distinct features of the *Versio Latina* tend to spread in distinct manuscripts, or group of manuscripts, as the result of a sort of structural ‘diffraction’. However, at the same time, these same features tend also to concentrate in other manuscripts, according to a trend that brings some manuscripts to instantiate almost integrally the *Versio Latina*, without, however, being its precise duplicate.

More specifically, we are in front of the following fourfold scenario. (a) In some manuscripts, chapters V.7 and V.8 are merged, as in the *Versio Latina*, without however being placed before Chapter V.6¹⁸

(b) Conversely, in other manuscripts chapters V.7 and V.8 are placed before chapter V.6, as in the *Versio Latina*, without however being merged. In this way, these manuscripts display the same sequence of chapters of the *Versio Vulgata* that the *Versio Latina* reproduces, but all the nine chapters of the *Versio Vulgata*, although arranged as in the *Versio Latina*, remain discrete units, with no merging of a chapter with another¹⁹.

(c) Some manuscripts both transpose chapters in accordance with the *Versio Latina* and merge some of them. Thus, in at least one manuscript chapters V.7 and V.8 are merged and placed before chapter V.6, whereas chapters V.4 and V.5 remain distinct. This happens in Ms. Mashhad, *Kitābhānah-i Āstān-i Quds-i Razavī*, 7347, which is one of the most ancient witnesses of the *Ilāhiyyāt*, having been copied before 630H/1232-3²⁰.

(d) We come finally to the most important piece of evidence at our disposal: in at least one manuscript, the sequence of all chapters is as in the *Versio Latina*, chapters V.7 and V.8 are merged and placed before Chapter V.6, and chapters

¹⁸ Ms. Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Or. 4 (Golius Collection) (Catalogue CCO, nr. 1444) (before X/XVI c.) displays no transition from chapter V.7 to chapter V.8 in the main text; the title of chapter V.8 is added in the margin by a different hand. In Ms. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Pococke 125 (Uri’s catalogue I, 435) (Ġumādā I 561H/March-April 1166 or 571H/November-December 1175), the descriptive part of the title of chapter V, 8 (‘... on the definition’) is absent, and only the term *faṣl* (‘Chapter’) appears.

¹⁹ See Mss. Aligarh, Maulana Azad Library, Aligarh Muslim University, Subhān Allāh 110/53 ‘A; Aligarh, Maulana Azad Library, Aligarh Muslim University, University ‘Ulūm 3 ‘A (before 1273H/1856-7); Rampur, Rampur Raza Library, 3483 ع (1293H/1876-7); Tehran, *Kitābhānah-i Maḡlis-i Shūrā-yi Millī* (now: *Kitābhānah-i Maḡlis-i Shūrā-yi Islāmī* = Parliament Library), 1898 (Thursday 16 Rabi’ II 995H/26 March 1587). In Ms. Tehran, *Kitābhānah-i Millī Ġumhūrī-yi Islāmī-yi Iran* (= National Library), 3843 (Šafar 1295H/February-March 1878), the same sequence of chapters is awkwardly brought in agreement with the list of seven chapters of the *Versio Latina* of treatise V that one finds at the beginning of treatise V.

²⁰ On the list of chapters of treatise V corresponding to the *Versio Latina* that this manuscript presents at the beginning of treatise V, see above, pag. 492, n. b.

V.4 and V.5 are partially merged. The climax of this tendency of concentration of the features of the *Versio Latina* in an Arabic codex is reached by Ms. Tehran, *Kitābhānah-i Millī Ğumhūri-yi Islami-yi Iran* (= National Library), 1327 (X/XVI c.)²¹, which presents a layout of treatise V almost identical to the *Versio Latina*, namely a fifth chapter corresponding jointly to chapters V.7 and V.8 of the *Versio Vulgata*, and a seventh chapter corresponding to chapter V.9 of the *Versio Vulgata*. The only difference between the Ms. Tehran and the *Versio Latina* is that, after the fourth chapter corresponding to chapter V.4 of the *Versio Vulgata*, the Ms. Tehran places another chapter, without number: this further chapter has the same title and content of chapter V.5 of the *Versio Vulgata*, but is not numbered (the following chapter in the manuscript is in fact expressly reckoned as fifth chapter).

Treatise V in Ms. Tehran, *Kitābhānah-i Millī Ğumhūri-yi Islami-yi Iran* (= National Library), 1327 (X/XVI c.)

| Chapters | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | --- * | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|-----------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|-----|-----|-----|
| <i>Versio Latina</i> | V.1 | V.2 | V.3 | V.4 | | V.5 | | V.7 |
| <i>Versio Vulgata</i> | | | | V.4 | V.5* | V.7 | V.8 | V.9 |

--- = without number

* = chapters bearing the same title ('On the species', *fī l-naw'*)

Ms. Tehran, Millī 1327 is the most precise Arabic counterpart of the Latin translation of treatise V presently known.

II.2.3 Quotations

The indirect tradition also offers some important clues on the present subject, thanks to authors who lived shortly after Avicenna and whose intellectual pedigree was linked with him. Whereas the debates on metaphysical topics performed within Avicenna's school and recorded in the *Mubāḥaṭāt* (*Discussions*) or in the *Ta'liqāt* (*Annotations*) do not provide relevant data²², much more

²¹ This manuscript constitutes the second part of the codex named 'Millī 580' by Y. Mahdavi in his description of the content of the *Šifā'* in Y. MAHDAVĪ, *Fihrist-i nuṣṣahā-yi muṣannafāt-i Ibn-i Sīnā*, *Intiṣārāt-i Dāniṣgāh-yi Tihrān*, Tehran 1333HŠ/1954, pp. 150-169.

²² The *Mubāḥaṭāt* contain a synopsis (*talḥiṣ*) of the *Ilāhiyyāt*, ascribed to Bahmanyār, which however does not contain passages from treatise V (see D. C. REISMAN, *The Making of the Avicennan Tradition: The Transmission, Contents, and Structure of Ibn Sīnā's al-Mubāḥaṭāt* (The Discussions), Brill,

interesting is the case of the quotations of the *Ilāhiyyāt* by a second-generation student of Avicenna, Abū l-‘Abbās Faḍl Ibn Muḥammad al-Lawkarī — who lived between the V-VI/XI-XII centuries, and was a student of Bahmanyār Ibn al-Marzubān (d. 458H/1066) — in his main philosophical work *Bayān al-Ḥaqq bi-ḍamān al-ṣidq* (*Clarification of the Truth with the Guarantee of the Veracity*)²³. The metaphysical section of Lawkarī’s *Bayān*, as the rest of the work, is modeled upon the large *summa* of Avicennian philosophy written by Lawkarī’s master Bahmanyār (the *Kitāb al-Taḥṣīl*, or *Kitāb al-Taḥṣīlāt*, *Book of the Validated Knowledge*, or *The Digest*), but it also contains references to the *Ilāhiyyāt* that are independent from Bahmanyār’s work.

In Lawkarī’s *Bayān*, eight chapters correspond to treatise V of the *Ilāhiyyāt* (chapters 25 to 32 of the metaphysical section). In the first four of them, Lawkarī depends mainly (although not exclusively) on Bahmanyār’s citations of treatise V of the *Ilāhiyyāt* in chapters IV.2-5 of the second book of the *Taḥṣīl* (ii.IV.2-5), whereas in the remaining four chapters he does not rely anymore on Bahmanyār (whose quotations of treatise V of the *Ilāhiyyāt* in the *Taḥṣīl* stop at ii.IV.5) and draws from this treatise independently from Bahmanyār. The following table gives a more precise idea of Lawkarī’s compositional strategy (the *loci* of treatise V that Lawkarī quotes directly are reported in bold).

AL-LAWKARĪ, *Bayān al-Ḥaqq bi-ḍamān al-ṣidq*. *Al-Qism al-Ilāhī*, ed. I. DĪBĀĠĪ, Tehran 1995, pp. 154-206

| Chapters | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 |
|--|--|-------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Quotations of Bahmanyār, <i>Taḥṣīl</i> | ii.IV.2 | ii.IV.3 | ii.IV.4 | ii.IV.5 | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Quotations of Avicenna, <i>Ilāhiyyāt</i> V | V.1, V.2 (through Bahmanyār) V.1, V.2 | V.2 (through Bahmanyār) | V.3, V.4 (through Bahmanyār) | V.7 (through Bahmanyār) | V.5 | V.8 | V.6 | V.9 |

Leiden 2002, p. 43, and Appendix F, I.B.c.2, p. 293; II, p. 300). Among the references to the *Ilāhiyyāt* in the *Ta’līqāt* analyzed by J. JANSSENS, *Ibn Sīnā’s Ta’līqāt: The Presence of Paraphrases of and Super-Commentaries on the Ilāhiyyāt of the Sifā’*, in F. OPWIS, D. C. REISMAN eds., *Islamic Philosophy, Science, and Religion: Studies in Honor of Dimitri Gutas*, Brill, Leiden - Boston 2012, pp. 201-222, only one regards chapter V.2 (see *ibid.*, p. 213), whereas two others deal with the issue of specific difference (*ibid.*, p. 203, n. 9; p. 209) but are not regarded by Janssens as referring to treatise V.

²³ R. MARCOTTE, *Preliminary Notes on the Life and Works of Abū al-‘Abbās al-Lawkarī* (d. ca. 517/1123), « *Anaquel de Estudios Árabes* », 17, 2006, pp. 133-157; J. JANSSENS, *Al-Lawkarī’s Reception of Ibn Sīnā’s Ilāhiyyāt*, in D. N. HASSE, A. BERTOLACCI eds., *The Arabic, Hebrew and Latin Reception of Avicenna’s Metaphysics*, De Gruyter, Berlin 2012, pp. 7-26.

For the present purposes, it is interesting to observe that already in the first chapter (25) of the *Bayān*, Lawkarī does not simply quote Bahmanyār's succinct account of chapters V.1 and V.2 of the *Ilāhiyyāt*, but he also quotes further passages of the same chapters independently from Bahmanyār. This means that Lawkarī had an access (arguably direct) to the text of the *Ilāhiyyāt*, and in particular of treatise V, different from the indirect access to it provided by Bahmanyār. More importantly, when, in the last four chapters (29-32) of the *Bayān*, Lawkarī stops citing Bahmanyār and quotes directly from treatise V of the *Ilāhiyyāt*, he quotes, in the order, chapters V.5, V.8, V.6, and V.9. A main similarity with the *Versio Latina* is evident: also in Lawkarī, chapter V.8 of the *Ilāhiyyāt* precedes chapter V.6. As in the *Versio Vulgata*, chapter V.5 and chapter V.8 are independent from, respectively, chapter V.4 and chapter V.7, since each of them corresponds to an independent structural unit in Lawkarī's work (chapters 29 and 30, respectively) and bears its own title. It is likely that Lawkarī did not quote at all chapter V.7 of the *Versio Vulgata* in this context, since chapter V.7 is a chapter cited by Bahmanyār in chapter ii.IV.5 of the *Tahṣīl*, already quoted by Lawkarī in chapter 28. It remains therefore uncertain which place chapter V.7 had in Lawkarī's copy of the *Ilāhiyyāt*: we can speculate that the version of the *Ilāhiyyāt* known to Lawkarī presented chapter V.7 immediately before chapter V.8, and that therefore the sequence of chapters of treatise V available to Lawkarī was V.1-4, V.5, V.7, V.8, V.6, V.9, as in the *Versio Latina*, but in discrete form, as in the witnesses of type (b) taken into account in the previous section.

II.3 Provisional Results

The evidential basis corroborating the existence of an Arabic counterpart of the *Versio Latina* is now considerably larger than before. The *Versio Latina* is, in fact, witnessed not only by the *Philosophia Prima*, but also by Arabic manuscripts not consulted, or insufficiently inspected, in the current Arabic edition. More specifically, whereas only one piece of evidence from the Arabic side was known so far, namely the list of chapters that is reported in the Berlin manuscript mentioned above, the data now available embrace not only further instances of the same type of evidence (similar lists of chapters of treatise V in other manuscripts), but also the actual content of this treatise in some codices, and the citations of treatise V by subsequent authors.

This allows to draw some provisional conclusions. First, the existence of several Arabic witnesses of the *Versio Latina* confirms that this latter is not an intentional modification of treatise V introduced arbitrarily into the translation by the Latin translator himself, who for some reasons decided to convey a version of treatise V different from the *Versio Vulgata* that he could read in his Arabic model; this modification rather lies outside the scope of the translator's possible

interventions and depends on the Arabic exemplar of the Latin translation. No alternative hypothesis is viable: in particular, it looks unlikely that all the Arabic witnesses of the Versio Latina that have been discussed above might bear traces, retroactively, of the arbitrary choice supposedly made by the Latin translator in a different cultural and linguistic context and at the remote Western periphery of the Muslim world, especially because some of the Arabic witnesses in question appear to be coeval, if not older, than the Latin translation itself.

Second, the plurality, both in number and in typology, of the Arabic witnesses of the Versio Latina prompts also to exclude that the variation in question, though occurring originally on the Arabic branch of the tradition, was limited to the exemplar of the Latin translation, as if the Arabic model of the Latin translation or its direct or remote ancestor had suffered some peculiar transposition of chapters. We are rather in front of a 'family' of witnesses of different provenience and nature — lists of chapters, actual manuscripts, and quotations by subsequent authors — whose precise genealogical relations have still to be ascertained, but whose nature of a real group of independent testimonia cannot be doubted.

Third, some of the Arabic witnesses of the Versio Latina date back to a very ancient stage of the period of diffusion of Avicenna's work, possibly surpassing in ancientness the Latin translation itself (second half of the VI/XII c.): the Kolkata manuscript that transmits the list of seven chapters at the beginning of treatise V, apparently copied in the XI/XVII century, might depend on an ancestor written in 469H/1076-7, a few decades after Avicenna's death, and, in general, this and similar lists of chapters might derive from very ancient models; the Mashhad manuscript that displays one of the most faithful Arabic instances of the Versio Latina (see section II.2.2.c) was copied before 630H/1232-3; and Lawkarī lived between the V-VI/XI-XII centuries. Together with the Latin translation, these further witnesses attest the occurrence of the variation in question, *in toto* or in part, at a very high point of the transmission history of the *Ilāhiyyāt*.

On all these accounts, the possibility that the Versio Latina represents a distinct recension of the *Ilāhiyyāt* — witnessed jointly by the Arabic exemplar of the Latin translation and by a group of further Arabic testimonia, and produced in an ancient stage of the dissemination of Avicenna's work — is corroborated.

III. ISSUES

The data regarding the Versio latina that can be assessed with relative certainty lead to a number of issues. For some of them (III.1-3) I have firmer opinions, whereas others (III.4-5) are more uncertain, although some sensible hypothesis about them can be formulated. Only future research will be able to corroborate or disprove the suggestions I am tentatively advancing in this last section of the article.

III.1 *Versio Latina* and *Versio Vulgata* in Chronological Perspective

The main issue to face is whether the *Versio Vulgata* is more original than the *Versio Latina* in the transmission history of the *Ilāhiyyāt*, or, vice versa, the latter is more original than the former. In other words, the question is whether the *Versio Vulgata*, despite being evidently the most widespread version of treatise V, is also, among the two versions, the most pristine, or rather it is an adjustment, which subsequently gained wider diffusion, of a previous account of it, possibly documented by the *Versio Latina*.

The priority in time of the *Versio Latina* with respect to the *Versio Vulgata* can be argued in three respects. First, the *Versio Vulgata* is a more plain and straightforward (actually, as we will see below, a more ‘scholastic’) account of the doctrine of universals than the *Versio Latina*: in the former, the universals pertaining to the essence (genus, species, differentia) are taken into account one after the other, with a final treatment of the derivative topic of definition; in the latter, more convolutedly, after the initial treatment of the genus, the account of differentia is encapsulated within two chapters dealing with definition. Second, by including two chapters absent in the *Versio Latina* (V.5 and V.8), the *Versio Vulgata* presents an account of universals that is also structurally lengthier than the one found in the *Versio Latina*. Third, the *Versio Vulgata* displays puzzling structural anomalies that, as we have seen, the *Versio Latina* does not have. On all these accounts, the *Versio Vulgata* has greater chances of being a modification of the *Versio Latina* than the other way round. In other words, in so far as it exhibits a less stereotypical, more condensed, and less problematic treatment of universal than the one in the *Versio Vulgata*, the *Versio Latina* of treatise V has good credentials to be more original than this latter.

Also in several other cases the readings of the *Ilāhiyyāt* witnessed by the *Versio Latina* through the Latin translation look more original than the ones attested by the *Versio Vulgata*²⁴.

²⁴ A case in point is a passage of chapter VIII.4 (IBN SİNĀ, *Al-Šifāʾ, al-Ilāhiyyāt* (1) cit., pp. 346.13–15) — present in the *Versio Vulgata*, but absent in the Latin translation and in other ancient witnesses of the *Ilāhiyyāt* — which looks suspicious and appears to be a later interpolation into Avicenna’s original text (see A. BERTOLACCI, *God as pure existence in chapter VIII, 4 of the Metaphysics of Avicenna’s Book of the Cure: the text and the doctrine*, communication held in the conference *Les traditions grecques, arabes et latines des Elements de Théologie et du Livre des causes*, org. M. Dragos Calma, avec les concours d’Olivier Boulnois, Ph. Hoffmann et Marc Geoffroy, Paris, 16 April 2016). The Latin translation supports many of the corrections of the text of the *Ilāhiyyāt* that I have proposed in A. BERTOLACCI, *The Reception of Aristotle’s Metaphysics in Avicenna’s Kitāb al-Šifāʾ: A Milestone of Western Metaphysical Thought*, Brill, Leiden – Boston, 2006, Appendix A.

III.2 Purpose of the Versio Vulgata

Assuming that the previous assessment of the chronological relation of Versio Latina and Versio Vulgata is correct, one can guess why the Versio Vulgata at some point replaced the more original Versio Latina. First, there was apparently the need to guarantee to the treatment of the universal ‘species’ an independent chapter, after the two previous chapters on genus. Second, a unified treatment of definition, as in the Versio Vulgata, rather than a treatment of this notion split into two chapters encapsulating the treatment of specific difference, as in the Versio Latina, might have seemed more coherent and preferable. Finally, the passage that becomes the incipit of chapter V.8 in the Versio Vulgata (« What we must now make known is ... ») might have looked compatible with the beginning of a new chapter.

On all these accounts, the Versio Vulgata is, in structure, a sort of ‘scholastic’ account of the doctrine of universals, in which the essential universals of the tradition (genus, species, differentia) are analyzed one after the other, as Avicenna had already done at the beginning of the *Šifā’* in his reworking of Porphyry’s *Isagoge*, or *Madḥal*²⁵.

| <i>Madḥal</i> (Logic of the <i>Šifā’</i>) | <i>Ilāhiyyāt</i> (Versio Vulgata) | <i>Ilāhiyyāt</i> (Versio Latina) |
|--|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | V.1-2 universals in general | V.1-2 universals in general |
| I.9 genus | V.3-4 genus | V.3-4 genus |
| I.10-11 species | V.5 species | V.5 definition |
| I.13 differentia | V.6 differentia | V.6 differentia |
| | V.7-9 definition | V.7 definition |
| I.14 property and common accident | | |

It is worth noticing that in the *Madḥal* the species is dealt with in two distinct chapters (I.10-11): this extensive treatment of species in logic might have been one of the reasons that prompted early readers of treatise V of the *Ilāhiyyāt* to reserve to this universal a similarly independent, though much briefer, account in metaphysics.

It is also important to remark, in the light of what we are going to see in the following section, that this attempt of bringing back the original sequence of

²⁵ This tendency to interpreting ‘Avicenna by means of Avicenna’ is instantiated by the commentary on the *Ilāhiyyāt* by Mullā Ṣadrā, in which no mention of the Versio Latina is made, and, on the contrary, the content of Treatise V is expressly compared with that of the *Madḥal*, namely with the *ex professo* treatment of universals in the logic of the *Šifā’*.

topics of Avicenna's account of universals in the *Ilāhiyyāt* to the more standard order of exposition of this doctrine adopted by Avicenna himself in the *Madḥal* is contrary to Avicenna's *modus operandi* in several regards. First, Avicenna insists on the independence and superiority of metaphysics with respect to subordinate disciplines like logic, and his idea that metaphysics grounds the hypothesis simply assumed by the inferior sciences does often entail a different treatment in metaphysics of topics already expounded in the subordinate disciplines. On the other hand, the structural alignment of the two accounts of universals given by Avicenna respectively in logic and metaphysics conveys *ipso facto* a substantial reduction of his distance from Porphyry and, more in general, from the ancient philosophical tradition, which is contrary to Avicenna's understanding of his own role in the history of philosophy.

III.3 Agent(s) of the *Versio Vulgata*

If, as it seems, the *Versio Vulgata* presupposes an intentional effort of reformulation of the more original profile of treatise V given by the *Versio Latina*, to whom shall we ascribe it? I would exclude the case of simple scribes or owners of manuscripts, who do not possess the authority required to make such a radical and momentous intervention like the one at stake. Conversely, I would equally exclude that Avicenna himself might have revised the profile of Treatise V as in the *Versio Latina* in order to transform it into the *Versio Vulgata*: the structural variations in questions, if by his pen, would probably have been accompanied by modifications of the content of the chapters involved, whereas no such modification, apart from the usual variants of the manuscript transmission, seem to surface in the relevant chapters of treatise V. I have therefore the impression, excluding Avicenna himself, on the one hand, and later scribes, on the other, that the first disciples of the school of Avicenna might be the most plausible candidates to the role of agents of the change.

The Introduction of Avicenna's letter to the disciple Ibn Zayla documents a situation in which some of Avicenna's students aim at reshaping Avicenna's thought as expressed in the *Šifā'*:

« [Ibn Zayla] said: In our Master's statement at the beginning of the *Šifā'*, I came upon some contradictory and conflicting points that fall outside the consensus [of scholars]. So it would behoove him to provide a correction of that and to disclose the picture of it [that he has in mind], if he can » (emphasis added)²⁶.

²⁶ Arabic text and English translation in REISMAN, *The Making of the Avicennan Tradition* cit., pp. 284, 199, transl. slightly modified. Text quoted also in BERTOLACCI, *How Many Recensions* cit., p. 277, n. 5.

This passage attests, first of all, that the *Šifā'* was the object of heated discussions during Avicenna's lifetime within his school. But it also shows that the master-disciple relationship within this school was a very peculiar one: the student, like Ibn Zayla in our case, could charge the master of inconsistency, ask him to clarify and revise his thought, and also express concerns about the master's capacity to meet this task. The impatient and resentful, not to say arrogant, reply by Avicenna to the petulance of Ibn Zayla is easy to imagine and does not deserve to be quoted. But we are interested here in the student's attitude, more than in the master's reaction. Ibn Zayla's contention is an explicit request of revision and correction of the master's view about some doctrinal points of the *Šifā'*: it is not hard to suppose that, in front of the master's abrupt denial, Ibn Zayla, or students with his same attitude towards authority, might have felt entitled to proceed themselves to the revision, especially after Avicenna's death. The objective counterpart of the disciples' free attitude towards the master's stances in the *Šifā'* is Avicenna's own understanding of this *summa* as an 'unfinished' and 'in progress' work: in many passages he underscores that the *Šifā'* conveys a provisional sketch of his thought, alluding to the possibility of longer expositions of the topics succinctly dealt with in the work, to forthcoming further research about certain subjects, or even to his own inability to solve specific issues²⁷; the provisional nature of the *Šifā'* is emphatically acknowledged by Avicenna himself in the Prologue, by reference to a long-running process of yearly updates and complements of this work, scheduled to last, Avicenna says, «until the end of my life», and gathered in a sort of a 'companion' of the *Šifā'*, named *Kitāb al-Lāwāḥiq* (*Book of the Appendices*), to which various passages of the work refer²⁸. The precise point of the *Šifā'* in need of revision according to Ibn Zayla in the aforementioned passage is also significant: the expression 'beginning of the *Šifā'*' in the above passage means for sure logic, and, within logic, the reference might

²⁷ See, for example, IBN SİNĀ, *Al-Šifā'*, *al-Ṭabī'īyyāt*, *al-Ma'ādīn wa-l-Ātār al-'ulwiyya*, edd. 'A. MUNTAŞIR, S. ZĀYID, 'A. ISMĀ'İL, al-Hay'a al-'amma li-šū'ün al-maṭābi' al-amīriyya, Cairo 1965, I.5, p. 23.16-17; IBN SİNĀ, *Al-Šifā'*, *al-Riyāḍiyyāt*, *Ġawāmi'* 'ilm al-mūsīqā, edd. Z. YŪSUF, A. F. AL-AHWĀNĪ, M. A. AL-ḤAFNĪ, al-Hay'a al-miṣriyya al-'amma li-l-kitāb, Cairo 1956, V.5, p. 135.5-6; IBN SİNĀ, *Al-Šifā'*, *al-Ilāhiyyāt* (2) cit., IX.7, p. 429.4-7.

²⁸ At least fourteen references to the *Kitāb al-Lāwāḥiq* can be found in the *Šifā'*, ranging over Logic, Natural Philosophy and Mathematics, some of which are discussed in D. GUTAS, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition. Introduction to Reading Avicenna's Philosophical Works*, Brill, Leiden - New York - København - Köln 1988. Second Revised and Enlarged Edition, Including an Inventory of Avicenna's Authentic Works, Brill, Leiden - Boston 2014, pp. 160-163. The importance of the in-progress nature of the *Šifā'* to explain the tendencies of post-Avicennian Arabic philosophy is recalled by D. GUTAS, *The Heritage of Avicenna: The Golden Age of Arabic Philosophy, 1000-ca. 1350*, in J. JANSSENS, D. DE SMET eds., *Avicenna and His Heritage*, Leuven University Press, Leuven 2002, pp. 81-97 (pp. 86-87).

be either to the *Madḥal* or to the *Maqūlāt* (*Categories*), if not to both. As a matter of fact, in these two sections of the *Šifā'* Avicenna upholds doctrinal « points that fall outside the consensus [of scholars] », with regard to, respectively, Porphyry and Aristotle²⁹. In other words, there is some reason to suppose that Avicenna's doctrine of universals — the topic of *Madḥal* and *Ilāhiyyāt* V — was debated and criticized within his school.

Passing from the potentiality of introducing changes in the *Šifā'*, as in Ibn Zayla, to the actual changes introduced in it, we encounter the important figure of Avicenna's disciple and intimate companion Abū 'Ubayd al-Ġūzġānī (d. around the middle of the XI c.). His functions of 'editor' and 'secretary' of Avicenna's works are particularly relevant in this regard. Al-Ġūzġānī's editorial activity can be classified under three distinct headings. First, he helped Avicenna in the final processing of some of his works (writing of clean copies, by Avicenna's dictation or by transcription of the author's drafts, and reading of clean copies in front of Avicenna), without this activity being acknowledged in the work itself: in this regard al-Ġūzġānī acted as the 'amanuensis' of Avicenna, as he has been aptly called³⁰. Second, he undertook the more entertaining and demanding activity of completing, in cooperation with Avicenna, the works left unfinished by the master, signaling this time his own contribution in the final product: this applies in particular to the mathematics of Avicenna's *Book of Salvation* (*Kitāb al-Nağāt*), which al-Ġūzġānī assembled from scattered previous works of Avicenna and wrapped up, writing an Introduction to it³¹, and to the biography of Avicenna, with which he completed the master's autobiography by narrating events of Avicenna's life after their encounter until the master's death³². In this regard, al-Ġūzġānī can be envisaged as a sort of 'ghost-writer' of Avicenna. Most importantly for the present purposes, in a third type of editorial activity al-Ġūzġānī appears to have implemented Avicenna's intentions far beyond this latter's plans, thus resembling more a 'co-author' with his own personal agenda than a mere executor of the master's directives; as it should be expected,

²⁹ See S. DI VINCENZO, *Avicenna against Porphyry's Definition of Differentia Specifica*, « Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale », 26, 2015, pp. 129-184; EAD., *Avicenna's reworking of Porphyry's 'common accident' in the light of Aristotle's Categories*, « Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale », 27, 2016, pp. 163-194; N. CAMINADA, *A quotation of an anonymous 'logician' in Avicenna's Categories*, « Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale », 27, 2016, pp. 195-237.

³⁰ T. STREET, *Introduction*, in *Avicenna's Deliverance: Logic, Translation and Notes* by A. Q. AHMED, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2011, p. xxii; GUTAS, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition* cit., p. 29.

³¹ See GUTAS, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition* cit., pp. 115-117.

³² See D. GUTAS, *Avicenna. Biography*, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, ed. E. YARSHATER, vol. III, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London - Boston 1987, pp. 67a-70b.

also in this case his action is recorded in the final product. A case in point is the mathematics of the Persian *Book of Science for 'Alā' al-Dawla* (*Dānešnāme-ye 'Alā'ī*), which consists in al-Ġūzġānī's Persian translation, preceded by his own introduction, of the mathematics that he previously compiled and assembled for the *Naǧāt*; this latter however is much more extensive than the mathematics originally planned by Avicenna for the *Dānešnāme-ye 'Alā'ī*, in so far as it contains, besides astronomy and music, also geometry and arithmetic³³. Likewise, the Introduction to the *Šifā'* that al-Ġūzġānī wrote and which is transmitted in manuscripts under his name at the very beginning of the work, looks like a sort of 'critical review' of the *Šifā'* and a palinode of the following Preface by Avicenna³⁴. In a similar vein one can envisage also al-Ġūzġānī's insertion of chapters 2-9 of Avicenna's medical treatise *Maqāla fī l-Adwiya al-qalbiyya* (*On Cardiac Remedies, De medicinis cordialibus* in Latin) in the psychological part of the *Šifā'*³⁵. The analysis of the chronological setting of this third type of interventions — whether they took place in the last leg of Avicenna's life or after his death — lies beyond the scope of the present article³⁶. Worth of notice here is that al-Ġūzġānī applied repeatedly this kind of more original and intrusive editorial activity to the *Šifā'*, of which he felt the commissioner and patron³⁷. Finally, in the complementary capacity of secretary of Avicenna, al-Ġūzġānī was deputed to take care of the final copies of the master's works and to organize their dissemination, having therefore the concrete possibility of introducing changes in them at any time.

³³ See GUTAS, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition* cit., pp. 118-119.

³⁴ See the English translation of the Introduction, *ibid.*, pp. 29-34.

³⁵ On the insertion of this part of the *Maqāla fī l-Adwiya al-qalbiyya* within the *Šifā'*, and for an attentive evaluation of whether this insertion should be placed at the same level of editorial activity from which al-Ġūzġānī's Introduction stems, or should be explained differently, see the article by T. Alpina in the present volume.

³⁶ In the introduction to the mathematical section of the *Dānešnāme*, al-Ġūzġānī says that he added this section since the corresponding part written by Avicenna himself had gone lost: this sequence of events (loss; replacement) would imply a certain temporal span, but is regarded as unlikely by GUTAS, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition* cit., p. 119, for the apologetic tone of al-Ġūzġānī's report. According to Gutas (*ibid.*, p. 112) al-Ġūzġānī's Introduction antedates Avicenna's Prologue to the work, as well as Avicenna's introduction to the later summa *Easterners* (*Mašriqiyyūn*).

³⁷ Al-Ġūzġānī emphasizes in the Introduction to the *Šifā'* and in the biography of Avicenna that he promoted the composition and solicited the completion of the work (GUTAS, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition* cit., pp. 31-32; *The Life of Ibn Sina* cit., pp. 55-67). Significantly, the title *Šifā'* for this summa occurs in al-Ġūzġānī's Introduction to the *Šifā'*, as well as in his biography of Avicenna, whereas it is absent in Avicenna's Prologue. In his biography of Avicenna, al-Ġūzġānī's underscores that he read the *Šifā'* in front of the master and at the presence of other members of his circle in the famous evening sessions of the school, whereas the *Canon of Medicine* was read concomitantly by other companions (see *The Life of Ibn Sina* cit., p. 55), thus indicating his special connection with, and his role of 'amanuensis' of this work.

Was then al-Ġūzġānī the agent of the *Versio Vulgata*? The available evidence is not conclusive. On the one hand, judging from the works ascribed to him, extant or attested, and from biographical information, his scientific interests appear to range over zoology, medicine, astronomy, and mathematics in general, rather than logic and metaphysics³⁸. On the other hand, however, his main avowed concerns in the Introduction to the *Šifā'* is the 'course' followed by Avicenna in this work, the traditional 'order' of topics in the four disciplines it contains, and the 'organization' of its various parts³⁹. Moreover, the agency of Avicenna's official secretary would aptly explain why the *Versio Vulgata*, being part of the public version of the *Šifā'* licensed at some point by al-Ġūzġānī in the capacity of Avicenna's editor, had much wider diffusion than the *Versio Latina*. Given that the main purpose of al-Ġūzġānī's Introduction to the *Šifā'* is «to defend Avicenna's Peripatetic orthodoxy»⁴⁰, one might also wonder whether the transformation of the *Versio Latina* of treatise V into its *Versio Vulgata* does correspond to a similar, though more localized, 'apologetic' attitude, with an analogous aim of effacing some of the innovations introduced by Avicenna within the doctrine of universals in metaphysics and his liberty towards the transmitted ways of exposition, and of bringing him back, at least in the structure of exposition, under the aegis of the previous tradition and its conventions⁴¹.

³⁸ See A. DHANANI, *Jūzjānī: Abū 'Ubayd 'Abd al-Wāḥid ibn Muḥammad al-Jūzjānī*, in T. HOCKEY ET AL., *The Biographical Encyclopedia of Astronomers*, Springer Reference, Springer, New York 2007, pp. 604-605.

³⁹ See GUTAS, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition* cit., pp. 33-34.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

⁴¹ The issue is whether al-Ġūzġānī's defense of Avicenna's Peripatetic affiliation in the Introduction to the *Šifā'* is really joined with a 'laudatory dimension', as D. Gutas argues (GUTAS, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition* cit., p. 112). In this regard, one might wonder whether al-Ġūzġānī's insistence on the «disparity between his organization of the Logic and that of the Physics and Metaphysics» (emphasis added), and his intention to arouse «wonder for his ability to compose the Physics and the Metaphysics in a period of twenty days without having access to books but by taking dictation only from his heart which was preoccupied with the afflictions [then] besetting it» (emphasis added; Engl. transl. in GUTAS, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition* cit., p. 34), can be aimed — rather than at silencing Avicenna's actual or potential Peripatetic critics, who were supposedly expecting a more uniform and traditional way of exposition in the different parts of this *summa*, and at extolling Avicenna's extraordinary intellectual capacities, as Gutas supposes — at emphasizing the unbridgeable difference, within the *Šifā'*, between the Logic, on the one hand, and the Physics and the Metaphysics, on the other (a difference *prima facie* scarcely noticeable, due to the character *per modum expositionis* of the work), and at shedding some suspicious light on the excessive originality of the Physics and Metaphysics. The quite surprising anti-Avicennian attitude that al-Ġūzġānī shows, in an astronomical work he authored, towards the most original and innovative aspects of Avicenna's astronomy (G. SALIBA, *Ibn Sīnā and Abū 'Ubayd al-Jūzjānī: The Problem of the Ptolemaic Equant*, «Journal of the History of Arabic Sciences», 4, 1980, pp. 376-403, repr. in ID., *A History of Arabic Astronomy: Planetary Theories During the Golden Age of Islam*, New York University Press, New York 1994, pp. 85-112) can be significant in this regard: rather than showing an unprecedented development in al-Ġūzġānī's attitude towards Avicenna after this latter's death, it might display openly a tendency already present *in nuce* in his earlier Introduction to the *Šifā'*.

At the present stage of research, the issue is not so much whether al-Ġūzġānī is or not responsible for the recension of treatise V that I have called *Versio Vulgata*, since his involvement in such a process — if it really occurred — appears beyond doubt for the reasons mentioned above. The real issue is whether, assuming that the analysis proposed here is correct, al-Ġūzġānī produced this modification by his own exclusive initiative; or whether he acted on Avicenna's text at the end of a common discussion involving also other disciples of Avicenna, in order to bring into effect the outcomes of a shared reflection. On account of the passage of Avicenna's letter to Ibn Zayla quoted above, this second hypothesis cannot be discarded.

III.4 *How Faithful is the Latin Translation of Treatise V to its Arabic Model*

Although the evidence discussed above in section II.2.2.d comes very close to a mirror-image of the roster of chapters displayed by the Latin translation, no Arabic witness known so far is a precise replica of the Latin translation. An important issue to be discussed is therefore whether the Latin translation depends on an Arabic exemplar that conveys an otherwise unattested aspect of resemblance with the Latin translation (the complete merging of chapters V.4 and V.5 into a single structural unit) — an Arabic exemplar whose traces would be lost in the Arabic manuscript tradition — or this aspect of resemblance, which one looks in vain in the manuscripts of the *Ilāhiyyāt* known so far, may have a different explanation.

When reporting the content of the Tehran Millī manuscript mentioned above in section II.2.2.d — i.e. the Arabic codex that most resembles the Latin translation — Y. Maḥdāvī gives the reader the definite impression that this manuscript contains only seven chapters of treatise V, and that no structural unit corresponding to chapter V.5 of the *Versio Vulgata* is present in it⁴². By noticing this shortcoming in reporting the content of this manuscript, I don't intend in any way to derogate to the value of Maḥdāvī's pioneering bibliography, which remains an indispensable tool for the scholarly study of Avicenna still nowadays, more than sixty years after its publication, and whose aim was not to provide a codicological description of the Tehran Millī manuscript, but only to clarify by means of it the content of the *Šifā'*. If I mention the misrepresentation that the otherwise outstanding bibliography authored by Maḥdāvī generates in this specific point, it is just to ask: might the Latin translator have used an Arabic manuscript in which chapter V.5 was partially detached from chapter V.4 as in the Tehran Millī manuscript, and have consequently decided to omit it as a structural

⁴² MAḤDAVĪ, *Fihrist-i nuṣṣahā-yi muṣannafāt-i Ibn-i Sīnā* cit., p. 168.

independent unit, by merging it with the previous chapter V.4, as Mahdavi did in his report of the Tehran Millī manuscript? This is not all inconceivable, especially if the Arabic exemplar of the Latin translation reported a list of seven chapters corresponding to the Versio Latina at the beginning of treatise V, as also the Tehran Millī manuscript does.

The question, in other words, is whether the Latin translation can be taken as the most reliable representative of the Versio Latina — and, therefore, whether the existence of an Arabic manuscript squarely corresponding to it can be confidently assumed, even in lack of available evidence — or, by contrast, some extent of creativity by the Latin translator — despite his generally faithful approach to the Arabic text that he is translating — has to be allowed. The question is not without consequences for the final issue I am going to discuss in the next section: an account of treatise V like the one displayed by the Tehran Millī manuscript, with its inchoative and germinal presence of an unaccomplished fifth chapter in between the seven chapters attested by the Latin translation, remains in principle more indicative of the original state of treatise V than the Versio Vulgata, for the reasons adduced in section III.1; but this kind of imperfect account would seemingly have few chances of being the original version of this treatise meant by Avicenna.

III.5 How Close is the Versio Latina to the Authorial Version of the *Ilāhiyyāt*

A crucial issue that future research is asked to investigate is the following: once ascertained that the Versio Latina has good credentials to be more original than the Versio Vulgata, can we exclude that there was another version of treatise V more ancient than the Versio Latina? In other words: is the originality of the Versio Latina relative (i.e. is it original only with respect to the Versio Vulgata) or also absolute? The evidence is ambivalent, and three sets of data should be considered.

i) The account of treatise V — as well as of the other treatises of the work — that Avicenna offers in the preliminary chapter I.4 of the *Ilāhiyyāt* does not provide sufficient information⁴³. This account is vague in a way, in so far as it merges the content of chapters V.1 and V.2 in the very long initial sentence;

⁴³ IBN SĪNĀ, *Al-Šifāʾ, al-Ilāhiyyāt* (1) cit., I.4, p. 26, 3-6 [= AVICENNA LATINUS, *Liber de Philosophia prima sive Scientia divina*, I-IV cit., p. 29.39-44]: «[a] In this place it is proper to acquaint ourselves with the state of the universal and the particular, the whole and the part; the manner of existence of the universal natures; whether they have an existence in external particulars; the manner of their existence in the soul; and whether they have an existence separate from [both] external [particular] things and the soul. [b] Here we would acquaint ourselves with the state of genus and species and the like » (cf. M. E. MARMURA, *Avicenna, The Metaphysics of The Healing. A parallel English-Arabic text*, Brigham Young University Press, Provo (Utah) 2005, p. 20).

imprecise in another, since it places within treatise V a topic ('the whole and the part') which, as such, is dealt with *ex professo* by Avicenna in treatise IV and only resumed in treatise V⁴⁴; and elliptic in a crucial respect, because it reports very succinctly in the brief last sentence the content of the remaining chapters of the treatise. In general, chapter I.4 of the *Ilāhiyyāt* gives a very fluid outline of the ten treatises of the work, in which some topics are mentioned 'out of place', i.e. with regard to a part of the work to which in fact they are not treated, and in which no articulation in treatises and chapters is explicitly given⁴⁵. This chapter corresponds to one of the preliminary issues faced by the Greek commentators of Aristotle in late antiquity⁴⁶, and is apparently meant to provide the reader with a sketchy overview of the entire exposition, emphasizing its main tenets in the context of a global picture, rather than with a comprehensive and detailed account of it, so that no precision and completeness in specific areas should be expected from it. In particular, the succinct cumulative mentions of chapters V.3-9 in the final sentence («the state of genus and species and the like») leaves the reader with no clue about the present issue⁴⁷.

ii) A careful inspection reveals that the Versio Latina is not itself free from structural problems shared with the Versio Vulgata. To begin with, chapter V.4 presents midway a quite lengthy transitional passage, in which Avicenna first draws a comprehensive *status quaestionis* of the issue he is dealing with, and then declares the ensuing agenda⁴⁸. There is no reason to doubt the authenticity

⁴⁴ Avicenna deals with whole and part, in general terms, in IV.3, whereas he touches upon the relation of universal and particular, on the one hand, with whole and part, on the other, at the end of V.2.

⁴⁵ See the reconstruction provided in the notes to the translation in *Libro della Guarigione, Le Cose Divine* di Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā) cit., pp. 175-180.

⁴⁶ See BERTOLACCI, *The Reception of Aristotle's Metaphysics* cit., pp. 169-170.

⁴⁷ One might see the independent mention of 'species' after 'genus' in this passage as congruent with the presence of an autonomous chapter on species (V.5) in the Versio Vulgata, and therefore incongruous with the Versio Latina. However, given the frequent references to both genus and species in chapter V.3, one could also take the joint mention of genus and species in the final sentence of our passage as a reference to chapter V.3 alone, in such a way that all the topics that Avicenna addresses in the following chapters of treatise V would fall, in chapter I.4, under the rubric 'and the like'. In an opposite direction, one could suppose that the mention of 'species', after 'genus', in this passage of chapter I.4 might have prompted Avicenna's disciples to cut off an independent chapter devoted to this universal in the actual structure they assigned to treatise V in the Versio Vulgata. The textual evidence at stake is very thin and can be read in either way.

⁴⁸ IBN SĪNĀ, *Al-Šifā', al-Ilāhiyyāt* (1) cit., V.4, p. 225.5-10 [= AVICENNA LATINUS, *Liber de Philosophia prima sive Scientia divina*, V-X cit., p. 261.87-93] : « We have made known the nature of the universal, how it exists [= V.1-2], and how the genus, among them [i.e. the universals] differs from matter [= V.3], according to a way [of investigation] from which other ways [of investigation] — which we will expound later — can branch out. We have [also] made known which things the genus contains among those through which it is specified [= previous part of V.4]. Two investigations, connected

of this passage, which is similar to other transitional passages frequent in Avicenna's works. But this kind of thematic break (mention of previous topics and of forthcoming themes) is unusual in the middle of a chapter penned by Avicenna, at least in the *Šifā'*, and seems to mark the beginning of a new textual unit. This break, however, has no structural counterpart either in the *Versio Latina* or in the *Versio Vulgata*, in both of which no additional textual unit within chapter V.4 can be found. Moreover, chapter V.5 in the *Versio Latina*, corresponding to chapters V.7 and V.8 in the *Versio Vulgata*, starts with the exposition of a lengthy and articulated objection regarding the commonly accepted view of definition, an objection which is subsequently rejected⁴⁹. Now, both in the *Versio Latina* and in the *Versio Vulgata* this objection is not preceded by a positive account of definition: the chapter immediately preceding chapter V.5 in the *Versio Latina*, i.e. chapter V.4 — resulting from the conflation of chapters V.4 and V.5 in the *Versio Vulgata* — deals cumulatively with genus and species; likewise, the chapter immediately preceding chapter V.7 in the *Versio Vulgata* (V.6) deals with specific difference. Now, such an abrupt incursion into a 'dialectical' issue is unusual for Avicenna, since he usually faces objections and provides their refutations after having positively expounded his own standpoint on a certain topic⁵⁰. These two structural anomalies shed some doubtful light on the pretension of the *Versio Latina* of witnessing Avicenna's original account of treatise V.

(iii) A more positive scenario for the *Versio Latina* emerges from the following considerations. First, the *Versio Latina* is in no way the only variation of the *Versio Vulgata* of treatise V known to date: at least three further variations of the *Versio*

with what we are dealing with, remain. The first is [investigating] which things the genus contains among those that do not specify it. The second is [investigating] how this unification [i.e. the unification that conveys the specification of the genus] takes places, and how one single thing, realized in act, comes to be from the genus and the differentia, which are two [distinct] things » (cf. MARMURA, *Avicenna, The Metaphysics of The Healing* cit., p. 172). See BERTOLACCI, *How Many Recensions* cit., pp. 284-287, Text 1 and Text 2.

⁴⁹ IBN SĪNĀ, *Al-Šifā', al-Ilāhiyyāt* (1) cit., V.7, p. 236.4-9 [= AVICENNA LATINUS, *Liber de Philosophia prima sive Scientia divina*, V-X cit., p. 265.64-72]: « Someone may say: Definition, as those engaged in the art [of logic] agree, is composed of genus and differentia, each of the two being separate from each other, their sum constituting the two parts of the definition. [Now,] definition is nothing other than the quiddity of the thing defined. As such, the relation of the meanings that are denoted by the genus and differentia to the nature of the species is the same as their relation in definition to the thing defined. And, just as genus and species are the two parts of the definition, likewise their two meanings constitute the two parts of the thing defined. If this, then, is the case, it would be incorrect to predicate the nature of the genus of the nature of the species, because it is part of it » (MARMURA, *Avicenna, The Metaphysics of The Healing* cit. p. 180).

⁵⁰ See BERTOLACCI, *The Reception of Aristotle's Metaphysics* cit., pp. 240-245.

Vulgata of this treatise are attested by more than one Arabic codex⁵¹, whereas other variations are restricted, as far as we can presently judge, to single manuscripts, and can be regarded as peculiarities of their individual bearers⁵². Of the structural variations of the Versio Vulgata of treatise V witnessed by distinct manuscripts, however, the Versio Latina is the most relevant, in various respects: in terms of comprehensiveness and complexity, since it is the only variation embracing four of the nine chapters of the treatise according to the Versio Vulgata, which it both merges and transposes; in terms of solidity, since it is the only variation free from all the three structural problems displayed by the Versio Vulgata; and in terms of width and reliability of the evidential basis, since it is the only variation attested both in Latin and in Arabic by testimonia that are more numerous and more ancient than in the other cases⁵³.

Second, even though no structural configuration of treatise V attested in manuscripts is totally satisfactory and free from problems, we should not think of the original text of the *Ilāhiyyāt*, and, more in general, of the *Šifā'*, as a version of the work totally congruent with the author's ideal plan. The *Šifā'*

⁵¹ a) The first of the recurrent variations is determined by the splitting of chapter V.4 into two distinct units, precisely where the transitional passage in question occurs, as in the already mentioned Ms. Berlin, Deutsche Staatsbibliothek, Minutoli 229 (see BERTOLACCI, *How Many Recensions* cit., pp. 284-287). In no manuscript conveying this variation, however, the new chapter resulting from the bipartition of chapter V.4 bears a title of its own. The two other recurrent variations regard: b) the placement of chapters V.8 and V.9 before chapter V.7, and their occasional merging under the title of V.9 (see, for example, Ms. Istanbul, Nuruosmaniye Kütüphanesi, 2709, 886-97H/1481-9); and c) the placement of chapter V.9 between chapter V.6 and V.7 (see, for example, Ms. Qum, Kitābhānah-i Maṣṣid-i A'zam, 1760, 1078H/1667-8). In case a), the transitional passage within chapter V.5 is granted structural significance. Both in case b) and in case c), chapter V.7 is no more the beginning of the treatment of definition within treatise V, in such a way that its dialectical start results unproblematic.

⁵² A case in point is the structural variation of treatise V in ms. Ankara, National Library B153, considered in BERTOLACCI, *How Many Recensions* cit., pp. 291-293. This and other variations witnessed by single manuscripts are not taken into consideration in the present article. In general, with respect to the other treatises of the *Ilāhiyyāt*, treatise V exhibits in manuscripts a particularly high number of structural configurations different from the Versio Vulgata. Such a proliferation might depend on the existence of two very early alternative recensions of this treatise (the Versio Latina and the Versio Vulgata, if our analysis is correct), which possibly, by their contrast, paved the way and triggered the production of other versions of this treatise; conversely, this efflorescence of versions might also indicate some deep and unresolved original problem affecting the structure of treatise V, as we are going to see.

⁵³ By contrast, the three recurrent variations of the Versio Vulgata of treatise V additional to the Versio Latina regard at most two chapters of the Versio Vulgata, respond to only one of the structural problems discussed in this paper (namely one of the two structural problems common to Versio Latina and Versio Vulgata), and are not attested by Latin testimonia, lists of chapters, or known quotations by later authors; the extant manuscripts attesting these variations are later than those supporting the Versio Latina, although they occasionally depend on ancient exemplars.

is an extremely extensive writing, which underwent a process of composition in which — for at least some parts of the work — Avicenna availed himself of the cooperation of his school, as his biography attests; moreover, being later than the encounter of Avicenna with al-Ğūzğānī, the work must have been affected by this latter's activity of secretary and editor. In other words, we cannot exclude the possibility of structural anomalies affecting the archetype of the *Šifā'* in the case of treatise V, as in the case of other controversial *loci* of the work, as the result of an infelicitous interaction between the author and his disciples in the process of production of the final text of the places in question. Historical reports inform us of the messy situation of the holographs of some of Avicenna's works, which looked extremely cryptic to his disciples and defeated their capacity of understanding⁵⁴: it is not far-fetched to imagine that some passages of Avicenna's draft of the *Šifā'* — if not transcribed by the author himself into a clean copy, as it seems it was his habit — similarly escaped the comprehension of the disciples deputed to 'edit' it, as well as the master's control of the disciples' work, and were licensed inadvertently at variance with respect to the author's blueprint.

Thus, although not free from structural anomalies, the *Versio Latina* should not *a priori* be denied the status of first version of treatise V authored by Avicenna in the framework of his school and with the assistance of his disciples. For sure, it is the main variation of the *Versio Vulgata* of treatise V known to date, and it looks more original than this latter for the reasons seen above. This being the case, even though probably it does not altogether agree with Avicenna's original intentions, the *Versio Latina* of treatise V might date back to the earliest phase of the transmission of the *Ilāhiyyāt*, and has to be considered attentively by future editors of the work.

CONCLUSION

The old adagio 'tradurre è tradire' ('translation is betrayal') does not apply to the *Philosophia prima*. In its case, the contrary is true. On the one hand, the Latin translation of Avicenna's *Ilāhiyyāt* looks firmly rooted in the Arabic tradition also when it arranges treatise V, on universals, according to a structure that is different from the one commonly found in the majority of codices and in current printings (*Versio Vulgata*). The most recent manuscript research has disclosed further instances of the evidence on the basis of which an Arabic background for the

⁵⁴ Avicenna's biography reports the disciples' inability to transform Avicenna's holograph of the *Lisān al-'Arab*, after the master's death and in lack of a clean copy by the master himself, into a text suitable for diffusion (*The Life of Ibn Sina* cit., p. 73; this passage of the biography is discussed by S. Di Vincenzo in her contribution to the present volume).

Latin version of treatise V had already been tentatively argued (lists of chapters that correspond precisely to the structure of treatise V in the Latin translation); moreover, it has brought to light Arabic codices whose text matches almost exactly the profile of Treatise V as it is exhibited by the Latin translation, and a way of referring to the articulation of treatise V by some of Avicenna's first disciples and followers (al-Lawkarī) that mirrors some key aspects of the Latin translation. The complex of this evidence represents the *Versio Latina*, some of whose Arabic witnesses are more ancient than, or coeval with, the Latin translation.

On the other hand, the Latin translation of Avicenna's *Ilāhiyyāt*, rather than conveying a distorted image of its source, does in fact witness a stage of the text of treatise V of the work that is arguably more original than the one that we currently read in the *Versio Vulgata*, thus having better credentials than this latter to be authored by Avicenna himself, and that may even go back to the very first account of this treatise produced by Avicenna in the context of his school. The same school is probably responsible for the replacement of the *Versio Latina* with a *Versio Vulgata* more suitable to didactic purposes and, possibly, also to the ideological options of Avicenna's followers, *in primis* of his biographer and secretary al-Ġūzġānī. The *Versio Vulgata*, sponsored and disseminated by Avicenna's disciples, gained wider diffusion than the *Versio Latina*, but was not able to efface completely this latter.

The critical edition of the *Philosophia prima* by S. Van Riet, after forty years since the publication of its first volume (1977), inevitably shows some limits: besides the shortcomings regarding the editor's understanding and methodological use of the so-called 'double lessons' of the Latin translation, evidenced by R. Arnzen in the present volume, some other flaws are pointed out by the present contribution: they regard the unavoidable choice of the Cairo printing of the *Ilāhiyyāt* — the only text of the work available in print to scholars at the time — and, hence, of the *Versio Vulgata* that it conveys, as point of reference of the Latin text, both in the Latin-Arabic apparatus and in the lexica. Nonetheless, the pioneering edition that the Belgian scholar started publishing four decades ago within the framework of the Avicenna Latinus series that she initiated has substantially promoted and oriented the very same research that now envisages the necessity of a step forward. On account of this indisputable merit, S. Van Riet's edition deserves to be acknowledged as an epoch-making landmark of the scholarship on in the field.

APPENDIX

Conspectus of the earliest extant dated Arabic manuscripts
of the *Ilāhiyyāt* of Avicenna's *Kitāb al-Šifā'* (V-VI/XI-XII c.)

1. 496H/1102-3: Najaf, Maktabat al-Imām Amīr al-Mu'minīn, 3070 (+ t_{vi,III,8-vii}) (+ *Adwiya Qalbiyya*_{2,9}) [it contains: *Ilāhiyyāt* I.1-6; I.8-III.1; III.8-IX.2]
2. 509H/1115 (20 Rabī' II/19 September), place of copy: Baghdad: Tehran, Kitābhānah-i Milli Malik, 1085
3. 535H/1141 (27 Šawwal/5 June): Cairo, Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyya, Aḥmad Taymūr Pāšā 140 (+ t_{vi-vii})
4. 561H/1166 or 571H/1175: Oxford, Bodleian Library, Pococke 125 (+ t, with a lacuna regarding chapters t_{i,1,6-7}) (+ *Adwiya Qalbiyya*_{2,9})
5. 587H/1191-2: Patna, Khudā Bakhsh Oriental Public Library (Bankipur), (Catalogue vol. XL, 3467, Library's handlist 2979) [it contains: *Ilāhiyyāt* I.1-end]
6. VI/XII (second half, *terminus ante quem*): [*Arabic exemplar of the Latin translation*]

LEGENDA:

t = *Ṭabī'īyyāt* (= *natural philosophy*) of the *Šifā'*.

(+ t) = ms. containing *Ilāhiyyāt* and *Ṭabī'īyyāt*.

Within *Ṭabī'īyyāt*, the sections (*funūn*) are designed by lower-case Roman numerals (i, ii, iii, etc.) written as deponents (ex. gr.: t_{ii-viii} = sections ii-viii of *Ṭabī'īyyāt/natural philosophy*).

Within *Ilāhiyyāt* and *Ṭabī'īyyāt*, the treatises (*maqālāt*) and chapters (*fuṣūl*) are designed respectively by upper-case Roman numerals (I, II, III, etc.) and Arabic numerals (1, 2, 3, etc.) (ex. gr.: *Ilāhiyyāt* I.1-3 = chapters 1-3 of treatise I of *Ilāhiyyāt*; t_{i-ii,1-2} = section i and chapters 1-2 of section ii of *Ṭabī'īyyāt/natural philosophy*).

(+ *Adwiya Qalbiyya*_{2,9}) = ms. containing within the *Ṭabī'īyyāt* chapters 2-9 of the medical treatise *Maqāla fī l-Adwiya al-qalbiyya* (On Cardiac Remedies, *De medicinis cordialibus* in Latin).

[*italics within square brackets*] = ms. attested.

For further information, see www.avicennaproject.eu, section 'Manuscripts/List (chronological)', as of July 2017 (<http://www.avicennaproject.eu/index.php?id=61>).

ABSTRACT

The Latin Translation and the Original Version of the Ilāhiyyāt (Science of Divine Things) of Avicenna's Kitāb al-Šifā'

The present article analyzes the evidence available in Arabic sources (preliminary lists of contents in manuscripts; texts of manuscripts; later quotations) that supports the hypothesis according to which the medieval Latin translation of the metaphysics of Avicenna's *Kitāb al-Šifā'* is rooted in its Arabic background when it conveys an account of treatise V of the work (called 'Versio Latina') alternative to the one that can be found in the majority of codices and in current printings ('Versio Vulgata'). It is argued (i) that the Versio Latina is probably more original than the Versio Vulgata, for doctrinal and philological reasons; (ii) that the Versio Vulgata might respond to a deliberate intention to make the content of treatise V more compliant with the account of universals provided by Avicenna himself in the logic of the *Šifā'* and, in general, with the traditional pre-Avicennian ways of expounding the doctrine of universals; (iii) and that the Versio Vulgata was likely the product of Avicenna's school, rather than of Avicenna himself, as the result of shared concerns and theoretical debates that prompted the decision of modifying Avicenna's original text through the intervention, in all likelihood, of al-Ġūzġānī. Two further issues are conclusively discussed: (iv) how precisely the Latin translation relates to the Arabic background of the Versio Latina, (v) and whether the Versio Latina can be taken as the outlook of treatise V intended and licensed by Avicenna, or it also conveys elements of later, non authorial modifications.

AMOS BERTOLACCI, Scuola Normale Superiore, Pisa
amos.bertolacci@sns.it

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