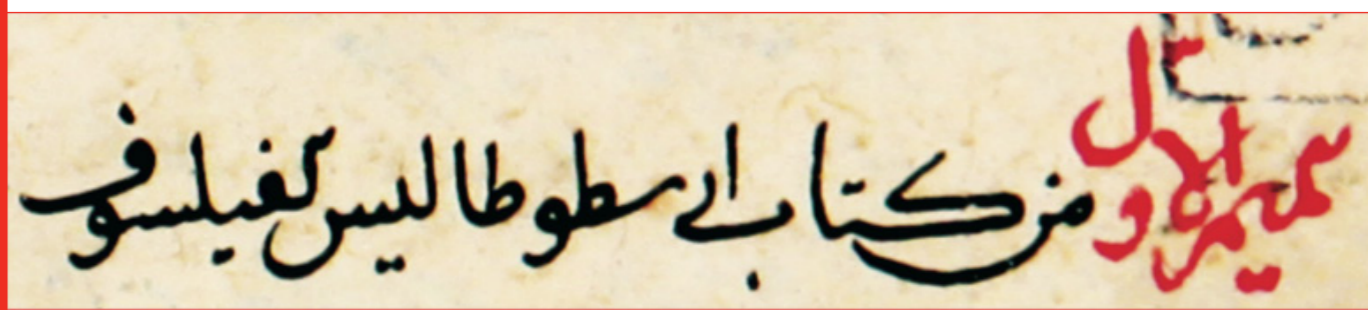
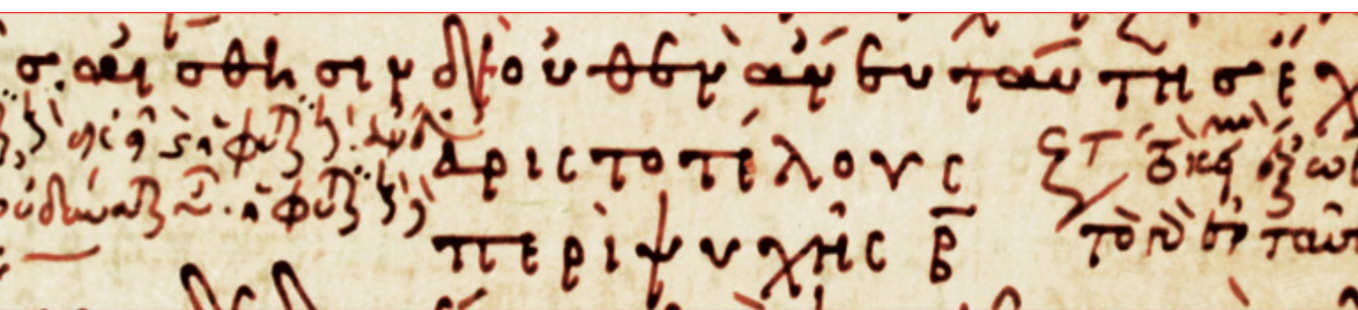


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Reconstructing the Text of Themistius' Paraphrase of the *De Caelo*

The Hebrew and Latin versions on the three meanings of the term "Heaven"

Elisa Coda*

Abstract

Themistius' paraphrase of Aristotle's *On the Heavens*, which is extant only in the Hebrew and Latin translations, announces at its beginning that the term "Heaven" has three meanings. The same tripartition features at the beginning of Simplicius' commentary: both Themistius and Simplicius depend upon Alexander's lost commentary. However, in the Hebrew version of Themistius' paraphrase only two meanings are given. The Latin version seems *prima facie* to be sound, because there are three meanings listed; however, the second meaning of the Latin is the "fifth body", something which does not match the second meaning in Simplicius. In this article it is argued that the "fifth body" of the Latin version is a commonplace emendation by the translator Moshe Alatino: it has no chances to have been the original reading of Themistius' paraphrase, let alone of Alexander of Aphrodisias' lost commentary, as it has been surmised in recent scholarship.

1. Themistius: the paraphrases, and the paraphrase of Aristotle's De Caelo

Late ancient commentators of Aristotle – all of them of Platonic allegiance¹ – had recourse to Alexander of Aphrodisias' exegeses,² and this tradition predictably continued in later eras, both in the Arabic-speaking world and in the Latin Middle Ages. In Medieval times, also the

* My deepest thanks go to Concetta Luna: her reading of the first draft of this paper saved me from a number of errors. For those which remain I am alone responsible.

¹ Cf. I. Hadot, "Der fortlaufende philosophische Kommentar", in W. Geerlings - Ch. Schulze (eds), *Der Kommentar in Antike und Mittelalter. Beiträge zu seiner Erforschung*, Brill, Leiden - Boston - Köln 2002 (Clavis Commentariorum Antiquitatis et Medii Aevi, 2), pp. 183-99 and G. Karamanolis, *Plato and Aristotle in Agreement? Platonists on Aristotle from Antiochus to Porphyry*, Oxford U. P., Oxford 2006.

² A comprehensive study of the use of Alexander's commentaries by the Neoplatonic authors writing on Aristotle has not yet been provided. For an overview of the commentary tradition between late Antiquity and the Middle Ages, cf. C. D'Ancona, "Commenting on Aristotle. From Late Antiquity to the Arab Aristotelianism", in Geerlings - Schulze (eds), *Der Kommentar in Antike und Mittelalter*, pp. 201-51. At least some of the Neoplatonic commentators were demonstrably conversant with Alexander's commentaries, a habit prompted in all likelihood by Plotinus' extensive use of his works. This is the case with Syrianus: cf. C. Luna, "Syrianus dans la tradition exégétique de la *Métaphysique* d'Aristote. I. Syrianus entre Alexandre d'Aphrodise et Asclépius", in M.-O. Goulet-Cazé et alii (eds), *Le commentaire entre tradition et innovation. Actes du Colloque international de l'Institut des traditions textuelles, Paris-Villejuif, 22-25 sept. 1999*, CNRS-Éditions, Paris 2000, pp. 301-9; Ead., *Trois études sur la tradition des commentaires anciens à la Métaphysique d'Aristote*, esp. Chapter II, "Le commentaire d'Alexandre d'Aphrodise comme source du commentaire de Syrianus", Brill, Leiden 2001 (*Philosophia Antiqua*, 88); Ead., "Alessandro di Afrodisia e Siriano sul libro B della *Metafisica*: tecnica e struttura del commento", *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 15 (2004), pp. 39-79. As for Simplicius, he famously refers to Alexander as a path to understand Aristotle's thought in his commentary on the *De Caelo*, p. 297.8-10 Heiberg: this point has been extensively commented upon by H. Baltussen, *Philosophy and Exegesis in Simplicius. The Methodology of a Commentator*, Duckworth, London 2008, pp. 107-35.

paraphrases³ by Themistius (317-387) were consulted. At variance with the line-by-line exegesis typical of Alexander's commentaries, Themistius accounted for Aristotle's doctrines without quoting the text itself: instead, he rephrased, expanded and summed up, at times rearranging the order of the topics, with an explicit didactical purpose. He presents his exegetical work as a concise presentation of the main Aristotelian doctrines,⁴ saying that his notes (τὰ συγγράμματα) on Aristotle's works, written for the sake of his own memory or as a medicine chest (ἡ ἀποθήκη) of his father's teaching, were meant to preserve the latter and Aristotle's own works from oblivion.⁵

In the prologue of his paraphrase of the *Posterior Analytics* he explains why he did not embark upon detailed commentaries, choosing instead to rephrase Aristotle:

I thought that for me to construct explications (*exégêseis*) of Aristotle's books in succession to so many great men was little short of futile ambition. Not much can be found that my predecessors omitted, and to attempt to construct exhaustive commentaries for the sake of some minor intervention would be like someone wanting to restructure the Athena of Phidias because he thought that he could improve the tassel on her sandal. However to extract the intentions of what is written in his books, and report it quickly in line with the conciseness of the Philosopher, as best I could, seemed both novel and quite beneficial. For I believed that revision by such a method would be convenient for those who had studied Aristotle's [works] once, but who were unable to take them up again because of the length of the [major] commentaries (*hupomnemata*). Many of Aristotle's books seem designed to be cryptic, especially those before us, first, because of his usual brevity of speech (*brakhulogia*), but also because the sequence of the main sections is not separately identified. For this reason you must excuse me if I appear to interpret some matters at rather great length (it was impossible to state them more clearly in an equivalent number [of words]), and with others to make readjustments and rearrangements (*metatithenai*) so that each of the main sections can be clearly demarcated. Also, if I have summarised some items more concisely, that does not merit complaint (trans. Todd).⁶

³ Themistius' exegetical works are labelled παραφράσεις in the *Suda*: cf. *Suidae Lexicon*, ed. A. Adler, Teubner, Leipzig 1931, Θ 122, vol. II, pp. 690.26-691.3. It has been surmised that besides the paraphrases Themistius wrote also commentaries on Aristotle and Plato, but there is no scholarly consensus on this point: cf. C. Steel, "Des commentaires d'Aristote par Thémistius?", *Revue philosophique de Louvain* 71 (1973), pp. 669-80; H.-J. Blumenthal, "Photius on Themistius (Cod. 74): Did Themistius write Commentaries on Aristotle?", *Hermes* 107 (1979), pp. 168-82; J. Vanderspoel, "The Themistius' Collection of Commentaries on Plato and Aristotle", *Phoenix* 43 (1989), pp. 162-4.

⁴ *In An Post.*, pp. 1.2-2.4 Wallies.

⁵ *Or.* 23, 294 D - 295 A. He adds that his συγγράμματα were published without his agreement, but recent scholarship considers the extant paraphrases not as the outcome of personal study, but as that of Themistius' lectures held in an institutional context: cf. J. Vanderspoel, *Themistius and the Imperial Court: Oratory, Civic Duty and Paideia from Constantius to Theodosius*, The University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor 1995, pp. 19-21. Themistius became a professor in 345-346, as one may infer from *Or.* 31; on his official activity as teacher cf. also *Or.* 24, 302 C - 303 A.

⁶ *In An. Post.*, p. 1.2-12 and pp. 1.19-2.1 Wallies, trans. R.B. Todd, Themistius, *On Aristotle On the Soul*, Duckworth, London 1966, pp. 3-4. According to P. Moraux, *Le Commentaire d'Alexandre d'Aphrodise aux Seconds Analytiques d'Aristote*, De Gruyter, Berlin 1979 (Peripatoi, 13), pp. 3-4, it is typical of Themistius' exegesis to provide a general assessment of Aristotle's doctrines without delving into the details which are discussed at length by the commentators.

Themistius' paraphrases were read both by Arabic and Latin authors. To mention only the two prominent examples, both Avicenna⁷ and Thomas Aquinas had recourse to them,⁸ a move that had been made possible by the translations into Arabic and Latin which granted access to them.⁹ Some of the paraphrases have been studied more than others in modern times. That of Book *Lambda* of the *Metaphysics* has mostly attracted the attention of the Arabists,¹⁰ and that of the *De Anima* has been

⁷ Cf. Ibn Sīnā, *al-Šifāʾ, al-Ilāhiyyāt* (2), ed. M. Y. Mūsā - S. Dunyā - S. Zāyid, al-Haʾya al-ʿamma li-šūʾn al-maʿābīʾ al-amīriyya, Cairo 1960, p. 393.2-5, English trans. by Michael Marmura: *Avicenna. The Metaphysics of The Healing*. A parallel English-Arabic text translated, introduced, and annotated, Brigham Young U. P., Provo, Utah 2005 (Brigham Young University Middle Eastern Text Initiative), p. 317 (Arabic text, p. ٣١٧.١٣-١٥). As stated by Marmura in the Introduction, pp. XXIV-XXV, the Arabic text is that of the Cairo edition, with some changes indicated in the text; in the passage quoted, there are no changes. “[Another of Aristotle’s followers,] the one who expresses himself well regarding the First Teacher’s books by way of summaries, even though he does not delve deeply into ideas, declares and states that whose meaning is as follows: ‘What is most likely and most true [to affirm] is the existence of a principle of motion belonging specifically to [each sphere] as being an object of love separated [from matter]’.” This passage is commented upon by G. Endress, “Alexander Arabus on the First Cause. Aristotle’s First Mover in an Arabic Treatise attributed to Alexander of Aphrodisias”, in C. D’Ancona - G. Serra (eds), *Aristotele e Alessandro di Afrodisia nella tradizione araba*, Il Poligrafo, Padova 2002 (Subsidia mediaevalia patavina, 3), pp. 19-74, p. 59 n. 63. Avicenna was obviously not the only one to consult Themistius’ paraphrases: cf. D. Gutas, “Averroes on Theophrastus, through Themistius”, in G. Endress - J.A. Aertsen with the assistance of K. Braun (eds), *Averroes and the Aristotelian Tradition. Sources, Constitution and Reception of the Philosophy of Ibn Rushd (1126-1198). Proceedings of the Fourth Symposium Averroicum (Cologne, 1996)*, Brill, Leiden - Boston - Köln 1999 (Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science. Texts and Studies, 31), pp. 125-44; A. Hasnawi, “Boèce, Averroès et Abū al-Barakāt al-Baġdādī, témoins des écrits de Thémistius sur les *Topiques* d’Aristote”, *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 17 (2007), pp. 203-65.

⁸ Thomas Aquinas refers twice to Themistius’ paraphrase of the *De Anima* in his *De Unitate intellectus*. He was acquainted with this paraphrase in the Latin version by William of Moerbeke: G. Verbeke, *Thémistius, Commentaire sur le traité de l’âme d’Aristote, traduction de Guillaume de Moerbeke, éd. critique et étude sur l’utilisation du commentaire dans l’œuvre de S. Thomas*, Publ. Univ. de Louvain - Béatrice Nauwelaerts, Louvain - Paris 1957 (Corpus Latinum Commentariorum in Aristotelem Graecorum, 1). First Thomas quotes Themistius’ exegesis of *De An.* I 4, 408 b 25-29: “Si quis autem contra hoc obiiciat, quod Aristoteles dicit in primo *De Anima* (...), patet responsio per dictum Themistii hoc exponentis, qui dicit (...)”: *Sancti Thomae de Aquino Opera Omnia (...), Tomus XLIII, De Principiis naturae. De Aeternitate mundi. De Motu cordis. De Mixtione elementorum. De Operationibus occultis naturae. De Iudiciis astrorum. De Sortibus. De Unitate intellectus. De Ente et essentia. De Fallaciis. De Propositionibus modalibus, cura et studio fratrum praedicatorum*, Editori di San Tommaso, Roma 1976, p. 298, col. 2, l. 654-661; then, he quotes a series of passages. The quotations are introduced by the following remark: “Nunc autem considerare oportet quid alii Peripatetici de hoc ipso senserunt. Et accipiamus primo verba Themistii in Commento de anima, ubi sic dicit (...)”, *ibid.*, p. 301, col. 1, l. 1-4. Thomas concludes his quotation as follows: “Patet igitur ex praemissis verbis Themistii, quod non solum intellectum possibilem, sed etiam agentem partem animae humanae esse dicit, et Aristotelem ait hoc sensisse”, *ibid.*, p. 301, col. 2, l. 59-62.

⁹ Cf. R.B. Todd, “Themistius”, in V. Brown - J. Hankins - R.A. Kaster (eds), *Catalogus translationum et commentariorum: Mediaeval and Renaissance Latin Translations and Commentaries. Annotated Lists and Guides. VIII*, The Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C. 2003, pp. 57-102, and my “Themistius, Arabic”, in H. Lagerlund (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy. Philosophy Between 500 and 1500*, Springer Science + Business media B.V. 2011, pp. 1260-66.

¹⁰ S. Pines, “Some Distinctive Metaphysical Conceptions in Themistius’ Commentary on Book *Lambda* and their Place in the History of Philosophy”, in J. Wiesner (ed.), *Aristoteles. Werk und Wirkung, II. Kommentierung, Überlieferung, Nachleben*, De Gruyter, Berlin - New York 1987, pp. 177-204 (repr. in *The Collected Works of Shlomo Pines. III, Studies in the History of Arabic Philosophy*, The Magnes Press, Jerusalem 1996, pp. 267-94); R. Brague, *Thémistius. Paraphrase de la Métaphysique d’Aristote*, traduit de l’hébreu et de l’arabe. Introduction, notes et indices, Vrin, Paris 1999 (Tradition de la pensée classique).

studied especially by Latin Medievalists.¹¹ Also the paraphrases of Aristotle's logical works have been studied to some extent.¹²

2. *The Hebrew and Latin versions of Themistius' In De Caelo*

At variance with the works mentioned above, Themistius' paraphrase of the *De Caelo* attracted less attention, something which has much to do with the transmission of this work. The Greek original is lost,¹³ and so is the case with the Arabic version.¹⁴ We know of its existence mainly by the *Kitāb al-Fibrīst*. In his entry on Aristotle's *De Caelo*, Ibn al-Nadīm tentatively credits Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī (d. 974) either with the Arabic translation of a commentary (*ṣarḥ*) by Themistius, or with the correction of a previous translation; he also mentions a work by Ḥunayn ibn Iṣḥāq (d. 911) based on it:

Themistius wrote an exposition of the entire book. Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī either translated or corrected it and Ḥunayn wrote something about it [entitled] *The Sixteen Questions* (trans. Dodge).¹⁵

In a subsequent entry, devoted to the translator and learned Aristotelian Abū Biṣr Mattā ibn Yūnus (d. 940),¹⁶ Ibn al-Nadīm points to the latter as the author of the translation corrected by Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī:

Translation of the book which is the commentary of Alexander about the book 'Heaven' [*De caelo*] – Abū Zakariyā Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī corrected it.¹⁷

It is immediately evident that the translation by Abū Biṣr Mattā which was corrected by Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī was that of Alexander's commentary, not that of Themistius' paraphrase; so, we are left with the statement given in the entry on the *De Caelo*, where only the revision is mentioned. This meagre

¹¹ Several studies have been devoted in the past to Thomas Aquinas' use of Themistius' paraphrase in his *De Unitate intellectus*; they are discussed, and to a certain extent superseded, by G. Verbeke in the introductory essay to the critical edition quoted above, n. 6. Four centuries before William of Moerbeke, who translated it from Greek into Latin, Themistius' paraphrase of the *De Anima* had been translated from Greek into Arabic by Ishaq ibn Ḥunayn. This translation is edited: M.C. Lyons, *An Arabic Translation of Themistius' Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima*, Cassirer, Oxford 1973.

¹² Sh. Rosenberg - Ch. Manekin, "Themistius on Modal Logic. Excerpts from a Commentary on the *Prior Analytics* attributed to Themistius", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 11 (1988), pp. 83-103; M. Achard, "Themistius' Paraphrase of *Posterior Analytics* 71a17-b8", *Laval théologique et philosophique* 64/1 (2008), pp. 19-34; M. Borgo, "Themistius on Demonstrative Premises: A Reading of His Paraphrase of *Posterior Analytics*, 71b9-72a7", *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* (2009), pp. 149-92.

¹³ Fragments of it are doxographically attested in Simplicius' commentary on the *De Caelo*: p. 62.12 Heiberg; see also p. 63.19; p. 68.5-7; p. 70.5; p. 70.9; p. 71.20; p. 131.21-22; p. 131.24; p. 176.28; p. 177.1; p. 177.9; p. 177.12; p. 188.6; p. 188.26; p. 188.30; p. 189.2.

¹⁴ The few traces lost have been studied by M. Türker, "İbnü'ş-Şalah'ın *De Coelo* ve onun şerhleri hakkındaki tenkitleri", *Araştırma* 2 (1964), pp. 1-79; Ead., "Les critiques d'Ibn aş-Şalah sur le *De Caelo* d'Aristote et sur ses commentaires", in *La filosofia della natura nel Medioevo. Atti del terzo congresso internazionale di filosofia medievale, Passo della Mendola (Trento), 31 agosto – 5 settembre 1964*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano 1966, pp. 242-52; G. Endress, *The Works of Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī, An Analytical Inventory*, Reichert, Wiesbaden 1977, pp. 29-30.

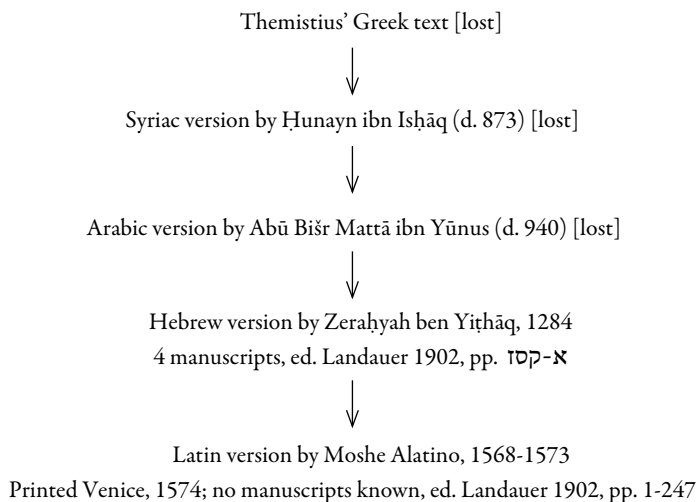
¹⁵ Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fibrīst*, I, p. 250.29-30 Flügel = p. 311.13 Tağaddud; Al-Nadim, *The Fibrīst, a Tenth-Century Survey of Muslim Culture*, trans. by B. Dodge, Columbia U. P., New York - London 1970, p. 603. As is often the case with Ibn al-Nadīm's pieces of information about commentaries on Aristotle, it is not clear if they refer to Aristotle's work itself, or to the commentary, or to both.

¹⁶ Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fibrīst*, I, pp. 263.22-264.4 Flügel = p. 322.10-17 Tağaddud; cf. C. Martini Bonadeo, "Abū Biṣr Mattā ibn Yūnus", in Lagerlund (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy* (see above, n. 8), pp. 13-14.

¹⁷ Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fibrīst*, I, p. 264.1-2 Flügel = p. 322.15-16 Tağaddud, trans. Dodge, p. 630.

piece of information is luckily implemented by another source: the mathematician and physician Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ (d. 1153), who still had access to Themistius' paraphrase in Arabic, says that its translator was indeed Abū Biṣr Mattā ibn Yūnus, and that the translation was revised by Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī. Whether Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ elaborates on the information given in the *Fihrist*, or he had access to some information in the copy of the Arabic Themistius he was consulting, we cannot decide. Be this as it may, Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ says that the translation into Arabic had been made by Abū Biṣr Mattā ibn Yūnus on the basis of the Syriac version by Ḥunayn ibn Iṣḥāq,¹⁸ something that on the one hand helps to explain Ḥunayn's work mentioned by Ibn al-Nadīm in the entry on the *De Caelo*, and on the other points to the fact that the Greek original was no longer within the reach of the Baghdad Aristotelians already in the age of Abū Biṣr Mattā ibn Yūnus, who, as is known, had no Greek and translated only from Syriac. Then, the Arabic version itself went lost. Only the Hebrew and Latin versions survive. The Hebrew version was made by Zeraḥyah ben Yiṭḥāq ben Šealtiel Ḥen (Gracian) ha-Sefardi on the basis of the Arabic text; it was completed in 1284. The Latin version was made by Moshe Alatino between 1568 and 1573, on the basis of the Hebrew version.¹⁹ This state of affairs obviously discourages consulting a work whose original readings seem to be out of reach. This is particularly regrettable in consideration of the fact that Themistius' paraphrase of the *De Caelo* is the only extant exegesis of this admittedly difficult work, before Simplicius' commentary; hence, the great interest it has for the history of ancient cosmology.

Reconstructing the original wording of this paraphrase proves to be a particularly difficult task, because the documents at our disposal are only two indirect versions. The Hebrew version was made on the basis of the lost Arabic text, and the Latin version was made on the basis of the Hebrew text. Since the Arabic version is lost, its degree of accuracy cannot be evaluated, but one thing is sure: the two pieces of information mentioned above point to an Arabic version made on the basis of the Syriac; hence, the lost intermediaries between the two extant versions amount to two for the Hebrew version, and to three for the Latin one. This state of affairs can be represented as follows:



¹⁸ According to Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, quoted by Türker, "Ibnü'ş-Şalah'in *De Coelo*", pp. 57.24- 58.1 (see above, n. 13) Themistius' paraphrase was first translated into Arabic by Abū Biṣr Mattā from the Syriac version of Ḥunayn ibn Iṣḥāq, then this translation was revised by Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī. Türker, "Les critiques d'Ibn aṣ-Şalah", p. 244-5, accounts for the Arabic translation of the paraphrase as follows: "Les commentaires de Thémistius, dont notre auteur s'est servi, avaient été traduits du grec en syriaque par Ḥunayn b. Iṣḥāq, du syriaque en arabe, par Abū Biṣr Mattā (mort en 940), et revus par Yaḥyā b. 'Adī".

¹⁹ *Themistii In libros Aristotelis De Caelo paraphrasis hebraice et latine* ed. S. Landauer, Berlin 1902 (*CAG* V.4).

The Hebrew version is attested by four manuscripts: (1) Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, II.II.528, copied in 1282, ff. 4r-121v²⁰ (*d*); (2) Cambridge, University Library, *Add.* 173, copied by Menaḥem b. Binyamin, 1288, ff. 1v-141r (*c*); (3) London - Beth Din & Beth Hamidrash 42 (ex London, Jews' College 42),²¹ copied by Y. Ben Mošeh Sarfati in San Severino (Marche), in 1424, ff. 52v-108r (*a*); (4) Roma, Biblioteca Casanatense, 3149, second half of the 15th century, ff. 1r-88v (*b*). The learned editor of both translations, Samuel Landauer (1846-1937), did not know the manuscripts *c* and *d*, the most important ones in consideration of their date: his edition is based only on *a* and *b*. As for the Latin version, it is attested only by the text printed in Venice,²² and the Hebrew manuscript which served as its basis is lost. In so far as it is based on the Hebrew version, the Latin one can help to reconstruct the Hebrew text only to the extent in which it can help to reconstruct this lost manuscript.²³ However, the discovery of the manuscripts *d* and *c*, which are contemporary with the translator, substantially plays down the ecdotic value of the Latin version as a testimony of the Hebrew text.

Faced with the difficult or even desperately corrupted readings of the Hebrew,²⁴ and at times of the Latin text, Landauer did not hesitate to correct the text on the basis of Simplicius' commentary, and this especially when he detected in the latter fragments of Alexander's lost commentary which were likely to be the source also of Themistius. Not only, but also Landauer corrected the text of Themistius, when the Hebrew version was corrupted and the Latin provided no help, on the basis of Simplicius' own commentary (always clearly indicating his editorial *iudicium* in the apparatus).²⁵ All this creates a host of problems which I do not pretend to be able to solve; however, I would like to exemplify here the nature and respective value of the two texts, the Hebrew one and the Latin one, in view of the edition and translation of this work which I am currently preparing.²⁶ As a matter of fact, an evaluation of the reliability of the two versions which survive counts as the establishment of one of the basic criteria of the edition. My aim here is to discuss a case in point for the poor reliability of the Latin version.

²⁰ According to M. Zonta, "*Hebraica Veritas*: Temistio, parafrasi del *De Coelo*", *Athenaeum* 82 (1994), pp. 403-28, in part. pp. 412-13, this manuscript is the autograph of Zerahyah.

²¹ I take the opportunity of rectifying the shelfmark of the MS London, Jews' College 42. This manuscript, London - Beth Din & Beth Hamidrash 42, ex London, Jews' College 42, was sold at public auction handled by Christies, New York, on 23 June 1999 as Lot 14. I rely on the microfilmed copy (F 4710) held by the National Library of Israel, Jerusalem.

²² In all likelihood the manuscript copy provided by Moshe Alatino to the publisher Simone Galignano was destroyed at the end of the printing, as the printers used to do at that time. On this practice cf. L. Voet, "Plantin et ses auteurs. Quelques considérations sur les relations entre imprimeurs et auteurs sur le plan typographique-littéraire au XVI^e siècle", in G. Crapulli (ed.), *Trasmissione dei testi a stampa nel periodo moderno*, Centro per il Lessico Intellettuale Europeo, Roma 1985, pp. 61-76, in part. pp. 65-6. Landauer's edition of the Latin translation is based on the copy which is housed in Milano, Biblioteca Nazionale Braidense, B XVI 5980.

²³ Alatino claims he made use of a *vetustissimus codex* (p. XII, l. 20 Landauer), but this claim should not be taken at its face value: cf. Landauer, *Praefatio*, p. VI, n. 1.

²⁴ Given that the MSS of Florence and Cambridge are contemporary with the translator, and the Florence MS might even be the autograph of the translation (cf. above n. 20), they attest a text which remains substantially unaffected by the deterioration implied in a long chain of textual transmission. This implies that the passages corrupted in the Hebrew version have much more chance to be either (1) errors on the part of the translator into Arabic, or (2) errors in the text he made use of, or again (3) errors in the textual transmission of the Arabic version.

²⁵ For a discussion of Landauer's corrections both on the Hebrew and on the Latin text cf. M. Zonta, "*Hebraica Veritas*", pp. 418-8; Zonta also checks Landauer's proposals on the Hebrew text against the readings of the MS Firenze, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, II.II.528. I take the liberty of referring also to my article "Alexander of Aphrodisias in Themistius' Paraphrase of the *De Caelo*", *Studia graeco-arabica* 2 (2012), pp. 355-71.

²⁶ Temistio. *Parafrasi del De Caelo di Aristotele*, testo ebraico, traduzione italiana, introduzione e commento, Pisa U. P. (Greco, Arabo, Latino. Le vie del sapere), forthcoming.

3. Themistius on the meanings of "Heaven" in the Hebrew and Latin versions

The very beginning of the paraphrase, which deals with the three meanings of the term "Heaven", will give an idea of the nature of the two translations, the Hebrew and the Latin one, as well as of the kind of problems with which is faced the editor of the Hebrew text.

Following the path laid by the exegetical tradition before him, Themistius discusses the object of Aristotle's inquiry. This equals for him determining the unity of a treatise which seems to touch a variety of different topics. The discussion of Aristotle's intention in writing this treatise turns out to be the establishment of the inner coherence between the *De Caelo* and the rest of Aristotle's works, in particular the *Physics*.

המאמר הראשון מספר השמים והעולם לארסתו עם פירוש תאמסטיאוס העתקת זרחיה בן יצחק הספרדי מלשון ערב אל לשון הקודש: אמר כי הענינים מורה עליהם משם השמים אצל הקדמונים שלשה. וזה שהוא יורה אצלם על גלגל הכוכבים הקיימים לבה. ויורה על העולם בעצמו. ולפי זה הענין השלישי נמצא אריסטוטאליס יע"ש בזה הספר. וכשכיון להגיד העולם בספרו זה. וידיעה זו נכנסת בידיעת הטבעים. ואמר שזה יהיה תחלת מאמרו. ויספר לנו בענינים אשר נהם תהיה ידיעת הטבעים. ואמר שזה יהיה בגדלים והמקומות אשר יקרו בהם. ובהתחלות אשר לזה העצם. כלומר המורגש הטבעי. וכל זה ימצא משלים העולם ונסגר בו. ואמנם השנה במאמרו כי זה ברוב הענינים. כי מחכמת הטבע הוא לחקור על הריקות. ועל מה שאין לו תכלית. ומה שדומה לזה. ואין אנו מוצאים אותו יסגור אלו הענינים. עם מה שמנה. כי הוא אקדים וספר מה שצריך אליו לדעת אותו בספר השמע הטבעי.

The first chapter of Aristotle's Book *On the Heavens and the Universe* accompanied by an exegesis by Themistius, translated by Zerahyah ben Yīḥāq ha-Sefardi from the Arabic language into the Sacred Language. He says that as for the question of what is meant by the term "Heaven", for the Ancients they are three. And indeed for them it means the sphere of the fixed stars only, or the universe in itself. Concerning this third meaning, we find that Aristotle discusses it in this book. As a matter of fact, his intention is to discuss in this book of the universe, and such a science falls within the province of the physical scientists; he says that this is the beginning of his discourse, enumerating for us its parts, which all form the science of nature: he says that it deals with bodies, their dimensions and the affections related to them, as well as with the principles which are at work in this substance, I mean the natural substance which falls under sense perception and all that constitutes the universe with all its contents. As for what is discussed here, he says that "most of it" is devoted to this, because it falls within the province of natural science to investigate about void, infinite and similar, while such items are not comprised in what he has enumerated above. And indeed, he anticipates and expounds what must be known about such items in his book on the *Physics* (p. 1.2-13 Landauer).

Apart from the *incipit* by Zerahyah, what we have here is a prologue whose focus is the title of the work commented upon, namely, *On the Heavens*.²⁷ In doing so, Themistius was by no means

²⁷ Discussing the title is one of the introductory points to be dealt with in the commentary technique: cf. I. Hadot, "Les introductions aux commentaires exégétiques chez les auteurs néoplatoniciens et les auteurs chrétiens", in M. Tardieu (ed.), *Les règles de l'interprétation*, Éd. du Cerf, Paris 1987 (Patrimoines. Les religions du Livre), pp. 99-129, esp. pp. 111-19; Ph. Hoffmann, "La problématique des titres des traités d'Aristote selon les commentateurs grecs. Quelques exemples", in J.-C. Fredouille - M.-O. Goulet-Cazé - Ph. Hoffmann - P. Petitmengin, avec la collaboration de S. Déléani (eds), *Titres et articulations du texte dans les œuvres antiques, Actes du Colloque international de Chantilly, 13-15 décembre 1994*, Études Augustiniennes, Paris 1997 (Collection des Études Augustiniennes, Série Antiquité, 152), pp. 75-103; Id., "La fonction des prologues exégétiques dans la pensée pédagogique néoplatonicienne", in J. Dublois - B. Roussel (eds), *Entrer en matière. Les Prologues*, Éd. du Cerf, Paris 1998, pp. 209-45. The analysis of the title was part and parcel of the "introductory schemes" already in the 3rd century: cf. Simplicius, *Commentaire sur les Catégories, Fascicule I, Introduction, première partie* (p. 1-9,3

following in Aristotle's footsteps: the beginning of the *De Caelo* points famously to another issue, that of the subject-matter of physics.

Ἡ περὶ φύσεως ἐπιστήμη σχεδὸν ἢ πλείστη φαίνεται περὶ τε σώματα καὶ μεγέθη καὶ τὰ τούτων οὔσα πάθη καὶ τὰς κινήσεις, ἔτι δὲ περὶ τὰς ἀρχάς, ὅσαι τῆς τοιαύτης οὐσίας εἰσὶν· τῶν γὰρ φύσει συνεστῶτων τὰ μὲν ἐστὶ σώματα καὶ μεγέθη, τὰ δ' ἔχει σῶμα καὶ μέγεθος, τὰ δ' ἀρχαὶ τῶν ἐχόντων εἰσὶν (I 1, 268 a 1-6).

We may say that the science of nature is for the most part plainly concerned with bodies and magnitudes and with their changing properties and motions, as also with the principles which belong to that class of substance; for the sum of physically constituted entities consists of (a) bodies and magnitudes, (b) beings possessed of body and magnitude, (c) the principles or causes of these beings (trans. Guthrie).²⁸

Paul Moraux's unparalleled account of the problems raised by this beginning and what follows it – namely an excursus on number three and an assessment of the perfection of the universe, followed by the question of the existence of a body endowed with circular motion – is worth quoting in full:

Avant d'expliquer un ouvrage d'Aristote, les commentateurs grecs avaient coutume de le situer dans l'ensemble de la production du philosophe, puis de chercher à en découvrir l'objet propre. Simplicius nous ayant conservé quelques opinions émises à propos de l'objet du *De Caelo*, nous constatons que les anciens avaient été intrigués, comme nous le sommes encore, par le peu d'unité que présente l'ouvrage. Comment Aristote avait-il pu réunir sous le titre *περὶ οὐρανοῦ* une étude du ciel et des astres, un exposé sur la terre, une longue enquête sur la génération des éléments sublunaires et une monographie sur le léger et le lourd? A quel titre ces thèmes si divers se trouvaient-ils groupés dans un traité unique? Aristote, répondait Alexandre d'Aphrodise, entend se livrer à une étude du monde dans son ensemble. Il manifeste cette intention dans le premier livre, où il traite de l'unicité du monde, de sa finitude, de son éternité. (...) Les Néoplatoniciens voient les choses autrement. Pour Jamblique, Syrien et d'autres membres de l'école, la substance animée du mouvement circulaire ou "corps céleste" constitue l'objet propre du traité. Si Aristote joint à cette étude celle du monde sublunaire, estime Jamblique, c'est parce que le cours des astres régit les changements des êtres générables: le corps céleste est donc étudié d'abord en lui-même, puis dans les êtres qui se trouvent sous sa dépendance. Syrien et ses disciples considèrent, pour leur part, que l'étude des éléments sublunaires sert à préciser les développements relatifs au corps céleste, en montrant que ce dernier n'est ni composé des éléments traditionnels ni fait d'un seul d'entre eux. Simplicius rejette ces deux explications. Il note que, dans le corpus d'Aristote, le *De Caelo* fait suite à la *Physique*, où sont étudiés les principes des corps naturels. Après l'étude des principes doit venir celle des êtres qui naissent immédiatement des principes, c'est-à-dire l'étude des éléments. Les cinq éléments considérés en eux-mêmes, voilà, d'après lui, l'objet du *De Caelo*. C'est le premier et le plus noble d'entre eux, l'élément céleste, qui a donné son nom à l'ensemble de l'ouvrage.²⁹

Kalbfleisch), *Commentaire au premier chapitre des Catégories*, Traduction de Ph. Hoffmann (avec la collaboration de I. Hadot, et P. Hadot), *Commentaire et notes à la traduction par I. Hadot, avec des appendices de P. Hadot et J.-P. Mahé*, Brill, Leiden - New York - København - Köln 1990 (*Philosophia Antiqua*, 50), p. 36.42-43.

²⁸ W.K.C. Guthrie, *Aristotle. On the Heavens*, Harvard U. P., Cambridge Mass. - London 1939, 1953³ (Loeb), p. 5.

²⁹ P. Moraux, *Introduction*, in *Aristote, Du ciel*, Texte établi et traduit par P. Moraux, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 1965 (CUF), pp. VII-VIII.

Simplicius points to Alexander's lost commentary on the *De Caelo*, and a comparison between his Prologue and the beginning of Themistius' paraphrase shows that the latter has the same source.³⁰ As we have just seen, Themistius (p. 1.5-7 Landauer) says that:

אמר כי הענינים המורה עליהם משם השמים אצל הקדמונים שלשה. וזה שהוא יורה אצלם על גלגל הכוכבים הקיימים לבה. ויורה על העולם בעצמו. ולפי זה הענין השלישי נמצא אריסטוטלים יע"ש בזה הספר.
As for the question of what is meant by the term "Heaven", for the Ancients they are three. And indeed for them it means the sphere of the fixed stars only, or the universe in itself. Concerning this third meaning, we find that Aristotle discusses it in this book.

This text is obviously corrupted: three meanings are announced, but only two are given. Luckily, Simplicius' passage is sound, and helps understanding not only that the source that Themistius is alluding to by the generic mention of the "Ancients" is Alexander, but also that the three meanings are (1) the sphere of the fixed stars; (2) the whole revolving body, which is divine; (3) the universe:

Τὸν σκοπὸν τῆς Περι οὐρανοῦ Ἀριστοτέλους πραγματείας ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος περὶ κόσμου φησὶν· οὐρανὸν γὰρ τριχῶς ὑπὸ τοῦ Ἀριστοτέλους ἐν τούτοις λέγεσθαι (1) τὴν τε τῶν ἀπλανῶν σφαῖραν (2) καὶ ὅλον τὸ θεῖον καὶ κυκλοφορικὸν σῶμα, ὅπερ καὶ ἔσχατον οὐρανὸν ἐν τούτῳ τῷ βιβλίῳ μετὰ προσθήκης καλεῖ, (3) καὶ ἔτι μέντοι τὸν κόσμον, ὡσπερ καὶ Πλάτων ὠνόμασεν "ὁ δὲ πᾶς οὐρανός", λέγων, "ἢ κόσμος ἢ καὶ ἄλλο τί ποτε κατονομαζόμενος ἂν δέχοιτο" (*In De Caelo*, p. 1.2-8 Heiberg; numbers in brackets added). Alexander says that the subject of Aristotle's treatise *On the Heavens* is the world. He says that "Heaven" is used in three senses by Aristotle in this work, to mean both the sphere of the fixed stars and the whole of the divine revolving body, which in this books he also calls the "furthest heaven" (with the adjective), and additionally "the world", as Plato called it when he said "the whole heaven, or the world, or whatever else it might care to be called" (trans. Hankinson).³¹

Simplicius reports that according to Alexander the σκοπός of Aristotle's treatise is the entire universe, and this because the meanings of "Heaven" listed by Aristotle are three, the last being ὁ κόσμος. This helps explaining why this treatise, albeit entitled *On the Heavens*, deals with the entire universe (and thus includes a development on the sublunary elements). Quoting Plato (*Tim.* 28 B 2-4) in support of the latter meaning, ὁ κόσμος, seems to be Simplicius' own move,³² but the tripartition of the meanings of "Heaven" comes from Aristotle himself, as highlighted by Alexander via Simplicius. Indeed, the tripartition is established by Aristotle in *De Caelo* I 9, 278 b 9-24, where he states that this term means (1) the sphere of the fixed stars, which is defined as "the substance of the outermost circumference of the world" (τὴν οὐσίαν τὴν τῆς ἐσχάτης τοῦ παντὸς περιφορᾶς, trans.

³⁰ P. Moraux, "Kommentar zu *De Caelo*", in Id., *Der Aristotelismus bei den Griechen, von Andronikos bis Alexander von Aphrodisias*, vol. III, De Gruyter, Berlin-New York 2001 (Peripatoi, 7/1), pp. 181-241, p. 189 n. 42; on the comparison between Themistius and Simplicius as a way to reconstruct Alexander's lost commentary cf. *ibid.*, pp. 185-8.

³¹ R.J. Hankinson, *Simplicius. On Aristotle On the Heavens 1.1-4*, Duckworth, London 2002, p. 19.

³² It is typical of Simplicius to proclaim as often as possible the unity of Plato's and Aristotle's cosmological views, as a response to Philoponus' insistence on the literal meaning of the temporal origin of the cosmos described in the *Timaeus*: cf. Ph. Hoffmann, "Some aspects of Simplicius' polemical writings against John Philoponus: from invective to a reaffirmation of the transcendence of the Heavens", in R. Sorabji (ed.), *Philoponus and the Rejection of Aristotelian Science*, Cornell U. P., Ithaca - London, 1987, 2010², p. 57-83, revised French trans. in I. Hadot (ed.), *Simplicius: sa vie, son œuvre, sa survie*, De Gruyter, Berlin-New York 1987 (Peripatoi, 15), pp. 183-221.

The three meanings are extracted from *De Caelo* I 9 by Alexander,³³ who placed the tripartition of the meanings at the beginning of the entire exegesis, as a terminological assessment useful to define and circumscribe the overall scope of the treatise, which for him was the cosmos in its entirety: Simplicius says in as many words that τὸν σκοπὸν τῆς Περὶ οὐρανοῦ Ἀριστοτέλους πραγματείας ὁ Ἀλέξανδρος περὶ κόσμου φησὶν. The meanings (1) and (2) in Simplicius' list are closely connected to one another by the the connective combination τήν τε ... καί, in order to keep them apart from meaning (3), the cosmos in its entirety, as shown by Simplicius' own commentary on the relevant passage of *De Caelo* I 9:

διηρημένως δὲ τήν ὀνομασίαν ἐπὶ τε τοῦ ἀπλανοῦς καὶ τοῦ πλανωμένου παραδοὺς δέδωκεν ἐννοεῖν, ὅτι καὶ πᾶν τὸ κυκλοφορητικὸν καὶ αἰδιδιον τὸ πρὸς τὸ γενητὸν καὶ φθαρτὸν ἀντιδιηρημένον οὐρανὸν λέγομεν. καὶ γὰρ καὶ αὐτὸς ὡς μίαν ἔχοντος τοῦ ὄλου φύσιν καὶ μίαν κίνησιν τήν κυκλοφορίαν κοινῶς ἀπέδειξε περὶ αὐτοῦ, καὶ ὅτι ἄλλη παρὰ τὰ ὑπὸ σελήνην στοιχεῖα πέμπτη τίς ἐστὶν οὐσία τοῦ οὐρανοῦ σώματος οὔτε βάρους ἔχουσα οὔτε κουφότητα, καὶ ὅτι ἀγένητον τοῦτο καὶ ἀφθαρτὸν ἐστὶ, κοινῶς ἔδειξε καὶ πάλιν ἀποδείξει· ὥστε καὶ ἐνὶ ὀνόματι καὶ τὸ ὄλον φαίνεται καὶ αὐτὸς καλῶν (*In De Caelo*, pp. 280.32-281.9 Heiberg).

In applying the appellation separately to both the fixed and to the wandering [bodies], he makes it understood that we also call everything which revolves and is eternal 'heaven', by contrast with what is generated and destructible. For he himself demonstrated in a general fashion in regard to it that, since the whole possessed one nature and one revolving motion, there was besides the sublunary elements another fifth substance of the heavenly body, possessing neither weight nor lightness; and he showed in general (and will later demonstrate) that this was ungenerated and indestructible. And do he too evidently calls the whole too by this one name (trans. Hankinson).³⁴

Here Simplicius explains that if Aristotle has labelled *ouranos* both the sphere of the fixed stars and the planets, it is because both items share in the circular motion and are made out of the fifth substance: as such, they stand against the third meaning, the cosmos (which includes the sublunary sphere, made out of the four elements).

Some readers of the Prologue of Simplicius' commentary have been baffled by the relative clause ὅπερ καὶ ἔσχατον οὐρανὸν ἐν τούτῳ τῷ βιβλίῳ μετὰ προσθήκης καλεῖ (*In De Caelo*, p. 1.5-6 Heiberg). This clause refers to *De Caelo* I 3, 270 b 15: καθ' ὄλον τὸν ἔσχατον οὐρανόν.³⁵ Given that the expression ἔσχατος οὐρανός *prima facie* fits only with the sphere of the fixed stars, one may wonder how is it possible that Simplicius identifies it, instead, with the second meaning, i.e. the whole revolving body which includes also the planets.

The Latin translation of Simplicius' commentary by William of Moerbeke, completed in 1271, reads:

³³ The move of starting with a classification of the various meanings attributed by Aristotle to a term gives a distinct Alexandrian ring; one may immediately remark the analogy with the beginning of Alexander's *On Intellect*, pp. 106.19-107.29 Bruns: Νοῦς ἐστὶ κατὰ Ἀριστοτέλη τρίτος, ὁ μὲν γὰρ τίς ἐστὶ νοῦς ὑλικός (...) Ἄλλος δὲ ἐστὶν ὁ ἤδη νοῦν καὶ ἔξιν ἔχων τοῦ νοεῖν (...) Τρίτος δὲ ἐστὶ νοῦς παρὰ τοὺς προειρημένους δύο ὁ ποιητικός. Obviously, in the case of the *De Caelo* the tripartition features in Aristotle's own text, but the fact of beginning by such a terminological remark bears the hallmark of Alexander.

³⁴ R.J. Hankinson, *Simplicius. On Aristotle On the Heavens 1.5-9*, Duckworth, London 2004, pp. 103-4.

³⁵ This passage is the only one in the whole *De Caelo* where the expression ἔσχατος οὐρανός occurs: thus, the identification of the reference of the expression ἐν τούτῳ τῷ βιβλίῳ is beyond doubt.

celum enim tripliciter ab Aristotile in hiis dici, videlicet aplanorum speram et totum divinum et circulare corpus quod quidem et extremum celum cum adiectione vocat in hoc libro et adhuc etiam mundum.³⁶

The anonymous author of the Greek retroversion of Moerbeke's Latin translation, in which consists the *editio princeps* of Simplicius' commentary, was unhappy with this text. He moved back ὅπερ – καλεῖ, in order to have these words referring to the sphere of the fixed stars:

τὴν τε τῶν ἀπλανῶν σφαῖραν, ὅπερ καὶ ἔσχατον οὐρανὸν ἐν τούτῳ τῷ βιβλίῳ μετὰ προσθήκης καλεῖ, καὶ ἅπαν τὸ θεῖον καὶ κυκλικὸν σῶμα καὶ προσέτι τὸν κόσμον.³⁷

It has been surmised that it was Bessarion who moved back the sentence ὅπερ – καλεῖ and referred it to the sphere of the fixed stars, but this hypothesis remains speculative.³⁸ The editor of Moerbeke's translation, Fernand Bossier, shows that in the *editio princeps* of this Latin translation, published in 1540, the Latin sentence has been reworked on the basis of the Greek as printed in the Aldina:

celum enim tripliciter ab Aristotile in hiis dici, videlicet aplanorum sphaeram quod quidem et extremum caelum cum adiectione vocat in hoc libro, et totum divinum et circulare corpus et adhuc etiam mundum.³⁹

Hankinson, the translator of this part of Simplicius' commentary into English, although following the text as edited by Heiberg in his translation, sides with the transposition and thinks that the text as it has come down to us is corrupt.⁴⁰ But in fact it is not: the passage of Simpl., *In De Caelo*, p. 1.2-8 Heiberg is sound, as is shown by Simplicius' commentary of Aristotle's passage, *De Caelo* I 3, 270 b 15: καθ' ὅλον τὸν ἔσχατον οὐρανόν, which, as we have seen, is the passage which the sentence ὅπερ – καλεῖ refers to. Commenting upon this expression, Simplicius says:

ἔσχατον δὲ οὐρανὸν τὸ κυκλοφορητικὸν εἶπε σῶμα ἀντιδιαστέλλων αὐτὸ πρὸς ὅλον τὸν κόσμον οὐρανὸν καὶ αὐτὸν καλούμενον (p. 118.9-11 Heiberg).

³⁶ Cf. Simplicius, *Commentaire sur le traité Du ciel d'Aristote. Traduction de Guillaume de Moerbeke*, édition critique par F. Bossier avec la collaboration de Chr. Vande Veire et G. Guldentops, Vol. 1, Leuven U. P., Leuven 2004 (*CLCAG* 8.1), p. 1.1-4.

³⁷ *Simplicii Commentarii in quatuor Aristotelis libros De coelo, cum textu eiusdem*, Venetiis in Aedibus Aldi Romani et Andreae Asulani Soceri 1526 (the passage is also quoted in Heiberg's Introduction: cf. Simpl., *In De Cael.*, pp. x-xi).

³⁸ The hypothesis is advanced by A. Rescigno, *Alessandro di Afrodisia, Commentario al De Caelo di Aristotele, frammenti del primo libro*, Hakkert, Amsterdam 2004 (Lexis. Suppl., 26), p. 151.

³⁹ *Simplicii philosophi acutissimi commentaria in quatuor libros De Caelo Aristotelis. Guillermo Morbeto interprete. Quae omnia cum fideissimis Codicibus Graecis collata fuere*, Venetijs apud Hieronymum Scotum 1540. Apropos this transposition, Bossier, *Simplicius, Commentaire sur le traité Du ciel d'Aristote* (quoted above, n. 36), p. xciv, writes: "g [that is, Moerbeke] respecte fidèlement l'ordre des mots de l'original grec; par contre en a [that is, the Aldina], la proposition relative ὅπερ ... καλεῖ est déplacée et rattachée directement à l'expression τὴν τε τῶν ἀπλανῶν σφαῖραν. Nous croyons que c'est le traducteur même de a qui en est responsable, très probablement parce qu'il estimait que, selon la doctrine d'Aristote (*Du ciel*, I, 9, 278 a 11-15) le terme ἔσχατος οὐρανός convient en propre à la sphère des fixes".

⁴⁰ Hankinson, *Simplicius. On Aristotle's On the Heavens 1.1-4*, p. 107 n. 4, thinks that Simplicius' passage is corrupted and that the solution of the princeps "to move the clause [i.e. ὅπερ – καλεῖ] back to qualify the sphere of the fixed stars" is the good one.

By the “outermost heaven” he means the revolving body, distinguishing it from the whole cosmos, which he also calls “heaven”(trans. Hankinson).⁴¹

Thus for Simplicius, and also for Alexander on the basis of Simplicius' testimony at p. 1.2-8 Heiberg, the expression ἔσχατος οὐρανός does not stand for the sphere of the fixed stars, but for the κυκλοφορητικὸν ... σῶμα, namely meaning (2) in the tripartition quoted above. Simplicius' Prologue, following the lead of Alexander, lists the three meanings of “Heaven” as they are given in *De Caelo* I 9, and Simplicius' exegesis of Aristotle's expression ἔσχατος οὐρανός of *De Caelo* I 3, 270 b 15 rules out the transposition of ὅπερ – καλεῖ.

Let me recall now that Themistius' paraphrasis, in the parallel place, is obviously corrupt: the second meaning, namely “the whole of the divine revolving body” is omitted. That the text is not sound is made evident by the fact that a tripartition of meanings is mentioned twice, at the beginning (“as for the question of what is meant by the term Heaven, for the Ancients they are three”) and at the end (“Concerning this third meaning ...”), while only two meanings are given. If however one turns to the Latin version by Alatino, the sentence seems to be sound: three meanings are promised, and three are listed. The Latin text reads:

Tria veteres caeli nomine appellare consueverunt; etenim (1) inerrantium stellarum orbem tantum, (2) insuper corpus quintum, ac demum (3) mundum ipsum caeli nomine usurparunt. Iuxta vero tertium hunc dicendi modum invenimus Aristotelem hic de eo disseruisse (p. 1.5-7 Landauer).⁴²

It is apparent that in the Latin version there is something that does not feature in the Hebrew: the “fifth body” (insuper *corpus quintum*). According to the Latin version, Themistius maintained that the Ancients labelled “Heaven” the “fifth body”, namely the aether. This strains credulity, because Themistius, albeit repeatedly dealing in the paraphrase with the meanings of “Heaven”, never says that one of them is the “fifth body”.⁴³ The obvious explanation of the presence of the “fifth body” here is that the translator into Latin, Moshe Alatino, introduced it in order to provide the missing meaning, the second one, thus balancing the enumeration. Although keeping the Hebrew text as it stands in the manuscripts, i.e. with the omission – which testifies that in all likelihood the Arabic model was corrupt in this point⁴⁴ – Landauer took into account Alatino's “fifth body” in his apparatus, instead of discarding it as a wrong conjecture.⁴⁵ There are also some who go as far as to

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

⁴² The reading is the same in the four manuscripts of the Hebrew text (cf. above p. 6).

⁴³ Themistius addresses this question more than once in his paraphrase. He says that the Ancients adopted the term “Heaven” also for (1) the ceaseless, eternal and divine body (*ba-nizhī ba-ttāmīdi hā-biṣṣ'arūt kī hu'elohī*: p. 3(ג) ll. 25-26 Landauer); (2) the ceaseless movement (*ha ttāmīdi ha-tenō'at*, p. 11(א) l. 26 Landauer); (3) the fire or the igneous body (*ba-šoreph / gešem išeī*, p. 11(א) l. 32 Landauer). According to him, the meaning (3) does not meet Aristotle's criteria (cf. Them., *In De Caelo*, I 3, p. 11(א) ll. 31-32 Landauer). He also says that Aristotle adopts the term “Heaven” also for (4) the highest and noblest part of the substances existing in nature (p. 140(ק) ll. 4-5 Landauer), meaning by “nature” the whole natural substance and all the bodies that fall under sense-perception (p. 35(ה) ll. 25-27 Landauer).

⁴⁴ Between the Arabic translation and its version into Hebrew there is a span of time of almost two and a half centuries.

⁴⁵ However keeping the text as it stands in the manuscripts, Landauer tentatively fills the gap in the apparatus *ad loc.*, adding on the basis of the Latin version *we-yōreb 'al 'ezem ba-ḥamīšī* (“or it means the fifth body”). This is even more surprising, in consideration of the fact that Landauer was perfectly aware that Alatino's emendations were nothing but rough conjectures; cf. *Praefatio*, p. vi: “Nam quae Alatinus plura habet, magnam partem ipse addidit, et coniectura eum aberrasse in addendo patet”.

suggest changing Simplicius' sound text on the basis of this late and worse than mediocre conjecture, with the effect of crediting Alexander of Aphrodisias with a tripartition of the meanings of "Heaven" that goes against Aristotle.⁴⁶ One may also remark that neither Themistius nor Simplicius say that the "fifth body" is one of the meanings of the term "Heaven" when commenting upon Aristotle's tripartition in *De Caelo* I 9, 278 b 9-24: Themistius, who does not follow Aristotle's text line by line, limits himself to referring the reader to the prologue of Book I (i.e. the passage discussed above), and adds that he had already explained that by "Heaven" Aristotle meant the cosmos as a whole.⁴⁷ As for Simplicius, he accounts for the three meanings one by one, as we have seen before.

Alatino made up for the lack of the second meaning by mentioning the *corpus quintum*. An eminent intellectual of his times,⁴⁸ he was by no means incapable of advancing emendations about Themistius' text; he was even interested in doing so, in view of the difficulties he met in translating it, and about which he complains. In his prologue to the translation⁴⁹ he discusses the details of the history of the text;⁵⁰ then, apropos his difficulties in translating it, he recounts he consulted various scholars, and even tried to find someone who might have helped him with the Arabic:

sperabam tamen me ope doctissimi alicuius viri adiutum, qui Arabum linguam profiteretur, in explicatione praecipue nonnullarum vocum, quae per hanc paraphrasim arabice dispersae inveniabantur, posse a tanto onere non nihil sublevari meamque interpretationem interim utcumque prosequi. Sed,

⁴⁶ Rescigno, *Alessandro di Afrodisia, Commentario al De Caelo di Aristotele, frammenti del primo libro*, pp. 153-4, maintains that it is Alatino's rendering which preserves the genuine reading of the original Greek (which also counts for him as a silent quotation of Alexander's lost commentary); consequently, it is Rescigno's opinion that the Latin of Themistius helps to correct Simplicius. He goes as far as to attribute the presence of the "fifth body" in the tripartition to Alexander himself: "Si potrebbe pensare ad una lacuna nella tradizione o ad una omissione da parte di Simplicio (...). Ma c'è la testimonianza di Temistio che vieta tale ipotesi e conferma, invece, che Alessandro tripartiva i significati in questo modo: 1) sfera delle fisse; 2) quinto corpo; 3) cosmo. Confermando, in qualche modo, la suddivisione che si ricava da Simplicio e confermando che l'ὄλον τὸ θεῖον καὶ κυκλοφορικὸν σῶμα che Temistio allega come *quintum corpus* corrisponde proprio al secondo dei significati di Alessandro. La problematica causola ὅπερ καὶ ἔσχατον οὐρανὸν ἐν τούτῳ τῷ βιβλίῳ μετὰ προσθήκης καλεῖ si spiega come la produzione da parte di Alessandro, di una prova desumibile dal *De Caelo* che il πρῶτον σῶμα (...) fosse stato chiamato, seppure μετὰ προσθήκης, con il termine οὐρανός" (*ibid.*, p. 153). As we have just seen, the clause ὅπερ καὶ ἔσχατον οὐρανὸν ἐν τούτῳ τῷ βιβλίῳ μετὰ προσθήκης καλεῖ has a completely different origin with respect to that advanced by Rescigno.

⁴⁷ Cf. Them., *In De Caelo*, p. 35.25-27 Landauer (literal translation of συνεστάναι τοῦ φυσικοῦ καὶ τοῦ αἰσθητοῦ σώματος, *De Caelo* I 9, 278 b 23).

⁴⁸ On Alatino's life and intellectual activity, see the references in "Alexander of Aphrodisias in Themistius' Paraphrase of the *De Caelo*", quoted above, n. 25, p. 357 n. 11, and p. 362 n. 32.

⁴⁹ Published in Landauer's *Praefatio*, pp. XIII-XV; this *Prologue* follows the dedication letter to Cardinal Luigi d'Este (Aug. 1, 1573) which is published *ibid.*, pp. XI-XIII. As he says in the Preface, Alatino had pupils, to whom he wanted to teach Themistius' doctrines: he complains about the difficulty of the task saying: "necesse quidem fuit, ut tantum ac tale onus subierim, quale certe vobis, o iuvenes amatissimi, nunquam explicare possem" ("It has been necessary, then, to embark upon a task so difficult and heavy that I cannot even tell you, my dear pupils"): *ibid.*, p. XIV.

⁵⁰ Of course, Alatino's information is not sound: according to him, the translation from Greek into Arabic was made in the XIIth century: "Etenim cum ex Graeco Averrois tempore ad Arabas ac inde in Hebraicum idioma eiusmodi paraphrasis fuisset delata, cui in dubium venit ex hac multiplici versione errores aliquos contigisse, qui obscuriores difficilioresque nonnullas orationes reddebant? Quare, quod vulgo fertur, sero sapiunt Phryges" ("In addition, given that the paraphrase was translated from Greek into Arabic in Averroes' time, and then it was in this way that it was translated into Hebrew, who might be surprised if so many translations produced flaws which made several sentences even more obscure and difficult? This is why, as the saying goes, Phrygians knew too late!"), *ibid.*, p. XIV. The saying *sero sapiunt Phryges*, meaning "it is easy to be wise after the event", features also in Erasmus' *Adagia*, n° 461.

bone Deus, nedum talem adire hominem nunquam mihi contigit, sed etiam multos locus inveni, qui ad eorum explicationem diligentissimo atque exercitatissimo homine indigebant (*In De Caelo, Suppl. Praef.*, p. XIV Landauer).

However, I was hoping that, with the help of some learned man proficient in Arabic, I would have been sustained in particular in understanding the few technical Arabic terms interspersed in the paraphrase,⁵¹ and in carrying on my translation. Alas, my God: it never happened to me to meet such a man; not only, but also I found in it many passages whose explanation would have needed someone extremely wise and conversant with the matter at hand.

He also informs the reader that it is a habit with him to check the text against Aristotle's sentences.⁵² All this points to a translator who did not hesitate to mix his own emendations with the authentic text, and warns correcting the Hebrew on the basis of the Latin version: indeed, Alatino's translation often verges on interpretation, and in this case the interpretation was wrong.

⁵¹ Indeed, some terms were left in Arabic in Zerahyah's Hebrew translation, which caused problems to Alatino: cf. Landauer, *Praefatio*, p. VII.

⁵² "At quo ordine in hac versione incessem, nunc audietis. Primo enim cuiusque Aristotelis contextus germanam pro viribus sententiam assecutus nonnulla, quae antea admodum confusa et ambigua erant, mihi perspicua reddebantur, aliqua ob phrasis mutationem agnovimus sensus perspicuitatem amisisse" ("Now listen to what was my procedure in translating. First, following as far as possible the similar sentence in Aristotle's passage, some points which before were quite confused and doubtful have been rendered clear to me, while I realised that other points lost their perspicuousness because of the changes in the wording"), *ibid.*