ROBERT GROSSETESTE AND THE FLUID HISTORY OF THE LATIN *NICOMACHEAN ETHICS*

ROBERTO GROSSETESTE Y LA HISTORIA FLUIDA DE LA *ÉTICA A NICÓMACO* LATINA

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Abstract

This article presents the history of the medieval Latin translations of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. It features the names of some key figures of the period like Burgundio of Pisa, Robert Grosseteste, and William of Moerbeke. The main focus lies on the question whether Robert Grosseteste had access to a complete copy of the earlier translation by Burgundio of Pisa, or only to the fragmentary version that has come down to us.

To reach an answer, the Latin versions and their Greek models are studied as "fluid texts", which indicates that all individual witnesses of the text and of its translations contain readings and variants that differentiate them from each other and from the translator's ultimate intentions. In their turn, the fluid elements cause changes to persist throughout the transmission process and continue to exert mutual influence.

A detailed, though necessarily largely incomplete study of some of these aspects leads to unnoticed evidence and to an uncertain but optimistic conclusion.

Keywords

Robert Grosseteste; Translation Method; Textual Fluidity; *Nicomachean Ethics*; Aristotle

Resumen

Este artículo presenta la historia de las traducciones latinas medievales de la *Ética a Nicómaco* de Aristóteles. Se destacan los nombres de algunas figuras clave del período, como Burgundio de Pisa, Roberto Grosseteste y Guillermo de Moerbeke. Se centra en la cuestión de si Roberto Grosseteste tuvo acceso a una copia completa de la traducción anterior de Burgundio de Pisa, o solo a la versión fragmentaria que nos ha llegado.

Para llegar a una respuesta, se estudian las versiones latinas y sus modelos griegos como "textos fluidos", es decir, testigos individuales del texto y de sus traducciones que contienen lecturas y variantes que los diferencian entre sí y respecto a las intenciones últimas del traductor. A su vez, los elementos fluidos causan cambios que persisten a lo largo del proceso de transmisión y continúan ejerciendo una influencia mutua.

Un estudio detallado, aunque necesariamente en gran medida incompleto, de algunos de estos aspectos conduce a pruebas inesperadas y a una conclusión incierta pero optimista.

Palabras clave

Roberto Grosseteste; método de traducción; fluidez textual; *Ética a Nicómaco*; Aristóteles

Medieval Translations as Fluid Texts

Can historians of medieval philosophy ever be absolutely sure that the text in front of them represents the author's ultimate intentions completely and faithfully?[1] Asking the question already implies its answer. In the absence of contemporary printed editions that went through the various stages of proof reading, after which the author himself could give his stamp of approval to a fixed text, there always remain doubts whether philology can establish the author's exact phrasing from the text as "deficient" manuscript copies preserve it. Even in the rare instances where an autograph copy of a particular medieval text is extant, divergent versions can turn up with legitimate claims to authority and originality.[2]

For the reconstruction of most texts, philological procedures will be sufficient to assess the value of the extant manuscripts. By applying strict rules of textual criticism, editors will attempt to establish which readings must be considered original, and accordingly decide that those words were preferred by the author in the final draft of his work. Rejected variants and their material bearers are labelled with a distinctly negative vocabulary. The readings are considered "errors" or "corruptions", and if scribes attempted to improve their models by comparing them with other copies of the same text, the resulting manuscripts are considered "contaminated" or even "impure". That religiously tinged vocabulary gives the impression that it conveys an anathema

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[2] Franz Pelster, "Die ersten beiden Kapitel der Erklärung Alberts des Großen zu *De animalibus* in ihrer ursprünglichen Fassung. Nach Cod. Vat. lat. 718", *Scholastik* 10 (1935): 229-240.

for editors to stay far away from this type of witnesses for the constitution of their texts.

The presentation of text transmissions in that manner rests on the firm conviction that if medieval authors had had the opportunity to fix their final text forms in the same way as printed editions can, they would have seized that opportunity. Yet recent scholarship has shown that the fixed character of printed texts is nothing more than an illusion and that various editions or print runs can significantly differ from each other, thus conveying a "fluid text".[3] Obviously, in the case of works that are transmitted exclusively in manuscript form, the variation between the preserved witnesses must be considerably more extensive. Since all medieval texts started their dissemination through manuscripts, their fluid nature forms an intrinsic characteristic. The observation was pointedly captured in Bernard Cerquiglini's famous one-liner: "l'écriture médiévale ne produit pas des variantes, elle est variance".[4] Cerquiglini's book that contains the sentence is said to have sparked the "New Philology" movement, which laid down its manifesto in a number of articles published in the first issue of the 1990 *Speculum* volume.[5] The concept was not completely innovative: ten years earlier, Françoise Desbordes had already characterized the transmission of ancient texts by their "état liquide".[6]

These developments do not imply that critical editions are no longer valuable tools to study medieval texts. Yet, a more positive approach to all aspects of fluid text transmissions potentially leads to richer research options, for "a reader's interpretation exists independently from a writer's intentions".[7] Readers were not necessarily aware of the fluctuations that a particular text had undergone before they were confronted with it. They exclusively had access to that particular state in which a sequence of transcriptions had conveyed the text to them. Every copy that is made of a text creates a specific state for its reception.

Although these considerations are valid for every single medieval text and its transmission, they constitute an even more powerful context for translations, which are impacted by fluctuations of transmission in two languages. At their origin lies a manuscript in the source language that is itself the result of a history of variance, while the text produced in the target language will set off a similar process. It is therefore

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[3] John Bryant, *The Fluid Text. A Theory of Revision and Editing for Book and Screen* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002). I owe the reference to this book to Mike Kestemont (UAntwerpen).

[4] Bernard Cerquiglini, *Éloge de la variante. Histoire critique de la philologie* (Paris: Seuil, 1989), 111.

[5] See the introductory article: Stephen G. Nichols, "Introduction: Philology in a Manuscript Culture", *Speculum* 65/1 (1990): 1-10.

[6] Françoise Desbordes, *Argonautica. Trois études sur l'imitation dans la littérature antique* (Bruxelles: Latomus, 1979), 96, n. 34.

[7] Bryant, *The Fluid Text*, 8.

impossible to come to an encompassing overview of all evolutions that characterize the process by simply laying out the two relevant critical editions side by side on one's desk.

In this article, I present the history of the medieval Greek-Latin translations of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* from the perspective of textual fluidity. Hardly any text would be a more appropriate subject to illustrate that approach. The first Latin version, produced in the 12th century, was transmitted in at least two separate and incomplete forms. The second resulted from a revision of the previous translation to which supplementary material was added. The third and final medieval Latin version took shape as yet another revision. In addition, each editorial phase was based on particular textual forms of the Latin and Greek texts, which in turn provided elements that influenced the further transmission history. As announced in its title, the article intends to shed light on the role played by Robert Grosseteste as "translator, transmitter, and annotator".[8] It will in particular provide supplementary evidence to assess the question whether Grosseteste had access to a complete text of the oldest translation.

The Fluid History of the Latin *Nicomachean Ethics*

The medieval Latin history of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* started around the middle of the 12th century. References in Italian medical and legal texts from that period demonstrate its availability, but the exact form in which it circulated is shrouded in uncertainty.[9] The oldest manuscripts of the text itself are dated to the end of the same century. They transmit the text in two different, fragmentary forms, a Latin translation of books two and a part of book three ("Ethica vetus"), and a version of the first book on its own ("Ethica nova"). The paths of transmission taken by the two versions were so distant that even if they are found in the same volume, they constitute separate codicological entities. To make their unconnected origin more visible, Father Gauthier, the editor of the medieval Latin *Nicomachean Ethics* translations, gave different sigla to separate parts of the same, important codex.[10] In the course of the 13th century, some scribes tried to remedy the deficiencies of the transmission by

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[8] Jean Dunbabin, "Robert Grosseteste as Translator, Transmitter, and Commentator: The 'Nicomachean Ethics'" *Traditio* 28 (1972): 460-472.

[9] Charles de Miramon, "Réception et oubli de l'*Ethica vetus*. Salerne et Bologne (1150-1180), in *Mélanges en l'honneur d'Anne Lefebvre-Teillard*, edited by B. D'Alteroche, F. Demoulin-Auzary, O. Descamps and F. Roumy (Paris: Panthéon-Assas, 2009), 727-746.

[10] Avranches, Bibliothèque municipale, 232: "Ethica vetus" = *Ay*; "Ethica nova" = *Aw*. Gauthier was well aware of the fluid character of the transmission of the Latin *Nicomachean Ethics* and accordingly pioneered the use of typographic means to differentiate the different layers of transmission in his five-volume critical edition: Aristoteles, *Ethica Nicomachea*, edited by R. A. Gauthier, 5 vol., Aristoteles Latinus XXVI, 1-3 (Leiden and Bruxelles: Brill-Desclée De Brouwer, 1972-1974).

bringing the two sections together into one compilation, which still remained very fragmentary.

According to Gauthier, the two partial versions were produced by different translators. To make matters more intricate, the editor hypothesized that the "Ethica nova" originally was a complete Latin text in ten books, which he labelled as the "Translatio antiquior". Passages from books seven and eight of that lost translation are found in one manuscript (Città del Vaticano, Biblioteca apostolica Vaticana, Borgh. 108, fol. 283r-289r), which were accordingly called "Ethica Borghesiana" by Gauthier. Further remnants were tracked down in variants and corrections throughout all books in another, "contaminated" manuscript of a later version of the translation (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Library, MS Typ 233, fol. 17r-58r). Since the manuscript formerly belonged to the collection of Philip Hofer, Gauthier named that particular version the "Ethica Hoferiana".

Numerous fluid elements determined the first reception of the Latin *Nicomachean Ethics*: the two partial translations that circulated independently, the few pages from books seven and eight that were preserved in one copy, and the traces of other books incorporated in the text of a later translation. Most of these features probably originated accidentally and can be explained conveniently by hypothesizing the loss of quires from an early model or from the archetype. Only in the case of the "Ethica Hoferiana", some form of intentional editorial intervention was necessarily involved.

In view of these intricate circumstances, the task at hand for the editor of the Latin translations was formidable. Yet Gauthier would have been greatly helped if he had realized that all older forms of the Latin *Ethics* were translated by one and the same man, Burgundio of Pisa.

That conclusion gradually materialized at the end of last century, mainly through stylistic comparisons with other translations that transmit Burgundio's name as their translator in the manuscripts. The discovery of the Greek manuscript that Burgundio used as his model (Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 81.18) added important evidence to support the identification.[11] In particular, the comparison between the readings of the Greek manuscript and of the Latin translation emphatically confirms that the one was the model for the other. Additionally, the Greek book belongs to a collection of manuscripts that once passed through Burgundio's hands. The translator used them as models for several translations of Galenic treatises and for his only other Aristotelian text, *On Coming-to-be and Passing-away*. In a preparatory phase of his work, he left numerous traces in Greek and Latin in those manuscripts, which were

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[11] Gudrun Vuillemin-Diem, Marwan Rashed, "Burgundio de Pise et ses manuscrits grecs d'Aristote: Laur. 87.7 et Laur. 81.18", *Recherches de théologie et philosophie médiévales* 64/1 (1997): 136-198.

evidently aimed at a better understanding of the original texts in view of their clear rendering into the target language.[12]

The identification of Burgundio as the translator of the earliest Latin version of the *Nicomachean Ethics* opened possibilities for a deeper understanding of the work's features. Gauthier had noticed that the translator in some instances offers more than one Latin equivalent for what he read in Greek. In Gauthier's edition, the alternative renderings are mostly presented as interlinear variants, similar to the layout that he found in many manuscripts. The appearance adequately reflects the method that is known from Burgundio's translations in other genres. Burgundio expressed his approach in one of the most explicit theoretical reflections on translation practice preserved from the medieval period. In his preface to the Latin version of John Chrysostom's commentary on the Gospel of John, he advocates the word-for-word translation method, but also admits to have made up "for the occasional deficiency of (Latin) words by adding two or three words".[13]

Yet not all manuscripts of Burgundio's *Ethics* look the same since scribes did not necessarily endorse the translator's preference for a presentation with multiple equivalents. As a result, they copied variants according to their own implicit selection criteria. In that way, Burgundio's autograph already provided the material that lay at the origin of a substantial amount of fluidity in the earliest textual transmission. Moreover, the image provided by the manuscripts of the "Ethica nova" is markedly different from that of the "Ethica vetus". The latter preserves a more detailed picture of the variance in Burgundio's translation style, while the former offers less diversity in its witnesses of the transmitted text.

The divergent quality of transmission also raises questions about the terminology used to indicate the available parts of the oldest *Ethics*. The names of "Ethica vetus" and "Ethica nova" were already used from the earliest phase of their preservation in the

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[12] Vuillemin-Diem, Rashed, "Burgundio de Pise", 171, n. 46, state that the Latin notes in 81.18 are from a later period and clearly not Burgundio's. Yet it seems to me that some of the Latin entries in the manuscript are medieval. They certainly demonstrate a good understanding of the Greek text, e.g. f. 43v: *premium ad gloriam spectans* (1134b7: γέρας); f. 44v: *aliqua ex parte* (1134b28: ὅς); f. 72r: *incusationes* (1162b24: ἐγκλήματα). In addition, the structure of a Greek sentence on f. 34r, ll. 7-8 (1129a15-16) is made explicit through the use of the Latin letters a, b, c, d above the words by hand E, which Vuillemin-Diem and Rashed identify as the hand of Burgundio or of a close anonymous collaborator (a similar, though less clearly distinguishable example at the bottom of the same folio, ll. 24-25). These letters probably prove that Burgundio did leave traces of his activity in this manuscript as well.

[13] "...deficienciam quidem dictionum intervenientem duabus vel etiam tribus dictionibus adiectis replens...", Peter Classen, *Burgundio von Pisa. Richter – Gesandter – Übersetzer* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1974), 95, ll. 181-183. Translation Charles Burnett in Michael Angold, Charles Burnett, "Latin Translators from Greek in the Twelfth Century on Why and How They Translate", in *Why Translate Science? Documents from Antiquity to the 16th Century in the Historical West (Bactria to the Atlantic)*, edited by D. Gutas (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 488-524, quote 497.

beginning of the 13th century. Although it is unclear how users would have known about the details of the partial transmission, stylistic research confirms that Burgundio produced the "Ethica vetus" at an earlier stage of his translation career than the "Ethica nova".[14] Why he chose not to translate all books of the *Nicomachean Ethics* in their linear order, remains completely unclear.

Robert Grosseteste was responsible for the following stage in the dissemination of the *Nicomachean Ethics* in the Latin world. His contribution offered significant progress for the availability and the understanding of the treatise. Grosseteste produced a complex body of translations and interpretations that contained a translation of Aristotle's work, another of various late-antique and Byzantine commentaries that accompany and elucidate the ancient philosopher's text, and his own notes to clarify the content of text and commentaries and to explain his choices during the translation process. Robert likely worked on this project in the 40's of the 13th century, for around 1250 Herman the German showed that he knew of Robert's undertaking by describing it in detail in the preface to his Arabic-Latin translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics*:

> And recently the reverend father master Robert with the Big Head but the exquisite intellect, the bishop of Lincoln, translated it more complete from the first sources from which it had flown, namely the Greek, and commented upon it by combining his own notes with the commentaries of the Greeks.[15]

The translated commentaries are preserved in 22 manuscripts, most of which combine them with the lemmas of Robert's version of the Aristotelian text.[16] Many hundreds only contain the ten books of Robert's Latin *Nicomachean Ethics*, and his notes on the translated texts are preserved scattered among those witnesses. From that description, it is clear that "so far, not a single page of Grosseteste's major annotated translations has been printed in the form he intended."[17]

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[14] Fernand Bossier, "L'élaboration du vocabulaire philosophique chez Burgundio de Pise", in *Aux origines du lexique philosophique européen. L'influence de la* Latinitas, edited by J. Hamesse (Louvain-la-Neuve: Fédération Internationale des Instituts d'Études Médiévales, 1997), 81-116.

[15] "Et postmodum reverendus pater magister Robertus Grossi Capitis sed subtilis intellectus, Lincolniensis episcopus, ex primo fonte unde emanaverat, graeco videlicet, ipsum est completius interpretatus et graecorum commentis proprias annectens notulas commentatus." H. Paul F. Mercken, *The Greek Commentaries on the Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle in the Latin Translation of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln (†1253)*, vol. I, Corpus Latinum Commentariorum in Aristotelem Graecorum VI,1 (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 39*. My translation.

[16] H. Paul F. Mercken, *The Greek Commentaries on the Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle in the Latin Translation of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln (†1253)*, vol. III, Corpus Latinum Commentariorum in Aristotelem Graecorum VI,3 (Leuven: University Press, 1991), 53*-54*. To these manuscripts has to be added the single leaf that contains the commentary text from the end of book VIII and the beginning of book IX from the private collection of professor Rodney Thomson, see https://eprints.utas.edu.au/8500 (accessed January 2023).

[17] Anna Carlotta Dionisotti, "On the Greek Studies of Robert Grosseteste", in *The Uses of Greek and Latin. Historical Essays*, edited by A.C. Dionisotti, A. Grafton and J. Kraye (London: Warburg

While it is clear that Grosseteste had to start his translation work on the Greek commentaries from scratch, it is also evident that the "Translatio Lincolniensis" of the *Nicomachean Ethics* itself is a reworking of Burgundio's Latin in those passages where the "Ethica nova", the "Ethica vetus", and the "Ethica Hoferiana" are extant. Gauthier typographically represented this feature in his edition by having the changes to the previous version printed in a larger font. Whether Grosseteste had a complete copy of the "Translatio antiquior" at his disposal, or had to produce a new translation of the other sections, is more difficult to establish.

In the preface to his Aristoteles Latinus edition of the medieval Greek-Latin translations, Gauthier convincingly demonstrated how Grosseteste had used the older translation for books I-III where it is still extant, but for the other parts he concluded that it was impossible to reach a certain verdict: "controversiam dirimere non ausim: tutius est candide fateri nos nescire utrum partes translationis Antiquioris librorum IV-X perditas Robertus cognovit necne."[18] In the revised second edition of his French translation and commentary, Gauthier stated more boldly, but without providing further evidence, that Grosseteste's Latin is "une révision de l'ancienne traduction complète que Robert Grosseteste semble avoir possédée en son entier".[19] Fernand Bossier confirmed the earlier conclusion and resigned himself to the impossibility of reaching complete certainty: "Cette traduction contient quantité d'éléments de la traduction ancienne, qui, de toute évidence, ne se laissent repérer avec certitude que dans les seuls passages où le texte ou des fragments de la traduction originale ont été conservés."[20] Yet, a recent article implies, without giving further argumentation, that the question has been decided: "Strictly speaking, the *Translatio lincolniensis* was not an altogether new translation, i.e., a translation *ex nihilo*, but a revision of a prior version published by Burgundio of Pisa before 1150, which comprised all the books of the *Ethics*."[21] In the last part of this article, I will come back to the question with additional arguments.

The last medieval stage in the transmission consists of another revision, this time of Grosseteste's version. While there was no controversy in recognizing the features of the text as resulting from revision rather than from a new translation, more

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Institute, 1988), 19-39, quote 29 and another leaf of book X auctioned in Bruges (Van de Wiele, 30/9/2023).

[18] Aristoteles, *Ethica Nicomachea*, vol. I, edited by Gauthier, CXCV.

[19] René Antoine Gauthier and Jean Yves Jolif, *L'Ethique à Nicomaque. Introduction, Traduction et Commentaire*, Second edition, vol. I, part 1 (Louvain-la-Neuve, Paris, and Sterling, VA: Peeters, 2002), 121.

[20] Fernand Bossier, "Les ennuis d'un traducteur. Quatre annotations sur la première traduction latine de L'*Éthique à Nicomaque* par Burgundio de Pise", *Bijdragen* 59/4 (1998): 406-427, quote 409.

[21] José A. Poblete, "The Medieval Reception of Aristotle's Passage on Natural Justice: The Role of Grosseteste's Latin Translation of *Ethica Nicomachea*", *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 94/2 (2020): 211-238, quote 212. Oddly, the works given as references for this sentence do not contain evidence in support of its claim.

uncertainty shrouded the identity of its maker. Franceschini, who first brought the revision to the attention of the scholarly world, concluded on the basis of the recent revision's close connection with the works of Thomas Aquinas that William of Moerbeke had to be responsible for it.[22]

Father Gauthier, who notoriously rejected every suggestion of a "privileged relation" between Aquinas and Moerbeke, investigated the "Recensio recognita" (as he called it) in greater detail in search for the changes to Grosseteste's version that could be attributed with certainty to the revisor. First, he established that the revision was performed using a copy of the "Translatio Lincolniensis" in an adapted form (as opposed to the original state of the text or "Recensio pura"). That adaptation was executed without reference to the Greek original. As a result, the "vir doctus" who revised the translation likely intervened to correct some of these new variants and to align the original "Translatio Lincolniensis" with his own translation practice.[23] In spite of Gauthier's negative judgement, the "Recensio recognita" is now generally accepted as the work of William of Moerbeke.[24]

The fluid state of the manuscripts that contain Williams' resulting reworking is described in the characteristic terminology of regression and decay.

> [T]he extant manuscripts of the revised translation are all more or less corrupt, but they testify to an *exemplar* that contained marginal and/or interlinear *notulae* which formed a sort of critical apparatus, giving variant readings, some of which went back to variants in the Greek manuscripts. This *exemplar*, unfortunately, is lost, but many of the variants are incorporated in the text of the extant manuscripts, often in the wrong place, or simply juxtaposed to the basic reading without connecting particle. (...) Moreover, some manuscripts contain this already mutilated version in a contaminated form, resulting from collations with manuscripts representing previous stages of this translation.[25]

Typology of Revised Translations

William of Moerbeke is known to have revised numerous Latin translations that had been produced by his predecessors. The abundance of information makes it possible to establish the characteristics of the manuscripts that transmit this particular type of translated texts. A typology of revised translations will be a useful asset to decide whether the sections of Grosseteste's *Nicomachean Ethics* outside of the preserved

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[22] Ezio Franceschini, "La revisione Moerbekana della 'Translatio Lincolniensis' dell'*Etica Nicomachea*", *Rivista di Filosofie Neo-Scolastica* 30/2 (1938): 150-162. Reprinted in Ezio Franceschini, *Scritti di filologia latina medievale* (Padova: Antenore, 1976), 637-653.

[23] Aristoteles, *Ethica Nicomachea*, vol. I, edited by Gauthier, CCXXXIII-CCXLV.

[24] Jozef Brams, "The Revised Version of Grosseteste's Translation of the Nicomachean Ethics", *Bulletin de philosophie médiévale* 36 (1994): 45-55.

[25] Mercken, *The Greek Commentaries*, vol. I, 45*.

parts of Burgundio's translation were based on the "Translatio antiquior" or were the outcome of Robert's own original work.

For this purpose, I will summarize the results of Gudrun Vuillemin-Diem's analysis of the manuscript tradition of William of Moerbeke's *Metaphysics.* Moerbeke started the work on the basis of an incomplete anonymous translation, which he revised but also supplemented with missing sections. As a result, the complex composition of the Latin version makes information discernible to distinguish elements typical for the two procedures in the transmission.

Theoretically, two practices to produce a revised translation are conceivable: either the revisor used a manuscript of the Greek text and a copy of the work by a Latin predecessor and he wrote down his own reworking of that information on new leaves, or he acquired an existing copy of an earlier Latin version, compared it with the Greek text, and entered his changes and corrections in the available space between the lines and in the margins of the manuscript of the older translation. All the known revisions by William of Moerbeke were realized following the latter method.[26]

As a consequence, the manuscripts through which those revisions were transmitted preserve various layers of fluidity that originate from different sources – and Moerbeke's revision of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* does so, since it is transmitted through various branches that all go back to the original state of the text. The ultimate touchstone to distinguish between genuine readings and errors, which is essential for the establishment of a critical edition, lies in the comparison with the Greek text. However, the underlying older translation and the revision were probably prepared on the basis of two or more different Greek manuscripts. Consequently, it is impossible to attribute readings based on Greek variants to the older text or to its revision unless there is a clear idea about the nature of the Greek manuscripts that the two translators had on their desks. By a lucky coincidence, the Greek manuscript on which Moerbeke chiefly based his revisions of the *Metaphysics* (and of numerous other Aristotelian treatises on natural philosophy) was preserved. Its survival allows for a more detailed and comprehensive study of Moerbeke's methods of revision.[27]

As for the further characteristics of variants, the revisor may have changed the underlying translation in equivalents that correctly render the Greek original if they were not in line with his own Latin preferences. Yet he may just as well have turned a blind eye on them so that they remained unchanged. Moreover, the older translator could have produced a correct Latin text that was subsequently miscopied in the

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[26] Aristoteles, *Metaphysica. Lib. I-XIV. Recensio et Translatio Guillelmi de Moerbeka*, edited by G. Vuillemin-Diem, Praefatio, Aristoteles Latinus XXV, 1 (Leiden, New York, and Köln: Brill, 1995), 24-25.

[27] Wien, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, phil. gr. 100; for a comprehensive treatment of the manuscript's importance for Moerbeke's revision of the *Metaphysics*, see Aristoteles, *Metaphysica*, edited by Vuillemin-Diem, 167-183.

specific manuscript used for the revision.[28] In that case, the revisor's correction may have consisted in a return to the original reading of his predecessor.

If a revised translation was transmitted through various independent branches that all go back to the original state of the revision's manuscript, the variants of the tradition will provide sufficient evidence for the editor to establish the nature of the corrections entered in the margins and between the lines (even if, as in the case of the *Metaphysics*, the original manuscript changed over time as the result of an ongoing process of revision by the translator). Vuillemin-Diem calls them "primary contaminations", a term that was previously introduced by Gauthier. It is obvious that their value to understand a text's transmission is decidedly different from later changes to the text or "secondary contaminations".[29]

Vuillemin-Diem's exemplary description of the typology of Moerbeke's method of revision and the fluid aspects of the manuscript tradition that result from the process are reflected to perfection in the "Recensio recognita" of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. First, it is clear that the revisor, to whom Gauthier persistently refers as a "vir doctus", but who undoubtedly was William of Moerbeke, used a different Greek manuscript from Grosseteste's. A note from the revisor's hand preserved in copies of the "Recensio recognita" confirms that he even checked a particular reading in two Greek manuscripts. The philological analysis of the changes in the "Recensio recognita" of Grosseteste's text confirms the revisor's statement. Unfortunately, in this case neither of Moerbeke's Greek models has so far been identified as an extant manuscript.

As for the Latin text underlying the revision work, Moerbeke did not start from the translation in the same state as Grosseteste had finalized it, since he had access to a form that was reworked by some anonymous scholar who did not use the Greek text (the version was labelled **L²** by Gauthier). Accordingly, Moerbeke's revision contains corrections of mistaken readings and supplements for passages that are missing in **L²** although they would not have needed changing if he had had Grosseteste's intended version at his disposal.

Gauthier was able to confirm the precise nature of the revision, i.e. that changes were entered in the margins and between the lines of an existing copy of Grosseteste's text in the **L²** state, through a number of copying incidents linked with the way in which the corrections were found in the model. The misinterpretations resulted in conflated readings that combine parts of the original Grosseteste reading with the Moerbeke correction, in corrections inserted in the wrong places, or in missing words for passages where the scribe left out the original text and forgot to replace it with the new

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[28] The manuscript of the older translation used by Moerbeke for his revision of the *Metaphysics* was very similar to manuscript Pisa, Biblioteca Cateriniana, 11, see Aristoteles, *Metaphysica*, edited by Vuillemin-Diem, 22-24.
[29] Aristoteles, *Metaphysica*, edited by Vuillemin-Diem, 52-54.

version.[30] Although Gauthier insists that there are some common mistakes between the two extant branches of the tradition of the "Recensio recognita" that warrant the hypothetical existence of an archetype, it seems a more economical explanation to suggest that these types of variants ultimately result from a shared access to Moerbeke's original, a manuscript that provided so many options for potential "primary contaminations", that it accounts for a large share of textual fluidity in the translation's subsequent transmission.

Did Grosseteste Translate or Revise?

Even a superficial glance at the transmission of Grosseteste's own "Translatio Lincolniensis", and in particular at the critical apparatus of books I-III, demonstrates that, in spite of being a revision of the translation by Burgundio of Pisa, it does not display features similar to Moerbeke's "Recensio Recognita".[31] The tradition is almost totally free of "primary contaminations", and where double readings and variant translations are preserved, they seem to result from Grosseteste's own selection, not from accidents in the transmission process. That becomes especially clear in those passages where the "Translatio Lincolniensis" contains a reading that is identical with an erroneous variant in one or more manuscripts of the older translation. Grosseteste must have entered them in the master copy of his translation, since in those cases the transmission of the "Translatio Lincolniensis" does not preserve corrections in the form of variants.[32]

That Grosseteste had at least one copy of the "Translatio vetus" in front of him (the use of the plural in the passage below may be reliable but a rhetorical exaggeration cannot be excluded), finds confirmation in his own statement regarding the reading at 1107a30:

> Where we put "universales sermones communiores sunt", we find in some Latin books as follows: "universales quidem sermones inaniores seu vaniores sunt". You have to know that the Greek text of the old exemplars that we examined has "koinoteri" with the diphthong oi, which means "more common", and not "kenoteri" with a simple e, which means "more idle or empty". The two readings can quite easily be changed into the same meaning.[33]

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[30] Aristoteles, *Ethica Nicomachea*, vol. I, edited by Gauthier, CCXXXI-CCXXXV.

[31] Aristoteles, *Ethica Nicomachea*, vol. I, edited by Gauthier, CLXXXVII-CXCIV.

[32] Aristoteles, *Ethica Nicomachea*, vol. I, edited by Gauthier, CXCII-CXCIV.

[33] "Ubi autem nos posuimus universales sermones communiores sunt, in aliquibus libris latinis invenimus sic: universales quidem sermones inaniores seu vaniores sunt. Set sciendum quod littera greca in exemplaribus antiquis que inspeximus habet koinoteri per oi diptongon, quod significat communiores, et non kenoteri per e nudum, quod significat inaniores seu vaniores. Potest autem utraque littera ad eundem sensum satis faciliter converti." Aristoteles, *Ethica Nicomachea*, vol. III, edited by Gauthier, 172.

It means that Grosseteste reconstructed the Greek variant κενώτεροι on the basis of Burgundio's not perfectly matching equivalent *inanes*, although his Greek manuscripts transmitted the reading κοινότεροι, which in Grosseteste's version became *communiores*. The variant from the "Translatio vetus" is preserved in Robert's note to the passage, not as a "primary contamination" in the manuscripts. These observations and the general view of the preserved manuscripts suggest that Grosseteste made his Latin version while various information sources were simultaneously or in consecutive stages on his desk: one or more manuscripts of the older Latin text, two codices of Aristotle's Greek original, and possibly a copy of the Greek commentaries that he planned to accompany his Latin *Nicomachean Ethics*. One can only imagine that he brought this intricate process to a successful end by working according to the first potential method that Vuillemin-Diem described, i.e. by writing his own version out anew on fresh leaves rather than following Moerbeke's system of entering changes and corrections into an existing copy.

Now that we have established Robert Grosseteste's revision method by comparing the first three books of his "Translatio Lincolniensis" with the extant passages of the "Translatio antiquior", it has become clear that building a watertight case for the remaining books on the basis of the available evidence is extremely difficult.[34] While William of Moerbeke's revised manuscript of the older translation provided sufficient fluid elements for scribes to transmit "primary contaminations" in their copies, Grosseteste's revision had already undergone the selection process before his neat copy preserved exclusively the preferences that were on the translator's mind. In order to assess whether Grosseteste had access to a complete manuscript of the "Translatio antiquior", we have to evaluate which elements from the lost translation potentially survived that selection process. This requires that we isolate from the "Translatio Lincolniensis" of books IV through X (with the exception of the passages from the "Translatio Borghesiana") elements that were hypothetically recovered from Burgundio's lost Latin version, i.e. elements that were not likely to have come from Grosseteste's own pen independently from the inspiration provided by his predecessor.

In order to carry out this hazardous assessment, two potential sources of information are available: (1) readings from Burgundio's Greek manuscript that were not present in Grosseteste's Greek sources (copies of Aristotle's text and of the Greek commentaries that he translated), and to which he could not likely arrive by mere conjecture; (2) typical features of Burgundio's translation style and vocabulary that differ markedly from Grosseteste's own preferences.

(1) While the Greek manuscript(s) of the *Nicomachean Ethics* that were in Grosseteste's hands are probably no longer extant, we still have access to Burgundio's Greek model (Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 81.18). Moreover,

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[34] "Difficilius postremo dictu est, utrum Robertus in manibus habuerit translationem Antiquiorem librorum IV-X." Aristoteles, *Ethica Nicomachea*, vol. I, edited by Gauthier, CXCIV.

Burgundio does not display a tendency to often deviate from the readings offered by his Greek manuscripts. As a result, whenever a Latin reading in Grosseteste's translation can be understood from a Greek text exclusively transmitted by Burgundio's manuscript, it is a probable relic from the "Translatio antiquior". Obviously, such cases are extremely rare since they require that a particular reading of the Laurentianus is unique in the Greek tradition, ánd that Grosseteste inadvertently or intentionally did not change it in line with what he read in his own Greek witnesses. The task is not impossible, however, since according to Panegyres, the Laurentianus "has many variants not (*as far as is currently known*) found in other medieval manuscripts".[35]

In books IV through X, two passages convey potentially significant evidence.

The first is the double translation *sufficit seu placet* (1164a27). The presentation of the alternatives is similar to other cases that Gauthier retrieved from books I-III, where the first variant is the reading that Grosseteste found in the older translation, while the rendering after *seu* (or *sive*, *vel*, *id est*) represents Grosseteste's own preferred equivalent.[36] In this example, *placet* renders ἀρκέσει, which is found in virtually all Greek manuscripts. The first term *sufficit*, however, is the translation for ἀρκεῖ, a reading almost exclusively preserved in the Laurentianus.[37] The only other manuscript that is reported in Gauthier's apparatus to transmit the variant is manuscript Venezia, Biblioteca nazionale Marciana, Z. 213 (751) (*M^b*), produced around 1466-1468, from the collection of Bessarion. Interestingly, we are probably facing an example of textual fluidity in the reverse direction. The model of this Marcianus is manuscript Venezia, Biblioteca nazionale Marciana Z. 212 (606).[38] In the latter manuscript, the text of the *History of Animals* was thoroughly revised with the help of the medieval Latin translation by William of Moerbeke.[39] If the same scenario was followed for the other texts in that manuscript, the variant ἀρκεῖ in *M^b* probably results from a comparison with the Latin version. As a retrotranslation, it may therefore indirectly reproduce the reading of Burgundio's Laurentianus. Unfortunately, there are no full collations available for the *Nicomachean Ethics* in the two Marciani manuscripts.

The second relevant passage is a peculiar addition of *congruit* (1180b15), which renders the Greek ἁρμόττει as transmitted in Burgundio's Laurentianus.[40] "As far as is currently known", the reading is unique for the Laurentianus in the whole Greek

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[35] Konstantine Panegyres, "The Text of Aristotle's *Ethica Nicomachea* in Laurentianus 81.18", *Prometheus* 46 (2020): 3-22, quote 5. My emphasis.

[36] Aristoteles, *Ethica Nicomachea*, vol. I, edited by Gauthier, CXCI and CXCIV-CXCV.

[37] Panegyres, "The Text of Aristotle's *Ethica Nicomachea*", 20.

[38] Georgios Pachymeres, *Commentary on Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics*, edited by S. Xenophontos, Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca et Byzantina 7 (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2022), LXXIV.

[39] Friederike Berger, *Die Textgeschichte der* Historia Animalium *des Aristoteles*, Serta Graeca 21 (Wiesbaden: Reichert, 2005), 87.

[40] Panegyres, "The Text of Aristotle's *Ethica Nicomachea*", 21.

tradition. Accordingly, it is very likely that Grosseteste simply accepted it in his own version from the older translation that he had in front of him.

(2) Burgundio's translation method and "signature vocabulary" has been well studied.[41] A peculiar feature highlighted by Bossier throughout his translations is the use of adjectives ending in *-bilis* (and adverbs in *-biliter*). From Bossier's list, the adjectives *actibilis* (πρακτός), *consiliabilis* (βουλευτός, θελητός), *indetractabilis* (ἀδιάβλητος), and *inpenitibilis* (ἀμεταμέλητος) are found in the *Nicomachean Ethics*.[42] Grosseteste's version shows regular occurrences of *consiliabilis*, both in books where Burgundio's Latin is still extant and in others; while we find *indetractabilis* in the "Ethica Borghesiana" (1157a21), Grosseteste changes it to *intransmutabilis* and prefers *inpermutabilis* in a later passage (1158b9); *actibilis* and *inpenitibilis* are missing from the remains of Burgundio's text, but they are found in the "Translatio Lincolniensis" (1140a2; b3 / 1166a29). The interpretation must therefore be that Robert meticulously evaluated the terminology used by his predecessor and either stuck by it or changed it according to his own understanding. Unless he had acquired knowledge about Burgundio's vocabulary from the latter's other translations, which can certainly not be excluded, it follows that he had the words and the particular passages in Burgundio's version in front of him.

That argument becomes even stronger in cases where thorough philosophical deliberation about the correct equivalence between Greek and Latin becomes less pressing. Although the adverb *quiescibiliter* (with the meaning of "gently") is absent from Bossier's list, it is an absolute signature of Burgundio's translations. The word seems virtually unknown before Burgundio introduced it in his Latin versions. Bonaventure gives us an indication of the unusual character of the word in his commentary on the Gospel of John: when he quoted *quiescibiliter* from Chrysostom's sermons on the Gospel, he felt the need to add the explaining gloss *id est paulatim*.[43]

An incomplete survey of the occurrences of the word as an equivalent for ἠρέμα in Burgundio's works gives an estimation of his preference.[44]

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[41] See, in particular, Bossier, "L'élaboration", Stefania Fortuna and Anna Maria Urso, "Burgundio da Pisa traduttore di Galeno: nuovi contribute e prospettive", e prospettive", in *Sulla tradizione indiretta dei testi medici greci*, edited by I. Garofalo, A. Lami and A. Roselli (Pisa and Roma: Serra, 2009), 139-175, and Riccardo Saccenti, *Un nuovo lessico morale medievale. Il contributo di Burgundio da Pisa* (Roma: Aracne, 2016).

[42] Bossier, "L'élaboration", 116.

[43] *S. Bonaventurae Opera Omnia*, vol. 11, edited by A.C. Peltier (Paris: Vives, 1867), 512b.

[44] I do not discuss the presence of the word in the Latin translation of the *Geoponica* on wine making, for which Burgundio's role is still unclear, see Francesco Buonamici, "Liber de vindemiis a Domino Burgundione Pisano de Graeco in Latinum fideliter translatus", *Annali delle Università Toscane* 28 (1908): memoria 3, 1-29 + tav. I-VI.

* Sermons on the Gospel of Matthew (4 occurrences)[45]

* Sermons on the Gospel of John (13 occurrences)[46]

* Nemesius, *De natura hominis* (2 occurrences)[47]

* Galen, *De interioribus* (3 occurrences)[48]

In one passage of Galen's *De sanitate tuenda*, Burgundio also uses *quiescibiliter* as the equivalent for ἀτρέμα.[49]

Finally, Burgundio uses antonyms in two other contexts: οὐκ ἀνεκτῶς is rendered by three synonyms *incontinenter*, *non quiescibiliter*, *non tolerabiliter*,[50] while the rare ἀκαταπαύστως becomes *inquiescibiliter*.[51]

The Greek word ἠρέμα occurs several times in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, but it seems that initially Burgundio had not come to his eventual standard translation. In the "Ethica vetus", it is rendered as *quiete* (1111a6), which remains unchanged in the "Translatio Lincolniensis". The equivalent *parum* from the "Translatio Borghesiana" (1150a28) is changed to *quiete* in the "Translatio Lincolniensis", and the presence of *quiete* (1146b27; 1148a18; 1169a23; 1175b11) in four other instances in Grosseteste's Latin strongly suggests that he simply accepted the vocabulary of his predecessor. The only exception to this seemingly consistent preference is the presence of *quiescibiliter* in one passage of the "Translatio Lincolniensis" (1126b8). Little imagination is needed to suspect that this was the first instance where Burgundio had tried the alternative equivalent that would later become his standard term, and that Grosseteste had left it unchanged when he revised the older Latin version.

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[45] *PG* 57, 25, l. 18; 69, l. 34; 69, l. 48; 74, l. 12. I have used the Latin text as published online on the *Chrysostomus Latinus in Matthaeum Online* (CLIMO) by Chris L. Nighman with his permission (climo-project.wlu.ca, accessed January 2023).

[46] *PG* 59; references are to the sermons, chapters, and paragraphs in the edition *Chrysostomus Latinus in Iohannem Online* (CLIO) by Chris L. Nighman: 14.3.2; 22.2.17; 26.3.15; 29.2.11; 29.3.7; 31.1.4; 32.1.6; 42.1.17; 44.1.8; 47.3.7; 54.2.13; 62.4.21; 86.1.20 (clioproject.net, accessed January 2023).

[47] *Némésius d'Émèse. De natura hominis. Traduction de Burgundio de Pise*, edited by G. Verbeke and J.R. Moncho, Corpus Latinum Commentariorum in Aristotelem Graecorum, Suppl. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1975), 113, l. 59; 124, l. 78.

[48] *Burgundio of Pisa's Translation of Galen's ΠΕΡΙ ΤΩΝ ΠΕΠΟΝΘΟΤΩΝ ΤΟΠΩΝ "De interioribus"*, edited by R. J. Durling, Galenus Latinus II, vol. A (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1992), 52, l. 35; 112, l. 14; 146, l. 8.

[49] *Galeni De sanitate tuenda libri VI*, edited by K. Koch, Corpus Medicorum Graecorum V 4,2 (Lipsiae and Berolini: Teubner, 1923), 139, l. 31, app. ad loc. Interestingly, the word remained unchanged in the revision that Nicholas of Reggio made of Burgundio's translation in the early-14th century.

[50] *Burgundio of Pisa's Translation of Galen's ΠΕΡΙ ΚΡΑΣΕΩΝ "De complexionibus"*, edited by R. J. Durling, Galenus Latinus I (Berlin and New York: De Gruyter, 1976), 6, l. 2.

[51] *Saint John Damascene. De Fide Orthodoxa. Versions of Burgundio and Cerbanus*, edited by E. M. Buytaert (Saint Bonaventure, NY: Franciscan Institute, 1955), 33, l. 99.

On the basis of this combined evidence, it appears almost irrefutably decided that Grosseteste had access to Burgundio's entire text of the "Translatio antiquior" of the *Nicomachean Ethics.* Yet one has to remain cautious about the statistical value of these individual instances, particularly in view of the quantity of missing information from unedited texts.[52] Further probes led me to two tantalising occurrences of the same adverb *quiescibiliter* that seriously challenge the significance of my earlier observations.

a) The adverb *quiescibiliter* surprisingly also appears in the Latin medieval version of Galen's *De theriaca ad Pamphilianum* as the equivalent of ἠρέμα.[53] The translation, which is preserved in only two manuscripts, is preceded by a preface that ascribes the work to the translator Nicholas of Reggio from the early-14th century.[54] Nicholas knew Burgundio's translations in the field of medicine well, as is demonstrated by the fact that he supplemented some of the latter's that had remained incomplete by translating the missing parts himself. As a consequence, it is quite conceivable that Nicholas's Latin text of *De theriaca ad Pamphilianum* could be a revision of an earlier, lost translation by Burgundio. The hypothesis becomes even more attractive after the analysis of the Greek model, which is similar to manuscript Firenze, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 74.5, which is known to have been in Burgundio's hands.[55]

On the other hand, the supposition goes directly against Nicholas's explicit statement in the preface, where he claims that he was the first to render the work into Latin.[56] And although the text of the Latin translation often agrees with the readings of the Laurentianus, it also has important divergences from it. Maintaining the hypothesis of a revised translation would clearly result in circular reasoning, since every passage that agrees with the Laurentianus would confirm the existence of an underlying text, while every reading that differs from it would have to be attributed to Nicholas's activity. We must therefore take Nicholas's word that his translation was the first in the Latin world. As for the use of *quiescibiliter*, Nicholas's acquaintance with Burgundio's translations of Galen's works will undoubtedly have influenced his own lexical register.

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[52] I am grateful to Ben Nagy (Polish Academy of Sciences, Kraków) for this critical observation.

[53] *Galien. Thérique à Pamphilianos*, edited by V. Boudon-Millot, Collection des Universités de France (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2021), 5 l. 4

[54] A survey of Nicholas of Reggio's translations of Galen is provided by Stefania Fortuna, "Il *Corpus* delle traduzioni di Niccolò da Reggio (fl. 1308-1345)", in *La medicina nel basso medioevo: tradizioni e conflitti* (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di studi sull' alto medioevo, 2019), 285-312.

[55] Burgundio annotated four Galenic treatises in this manuscript, but there are no traces of his activity in *De theriaca ad Pamphilianum*, see Fortuna, Urso, "Burgundio da Pisa traduttore di Galeno", 144-145.

[56] "... libellum Galieni de tiriaca quo hucusque caret lingua Latina..." Paola Radici Colace, "*De theriaca ad Pamphilianum* tradotto da Niccolò da Reggio: *De tiriaca ad Pamphilum*", in *Estudios sobre Galeno Latino y sus fuentes*, edited by M. T. Santamaría Hernández (Cuenca: Ediciones de la Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 2021), 125-161, quote 128. Stefania Fortuna kindly drew my attention to this article.

(b) A second difficulty arises from Grosseteste's translation of the *Testamentum XII Patriarcharum*. In this work, we find the same word *quiescibiliter* as the translation for ἡσύχως.[57] In this case, there is absolutely no reason to suspect that an older translation, by Burgundio or by another scholar, preceded Grosseteste's version.[58] Obviously, there is the possibility that Grosseteste had assimilated the word from his involvement with Burgundio's versions of the *Nicomachean Ethics* and of John Damascene's *De fide orthodoxa*, for which he had also revised the earlier translation by Burgundio. However, that would mean that the word had entered Grosseteste's own vocabulary and that it loses its value as "signature" for Burgundio's translations.

Yet it must be stressed that scholars usually distinguish the *Testamentum XII Patriarcharum* from Grosseteste's other works for its less strict adherence to the verbatim translation method, allegedly because it was aimed at a different, less formally educated readership. Moreover, the *Testamentum* is emphatically mentioned among the translations that Grosseteste prepared in close collaboration with the somewhat mysterious Nicholas the Greek, whose exact influence is difficult to assess.[59]

Moreover, in this particular instance, the textual fluidity of the medieval translation stretches into its early-modern printing history. After the translation was printed numerous times in the 16th century, it received its first scholarly edition in Oxford through the care of Joannes Ernestus Grabius in the first edition of his *Spicilegium SS. Patrum* from 1698, where the Greek and the Latin texts are printed in facing columns.

The collection was reprinted without any changes in an "Editio secunda" of 1700, but by the time it had come to a third revised edition (oddly labelled as the "Editio altera, priori auctior & emendatior") in 1714, the text of the *Testamentum* had undergone an important modification. Precisely in the passage that interests our research, the word *quiescibiliter* had been replaced by *quiete*, without a footnote to explain the reasons for the change.[60] Thus, the two words wonderfully mirror the variance of translation choices that we found in the *Ethics*. Grabius's third edition was

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[57] *Spicilegium SS. Patrum ut et Hæreticorum Seculi post Christum natum I. II. & III.*, edited by J. E. Grabius (Oxoniæ: E Theatro Sheldoniano, 1698), 228.

[58] Much depends, however, on the interpretation of the following testimony about Grosseteste's translation work: "Hic secundo post Burgundionem iudicem Pisanum transtulit Damascenum, et Testamenta patriarcharum XII et multos alios libros." *Salimbene de Adam. Cronica I a. 1168-1249*, Corpus Christianorum, Continuatio Mediaevalis CXXV (Turnholti: Brepols, 1998), 352-353, ll. 28-30. The stop after "Damascenum" is significant, since it limits the preceding "secundo post Burgundionem" to *De fide orthodoxa*. Another reading (and punctuation) of the passage may imply that the *Testamenta patriacharum XII* and other works were also revisions. Classen, *Burgundio von Pisa*, 38-39, firmly favours the former interpretation.

[59] Marinus de Jonge, "Robert Grosseteste and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs", *The Journal of Theological Studies* 42/1 (1991): 115-125.

[60] *Spicilegium SS. Patrum ut et Hæreticorum Seculi post Christum natum I. II. & III.*, Editio altera, edited by J. E. Grabius (Oxoniæ: E Theatro Sheldoniano, 1714), 228.

published posthumously after his death in 1711, so it is unclear whether he had already prepared the expanded edition himself or others had taken over that responsibility. Whoever the editor was, he did not explain the motives behind the adaptation: did he find more and convincing manuscript evidence, or was he struck by the unusual word *quiescibiliter* that might be understood with difficulty by the readers? As a critical edition of Grosseteste's translation is lacking, the question cannot be answered with any degree of certainty.

Conclusion

In this article, we have followed the medieval trail of the *Nicomachean Ethics* in its aspects of a fluid text. The material for its meandering transmission was provided by three different Latin translations, each with its own intricate history. The oldest translation by Burgundio of Pisa was probably made in chronologically different stages and the production process may not have proceeded along the logical order of the text. Robert Grosseteste had access to that earlier translation in a particular state that was certainly not identical to Burgundio's final intentions. In addition, Robert could profit from the hermeneutical efforts of the Greek commentators whose works he also rendered into Latin. As for William of Moerbeke's Latin text, it was based on a physical copy of Grosseteste's work representing a branch of the text history that was marked by significant changes.

As can be expected where translations are concerned, each of the successive stages of the Latin transmission also involved the use of one or more Greek manuscripts, most of which can only be hypothetically reconstructed. In most cases, changes trickled down from these Greek text versions and influenced the Latin phrasing, but there are indications that occasionally the roles might have been reversed and that a Latin book served as model to correct a Greek manuscript. Our investigation was in one instance even complicated by fluid aspects of the printed transmission of another translation by Grosseteste!

For the initial question of this article, whether Robert Grosseteste had a complete copy of the older Latin translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics* by Burgundio of Pisa at his disposal, it turned out to be impossible to reach a final answer. Some peculiar indications preserved in the "Translatio Lincolniensis" are to a remarkable degree consistent with Burgundio's translation preferences and with variants in his Greek model. Yet, in spite of the striking nature of these correspondences, their value remains anecdotical. To reach a more accurate assessment of their weight, the monumental edition of the Latin *Nicomachean Ethics* by Gauthier should be supplemented with a modern edition of the Greek text based on an exhaustive collation of the extant manuscript witnesses. On the Latin side, more research is needed into translation practices in general, and those of Robert Grosseteste in particular. We are not well enough informed about his specific approach to texts that had previously been

translated into Latin, like the *Nicomachean Ethics*, as compared to those for which he had to start his translation afresh, like the Greek commentaries on the same text – I choose these examples carefully since they are among the few texts that have already been studied and critically edited. And the role of his assistants, in particular the somewhat mysterious Nicholas the Greek, may have had an important impact on some of the Latin versions that we used to consider Grosseteste's style.

Stronger indications to distinguish between the various elements of influence that led to the Latin translations as they have come down to us may lie hidden in the fluid aspects of the transmitted texts. Without believing in instant miracles, we might hope that developing computational analyses will shed new light on these fascinating processes of cultural transmission.

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