CHAPTER THREE

ABRAHAM SHALOM’S HEBREW TRANSLATION
OF A LATIN TREATISE ON METEOROLOGY

Resianne Fontaine

1. Introduction

Aristotle’s *Meteorology*, the fourth of his treatises on natural philosophy, elicited considerable interest on the part of medieval Jewish intellectuals. As a result, the corpus of medieval Hebrew texts pertaining to meteorology is quite extensive.¹ Among these texts two concern translations from a Latin text, the so-called *Philosophia Pauperum*. One of these Hebrew translations is by the well-known philosopher Abraham Shalom (d. 1492), active in Aragon and Catalonia, author of the philosophical treatise *Neweh Shalom* and translator of some scholastic works on logic.² The other Hebrew translation is anonymous; its date and place of origin are as yet uncertain, although presumably it antedates Abraham Shalom’s translation. Each translation is preserved in a unique manuscript, that of Abraham Shalom in MS Hamburg 266; the anonymous in MS Oxford, Bodleian Opp. 583.³ In contradistinction to the Hebrew texts on meteorology that are based on Arabic texts, these two Latin-into-Hebrew translations have not yet received much scholarly attention. In a brief article published in 1993, Y. Tzvi Langermann pointed

¹ This article is dedicated to the memory of my ‘fellow-meteorologist’ Pieter L. Schoonheim.


³ In the manuscript it is entitled *Meqor Ḥokhmah*, but since this title does not seem to be original, I prefer to refer to this translation as ‘the anonymous translation’ as opposed to Abraham Shalom’s translation.
out that there are important differences between the two translations even though they seem to go back to the same Latin source. The present article aims to describe some features of Abraham Shalom\'s translation, mostly in comparison to the anonymous Hebrew translation. I shall address issues of translation and terminology as well as the way in which Abraham translates Latin passages that refer to Christianity.

Abraham Shalom\'s translation of the *Meteorology* forms part of a collection entitled *Qīṣṣur ha-Filosofyah ha-ṭivʿit*; in his *Neweh Shalom* he refers to it as *Oṣar ha-ʿeinayim*, which, as Moritz Steinschneider already pointed out, must be a corruption of *Oṣar ha-ʿaniyyim*. This last word reflects the name of the Latin source-text, the popular *Philosophia Pauperum*. This Latin compilation consists of summaries of five of Aristotle\'s treatises on natural philosophy (*Physica*, *De Caelo*, *De Generatione et Corruptione*, *Meteora*, *De Anima*). In the Middle Ages it was often used as a textbook and circulated in different versions. Frequently ascribed to Albertus Magnus, it is now commonly considered to be a pseudo-Albertinian text, presumably authored by Albertus of Orlamünde (fl. late 13th century). The section on meteorology is closely connected to, or perhaps even an extract of Albertus Magnus\’ extensive commentary on Aristotle\'s *Meteorology*, with which it has large portions of text in common. Albertus\’ own commentary, in turn, is based on the Latin version of Aristotle\'s *Meteorology*, although it contains numerous digressions deriving from a wide variety of sources.

---


5 For a more detailed discussion of the anonymous translation, see Resianne Fontaine, "An Anonymous Hebrew Translation of a Latin Treatise on Meteorology", in: Gad Freudenthal, Resianne Fontaine (eds.), *Latin into Hebrew: Texts and Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 221–244. Leʿazim in the body of the text point to a provenance from Central or Northern France, whereas marginal glosses suggest that the text circulated in Germany.

6 For some information on the text and the manuscript see Moritz Steinschneider, *Die hebräischen Übersetzungen des Mittelalters und die Juden als Dolmetscher* (Berlin: Kommisionsverlag des Bibliographischen Bureaus 1893), 465, § 277, and id., *Catalog der hebräischen Handschriften in der Stadtbibliothek zu Hamburg und der sich anschliessenden in anderen Sprachen* (Hamburg: O. Meissner, 1878), 110.

7 Cf. Bernhard Geyer, *Die Albert dem Großen zugeschriebene ‘Summa Naturalium’ (Philosophia Pauperum). Texte und Untersuchungen (= Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters 35/1)* (Münster i. W: Aschendorff, 1938), 47. As far as I know, Geyer\’s arguments in favor of the authorship of Albertus of Orlamünde, a Dominican master in Thüringen, have been generally accepted.
