III. THE ITALIAN TEXT

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Description of the Manuscript

The Italian version of «On Twilight and the Rising of Clouds» exists in a fourteenth-century Vatican manuscript (Biblioteca Apostolica, MS Lat. 4595, ff. 178r-181v). Untitled, it is included with a virtually complete Italian rendering of the medieval Latin version of Alhazen’s monumental De aspectibus or «Optics».18 The way the two works dovetail in the manuscript leaves no doubt that the Italian translator assumed not only that the two form an integral whole, but that Ibn Mu’adh’s treatise brings the De aspectibus to its intended conclusion. This assumption was by no means uncommon during the Middle Ages and Renaissance; of 25 complete Latin manuscript versions of Ibn Mu’adh’s treatise, seven are found in tandem with the De aspectibus.19 It is therefore reasonable to suppose that the Latin exemplar for the Italian version falls within this particular tradition.

We can be even more specific, though. A detailed comparison against the Latin texts within the group of seven reveals an exceptionally close relationship between the Italian translation and Latin version L (British Library, Royal 12.G.VII), which itself dates from the fourteenth century and is written in an Italian hand. So it is quite likely that the Italian translation was drawn, if not directly from L, then from a common Latin progenitor. Unfortunately, there is no indication whatever in the manuscript of who the translator was or why he undertook the translation.20 We do know, however, that Lorenzo Ghiberti relied heavily on this translation of the De aspectibus for his Commentaries (particularly the «Commentario

18 For a complete description of this manuscript, see Narducci, 1871.
19 Six of the seven relevant Latin texts are listed in the earlier critical Latin edition (Smith, 1992). According to the sigla provided in that list, they are as follows: L, P4, V, E, P, and S. In that listing, L was erroneously dated to the 15th century rather than to the 14th, where it properly belongs. The unlisted seventh manuscript is Paris, Bibl. Nat., MS Lat. 7319.
20 Lindberg, 1975, mistakenly attributes the translation to Guerriuccio di Cione Federighi, perhaps on the basis of a misreading of Narducci 1871. For further details, see Vescovini, 1990, pp. 234-235.
terzo»), which were written toward the middle of the fifteenth century on the basis of notes compiled from the early 1420’s on.21

Editorial Matters

While it is by no means diplomatic in the strict sense of the term, the transcription that follows is relatively free of editorial intervention. Still, some has been necessary. For instance: modern punctuation has been used throughout; the text has been subdivided into paragraphs; theorems have been set off with their enunciations in italics; words have been capitalized where appropriate; abbreviated terms (which are very few in the original text) have been spelled out; and a few apostrophes have been added to change such unwieldy diplomatic readings as «luno e l’altro» (or «l uno e l’altro») to «l’uno e l’altro». Original spelling, which is far from consistent in the manuscript, has been retained as far as possible throughout the transcription.

Certain conventions have been followed in the transcription to indicate specific deviations from the norm as gauged by the critical Latin text. The use of plain brackets (...), for example, indicates that the enclosed text was interpolated by the Italian translator, either for the sake of clarification or to indicate an alternative rendering. Thus, in the sequence «e altro (ovoi diverso)», the parenthetical phrase is the translator’s own interpolation, indicating that «diverso» could be substituted for «altro» at this point (where the Latin is in fact «alius»). Parenthetical phrases in italics indicate repetitions in the text. Braces [...] indicate erasures in the Italian text, whereas angle brackets ⟨...⟩ indicate interlinear or marginal additions in the text.

All editorial additions and emendations are set off by square brackets [...]. Such additions and emendations have been made in order either to complete thoughts or sentences or to indicate significant omissions of text vis-à-vis the critical Latin version. Because the particular Latin text (L) from which the Italian version was drawn deviates in some important ways from the critical Latin text, it has been necessary to signal those deviations where they vitiate the logic of a given argument or theorem. Such deviations have been signalled by the juxtaposition of the alternative Latin reading, in square brackets, right after the defective Italian reading.