Logic and Performance:
Translating the *Poetics* into Medieval Scholasticism

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William of Moerbeke was one of the most productive and widely used translators of Aristotle in the thirteenth century. The lack of extant commentaries, *expositio*, or *florilegia* on his 1278 translation of the *Poetics* suggests that there was little, if any, scholastic response to this particular text.[1] While the *Poetics* was certainly not a widely used text in scholastic inquiries, the other extant thirteenth-century version, Hermannus Alemannus's 1256 translation of Averroes's *Middle Commentary* on the *Poetics*, was used into the fourteenth century.[2] That William of Moerbeke's characteristically faithful translation from the Greek made no apparent contribution to medieval theories of theatre, tragedy, rhetoric, or syllogistic logic in the Middle Ages has long been acknowledged.[3] Why the document was apparently ignored as a treatise on performance until the sixteenth century has remained an open question.[4]

Based on a comparison of the content of William of Moerbeke's translation of the *Poetics* and the translation of the Arabic *Middle Commentary* by Hermannus Alemannus, this paper offers two reasons for the marginalization of the Aristotelian *Poetics* in the hierarchies of knowledge established by and within medieval scholastic thought. First, William of Moerbeke's translation did not position the *Poetics* as a treatise on logic, which meant that it occupied no place in the study of dialectic in medieval schools and universities. Second, Aristotle's *Poetics*, unlike the Arabic *Middle Commentary*, defined poetry specifically as theatrical tragedy, thus the treatise did not fit with traditional studies of rhetoric and grammar.[5] The contrast between Moerbeke's translation of the *Poetics* and Hermannus Alemannus's translation of Averroes's *Middle Commentary* shows how the Aristotelian presentation of poetics as tragic form, content, and dramatic performance diverged from scholastic understandings of poetry and poetics as logic, rhetoric, or grammar. This paper analyzes how these two thirteenth-century translations construed poetics differently and points to aspects of the Aristotelian *Poetics* that could not be recognized in the established categories of scholastic thought.

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I. Poetics as Logic in Hermannus Alemannus's Translation of the *Middle Commentary*

Medieval Latin translations of Aristotelian treatises from Arabic placed the *Poetics* and the *Rhetoric* in the Aristotelian *Organon*.[6] Thus, the science of words (*scientia sermonicales*), though considered a lesser form of reasoning than positing logical propositions, hypothetical propositions or syllogisms, was included in the overarching project of discerning truth from falsehood.[7] For example, a recension of Hermannus Alemannus's translation of the *Middle Commentary* and Bartholomew of Bruges's *Brevis Expositio supra Poetriam Aristotelis*, both done at Paris in the late thirteenth century, specifically classified poetics with dialectic. This treatment of poetics as a logical method, as a technical device irrespective of content, has been widely noted and sometimes contested.[8]

In any case, Hermannus Alemannus, a monk based in Toledo, followed the Arabic tradition and defined poetics as a method of non-demonstrative logic and as a counterpart to rhetoric.[9] So defined, the universal rules of poetry could be used to discern truth from falsehood even when language was acknowledged to represent things existing only in imagination.[10] Hermannus Alemannus's introduction is unambiguous in its placement of poetics with logic:

> *Suscipiant igitur, si placet, et huius editionis Poetrie translationem viri studiosi, et gaudeant se cum hac adeptos logici negotii Aristotilis complementum.*[11]
> [Serious men may undertake this translation put forth of the *Poetics* if it seems good, and they may be glad to attain that which completes Aristotle's thought on logic.]

So presented, poetics constituted a method for discovering reasoned truth as distinct from revealed truth. According to principles of syllogistic logic, Hermannus Alemannus treated poetics as the science of discerning truth from poetic imitations. In this context, Hermannus Alemannus developed his translation of the *Middle Commentary* as a discussion of poetry as linguistic artifice capable of making effective likenesses (*modi ymaginationis et assimilationis*). Poetry renders likenesses by replacing one thing for another (*assimilatio rei ad rem et exemplio*) or establishing comparisons by tropes (*concambium*); substitution (*transumptio*) and figuration (*translatio*) are subspecies of tropes. Poetry, defined as lyrics of praise (*laudatio*) or blame (*vituperatio*), takes on an ethical and rhetorical dimension derived from Horace and Cicero (*intellectus Poetrie Oratii, sicut intelectus Rethoricarum Tullii Ciceronis adiuvans est ad intelligendum negotium aristotelicale Rethorice*).[12]

However, the translation of the *Middle Commentary* incorporated Aristotle's three components of poetry—melody, meter, and the composition of representative

statements—into a medieval hierarchy that privileged rational speech (*ars consonandi, et ars metrificandi, et ars componendi sermones representativos*). Poetry was defined as the art of making statements in imitation of ideas, images, and aspects of human conduct (*erunt artes imaginative vel que faciunt effectum imaginandi tres*); poetics was defined as the study of the composition of imitative statements and their relationship to truth (*et ista est ars logicalis de qua est consideratio in isto libro*). [And that last (imitative statements) is the art of logic, which is considered in this book.] [13]

Unlike demonstrative statements, which could be judged as true or false, the Latin *Middle Commentary* described poetry as imitating men's actions in color, figure, sounds and statements. The construction of poetic statements—which was the direct link between poetics and logic—remained paramount in both the Arabic and Latin texts.[14] Poetics, as a linguistic art, became a rational process by which the actions of men could be made known and, through comparison with their likenesses in imitation, could be judged.

> *Et quemadmodum quidam hominum naturaliter coimaginantur quibusdam et representant ipsos in actionibus, ut est representatio quorumdam ipsorum ad quosdam in coloribus et in figuris et in vocibus. Et hoc aut est ex arte aut ex habitu reperto in ipsis representatoribus aut ex parte consuetudinis quam iam diu habuerunt in hoc . . .* [15]
>
> [And as some men naturally make images and so represent other men in action (or, the actions of men) in color, figured images, and voice. This is either through artistry or convention or long practicing, so some men naturally represent in language . . .]

After describing the impulse to imitate as an innate human capacity, Hermannus Alemannus incorporated the Aristotelian modes of poetic representation into the three species of medieval terms: mental concepts (natural), spoken concepts (derivative), and written concepts (derivative). Thus, the logical ends of poetic imitation come to the fore in Hermannus Alemannus's translation (as opposed to an emphasis on how dramatic tragedy imitates action and character through plot).

So defined, poetic imitation could easily be fitted with rhetoric as an epistemological tool in the scholastic organization of knowledge and could be regarded as an extension of rhetoric that included figures and sound. The overlap between rhetoric and poetics was carried over from Cicero, Horace, and late classical authors, with poetry distinguished as a more oblique or circumstantial form of linguistic representation, or *res ficta*.[16] In the context of thirteenth-century logic, poetics was also distinguished from rhetoric by its method for discerning truth in language. Whereas rhetoric was a tool for argumentation and persuasion based on

existing matter and conditions, poetic statements required comparison between an imitation and its referent.

The adaptation of the *Poetics* to Latin Christian logic is clearest in Hermannus Alemannus's discussion of Aristotle's third part of tragedy: thought articulated through characters' language. The Latin translation of the *Middle Commentary* construed thought as belief in the object of representation, related to its poetic imitation:

> *Et pars tertia tragedie est credulitas; et hec est potentia representandi rem sic esse aut sic non esse. Et hoc est simile ei quod conatur rethorica in declaratione quod res existat aut non existat, nisi quod rethorica conatur ad hoc per sermonem persuasivum, et poetria per sermonem representativum.*[17]
> [The third part of tragedy is belief; this is the ability to represent a thing that is or a thing that is not. This is similar to the undertaking in rhetoric to make clear what exists and what does not exist, rhetoric undertakes it by words that persuade, and poetry by words that represent.][18]

With this understanding of poetry as representing things that were conceptually possible, not necessarily verifiable by the senses, the Latin *Middle Commentary* posited poetics as a kind of argumentation by comparison. The assumption was that poetry is neither pure artifice, nor the product of an individual poet's flights of imagination: *Ideo poete non pertinet loqui nisi in rebus que sunt aut quas possibile est esse.*[19] [It is not the job of a poet to represent things other than those that exist or can exist.]

The Latin *Middle Commentary* further enumerated how poetic imitations could be juxtaposed with observation to result in proper judgments of good or bad actions and human character:

> *Et ex quo representatores et assimilatores per hoc intendunt instigare ad quasdam actiones que circa voluntaria consistunt et retrahere a quibusdam, erunt necessario ea que intendunt per suas representationes virtutes aut vitia.*[20]
> [And because those who represent and make comparisons intend to incite those actions that occur as a result of volition and to refrain from other kinds of actions, they necessarily intend by their representations to represent virtues or vices.]

This process of representing and comparing constituted a form of reasoning precisely because poetry's primary medium was defined as language:

*Oportet denique ut in omni assimilatione inveniantur iste due differentie,
scilicet approbatio decentis et detestatio turpis; non inveniuntur autem
due hee differentie nisi in assimilatione et representatione que fiunt per
sermonem, non in representatione que fit per metrum neque in
representatione que fit per consonantiam.*[21]

[Therefore finally, in all likenesses two differences are discovered,
approval of comely figures and a detesting of ugliness; indeed these two
differences are only discovered in likenesses and representations that are
made in words, not in representations that are made in metre and not in
representations made in harmonious sounds.]

Language was understood as a manifestation of reason and distinguished from its
spoken delivery or recitation. Thus, Aristotle's sixth part of tragedy became a
contemplation of, or argument for, establishing correct belief:

*Ex pars sexta est consideratio, scilicet argumentatio seu probatio
rectitudinis credulitatis aut operationis non per sermonem persuasivum
(hoc enim non pertinet huic arti neque est conveniens ei), se per sermonem
representativum; ars nempe poetrie non est consistens in
argumentationibus neque in speculatione considerativa et proprie
tragedia. Ideoque non utitur carmen laudativum arte gesticulationis neque
vultuum acceptione sicut utitut [sic] hiis rethorica.*[22]

[And the sixth part is contemplation, that is to say, argument for proof of
right belief or work not by persuasive words (for that does not pertain to
this art and is not in agreement with it), but by representative words; the
art of poetry and character of tragedy truly does not consist of
argumentation or observation of contemplation. That is why the art of
praise songs also does not use the art of gesture or facial expression
acceptable for use in rhetoric.]

The aims of poetry could be also distinguished from those of rhetoric by how
poetry moved the soul, or will, to produce judgment. Here, too, the Latin *Middle
Commentary* invoked methods of logical reasoning. A soul could be moved by
two kinds of representation: direct representation (praising the thing itself) or circular
representation (representing the opposite of what is to be praised so that the object
of praise is known by its antithesis).[23] Regarding the two parts of mythic statements,
for example:

*Omnis enim representatio aut imperat sibi locum per representationem
sui contrarii, et post permutatur ad suam intentionem (et est modus qui*

dicitur apud eos circulatio) aut rem ipsam non faciens mentionem aliquam sui contrarii (et hoc est quod ipsi vocabant significationem).[24]
[Every representation is caused from the same place as a representation of its opposite, and later changes into its own direction (this was called according to them, indirect representation) or the thing is represented without making mention of the contrary (and this is what they called a direct sign).]

The truth of an argument, following Hermannus Alemannus's translation, could be found in how a poem represented a thought progression leading to a conclusion:

Et directio humana et circulatio non usitantur nisis in inquisitione et refutatione; et hec species directionis est que movet animam quandoque ad miserendum et quandoque ad timendum.[25]
[Man uses direct and indirect reasoning in inquiry and refutation; this species of direct reasoning is what moves the soul to feel pity at times, and fear at times.]

The Latin *Middle Commentary* emphasized the visual presentation of a poetic text in metaphoric terms. That is, the action must appear convincing to the mind's eye in order to move a reader or listener to pity or fear (*Quod enim non crediderit quis non movebit eum neque ad timendum neque ad miserendum.* [A poem that cannot be truly believed by someone will not move someone to fear or pity.]) This movement of the soul to pity and fear happened as a result of the kind of argument presented, not as a response to the sad or pitiable actions presented by poetic statements. Men will be naturally moved, Hermannus Alemannus translated, by two kinds of language: either demonstrative language or non-demonstrative language (*Homines enim naturaliter moventur altero duorum sermonum: aut sermone demonstrativo aut sermone non demonstrativo*).[26]

In short, Hermannus Alemannus's *Middle Commentary*, following the Arabic tradition, presented poetry as the composition of imitative statements (rather than persuasive statements and their delivery, as in rhetoric) and poetics as the science of analyzing the practice of linguistic imitation within the discipline of logic:

Et ars scientalis que monstrat sive docet ex quibus et qualiter componuntur poemata principalior et perfectior est quam ipsa operatio poematum. Omnis enim ars instruens et continens quod sub ipsa de operativis sui operis, dignior est eis que sub ipsa sunt. [27]
[And the art of knowledge that shows what poems are made of and how they are made is more completely authoritative than making poems. Indeed

any art that is aware of the way technique is subordinate to its function is more authoritative than what is subordinate to it.]

Hermannus Alemannus's description of poetics as a species of non-demonstrative logic was thus recognizable, if not especially useful, in the tradition of Aristotelian exegesis and logic at Paris given the established Arabic tradition and the existing categories of scholastic knowledge.[28]

An examination of William of Moerbeke's translation of the *Poetics* from Greek shows that the Aristotelian text, rendered fairly literally in William's Latin, was incompatible with the logical tradition. William of Moerbeke's *Poetics* made no attempt to reconcile Aristotle's analysis of theatrical tragedy with the logical methods of scholasticism. As translated by William of Moerbeke, the *Poetics* inquired directly into the form, nature, and performance practices of tragic poetry. William's *Poetics* did not allude to the perfection of the soul, Horatian and Ciceronian poetic traditions, or how comparison between imitations and objects of imitation could improve human knowledge, as did Hermannus Alemannus's *Middle Commentary*. In sharp contrast to the opening of Hermannus Alemannus's *Middle Commentary*, William of Moerbeke's *Poetics* translation began with Aristotle's description of poetic species—tragedy, comedy, and dithyrambs—and the method for parsing out the parts and nature of tragedy:

> *De poetica ipsaque et speciebus ipsius, quam virtutem habet, et quomodo*
> *oportet constituere fabulas si debeat bene habere poesis, adhuc autem ex*
> *quot et qualibus est partibus, similiter autem et de aliis quecumque sunt*
> *eiusdem methodi, dicamus incipientes secundum naturam primo a primis.*
> *Epopoiia itaque et que tragodie poesis, adhuc autem komodia et que*
> *dithrambopoetica . . .*
> [On poetry in general and its kinds, what virtues it has, and what kind of
> stories are proper to it, the number and nature is of its parts, and also
> similar questions of its methods, we state at the beginning following
> naturally with first principles. Epic and also tragic poetry, and also comedy
> and dithyrambic poetry . . .]

Following Aristotle, William of Moerbeke's *Poetics* defined action as the proper object of imitation, which was represented by the imitative modes and the manners of representation of poetry (narration and impersonation, narration only, dramatic imitation). The problem presented by the *Poetics* was defining the criteria on which poetry, as opposed to people, might be judged as good or bad. William of Moerbeke's translation allowed at the outset that all forms of imitation, including dance and music (*omnes existunt entes imitationes secundum totum*), could be defined as imitative by identifying their media, objects of imitation, and mode of

imitation (*aut enim per genere alteris imitari, aut per altera, aut per aliter et non eodem modo*).[29]

The inquiry set out in the Moerbeke translation of the *Poetics* immediately broadened the category of imitative representations with Aristotle's observation that Greek had no common name that could define the mime performances of Sofronis and Xenarchi at one extreme and Socratic discourse at the other, as specifically verbal arts *(nichil enim habemus nominare commune Sofronis et Xenarchi mymos et Socraticos sermones)*. This point is illustrated with Aristotle's contrast between Homeric poetry as imitative and the scientific writing of Empedocles as natural philosophy (*nichil autem commune est Homero et Empedocli preter metrum, propter quod hunc quidem poetam iustum vocare, hunc autem fysiologum magis quam poetam*).[30]

At the outset, then, William of Moerbeke's translation presented dramatic tragedy and comedy as the objects of Aristotle's inquiry. His translation illustrated the concept of tragedy with Greek references that spanned a wide range of written, spoken, and performed imitations. Further, Moerbeke's translation distinguished tragedy and comedy from other poetic forms by their mode of imitation (*has quidem igitur dico differentias artium in quibus faciunt imitationem*).[31] Aristotle's inquiry was also presented in the Latin translation as referring specifically to Attic poetry.

Hermannus Alemannus's translation of the *Middle Commentary*, following the classification of poetics with rhetoric under dialectic, focused on metricity as a characteristic of imitative statements and as an aspect of written poetry. Hermannus Alemannus's translation observed that many statements that are called poems are not poetic except for their meter, as in the metered statements of Socrates and the statements of Empedocles on natural things, both of which are unlike Homeric poetry (*Et multotiens non invenitur in sermonibus, qui nominantur 'poemata' quedam de intentione poetica, preter quam metrum tantum, ut sunt sermones Socratis metrici et sermones Empedoclis in naturalibus, secundum diversum eius quod est in poematibus Homeri*).[32] Working on the Arabic assumption that poetics constituted a form of logic, the *ars metrica* was a subordinate, if unavoidable, issue in Hermannus Alemannus's translation.

Not only was there no suggestion in William of Moerbeke's *Poetics* that poetry was a discipline of logic, but also the treatise referred to forms of poetic writing that were not clearly defined or performed in medieval Europe. Hermannus Alemannus's translation of the *Middle Commentary* had proposed two kinds of oral poetry in two forms (*laudatio* for tragedy and *vituperatio* for comedy). These two forms represented either honorable or despicable things (*rebus voluntariis, scilicet honestis et turpibus*) and constituted a kind of inductive reasoning (*et hoc patet per inductionem poematum*).[33] In contrast, William of Moerbeke's translation of the *Poetics* presented an analysis of four species of poetry that together constituted a practice of imitation (*omnes existunt entes imitationes secundum totum*) in which

the medium, objects, and modes of imitation were not the same (*aut enim per genere alteris imitari, aut per altera, aut per aliter et non eodem modo*).[34] Based on this initial presentation of tragic and comic poetry and the science of its composition in metrical language, rhythm, and melody, William of Moerbeke's *Poetics* translation would have required extensive commentary were poetics to continue to be considered in the *Organon* as a treatise on logic.

Both texts located the two natural causes of poetic representation in man's innate capacity for imitation and man's ability to enjoy and learn from imitation. Both described knowledge derived from representation as pleasurable to all observers, not just philosophers.[35] Both texts also acknowledged that poetic representation made objects that would be repugnant in the natural world tolerable in representation.[36] But the subject of the *Middle Commentary* appeared to be the exposition of a method for discerning truth from representations of human nature in lyric poetry by the effect of a poem on a listener. William of Moerbeke's *Poetics* dealt with poetics as a scientific inquiry into poetry as a material object in and of itself. The intellectual by-products of the inquiry into poetry, following the Aristotelian *Poetics,* were a more refined knowledge of Attic poetry, the ability to distinguish good poetry from bad poetry, and a set of categories on which to base an analysis of tragedy. Improvement of the soul was not an issue. Whereas the *Middle Commentary* constituted poetic statements as a cognitive process toward the perfection of the soul, William of Moerbeke's translation placed the source of poetic imitation in man's innate proclivity for "formless" activity (*a principio apti nati et ipsa maxime paulative adducentes produxerunt poesim ex informibus*). The *Poetics* thus grounded tragedy, in part, in poetry as a physical practice rooted in improvisational performances.[37]

Though Aristotle had placed the internal logic of plot in its language, the performative aspect of Attic tragedy was unmistakable throughout the *Poetics*. William of Moerbeke translated Aristotle's history of the disputed origins of tragedy and comedy, including the origin of the term tragedy in active verbs: the Dorian *dran* and the Athenian *prattin*. The inclusion of the Greek terms with William of Moerbeke's Latin equivalents thus presented tragic poetry as a kind of activity beyond spoken and written texts: "*et poein ipsi quidem 'dran' (idest actitare), Athenienses autem 'prattin' (idest agere) appellant*"[38] [and poetry itself was called "*dran*" (that is, to act), the Athenians also called it "*pratten*" (that is, to do)]. While tragedy's pagan history would not necessarily have troubled scholastic thinkers, the conception of tragedy as dramatized action would have been incongruous with the concept of lyric poetry as primarily linguistic.

Any number of details in Aristotle's analysis of dramatic poetry as performance would have fallen outside scholastic thinkers' quests for rational proof by comparison, and certainly outside their concepts of classical theatre. For example, Moerbeke translated Aristotle's list of the quantitative parts of tragic performances

(*prologus, episodion, exitus, khoricon, parodus, stasimon*), the function of the tragic chorus (*khori*) and the choral meters appropriate to tragedy (*anapesto et trocheo*) in their original terms, without explanation, allowing them to stand for structural elements of Greek tragedies.[39] The *Middle Commentary*, in contrast, adapted these structural elements of tragedy into oratory. The "first part" functions as an introduction in a rhetorical speech (*prima est que se habet apud ipsos in poemate ad modum exordii in rethorica*), the "second part" is a song (*et part secunda est ipsa laus*), and the "third part" functions as the conclusion to a speech (*e tertia pars est que habet se ad modum conclusionis in rethorica*).[40]

Hermannus Alemannus's *Middle Commentary* had given poetics some relevance to medieval representational practices by linking it with rhetorical delivery. But without an active tradition of dramatizing classical poetry, without the texts of Athenian plays such as *Oedipus Rex, Medea, Thyestes*, and *The Chorephorai* at hand, and especially without a philosophical reason to analyze Athenian plays, the presentation of poetry as acted drama in William of Moerbeke's translation had little immediate application to the scholastic project of reconciling the branches of classical knowledge with Christian belief through rational inquiry.

The difference in how the two documents presented poetics with respect to logic is nowhere clearer than in the treatments of Aristotle's terms *anagnorisis* (recognition) and *peripeteia* (reversal). Hermannus Alemannus, as discussed above, had presented *anagnorisis* and *peripeteia* as functions of poetic logic (indirect and direct reasoning). Having acknowledged that when the art of praise refers to things that already exist (as opposed to names of things already represented in poems), it had greater power to provoke voluntary action, the *Middle Commentary* followed Aristotle's analysis of simple and complex plots:

> *Et imitatio simplex est in qua usitatur aliqua duarum specierum ymaginationis, scilicet aut species que nominatur circulatio, aut species que nominatur directio. . . .*[41]
> [Simple imitation is that in which two kinds of thinking are used, either the kind called indirect or the kind called direct. . . .]

The *Middle Commentary* thus introduced poetics to scholastic thought as a logical method accomplished by parsing out how poetic statements represent truths and/ or falsehoods and what constitutes the subject matter for poetic representation.[42]

William of Moerbeke's *Poetics*, in contrast, presented the purpose of analyzing dramatic tragedy as a process of making aesthetic judgments about how well a given tragedy represented action and character. Following Aristotle's discussion of simple and complex plots, William of Moerbeke presented *peripeteia* and *anagnorisis* as what would now recognized as "plot points." Skillful presentation of a change in fortune and a character's recognition of self or situation meant the

story was well structured and, therefore, effective. Plot (*fabula*), in William of Moerbeke's translation, represented an action that could be identified as either simple or complex (*sunt autem fabularum hee quidem simplices, hee autem complexe; et enim actiones, quarum imitationes sunt fabule, existunt mox entes tales*) according to the placement of the reversal (*peripeteia*) *and* recognition (*anagnorisis*) in the story:[43]

> *Dico autem simplicem quidem actionem qua existente, ut determinatum continua et una sine peripetia et anagnorismo transitio fit, complexa autem locutio cum anagnorismo aut peripeteia aut ambodus transitio est. Hec autem oportet fieri ex ipsa consistentia fabule, quare ex pregestis accidit aut ex necessitate aut secundum verisimile fieri hec; differt enim multum fieri hec propter hec aut post hec. Est autem peripeteia quidem que ad contrarium eorum que aguntur transmutatio, sicut dictum est, et hoc autem sicut dicebamus secundum verisimile aut necessarium . . .* [44]
>
> [I say also that a simple action exists, and determine that it continues without *peripeteia* or *anagnorisis* to make a transition; and complex expressions transition with *anagnorisis* or *peripeteia* or both. These must also be done from a unified story, (showing) how preceding events follow from necessity or probability; it is different whether these many things are done before or after (reversal or recognition). Also a reversal is a contrary transition, which as we say, must also follow probability or necessity . . .]

In the discussion of *anagnorisis* and *peripeteia*, Moerbeke's *Poetics* preserved Aristotle's references to Sophocles's *Oedipus Rex* as an illustration of how a dramatic character's self recognition occurs simultaneously with the turning point of the action (specifically from good fortune to bad) in the narrative and in performance. The use of *Oedipus Rex* and other Attic dramas as reference points for structural principles took Arisotle's analysis out of the realm of ethics, grammar, rhetoric, and logic, not to mention out of the biblical references familiar to scholastic readers.

The Latin translations of the *Middle Commentary* and the *Poetics* thus differed markedly in their presentations of poetics as a scientific inquiry. Hermannus Alemannus's *Middle Commentary* presented poetics as the analysis of the logic of imitative statements and their ability to represent truths and/or falsehoods. William of Moerbeke's *Poetics* presented poetics as a method for analyzing the qualitative and quantitative components of dramatized poetry, which might include characters' good or bad reasoning. William of Moerbeke's translation of the *Poetics* thus did not fit easily into the existing tradition of classifying poetics and rhetoric with non-demonstrative logic initiated by Hermannus Alemannus's *Middle Commentary*

and the tradition of dialectic and rhetoric as taught in the *trivium*. The comparison thus far has shown how the translation of the *Middle Commentary* allowed the text a place in scholastic logic, while William of Moerbeke's translation of the *Poetics* found no such discursive compatibility as a method of analysis applicable to Greek drama.

II. Outside the Logical Tradition: Tragedy in William of Moerbeke's *Poetics* Translation

The second major axis of difference is how concepts of tragedy and theatre operated in the Latin translations. Horace's *Ars poetica* had provided medieval thinkers with foundational concepts of poetry as an enjoyable means for instructing good morals, a central concern for Averroes as well. Early Christian writers, such as Isidore of Seville, had developed the late classical concern for the truth-value of poetic representation from the sixth through the tenth century. The Carolingian schools taught rhetoric and poetics under grammar, a practice that continued into the thirteenth century. Consistency of style and content had emerged as criteria for evaluating poetry, along with increasing attention to the logical aims of rhetoric and the role of allegory and symbolic language in exegesis. By the mid-thirteenth century, a three-dimensional approach to poetry had emerged from different strands of Latin Christian thought: ethics, stylistic technique, and logical argumentation. While Hermannus Alemannus's use of the terms "tragedy" and "theatre" in the *Middle Commentary* could be adapted to these criteria, the very concepts of tragedy and theatre presented in William of Moerbeke's *Poetics* appeared at odds with all three intellectual options and perhaps even contributed to Thomas Aquinas's relegation of poetry to the lowest rung on the intellectual ladder.[45]

In the context of the poet/performer's attitude and its contribution to poetic statements, Hermannus Alemannus used the specific term tragedy (in the comment on Chapter 4 of the *Poetics*) as the equivalent of praise poetry, which was capable of representing virtuous things. Hermannus Alemannus was likely thinking of tragedy as a genre based on its content in the following passage:

> *Oportet ergo ut habitudo sermonis recitantis et representantis in tragedia sit habitudo et figura certi et non dubii, et dicentis seriosa, non iocosa, ut sunt sermones virorum summe honestatis in moribus et opinionibus et actionibus, et gesta et eventus de quibus loqui oportet recitatorem et representatorem habentes dictas habitudines.*[46]

> [It is proper therefore that the appearances represented in recited words and tragedies are the appearances of certain, not doubtful, figures and tell of things serious, not jocular, and are living words that are honorable in morals and opinions and actions, and posture and consequences; in such manner a recitation carries indications of character.]

In a departure from the Arabic source, Hermannus Alemannus's translation of the *Middle Commentary* suggested that Aristotle's breakdown of the six parts of dramatic tragedy referred to tragedy as a literary form that included music:

> *Et oportet ut tragedie, id est artis laudandi, sex partes sint: scilicet sermones fabulares representativi, et consuetudines, et metrum seu pondus, et credulitates, et consideratio, et tonus.*[47]
> [And it is proper that tragedy, the same as the art of praise, has six parts: language representing myths, the customs of men, weighted rhythm, belief, speculation, and sound.]

But the Latin *Middle Commentary* did not define tragedy as distinct from praise poetry and reverted to the terms "poetry," "arts of praise," and "poetic words" when following Averroes's examples of Homeric poetry, the Old Testament story of Abraham as an example of epic poetry, and Arabic songs. Following Hermannus Alemannus's interpretation of Averroes, tragedy was defined as the words of a narrative myth, which showed men's behavior, correct belief, and rationality by means of rhythm and musical tones. Though there is no evidence of which I am aware that the rules for poetry discussed in the *Middle Commentary* were directly applied to Latin poems, the concept of tragic poetry presented in Hermannus Alemannus's translation was not incongruous with Latin classic poetry as studied in the *ars poetica* tradition, or even with the performance of liturgical hymns or liturgical enactments.

William of Moerbeke's translation of the *Poetics*, on the other hand, suggested no such parallel to poetic forms current in thirteenth-century Europe. It would have required a significant expansion of prevailing concepts of tragedy beyond the boundaries of logic, rhetoric and grammar, the *artes poeticae*, and the classification of theatre as a mechanical art. This difference between the two presentations of tragedy was sharp enough to have provoked a reassessment of the traditions of classical tragedy, had there been a place for such an inquiry in the classifications of knowledge in the thirteenth century.

Consistent with his earlier translations of Aristotelian treatises, William of Moerbeke's project was a literal and direct translation of the Greek text. As noted above, he did not try to Latinize Aristotle's references to Greek tragedies, characters, history, and language but presented tragedy as a Greek practice at odds with the medieval grounding in Roman poetry. It was clear from William of Moerbeke's translation that Aristotle assumed tragic poetry was acted out, rather than read silently or recited:

Est igitur tragodia imitatio actionis studiose et perfecte, magnitudinem habentis, delectante sermone seorsum unaquaque specierum in partibus, actitantium et non per enuntiationem, per misericordiam et timorem concludens talium mathematum purificationem . . . Quoniam autem agentes faciunt imitationem, primo quidem ex necessitate utique erit aliqua pars tragodie visus ornatus.[48]

[Tragedy therefore is imitation of an action that is serious and complete and has magnitude, in delightful words, its form separated into parts, acted out and not spoken, which concludes with the purgation of pity and fear . . . Since agents make imitations it is first necessary to consider the visual ornamentation of tragedy.]

The idea that tragedy was one of three genres of narrative performance (with epic and comedy) was well established in the first section of the first chapter of William of Moerbeke's translation. Tragic and comic poetry were discussed as representation of action and as the action of performance:

Quare hac quidem idem utique erit imitator Homero Sophocles, imitantur enim ambo studiosos; hac autem Aristofani, agentes enim imitantur et actitantes ambo. Unde et dramata (idest actitamina) vocari ipsa quidam aiunt quia imitantur actitantes.[49]

[In this way Sophocles is an imitator like Homer, both imitating zealous men; and is also like Aristophanes who imitates acts being done. Wherefore it is called drama (it is active), that is, imitation of action.]

Whereas the *Poetics* made action central, Hermannus Alemannus had discussed poetry as either written (*poema*) or spoken (*oratio poetica*) and identified genre as content (poems of blame or poems of praise) (*omne itaque poema et omnis oratio poetica aut est vituperatio aut est laudatio*).[50] Rhythm, meter, and tonality were thus construed as properties of language. Poetry did not require the facial expressions and gestures required for rhetorical persuasion (*ideoque non utitut carmen laudativum arte gesticulationis neque vultuum acceptione sicut utitur hiis rethorica*).[51] However, a narrator's conviction in the presentation of a poem affected the believability of poetic statements, as in rhetoric, and hence affected the validity of the argument presented by a poem's representation of real or possible things:

Et habitudines eorum qui recitant et representant completive ymaginationum inventarum in ipsis orationibus poeticis ex parte istorum trium, scilicet assimilationis et ponderis et toni, que elementa sunt representationis, sunt in summa due habitudines. Quarum una est habitudo significans morem et consuetudinem, ut qui loquitur sermonem intelligentis

aut sermonem iracundi, et altera est habitudo significans hominis credulitatem seu opinionem; non est enim habitudo eius qui loquitur certus existens de re, habitudo eius qui loquitur dubius existens.[52]
[The appearance of those who recite and represent poetry completes the inventions of the imagination in the recitation of poetry in three ways: namely, simulation and rhythmic weight and sound, the elements of this representation, which have two forms. One is the form indicating character and customs, as one who speaks in words of insight/understanding or in words of anger, and the other is the appearance of signifying a person's belief in his opinion; the appearance of one who speaks with certainty of the existence of things is not the same as one who speaks doubtfully of the existence of things.]

In the *Middle Commentary,* inflections used in rhetorical argumentation (such as elongating vowels or accelerating and slowing speech) did not originate in poetic meter but were properties of a narrator's delivery.[53] The definition of tragedy as action in William of Moerbeke's translation conflicted with prevailing concepts of tragedy as language, once again, by contradicting the concept of poetry as an extension of rhetoric.

Further, the Latin *Poetics* located knowledge in tragic poetry itself, rather than in previously held beliefs, *a priori* truths, or the state of a Christian soul. William of Moerbeke's translation placed plot—the schematic arrangement of events of a story *(fabula)*—at the top of the hierarchy of Aristotle's six elements of tragedy, followed by character and thought. Similarly, thought and action were presented as the elements of a dramatized tragedy that revealed the moral qualities (character) of the fictional men and women represented:

> *Principium quidem igitur et velut anima tragodie fabula, secundum autem mores. . . . Estque imitatio actionis et propter hanc maxime agentium. Tertium autem ratiocinatio, scilicet posse dicere inentia et que congruunt, quod quidem in sermonibus politice et rethorice opus est. . . .* [54]
> [The first principle is therefore the plot and is the soul of tragedy followed by character . . . tragedy is the imitation of action and therefore imitates the agents of action. Third is thought, which can speak relevant and congruous speeches as in the language of politics and rhetoric. . . .]

III. Further Diversion from the Scholastic Tradition: Theatre as a Site for Philosophical Inquiry in William of Moerbeke's *Poetics*

William of Moerbeke's *Poetics* also presented a vision of tragedy that differed substantially from traditional medieval concepts of tragedy based on content and a Horatian model of pleasure and instruction. The *Poetics* might have served

scholastic inquiry as a model for gaining knowledge about Greek tragedy, if not for analyzing liturgical poetry and enactments, beyond the interpretation of poetic logic presented in the *Middle Commentary*. If William of Moerbeke's presentation of tragedy was incompatible with late thirteenth-century discussions of poetics, the use of theatre as a performative venue for tragedy was even more difficult to reconcile with scholastic categories. The two translations use the term theatre very differently.

Where Hermannus Alemannus used the term theatre, he followed the Arabic commentary on the presentation of poetry without the external artifice of "dissimulation and delivery."[55] Hermannus Alemannus understood external artifice in terms of theatricality. H. A. Kelly suggests that Hermannus Alemannus's use of "*theatralis*" was most likely a generic term referring loosely to any number of kinds of public performances (minstrels, mimes, and recitations, etc.) rather than a formal theatrical performance in the classical sense.[56] While the *Middle Commentary* does allow for representation other than language, these are to be used when the subject matter is not substantial. Theatrical gesture, for Hermannus Alemannus, was only appropriate for representing imperfect or abstract objects such as belief:

> *Neque etiam indiget poeta peritus seu perfectus ut compleat representationem suam per ea que extrinsecus sunt, ut est in gestibus theatralibus et vultuum dispositionibus . . . Adiutorium ergo fit ad earum imitationem per ea que extrinsecus sunt, et proprie quando intenditur imitatio credulitatem.*[57]
>
> [Nor is it necessary for a poet to perfect and complete his imitation with external devices, theatrical gesture or arrangement of facial expressions . . . External devices aid their imitation when the aim is imitation of belief.]

Theatre, for Hermannus Alemannus, was a descriptive term, rather than a social or civic performance practice.[58]

The specificity of William of Moerbeke's use of the term theatre throughout his translation set up a categorical divide between Hermannus Alemannus's general and generic *theatricalibus* and the *theatrum* of the *Poetics*. In Moerbeke's translation, tragedy is visual.[59] Not only does tragedy have a soul (*anima*) but its soul is its plot (as opposed to its narrative content or representation of virtue and vice). Here again, William of Moerbeke's translation falls outside the scope of scholastic inquiries. Hugh of St. Victor's *Didascalicon* (c. 1125), in the Isidoran tradition, had included theatre with the mechanical arts, "that science to which [the ancients] declare the manufacture of all articles to belong" and construed theatre as one such art.[60] In scholastic thought, the mechanical arts testified to physical, as opposed to intellectual, ingenuity; they were functional and served to relieve body

and spirit.[61] Given the emphasis on poetry as a tool for knowledge in the *Middle Commentary*, the scant and descriptive use of the term in Hermannus Alemannus's translation also reflected theatre's status as a mechanical art, antithetical to philosophy. Hermannus Alemannus's translation of the *Middle Commentary* thus neither challenged nor invoked prevailing concepts of classical tragedy or theatre.

William of Moerbeke's translation of tragedy as theatrical performance and implicit presentation of theatrical performance as a legitimate intellectual inquiry, however, would have been problematic in the context of scholastic thought. In William of Moerbeke's translation of the *Poetics*, theatrical performance was an unequivocal (if undeveloped) component in the evolution of tragedy:

Superintendendi quidem igitur si habet iam tragodia speciebus sufficienter aut non, sique ipsumque secundum se iudicatur esse et ad theatra, alia ratio.[62]

[Consider therefore whether or not tragedy has evolved sufficiently in its species, judging by its own qualities and in the theatre, is another issue.]

William of Moerbeke's translation defined tragedy, comedy, and dithyrambs as theatrical performances and grounded a history of tragedy in performance conventions that were irrelevant to Latin Christian intellectual inquiry. Theatrical tragedy was, as noted in William's Latin, mimetic (*imitationes actitivas fecit*); the number of actors was increased to three and scenery was added (*ypocritarum multitudinem ex uno in duo primus Eschylus produxit; tres autem et skenografiam Sophocles*); the chorus was reduced (*et que chori minoravit*); and the spoken word increased in importance (*et sermonem protagonistam disposuit*).[63] The orgins of tragedy, as well as its modes of imitation, could be found in dance and satire (*primo quidem enim tetrametro utebantur propter satyricam et magis saltativam esse poesim*).[64]

William of Moerbeke's translation of the *Poetics* thus veered away from a logocentric approach to poetry in its discussion of poetic composition. Against the presentation of poetry as the conscious formation of poetic statements without rhetorical gesture or facial expression in Hermannus Alemannus/Averroes, William of Moerbeke presented poetry as a visual art. A poet's particular skill is the ability to visualize the poem in performance as he composes it:

Oportet enim fabulas consistere et locutione cooperari quam maxime pre oculis positum (sic enim utique efficacissime videns sicut apud ipsa gesta presens inveniet decens et minime utique latebunt que subcontraria; signum autem huius quod increpat Karkino; nam Amphiaraus ex sacro utique erat, quod non videntem inspectorem latebat, in skene autem decidit

aspernantibus hoc inspectoribus), quecumque autem possibile et scematibus cooperantem.[65]

[A poet must compose a story by putting it in front of his eyes (for by putting the story before his eys as if it were taking place the poet can best discover what is incongruous and obscured; a sign of this is the critique of Carcinus as Amphlarus came in from the temple, the poet did not visualize it and on stage the audience was annoyed and the play failed), as far as possible a poet should include gesture in composing.]

By presenting tragedy as inseparable from its theatrical performance, William of Moerbeke's translation of the *Poetics* allowed little maneuverability for a scholastic trying to construe poetics and poetry within the parameters of grammar and rhetoric, or the study of the Roman *artes poeticae*. The Aristotelian treatise appeared to place pagan theatre, otherwise classified with the mechanical arts, inappropriately within philosophical discourse. Aristotle's emphasis on visual spectacle as an essential component in the evaluation of tragic performance further distanced Moerbeke's translation from scholastic concerns.

IV. Conclusion

The two versions of Aristotle's *Poetics* available to European philosophers of the late thirteenth century were radically different in their approaches to poetry and the study of poetry. Hermannus Alemannus's *Middle Commentary* presented poetics as a mode of thought leading to the discernment of truth. The responsibility for discerning truth rested with the reader's, or hearer's, ability to reckon the relationship between a probable event and its representation and to judge not the quality of the presentation but the value of what a poem represents. Poetry constituted a form of non-demonstrative logic.

William of Moerbeke's *Poetics* presented a model for analyzing tragedy as a species of theatrical performance. The Latin translation from Greek emphasized modes of imitation operating in dramatic poems and foregrounded a concept of dramatic tragedy far beyond the models of ancient tragedy available to Latin scholastic and monastic thinkers. Any interest in the *Poetics* as a treatise on the art of performed poetry would have been dependent on an intimate knowledge of Greek plays and the conventions of their performance.

The differences in the conception of poetry and poetics represented in these two translations would easily have placed Moerbeke's *Aristotilis de Arte Poetica* outside the purview of scholastic philosophy. First, the analysis presented in the *Poetics* alienated poetry from rhetoric, dialectic, and grammar. There was thus no place for poetics, as presented by Aristotle, in the thirteenth-century liberal arts curriculum. Second, theatrical performance, as explicitly detailed in the *Poetics*, did not warrant serious consideration in scholastic thinking, and might even have

been a deterrent to the treatise's viability. While the treatise did not fit existing concepts of tragedy, poetry, or performance (as noted in the opening of this paper), there is no indication that William of Moerbeke's translation of the *Poetics* presented a significant challenge either to prevailing methods of logical inquiry or to interest in classical theatre within the Paris curriculum. Constructing an intellectual context for the reception of the *Poetics* by examining treatments of poetics in the Paris liberal arts curriculum, the importance of theatre's classification as a mechanical art, the Italian *artes poeticae* tradition, the "underground tradition" of Aristotelian ideas in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, [66] and the application of Aristotelian *mimesis* in musical treatises, as well as a thorough study of Bartholomew of Bruges's 1307 commentary on the Hermannus Alemannus recension, may further explain why William of Moerbeke's *Poetics,* alone among his translations of Aristotle, remained obscure during the Latin Middle Ages.

Notes

1. William of Moerbeke's *[Aristotilis de Arte] Poetica* was written and copied at the papal court in Viterbo. Two copies were made in, and apparently stayed in, Italy. H. A. Kelly traces later citations of Moerbeke's *Poetics* to Albertino Mussato in his *Vita Senece* and possibly to Petrarch in his *Invective contra medicum.* See *Ideas and Forms of Tragedy from Aristotle to the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992) 118. Thanks to Warren Smith, University of New Mexico at Albuquerque, for assistance with literal translations and to Bonnie Kent, Syracuse University and Chris Laursen, University of California at Riverside for their comments on early drafts of this article.

2. The extant manuscripts relating to the Arabic *Middle Commentary* (twenty-four of Hermannus Alemannus's translations and the *Expositio supra Poeticam Aristoteles* of Bartholemew of Bruges, 1307) suggest at least some interest in poetics as a discipline of logic in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Roger Bacon (*Moralis Philosophia* 5.3.9.) and Thomas Aquinas (*Expositio* in I Tim, cap. 4, lectio 2, *Oper Omnia* 13.604 and *Summa Theologiae* 2.1.32.8) mention Hermannus Alemannus's translations of Aristotle from Arabic, including the *Middle Commentary.* A thirteenth-century *florilegium* preserved 26 excerpts from Hermannus Alemannus's *Middle Commentary* in which the term tragedy is not used. For evidence of a thirteenth- or fourteenth-century recension, see William F. Boggess, "Aristotle's *Poetics* in the Fourteenth Century," *Studies in Philology* 67 (1970): 278-94.

3. Marvin Carlson notes that the Latin *Poetics* "created no stir whatever." See *Theories of the Theatre: A Historical and Critical Survey, from the Greeks to the Present, Expanded Edition* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1993) 34. Boggess states that the Moerbeke translation "does not seem to have been used at all." See Boggess 278. H.A. Kelly remarks that the Latin translation of the Greek "received almost no notice until the twentieth century." See "Aristotle-Averroes-Alemannus on Tragedy: The Influence of the *Poetics* on the Latin Middle Ages," *Viator* 10 (1979) 161. E. N. Tigerstedt, who distrusts the foundation of the negative attitude toward Moerbeke's *Poetics* by *argumentum e silentio,* still concludes that there are "no certain traces" of the study of Aristotle's *Poetics* as such in the Latin Middle Ages. See "Observations on the Reception of the Aristotelian *Poetics* in the Latin West," *Studies in the*

Renaissance 15 (1968): 9. *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, a basic reference tool, asserts that Moerbeke's *Poetics* "remained unknown" in the European Middle Ages. *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1982) 45.

4. Early modern and modern compilations do not classify the *Poetics* and *Rhetoric* with the Aristotelian treatises on logic. Deborah L. Black argues that both the *Poetics* and the *Rhetoric* have been neglected as philosophical treatises due to their annexation to literary studies. See *Logic and Aristotle's Rhetoric and Poetics in Medieval Arabic Philosophy* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990) 4.

5. For a detailed study of medieval concepts of tragedy from Roman sources through Remigius, Isidore of Seville, and Boethius to the theologians and philosophers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (William of Conches, Gilbert of Poitiers, Peter Abelard, John of Salisbury, John of Garland, and Thierry of Chartres), see Kelly, *Ideas and Forms of Tragedy from Aristotle to the Middle Ages*. The scope of Kelly's meticulous study acknowledges that while tragic performances were used as metaphors, for example by John of Salisbury (1159) and Honorius Augustodunensis (1100), medieval tragedy as a genre consisted primarily of poetry in elegiac meters, based on Roman models; tragic narrative was generally conceived as a "joy to sorrow" movement based on the content of the story. The significant exception to the tradition is the *Ysagoge in Theologiam* (c. 1150), which was included with the treatises of the *Organon*.

6. The original eight-part scheme of Aristotle's treatises, the *Organon*, included the *Rhetoric* and *Poetics*. The *Organon* was transmitted from the Neoplatonic Alexandrine school commentator Simplicius (fl. 533 A.D.) to Syriac. From Syriac it was translated into Arabic, and from Arabic to Latin. The medieval *Organon*, inherited from the Arabic tradition, included: the *Categories (Categoriae), On Interpretation (De Interpretatione), Prior Analytics (Analytica Priora), Posterior Analytics (Analytica Posteriora), Topics (Topica), On Sophistical Refutations (De Sophisticis Elenchis)*, and the *Rhetoric* and *Poetics* as studies of the sciences of language. A thirteenth-century Latin version of the *Organon* would also have included Boethius's *De divisione* and *De topicis differentiis*, Porphyry's *Isagoge* and the *Liber sex principiorum*. Though the modern *Organon* consists only of the six main treatises, medieval scholars would have assumed that *Rhetoric* and *Poetics* were included in the *Organon* as a part of scientific inquiry. For the Arabic transmission, see Ismail N. Dahiyat, *Avicenna's Commentary on the Poetics of Aristotle: A Critical Study with an Annotated Translation of the Text* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974) 12, and Salim Kemal, *The Poetics of Alfarabi and Avicenna* (Leiden: E. J. Brill 1991) 2. Black analyzes the context theory of the *Poetics*'s placement with logic in *Logic and Aristotle's Rhetoric and Poetics in Medieval Arabic Philosophy* 1-3. The Latin translations of Aristotle's treatises are tabulated in Norman Kretzmann, et al., *The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1988) 74-79.

7. Claude LaFleur, "*Logique et theorie de l'argumentation dans le 'Guide de l'etudiant'* (c. 1230-1240) *du ms. Ripoll* 109," *Dialogue* XXIX (1990) 336.

8. See O.B. Hardison, ed. "The Place of Averroes' Commentary on the *Poetics* in the History of Medieval Criticism," *Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 4, ed. John Lievsay (1970), 57-81; abridged and modified in *Classical and Medieval Literary Criticism: Translations and Interpretations*, eds. Alex Preminger, O. B. Hardison, and Kevin Kerrane (New York: Frederick Ungar, 1974) 341-48, and A.J. Minnis and A. B. Scott, *Medieval Literary Theory and Criticism c. 1100-1375* (Oxford: Clarendon

Press, 1988) 277-88. Hardison argues that the *Poetics* was a literary treatise and inappropriately placed with logic in the Middle Ages.

9. Averroes (Ibn Rushd, 1126-1198) wrote two commentaries on the *Poetics*, one short and the other "middle-sized" (he apparently did not write a long commentary on this particular treatise). The *Middle [Sized] Commentary* (c. 1175) shifted Aristotle's highly theoretical analysis of the properties of poetry in an effort to "redirect Arabic poetry itself, to turn it away from frivolous, irresponsible, even voluptuous and dissolute concerns and to make it serve moral goals" as well as to identify the rules of poetry that apply universally over time. See Charles E. Butterworth, *Averroes' Middle Commentary on Aristotle's* Poetics (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1986) xi, xii, 49. Averroes replaced Aristotle's specific references to Attic poetry with Arabic songs and poetry. In translating Averroes's *Middle Commentary*, Hermannus Alemannus either omitted the Arabic references, substituted Latin or more familiar Arabic equivalents for Averroes's examples, or translated the Arabic examples into Latin verse or prose. A summary of Hermannus Alemannus's adaptations is provided by William F. Boggess, "Hermannus Alemannus' Latin Anthology of Arabic Poetry," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 88 (1968): 657-70. The Latin translation of the *Middle Commentary* is included in Laurentius Minio-Paluello, *Aristoteles Latinus XXXIII* (Brussels: Desclee de Brouwer, 1968). A full translation is in O. B. Hardison, et al., *Medieval Literary Criticism: Translations and Interpretations* (NY: Frederick Ungar, 1974) 349-82. Hermannus Alemannus's references do overlap with Averroes's scriptural references, for example:

> *Et tu reperies multa ad modum omnium istorum in scripturis legalibus, cum carmina laudativa virtutum non inveniantur in poemitatibus Arabum, et non inveniuntur in hoc nostro tempore nisi in legibus scriptis.* (Minio-Paluello 56)
>
> [You often find examples (of things represented in tragedies without arousing pity or fear) in the historical writings of scripture, as songs of praise of the virtues are not discovered in the Arabic poems, and not discovered in our time except in scriptural writings.]

Scriptural references are used in both texts to illustrate eulogy (Arabic) or tragedy (Latin) poems. For example, the scriptural story relating God's command that the patriarch Abraham sacrifice his son (*ideoque quod narratur de Abraham quod mandatum fuit ei de immolatione filii*) illustrates imitation that arouses sadness, compassion, and fear (*et quasi in fine commotionis ad dolorem et compassionem et pavorem*). The scriptural account of Joseph and his brothers illustrates virtue in Hermannus Alemannus's translation. See Minio-Paluello 55, 57.

10. Black 3; Minnis and Scott 279-80; Butterworth 49. Averroes (1126-1198) lived and wrote primarily in Cordova and drew on Avicenna's commentary on the *Poetics* (1020). For the Arabic interpretation of Aristotle, see Dahiyat, *Avicenna's Commentary* and Kemal, *The Poetics of Alfarabi*. The Arabic tradition, as Black points out, assumed poetics to be a form of syllogistic reasoning. However, none of the three main Arabic commentators, Avicenna, al Farabi, and Averroes explained exactly how poetry functioned syllogistically. For a discussion of the ambiguities in the Arabic understanding of poetics as logic, see Black 209-25.

11. Minio-Paluello 41; cf. Hardison 90.

12. Minio-Paluello 41-42.

13. Minio-Paluello 43.

14. The Arabic tradition put epistemological value on inter-subjective responses elicited by poetry. While poetry might be a less effective cognitive tool than objective reasoning by assertion, syllogism, or demonstrative argumentation as proposed in the first six parts of the Arabic and Latin *Organon,* the hearing and analysis of poetry nevertheless could lead to conviction. Poetry thus constituted a form of reasoning. Subjective, emotional, or aesthetic responses to poetry could also be used to promote social unity and to convince subjects of limited ability to reason. See Kemal 2-3. The Arabic tradition, as Black points out, provided "a fully developed account of what sort of discipline logic must be if it is to encompass the arts of rhetoric and poetics" through the use of conception and assent. Black 52.

15. Minio-Paluello 42.

16. Nicolette Zeeman, "The Schools Give a License to Poets," *Criticism and Dissent in the Middle Ages*, ed. Rita Copeland (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1996) 153; Marcia L. Colish, *The Mirror of Language: A Study in the Medieval Theory of Knowledge* (Lincoln: U of Nebraska P, 1968) 156-57; Rita Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages: Academic Traditions and Vernacular Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991) 159.

17. Minio-Paluello 49.

18. *Cf.* Minio-Paluello 52: Songs of praise or tragedies must represent things that exist in nature not fictions with invented names because "*Carmina namque laudativa intentionem habent promovendi actiones voluntarias*". [Praise songs have as their intent the movement of acts of the will]. L. M. de Rijk makes the case that, after 1250, medieval logicians "shifted their attention from explaining the variations of the truth-value of a proposition over time to justifying predication regarding non-existent individuals and empty classes." ("The Origins of the Theory of the Properties of Terms," *Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy*, ed. Norman Kretzmann et al. [Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1982] 187). Hermannus Alemannus's translation, which dealt explicitly with discerning the truth-value in representations, could be seen as part of this shift in focus.

19. Minio-Paluello 51.

20. 43.

21. 43-44; *cf.* Hardison 91.

22. Minio-Paluello 49; *cf.* Hardison 96.

23. H.A. Kelly, "Aristotle—Averroes—Alemannus on Tragedy" 167.

24. Minio-Paluello 48; *cf.* Hardison 96.

25. Minio-Paluello 54; *cf.* Hardison 101.

26. Minio-Paluello 56.

27. 49; *cf.* Hardison 96.

28. For analysis of how Hermannus Alemannus adapted the Arabic into Latin Christian terms, see B. L. Ullman, "Herman the German's Translation of Aristotle's *Poetics*," (*Estudis Romanics* 8, 1961) 43-48. For a detailed comparison of editing of Arabic songs, see W. F. Boggess, "Hermannus Alemannus's Latin Anthology of Arabic Poetry," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 88 (1968): 657-70. The Arabic text is translated in Butterworth.

29. Minio-Paluello 3.

30. 4; 1447b10-15.

31. 4; 1447b24-27.

32. 43.

33. 41.

34. 3; 1447a14-19.

35. In William of Moerbeke's translation:

Nam imitari connatum hominibus est ex pueris, et hoc differunt ab aliis animalibus, quia maxime imitativum est et imitationes facit et propter gaudere imitaminibus omnes. . . . quia addiscere non solum philosophis delectabilissimum, sed et aliis similiter omnibus ad breve communicantibus ipso. (Minio-Paluello 6; 1448b5) [Now to imitate is a natural inclination of man from childhood, and this distinguishes man from other animals, he is the most imitative and makes imitations because all delight in imitations. . . . for to learn is not only a philosopher's delight, but similiarly for all men who share in it a little time.]

The parallel passage in Hermannus Alemannus's *Middle Commentary* focused on comparative reasoning:

Prima quidem quoniam in homine existit naturaliter a prima sua nativitate assimilatio rei ad rem et representatio rei per rem; scilicet hic assimilandi et representandi actus etiam in infantibus reperitur, et istud proprium est homini respectu ceterorum animalium. [At first from the moment of his birth man naturally compares one thing to another and represents one thing for another; the act of comparing and representing was revealed in infancy, and is that which is particular to man with respect to other animals]. On philosophy and the common man, Hermannus Alemannus translated: *doctrina ergo non solum philosophorum est sed et ceterorum hominum communicantium in hoc philosophis aliquantulum* [this law of poetry is therefore not only for philosophers but for other men who share in the communication of philosophy.] (Minio-Paluello 44-45)

36. Minio-Paluello 6, 44-45; 1448b5-15. In William of Moerbeke: *Que enim ipsa tristabiliter videmus, horum ymagines que maxime expresse considerantes gaudemus, puta bestiolarum formas vilissimarum et mortuorum* (Minio-Paluello 6; 1448b10-12). [What we would otherwise see as harsh, when it is formed in imagery we take pleasure in contemplating, for example forms of base beasts and of the dead.] In Hermannus Alemannus: *est quod delectamur et gaudemus in representatione aliquarum rerum in quarum sensu non delectamur.* (Minio-Paluello 45) [it is pleasurable and we are pleased by representations of things which to the senses are not pleasurable.]

37. Minio-Paluello 6; 1448b23-24.

38. 5; 1448b1.

39. 15; 1452b14-25.

40. 54.

41. 53.

42. *Et patet etiam ex hiis que dicta sunt de intentione sermonum poeticorum, quoniam representationes que fiunt per figmenta mendosa adinventitia non sunt de opere poete. Et sunt ea que nominantur proverbia et exempla, ut ea que sunt in libro Esopi et consimilibus fabulosis conscriptionibus. Ideo poete non pertinet loqui nisi in rebus que sunt aut quas possibile est esse; talia quippe sunt que appetenda sunt aut refutanda aut quarum conveniens est assimilatio secundum quod dictum est in capitulis representationum* (Minio-Paluello 51; *cf.* Hardison 98-99).

[From what has been said about what are the intentions of poetic words, representations that come about by the invention of false figures are not the work of poets. These are things called proverbs and parables, as are in the books of Aesop and similar to the fables written. Indeed, a poet speaks only what pertains to things that are or are possible to be; because these are what desire or refute or what is an agreeable comparison following what is said in the headings on imitation.]

43. Minio-Paluello 14; 1452a12.

44. 14; 1452a10-35.

45. For a brief and comprehensive summary of writers, texts, and trends in thought on poetry and rhetoric from the late classical period through scholasticism, see Colish 156-62.

46. Minio-Paluello 47; *cf.* Hardison 95.

47. Minio-Paluello 48; *cf.* Hardison 95.

48. Minio-Paluello 8-9; 1449b27-36. *Cf.* on pity and fear in Hermannus Alemannus, see Hardison 94; Minio-Paluello 47.

49. Minio-Paluello 5; 1448a26-30.

50. 41.

51. 49.

52. 47.

53. *Hoc quod frequenter faciunt litigantes, ut cum dicunt "non, non, non" extendentes per hoc vocem suam; et, cum dicunt "non sic est hoc" similiter et per hoc extendentes vocem suam et spaciosam eam facientes; huiusmodi namque responsive resistentie sunt, quasi semiversus habentes tonum et metrum* (Minio-Paluello 46). [(Aristotle) refers to what lawyers frequently do, as in extending their voices saying "no, no, no"; and similarly extending their voices when saying "this is not so" and making them larger. Oppositional responses are like half verses, having tone and meter.]

54. Minio-Paluello 10: 1450a36-b9.

55. Butterworth 86.

56. Kelly, "Aristotle—Averroes—Alemannus on Tragedy" 167.

57. Minio-Paluello 52-53; *cf.* Hardison 99-100.

58. Averroes's *Middle Commentary* clearly construed poetry as lyric and song; for the history of theatrical entertainments as civic and social practice in the Arab world from the late classical to the medieval period, see Shmuel Moreh, *Live Theatre and Dramatic Literature in the Medieval Arab World* (New York: New York UP, 1992).

59. The visual dimension of poetry was, following Aristotle, more important for the poet than for the presentation. While poetry was described as a visual spectacle that included masks and costumes, masks and costume were considered less artistic than metric language: *ut enim tragodie potentia et sine agone et ypocritis est, adhuc autem circa elaborationem visuum magis propria ars vasificorum est quam que poetarum.* (Minio-Paluello 10; 1450b18-20) [Tragedy is possible without acting and public conflict, and besides the visual spectacle is strong; the mask-maker's art is more important in visual effects.]

60. Jerome Taylor, trans., *The* Didascalicon *of Hugh of St. Victor: A Medieval Guide to the Arts* (New York: Columbia UP, 1961) 75.

61. See Taylor 79: "The science of entertainments is called 'theatrics' from the theatre, to which the people once used to gather for the performance: not that a theatre was the only place in which entertainment took place, but it was a more popular place for entertainment than any other."

62. Minio-Paluello 7; 1449a7-9.

63. 7; 1448b35; 1449a16-19.

64. 7; 1449a23. Also: *Et enim in saltatione et fystulatione et chytharizatione est fieri has dissimiltudines.* (Minio-Paluello 5; 1448a6) [Even dancing, flute-playing, and lyre-playing can make such distinctions (in diversity of human character).]

65. Minio-Paluello 21; 1455a10-33.

66. Cary J. Nederman, "Aristotelian Ethics Before the *Nichomachean Ethics:* Alternative Sources of Aristotle's Concept of Virtue in the Twelfth Century, " *Medieval Aristotelianism and Its Limits: Classical Traditions in Moral and Political Philosophy, 12th- 15th Centuries* (Aldershot, Great Britain: Variorum/Ashgate, 1997) I, 75.