

“The New Aristotle, as a Bridge
between East and West:
Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) and the *Ilāhiyyāt*
(Metaphysics) of the *Kitāb al-Šifā’*
(Book of the Cure)”

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Dante Alighieri (1265-1321)



“Great Spirits” in the Limbo
(*Divina Commedia*, I.IV, 106-144)



Why mention Ibn Sīnā ?

- 1) Dante is not only a poet, but also a philosopher
- 2) Ibn Sīnā had enormous influence on the Latin culture of the Middle Ages
- 3) The Latin influence of Ibn Sīnā was mainly due to his Metaphysics**

Metaphysics

- Lit. “after the Physics”
- A series of lectures by Aristotle on (1) the analysis of being in so far as it is being (being in general), and on (2) the study of God (the Supreme Being)
- A collection of 14 treatises: the 12th treatise (Lambda) contains Aristotle’s doctrine of God

Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā) (d. 428H/1037AD)



Importance of Metaphysics for Ibn Sīnā

- A turning-point of his education (see the Autobiography)
- A stable element of all his philosophical works (always present, either at the end or at the beginning)
- Profound revision of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*

Importance of the *Šifā'* for Ibn Sīnā

- It belongs to the period of full maturity (1020-1027)
- The longest work of Ibn Sīnā (22 vols., 5410 pp.)
- At the center of his production: previous works are summarized in it (*Kitāb al-Mabda' wa-l-ma'ād; Ḥāl al-naḥs al-insāniyya*); later works summarize it (*Nağāt*); in the prologue, Ibn Sīnā connects it with other works of his (*Ḥikma Mashriqiyya; Kitāb al-Lawāḥiq*)
- Very dear to Ibn Sīnā's disciples (Ğüzğānī wrote an introduction to it; it is mentioned at the very beginning of the "Longer Bibliography" of Ibn Sīnā's works)
- Many manuscripts and commentaries
- The only philosophical work of Ibn Sīnā that was translated into Latin
- Influence also on Hebrew culture

Šifā'

Preface and (I) Logic (9 sections)										
Šifā'	Preface	<i>Madḥal</i>	<i>Maqūlāt</i>	<i>'Ibāra</i>	<i>Qiyās</i>	<i>Burhān</i>	<i>Ġadal</i>	<i>Safsāṭa</i>	<i>Ḥiṭāba</i>	<i>Ši'r</i>
Model	---	Porphyry <i>Isagoge</i>	<i>Categ.</i>	<i>De Int.</i>	<i>An. Pr.</i>	<i>An. Post.</i>	<i>Topica</i>	<i>El. Soph.</i>	<i>Rhetor.</i>	<i>Poet.</i>

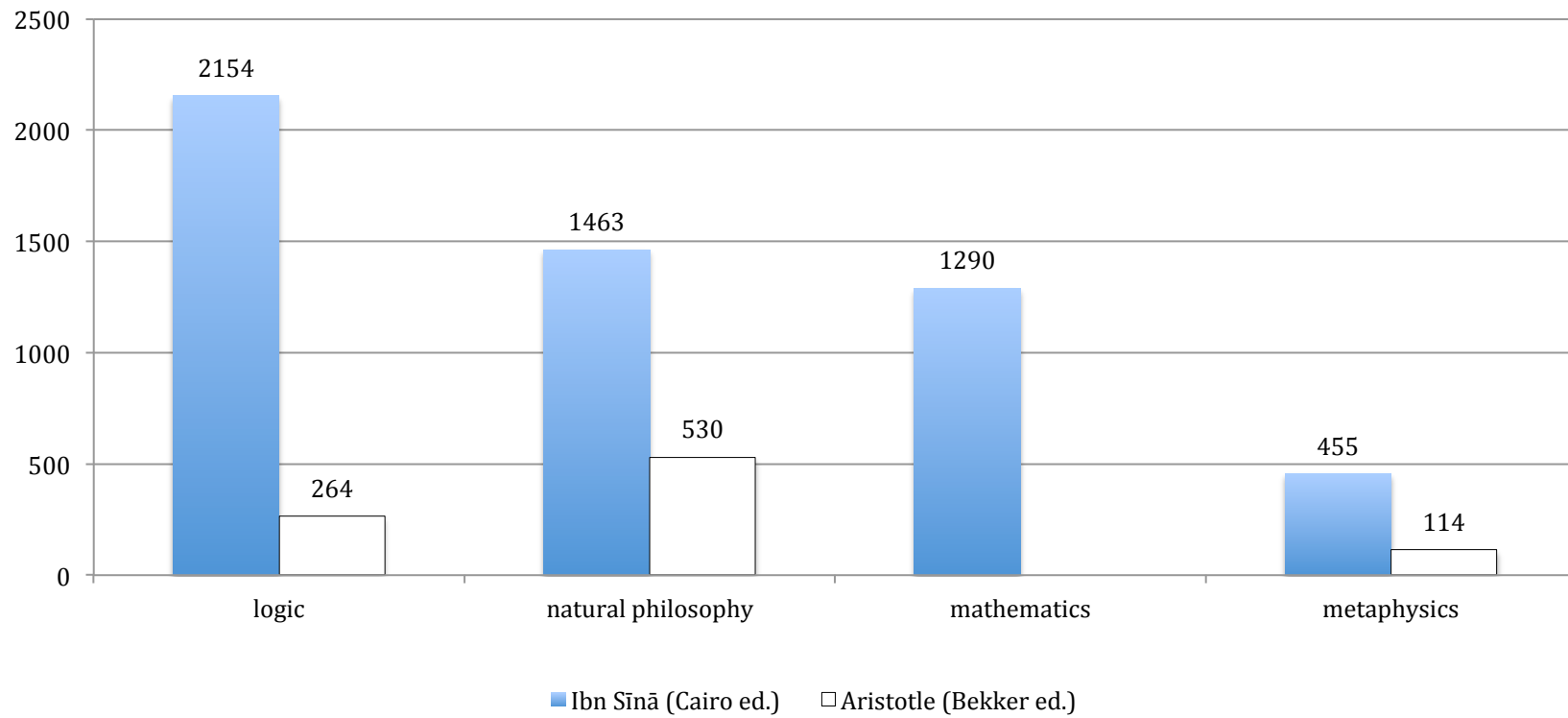
(II) Natural Philosophy (8 sections)								
Šifā'	<i>Samā' ṭabī'i</i>	<i>Samā' wa- 'Ālam</i>	<i>Kawn wa- Fasād</i>	<i>Af'āl wa- Infi'ālāt</i>	<i>Ma'ādin wa- Āṭār 'ulwiyya</i>	<i>Nafs</i>	<i>Nabāt</i>	<i>Ḥayawān</i>
Model	<i>Physica</i>	<i>De Caelo</i>	<i>De Gen. et Corr.</i>	<i>Meteor.</i>	<i>Meteor.</i>	<i>De Anima Parva Nat.</i>	<i>Ps.-Arist. De Plantis</i>	<i>Hist. Part. Gen. Animal.</i>

(III) Mathematics (4 sections)				
Šifā'	<i>Uṣūl al-handasa</i>	<i>'Ilm al-Hay'a</i>	<i>Ḥisāb</i>	<i>Ġawāmi' 'ilm al- mūsīqā</i>
Model	Euclid <i>Elements</i>	Ptolemy <i>Almagest</i>	Nicomachus of <i>Gerasa Introd. Arit.</i>	Ptolemy <i>Harmonica</i>

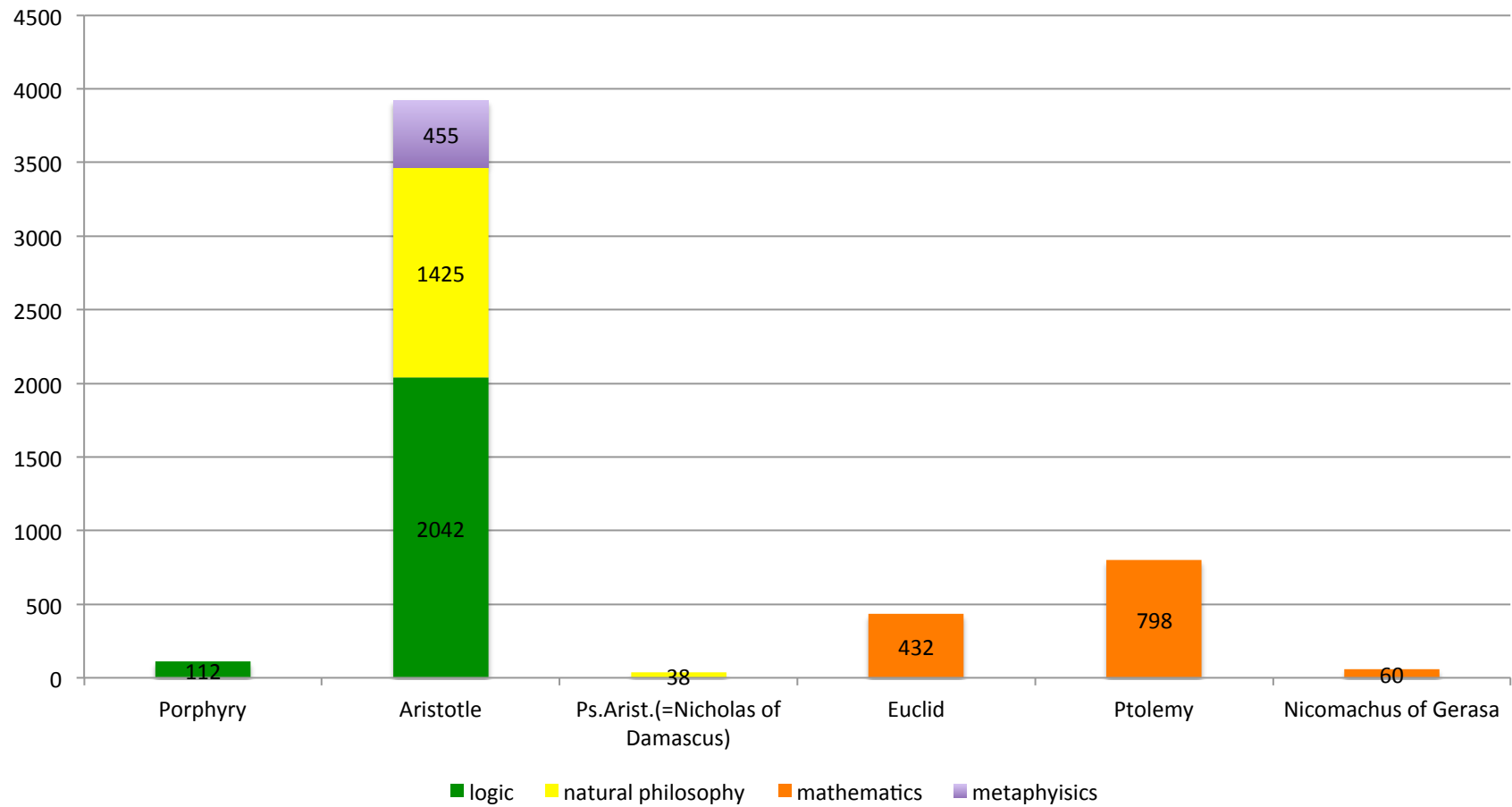
(IV) Metaphysics (1 section)
<i>Ilāhiyyāt</i>
<i>Metaphysica + Ethica</i>

Šifā': Content

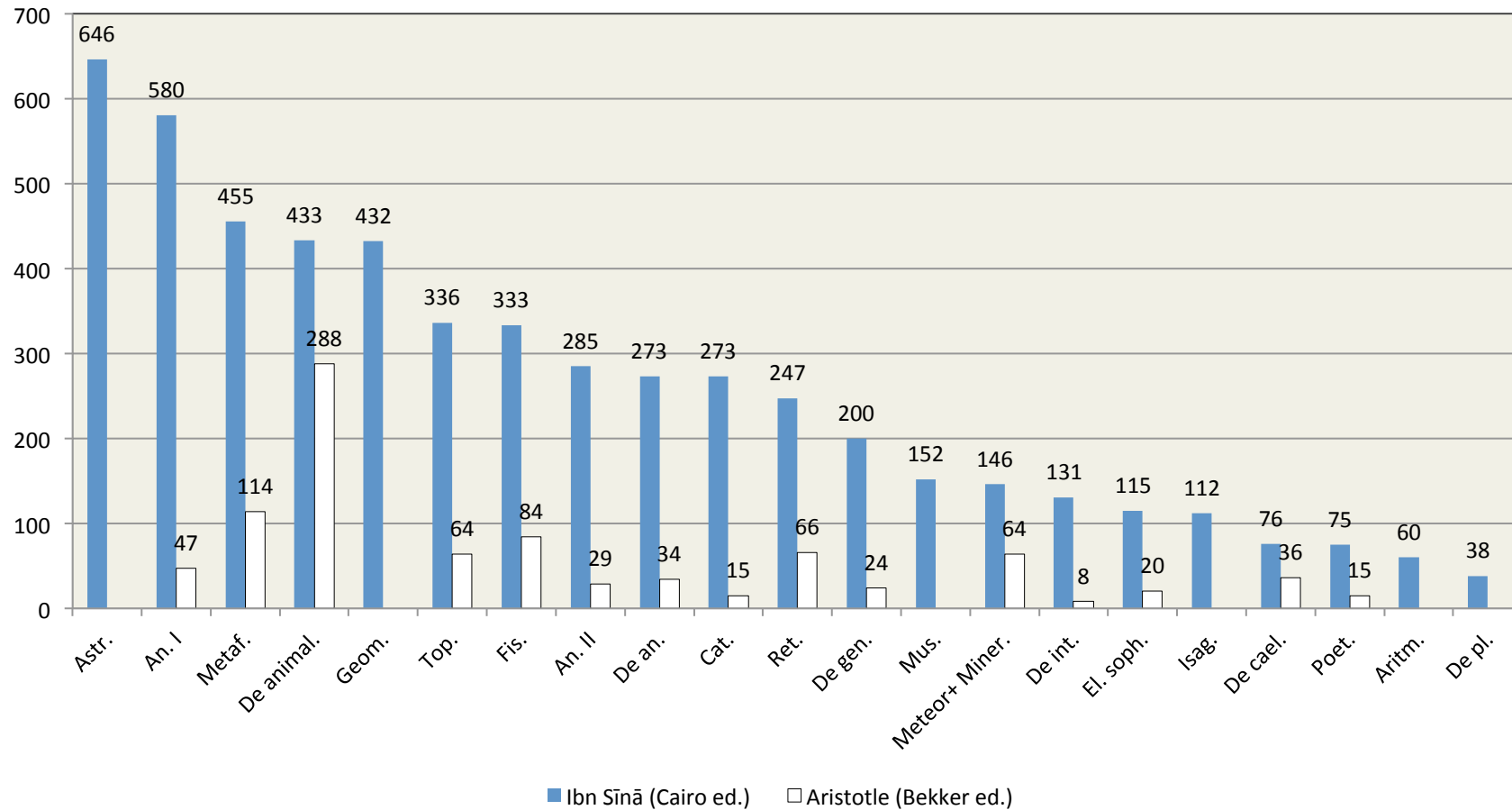
Main Parts



Šifā': Sources



Single Sections (absolute length)



Outline of the *Ilāhiyyāt*

Avicenna, <i>Ilāhiyyāt</i>		Sources
(A) FORM:		
(1) Theme: existent is the subject-matter; God and the ultimate causes are the goal; existent and God/ultimate causes are immaterial realities		(1)-(4): Aristotle, <i>Posterior Analytics</i> ; <i>Metaph.</i> Γ, 1-2; E, 1 Alexander of Aphrodisias, Commentary on <i>Metaph.</i> Λ al-Fārābī, <i>On the Goals of Aristotle's Metaphysics</i> (<- Ammonius Son of Hermeias?)
(2) Structure:		
Ontology	Henology	
species of existent (OntologyS)	species of one-many (HenologyS)	
properties of existent (OntologyP)	properties of one-many (HenologyP)	
causes of existent (OntologyC/Theology)		
(3) Method: apodictic, analytical, non-dialectical		
(B) SYSTEM:		
Relationship with other sciences: metaphysics grounds the proper principles of logic, natural philosophy, mathematics (and practical philosophy)		al-Fārābī, <i>Survey of the Sciences</i>
(C) CONTENT:		
(i) Prolegomena (I, 1-4): subject-matter, goal, utility, rank, name and division of metaphysics Introduction (I, 5-8): existent and the other primary concepts; Necessary Existent in Itself/possible existent in itself; the axioms		(i) <i>Metaph.</i> Γ; E, 1 Greek Prolegomena al-Fārābī, <i>Survey of the Sciences</i> ; <i>On the Goals of Aristotle's Metaphysics</i>
(ii) OntologyS (II-III): categories (substance, quantity, quality, relation) OntologyP (IV-VI): prior and posterior, potency and act, perfect and imperfect, whole and part; universal and particular; cause and effect		(ii) <i>Metaph.</i> Z-H, Θ
(iii) HenologyS (III, 2-6; III, 9): one by accident and one by essence (by genus, by species = by differentia, by relation, by subject, by number); quantity; absolute and relative multiplicity; opposition one-many; qualities which are in quantities HenologyP (VII, 1): sameness by accident (similarity, equality, comparability), sameness by essence (in genus, species and properties); otherness, alterity, difference, privation and contrariety		(iii) <i>Metaph.</i> I
Appendix to Henology (VII, 2-3): exposition and criticism of the doctrine of numbers of Plato and the Pythagoreans		<i>Metaph.</i> A, M-N
(iv) OntologyC/Theology (VIII-X, 3): the First Principle's existence (VIII, 1-3); His nature (VIII, 4-7); Cosmology (IX, 1-5); Theodicy (IX, 6); Eschatology (IX, 7); Prophetology (X, 1-3)		(iv) <i>Metaph.</i> α, 2 + Λ, 6-10 (<- al-Kindī) Alexander of Aphrodisias, <i>On the Principles of the Universe</i> Themistius, Commentary on <i>Metaph.</i> L <i>Theologia Aristotelis</i> (<- Plotinus), <i>Liber de Causis</i> (<- Proclus) Fārābī, <i>Principles of the Opinions of the People of the Virtuous City</i> Islamic religion and theology
Appendix to OntologyC/Theology (X, 4-5): practical philosophy		Aristotle, <i>Ethica Nicomachea</i> Bryson, <i>Oeconomica</i> Plato, <i>Respublica</i> , <i>Leges</i>

(i)-(iv)
Metaph.
B-Δ

Latin Translation

- In Andalusia (Toledo), after the Reconquista
- promoted by a Jewish scholar (Abraham Ibn Dawd)
- with the assistance of a Christian man of Church (Dominicus Gundissalinus)
- under the protection and support of the bishop of Toledo

Preface and (I) Logic (9 sections)										
Šifā'	Preface	<i>Madḥal</i>	<i>Maqūlāt</i>	<i>'Ibāra</i>	<i>Qiyās</i>	<i>Burhān</i>	<i>Ġadal</i>	<i>Safsāṭa</i>	<i>Ḥiṭāba</i>	<i>Ši'r</i>
Model	---	Porphyry <i>Isagoge</i>	<i>Categ.</i>	<i>De Int.</i>	<i>An. Pr.</i>	<i>An. Post.</i>	<i>Topica</i>	<i>El. Soph.</i>	<i>Rhetor.</i>	<i>Poet.</i>
Lat. transl. (1)		Logica	---	---	---	II.7	---	---	---	---
Lat. transl. (2)	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	Fragm.	---

(II) Natural Philosophy (8 sections)									
Šifā'	<i>Samā' ṭabī'i</i>	<i>Samā' wa- 'Ālam</i>	<i>Kawn wa- Fasād</i>	<i>Af'āl wa- Infi'ālāt</i>	<i>Ma'ādin wa- Āṭār 'ulwiyya</i>	<i>Nafs</i>	<i>Nabāt</i>	<i>Ḥayawān</i>	
Model	<i>Physica</i>	<i>De Caelo</i>	<i>De Gen. et Corr.</i>	<i>Meteor.</i>	<i>Meteor.</i>	<i>De Anima</i>	Ps.-Arist. <i>De Plantis</i>	<i>Hist. Part. Gen. Animal.</i>	
Lat. transl. (1)	Liber I Nat.	---	---	---	I.1 I.5 II.6 (De Miner.)	De Anima	---	De Animal.	
Lat. transl. (2)	---	De Caelo	De Gen. et Corr.	De Act.Pass. Qualitatum Primarum	Libri Meteororum	---	Attested	---	

(III) Mathematics (4 sections)					(IV) Metaphysics (1 section)
Šifā'	<i>Uṣūl al-handasa</i>	<i>'Ilm al-Hay'a</i>	<i>Ḥisāb</i>	<i>Ġawāmi' 'ilm al- mūsīqā</i>	<i>Ilāhiyyāt</i>
Model	Euclid <i>Elements</i>	Ptolemy <i>Almagest</i>	Nicomachus of <i>Gerasa Introd. Arit.</i>	Ptolemy <i>Harmonica</i>	<i>Metaphysica</i>
Lat. transl. (1)	---	---	---	---	Philosophia prima sive Scientia Divina

Albert of Lauingen (Albert the Great) (d. 1280 AD)



Tommaso da Modena, S. Alberto Magno, 1351-52, Sala del Capitolo, S. Niccolò, Treviso

Albert the Great

(Albertus Magnus, 1200ca.-1280)

- Bishop, theologian and philosopher
- “Doctor Universalis”
- Patron of scientists (Pious XII’s decree *Ad Deum*, 16 December 1941)
- One of the greatest commentators of Aristotle of all times

Some events of Albert's Life

- 15 May 1248 (Paris): signs the condemnation of the *Talmud*
- 1248-1254 (Cologne): starts commenting on Aristotle
- 1263-1264 (Germany): preaches the crusade (Pope Urban IV)
- 1264-1267 (ca) (Würzburg): comments on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*

Authors/works quoted by name/title in Albert the Great's Commentary on the *Metaphysics*

Ancient Greek	Arabic (Muslim authors)	Latin	Arabic (Jewish authors)	Byzantine Greek
Aeschilus: 1	al-Fārābī: 1	Varro: 2	Salomon Ibn Gabirol: 3	Eustratius of Nicaea: 1
Alexander of Aphrodisias: 6	al-Ġazālī: 8	Severinus Boethius: 9	Isaac Israeli: 3	Michael of Ephesus: 1
Alexander Graecus Peripateticus (= ?): 4	al-Bitrūġī: 1	<i>Corpus Iuris Civilis</i> : 1	Maimonides: 2	
Dionysius Aeropagita: 3	Ibn Zur'a: 1	David de Dinant: 1		
Euclid: 11	Ibn Rušd (Averroes): 23	Horatius: 1		
Hermes Trismegistus: 3	Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna): 17	Iohannes Sarracenus: 1		
Hippocrates: 1	<i>Liber de causis</i> : 5	Ovidius: 1		
John Philoponus: 1	Ibn Baġġa: 1	Cicero: 3		
Porphyrus: 5	Ṭābit ibn Qurra: 1			
Ptolemy: 3				
Tertullian : 1				
Themistius: 3				

Thank you!