
The nomenclature of marine fauna in Theodore Gaza's translation of Aristotle's 'History of animals'

Grigory Vorobyev*¹

¹Académie russe des sciences – Russie

Résumé

My paper aims at attracting attention to the names of fishes and other sea animals that were first introduced into Latin by Theodore Gaza, the translator of Aristotle's *Historia animalium* (finished in the early 1470s, printed in 1476). As has been shown by John Monfasani, Stefano Perfetti, Pieter Beullens and Allan Gotthelf, Gaza's version enjoyed great popularity in the sixteenth century. Still, its impact on the development of early modern, and partly also post-Linnaean, nomenclature has not been sufficiently studied. Beullens' 2008 article dedicated to the role of medieval and humanist translations of Aristotle on the modern ichthyologic nomenclature studies Gaza's fish names and opens thus a new research path, but does not scrutinize Gaza's vocabulary systematically. Gaza's text turned out to contain almost five dozen names referring to marine fauna that had not been used before him in Latin. These include pure neologisms (neologisms of form), neologisms of sense (i.e. words known in Latin before, but with different meaning), transliterated Greek words sophisticatedly modified so as to look more appropriate for a purist Latin reader, words probably borrowed from Italian vernaculars, words born from Gaza's conjectures to Aristotle's text and even a couple of misprints that were later accepted as if they had been correct words. Gaza's humanist translation of Aristotle's *Historia animalium* is the first (or at least the first widespread) text belonging to early modern zoological tradition. Many sixteenth-century naturalists, including ichthyologists, cited Aristotle in Gaza's translation and could not help accepting, or at least mentioning, Gaza's animal names. In the thesaurus of the *Ichtya* database, several entries mention Gaza, as cited by Peter Artedi, but his presence in the database could be increased. My paper will, thus, stress Gaza's role as $\pi\rho$ *tau* $\epsilon\rho\epsilon$ *tau* of numerous Latin names of marine animals.

Mots-Clés: Theodore Gaza, Aristotle, translation, nomenclature

*Intervenant