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THE ARABIC-ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY, ITS DEFINITION*
AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE**

One of the most significant characteristics of philosophy in the Middle Ages was its subjection to theology and therefore also its limited role within perimeters of certain theological terms. Of course, in addition to theology as the most expressive human activity of mind in the Middle Ages, in a stronger or weaker form there was also a philosophy based predominantly on reason, but both theology and philosophy were in constant and fierce conflict with the obvious domination on the side of the theology. The degree of subjection of philosophy to theology has varied according to the times and differences in religious traditions and philosophical developments. Very often, exactly in the moments of stronger efforts on the part of theology, philosophical proofs and methods were used in attempts to destroy philosophy, and free use of reason was limited by existence of religious control of human activity.¹

* See: "Arapsko-islamska filozofija, definicija i značaj u istoriji". In: *POF XXIV/1974*, Sarajevo, 1976, pp. 109-132.

** This report was not made from the positions of any school or line of philosophy, and therefore, is not intended as a philosophical work. It was made exclusively from the positions of the broader historical science, primarily the Orientalistics and Medievalistics, and as such was intended as a work of cultural history of the Middle Ages, having in mind in particular the relations between the Islamic East and the Christian West in the field of philosophy. As this work deals with historical facts about which virtually nothing had been written in Yugoslavia, it was also necessary to indicate upon a large monographic literature which addresses this problem in more detail. This literature, which was directly used in making of this report, and which is nevertheless an individual choice, was stated in the end of the paper in alphabetical order.

¹ Julius R. Weinberg, *A Short History of Medieval Philosophy* (Princeton University Press, 1964) "Introduction", pp. 3-29, which presents these introductory deliberations in the relation between theology and philosophy more extensively, with specific examples from Christian, Islamic and Jewish sources. Some general comments on this are also provided by Mr. Grabmann, *Die Philosophie des Mittelalters* (Berlin, 1921), pp. 38-43. The conflict between religion and reason, theology and philosophy, is a conflict between the holy authority (*auctoritas*) and the free use of reason (*ratio*) on some common issues, but with some different, very often completely opposing, views of the same problems, causing one another and forcing the seeking of new solutions. Excessive emphasis of authority

Such a status in relations between philosophy and theology, reason and religion, had existed since the death of the classical Greek philosophy, until the movement of the Renaissance and Humanism in the 16th century, just like it was much earlier in the Judaism and Christianity, it was also later on, parallel with these, in the Islam too, and it has extended in a changed form even up to date, mainly with the same issues involved, but with differently defined notions in general and specific questions. If as a perimeter we take the method of philosophizing appearing since the movement of Renaissance, particularly in the 19th and 20th centuries, then we would have to answer the question: if the philosophy in the real sense of the word could even exist under such control of human thoughts and actions, in a negative way, and deny existence of philosophy under the circumstances predominant in the Middle Ages, and, analogously, even deny existence of both Jewish and Christian, and Islamic philosophy. However, there are even nowadays numerous, significant and extensive studies addressing philosophy that has developed within these three major religious systems. Indeed, if we do not want to take on a fully non-historical view of the circumstances under which people act and think, we will have to recognize that philosophy nevertheless existed, not only in spite of but also exactly due to the religious tradition in which it developed. Many problems as the objects of philosophizing were mainly determined exactly by the religious aspirations of peoples and times, and philosophical deliberations and systematic research studies on the essence (nature) of world and knowledge, on human activities and social welfare, as cherished by the classical Greek philosophers, were continued through the Middle Ages, and to that extent that the philosophical terminology of the modern times and various systematic solutions to these problems were in major part and in significant areas of today's world created exactly in the Middle Ages.

leads to hyperconservative traditionalism, that is, to sheer reception and compilation of the matter previously existing and presented, while exclusive reliance onto reason, which by its nature is subjective and speculative, leads to hyperdialectics (or speculation), which thinks in non-historical terms, failing to provide an appropriate assessment of the original materials and previous knowledge. In the Islam, the notion of authority is not so clearly expressed and defined like, for instance, in the Christianity with the official teaching of the Church, acts of the Council, Pope's proclamations, etc., so in the Islam various free views were slower to take on, and only under certain definite circumstances, for instance, as resistance to some orthodox theologians or government authorities.

There is a completely different problem in the relation between science and scientific knowledge, in the modern sense of the word, not only towards theology but towards philosophy too, on which numerous studies exist nowadays, but here, in the historical context, the attention deserving ones are the following: Andrew D. White, *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology in Christendom*, vol. 2, New York, 1910, and particularly: Sir W.C. Dampier (Whetham), *A History of Science and its Relations with Philosophy and Religion*, 4th, revised and enlarged, Cambridge University Press, 1950, which has lived to have 20 issues over a 20-year period.

In those terms, Islam, in relation to Judaism and Christianity, in essence has the same problems like these two religious systems, namely, the conflict between religion and reason, theology and philosophy, authority and the independent, free thought, but it is natural and logical that Islam as a separate and independent, complete, religious and philosophical system, should also have its conspicuous specific features and separate views on the common issues, which ensure that it has a separate and significant place in the history of the philosophical thought. In fact, throughout the ages, all the time maybe even until the period of Humanism and Renaissance, philosophy in Islam had a better reception and was undoubtedly in a more favorable position than the one, for instance, in the Medieval Europe, but it is also undoubted, and let us stress it right away, that this favorable relation between Islam and philosophy since the reformation times has been lost or significantly weakened not only in the sense of territory but also in the sense of internal building, so that the relations in positions are today exactly inverted when compared to their status in the previous ages. It is only over the past several decades that some revival and a radical turnaround have been noticed in perceptions and views of society and man and the separate roles played by religion and philosophy, and this is still rather a slow process, exactly within the Islamic world, but these most recent phenomena are beyond the frameworks of this paper.

These general considerations also impose the answers to the questions asked in this report, namely, for us to first determine what that philosophy is that we are dealing with here, how are we to name it, in short, what is its purpose and definition from the formal and contents side, and for us to draft the main items of its significance as a system and its position and role in the history of philosophy in general.

The very name of this philosophy with many scientists is rather dubious. Namely, since a long time ago, two names have been used: the *Arabic* philosophy and the *Islamic* philosophy, of which, we may say, neither fully corresponds with the facts. It can be called Arabic only because its main works were written in Arabic, but there exist some significant works too written in Persian, and later on in some other languages too, and they undoubtedly in their main features belong into the same kind of philosophy. Accordingly, the name of the Arabic philosophy is not adequate from the linguistic side. In the national sense, this name is even more dubious, because the main representatives of this philosophy, except for some really minor exceptions, were exactly non-Arabs, namely, Persians, Turks and others, and in a later period and in a very modest role, even some Slovenes from this region.

The common connection and issues of this whole philosophy was Islam without doubt, and thence the term most often used is the Islamic philosophy. But, as already mentioned above, if we understand the Islam exclusively as a religion, then this name too would be very dubious, because philosophy referred to here has developed very often not only in a parallel manner but also in many cases in strict conflict with the orthodox teaching of the Islam, and as such has been under fierce criticism by the Islamic theologians and

advocates of the Islamic theology. However, this whole philosophy was nevertheless created within the Islamic territory, on which the main tendency was to philosophically develop and logically explain the issues brought by Islam in its vision of the world, law, social relations and the role of the God and man within the society. In addition to this, it was long ago perceived that Islam is not only a religion but also a cultural notion, in fact a whole culture of itself, created on the soil of ancient civilizations, primarily the Greek one, and that the components of this culture are numerous. Although Islam as a religion was created on the borders of the ancient *ecumena*, beyond the actual cultural reach of the Greek and Iranian cultures, nevertheless, this cradle of Islam could not have been without radiation to a significant extent by both these cultures. Moreover, it is stressed that even the activity of Muhammad, the founder of Islam, could not be understood without knowing the stimuli from the ancient Greek cultural circle.²

By opening the new centers of Islam out of Arabia, in Syria, Mesopotamia, Persia, Egypt and North Africa, the process of development of the Islamic culture mainly remained on the ancient Greek territory, using ancient Greek methods and ancient Greek forms, with the predominance of Oriental influences, primarily from Persia, and all of these resulted in creation of a completely new entity which as an enclosed unit is clearly different from the pre-Islamic Greek culture.³ This goes both for the philosophical and theological thought and for art, law and economy. Thus with the background of the Islam, as a broader cultural notion, not exclusively as a religion, one can rightfully speak about the Islamic philosophy, just like one speaks about the Christian Medieval philosophy in the West.⁴ After all, the name of the Arabic-Islamic philosophy may be the most adequate one, because it refers to the Islamic philosophy expressed mainly in the Arabic language.

With what justification, however, can one speak from the contents aspect about one such Islamic philosophy? The philosophy in Islam had two sources, from which two explicitly different directions of philosophizing developed subsequently.

The first one of these sources was within the very Islamic religious tradition when, namely, as early as in mid-seventh century, thus soon after the death of Muhammad, political-religious or religious-political parties began to form, depending on the linguistic version, which each in their own ways

² R. Hartmann, *Die Welt des Islam einst und heute* (Leipzig, 1927), p. 6 and the like.

³ C. H. Becker, *Islamstudien, Vom Werden und Wesen der islamischen Welt*, vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1924), which is the collection of all his numerous discussions of this problem. A good overview of the same problem is also offered by Rudi Paret: *Der Islam und Das griechische Bildungsgut*, Tübingen, 1950, in the series: *Philosophie und Geschichte*, 70.

⁴ Probably the best example is Etienne Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, New York, Random House, 1955, XVII, 829 p. This, in a relevant proportion, rather thoroughly addresses the "Arabic philosophy" too, particularly pp. 181-224, as well as the "Greek-Arabic influences", pp. 235-246.

attempted to justify their concepts and views of the state and social systems and the related issues, by using documentation from religious texts and the life of Muhammad, the Koran and hadith. Then questions were brought up, such as personal skills of power holders, subjective, that is, psychological responsibility of individuals for acts committed, role of humans and the god in committing specific acts, freedom of will and determinism, capacity of stronger or weaker faith in the man, attitude of subjects towards the authorities, essence of matter and spirit, good and evil, punishment and default, origin of the visible world, and many other issues. From these early discussions, which as a rule were very fiery and often caused open conflicts, while deeply penetrating some subtle issues of philosophy and psychology, numerous schools subsequently developed with some very different, often radical teachings and theories on the above issues. An excellent overview of these early schools and opinions was given in two very-well known works: *Maqālāt ul-islāmiyyīn (The Doctrines of Islam Members)* by al-Ash'ari and *Fihrist ul-'Ulūm (An Overview of Sciences)* by Ibn an-Nadīm, both dating back to the 10th century.^{4a} However, the most significant school with explicitly philosophic background and methods, which had developed rather early from these discussions, was the science of *kalām* (*'ilm ul-kalām*), a dialectic or speculative theology or, rather, a scholastic philosophy.⁵

Kalām is a general term of the Islamic scholastics and its advocates, denoting the theological thinking and discussing, and it simply means the speech, but primarily "the speech of the god", *logos*, word. The discussion on the word, announced to the man in the Koran brings about the question on the relation between the god and his words. Is it already contained in his being or did he only have to create it for the purpose of the announcement? On the other hand, the Antic and Christian philosophies, in whose tradition is John of Damascus in the Umayyad age, gave the *Logos* simultaneously the sense of reason and thus "to address the word" means "to address the reason". Under the influence of this opinion, to study the *kalām* also means to discuss mentally on the contents of the announced faith. The advocates of this sci-

^{4a} The first one in the original was issued by H. Ritter: *Die dogmatischen Lehren der Anhänger des Islam*, 2. Auflage, Wiesbaden, 1963, and the second one by G. Flügel, Leipzig, 1871-72, vol. 2. This latter is now fully translated into English: *The Fihrist of al-Nadim. A Tenth Century Survey of Muslim Culture*, Translated by Bayard Dodge, 2 vol. (1150 pages), 1970, in the series: Records of Civilizations, Sources and Studies.

⁵ A short overview of the science of *kalām* is provided by D. B. Macdonald, the article "Kalam" in: *Encyclopedia of Islam*, first issue. Much more detail provided in *Essai de theologie comparee*, Paris, 1970, in particular on pp. 101 and further on, also see M. Horten, *Die philosophischen System der spekulativen Theologen im Islam*, 1912. The name of "dialectical theology" for *kalām* was adopted by R. Walzer, *Greek into Arabic, Essays on Islamic Philosophy* (Oxford, 1961), e.g. p. 175, while A. Glulfaume, *The Legacy of Islam* (Oxford, 1931), p. 264, believes that the name of "scholastic philosophy" more corresponds to this.

ence, *mutakallimūn*, can be called theologians, but one must not forget that in the *kalām* the faith is in concordance with the reason.⁶

In the *kalām*, three directions came to expression, that is, three schools: *qadariyya*, advocates of free will (and not determinists, such as translated in Baranov),^{6a} then a quite contrary school called *ḡabriyya*, the real determinists, and ultimately a group of *murḡi'a* and particularly the ash'arītes, and these are those who advocate a middle in-between these two schools, that is, those who do not recognize either full freedom of will or determinism, but those who reached a middle solution that they developed in terms of philosophy. The discussion by Alexander Aphrodisian on destiny provided a significant contribution to the discussion of the Islamic theologians and philosophers on determinism and free will.⁷ The *qadariyya*, members of the free will teaching, resulted in the famous mu'tazilitian school, which is the actual founder of the *kalām* and which dominated and played the decisive role in the initial centuries of the Islam. The members of the *kalām* more and more intensively used the philosophical method of proving, primarily the Aristotelian logic, in formulating their attitudes. In fact, this Islamic dialectic theology lies on the Aristotelian philosophy no less than the Medieval scholastic of the West, and the same also applies for other cultural phenomena.⁸

This is the real Islamic philosophy, based on the Islamic theological system, which, however, in the process of its forming and final formulation itself was to a certain extent adjusted by certain theologians and coordinated with the systems with which strenuous fight was made. The members of the *kalām*, called the *mutakallimūn*, had a decisive influence on the development of the Jewish philosophy, and they are well noticed with the scholastics in

⁶ C. Cahen, *Der Islam, I. Vom Ursprungs bis zu den Anfängen des Osmanenreiches* (translated from French by Dr. Gerhard Endress, Fischer Weltgeschichte, vol. 14, 1968), pp. 86, 92. Weinberg, quoted from p. 4, cites, as a typical example, the beginning from the famous work on the Islamic dogma (Aqā'id) by Nasafi (12th century), which is even today taught at Islamic schools, and until recently in Yugoslavia too: "Science in general has a basis in truth and reality of things, therefore the friends of truth recognize existence of all truthful and realistic things. They can be recognized in three ways: by healthy senses, by authentic storytelling and by reason." Cahen indicates (quoted from p. 92) of the Mu'tazilian theologians with whom dogma is based on reason, on the human reason exactly, and therefore with them "The God is reason and the faith corresponds to reason" (Gott sei Vernunft and Glaube sei der Vernunft entsprechend"). See also: H. Ley, *Studie zur Geschichte des Materialismus im Mittelalter* (Berlin, 1957), p. 51 (from the Marxist viewpoint).

^{6a} H. Baranov, *Arabsko-ruskii slovar* (Moskva, 1962), p. 800 "On schools" "qadariyya", "ḡabriyya", "murḡi'a", and "aš'ariyya", see the corresponding articles in the Encyclopedia of Islam, First Edition, or in Handwörterbuch des Islam (Leiden, 1941) under these names, or, else, with Gardet-Anawati, quotation, Index Table.

⁷ H. Walzer, Greek into Arabic, p. 6.

⁸ R. Hartmann, quoted, p. 9. S. Horowitz, *Über den Einfluss der Griechischen Philosophie auf die Entwicklung des kalam*. Breslau, 1903.

the West, where they were known as “*Loquentes*” and who were as such even mentioned by Saint Thomas Aquinas.⁹

The direct influences of the Greek philosophy on the *kalām* came to expression even within the Islamic circles when, in the centers of the ancient Greek culture, in Syria, Mesopotamia, Persia and elsewhere, some learned people, built within this culture, were converted into the Islam and thus brought with themselves both the old issues and the philosophical arguments, thus also transferring them onto the Islamic theological system.

The second source, which resulted in creation of the second direction of the Arabic-Islamic philosophical thought, was the Greek philosophical heritage, which the Arabs had deliberately and systematically taken over and continued to work on it seriously. After the closing of the last philosophical academy in Athens back in 529 by Justinian, the main centers of the Greek learning, in addition to Alexandria, also were Edessa, Nisibis, Seleuchia, Antiochia, in the then Nestorian and Jacobitic Syria, and primarily in *Gondeshapur* in Persia. Many persecuted philosophers found exile in Gondeshapur, where even an academy was opened in 530, in which the Greek science was further cherished. Among the Nestorian and Jacobitic Christians in Syria, there were some primarily theological schools which cherished philosophy as a secondary subject, but in a rather limited form.¹⁰

It has already been mentioned above that the Islam as a cultural notion emerged and developed on the territory of the Ancient Greek culture, with the Greek influences coming from some even earlier times, but now a much deeper turnover happened on this territory. Whereas the Ancient Greek heritage had already been preserved and cherished in Greek, Syrian and Persian, now under the Islam this heritage was translated into one single language, Arabic, as a common language of all the peoples, sects and confessions. Translation of the Greek philosophy works began in the early Abbasside era in the 8th century, and lasted until the end of the first millennium, that is until somewhere in year 1000, and this was for nearly three hundred years.

The Greek philosophy, which in this way obtained a new force of life and was saved from complete oblivion, however, exerted influence on this direction of the Islamic philosophy to such an extent that there was sometimes a tendency to deny this Arabic-Islamic philosophy any originality and for it to be seen as an extension of the Greek philosophy in Arabic disguise.¹¹ How much such an opinion corresponds to facts or how justified this is, had been the subject of scientific research from a long time ago, but it had already clearly and convincingly showed that this did not involve only the Greek philosophy

⁹ A. Guillaume, “Philosophy and Theology”, In: *The Legacy of Islam* (Oxford, 1931), p. 265.

¹⁰ G. E. von Grunebaum, “The Sources of Islamic Civilization”. *The Cambridge History of Islam*, vol. II (1970), p. 793. De Lacy O Leary, *How Greek Science Passed to the Arabs*, London, 1949.

¹¹ Cahen, quotation, p. 127. More in detail with Gardet-Anawati, Introduction etc., p. 74 and further on.

in a new disguise but really the Islamic philosophy which only used the Greek philosophy as a starting point, but which did not remain within the limits of exclusively Greek notions and norms. The main goal of this Arabic-Islamic philosophy, as already in the beginning expressed by al-Kindī in the 9th century, was: "In complete citations, gather everything that the Ancients (that is, the Greeks) had told on a specific subject and supplement that which was not sufficiently expressed by the Ancients, and this to be done using the tools of our Arabic language and according to the rules of our era and our own capacity."¹² Such an attitude by all means also justifies the name of *Islamic* philosophy. The originality does not exclude the desire to use the precedents to learn and to draw lessons from them, on the contrary, it even intensifies this desire.

It is worth also to underline the position of the Islamic philosophers in philosophical research, and again, according to al-Kindī, in the preface to his *Metaphysics*: "It is appropriate to offer the biggest gratitude to those who have contributed to truth at least a little, let us not mention those who have contributed much. We should not be ashamed to admit the truth and to accept it, regardless of which source it may come from, even if it was shown to us by previous generations and by foreign peoples. For him who seeks truth, there is nothing more valuable than the truth itself, because it never lowers or decreases the value of he who seeks it, on the contrary, it dignifies and ennoble him." Such an open attitude towards the truth and science was also corroborated three hundred years later by Averroes (Ibn Rushd), and it was a normal practice of all the classical Islamic philosophers.¹³

In such an environment and with a high interest and support of the Abbassidian khalifas themselves, it was proceeded with a systematic translation of the works of the Greek philosophy.^{13a}

Without stressing all the details, almost all Aristotle's works were translated, then Plato's dialogues, including in particular *Timaeus*, *State and Laws*,

¹² Waltzer, Greek into Arabic, p. 13.

¹³ Ibid., p. 12.

^{13a} The reasons of such a favorable attitude of the Abbasside khalifas towards the science and philosophical heritage of the Greeks are not completely clear, and there are some varying opinions on this matter. Cahen indicates upon the fact that in the early centuries of the Islam, advocating various points of view and cherishing various sciences was free unless it lead to an obvious revolt or social bounty (Der Islam, vol. I, p. 127 and further on). Walzer believes that the khalifas' positive attitude towards science involved either their own urge towards science or some very successful influences in this direction by the mu'tazilians or other schools (Greek into Arabic, p. 6). White presents this as follows: "People have very often wondered how come that the Arabs accomplished so much in the scientific discovery in comparison with the Christian researchers, but the answer is an easy one. The Arabs were relatively free of (...) theological baits that in the Christian Europe glittered around everywhere, seducing people to take roads leading nowhere." (A. D. White, A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology, vol. I, p. 397).

the numerous commentaries of Aristotle's works, among which those by Alexander the Aphrodisian and Themistius, several works by Stoics and neo-Phytagoreans, various Gnostic documents by neo-Platonists, Proclus's *Elements of Theology*, by Porphyrius, John Philoponus, Euclides, Galen, Ptolemy, many anonymous neo-Platonic documents, etc.

Under the names of Plato and Aristotle, there were a number of apocryphal works, in particular those in popular philosophy or occult ones. However, we should separately mention two works of special significance, both ascribed to Aristotle, and these are: so-called *Aristotle's Theology*, which is in fact a free paraphrase of individual Plotin's *Eneads* and so-called *Liber de causis*, based on Proclus's work *Elements of Theology*. The contrariness of these works with Aristotle's teaching in his other authentic works gave much trouble to Arabic-Islamic philosophers, which contributed to a separate kind of a comparative studying in an effort to clarify the notions related to Aristotle.

In order to understand the Arabic-Islamic philosophy, based on the Greek heritage, thus obtaining its specific undertone, it is important to have in mind what was the Greek philosophy like in the 5th and 6th centuries A.D., and, first of all, how Plato and Aristotle were read and interpreted in later Greek schools and in philosophical centers of the Near East.¹⁴ Almost all the works of the classical Greek philosophy were accompanied with commentaries from neo-Platonic and mystical circles, as well as with discussions and interpretations by nestorian and monophysitic Christians, of whom a particular mention should be given to John Philoponus from the 6th century. The neo-Platonism, Gnosticism and early Christian schools in the late pagan era, in which the philosophy was cherished, but in favor of defense of the Christendom, were the decisive factors in the transfer of the Greek philosophy in the spirit and form in which it was taken over by the Arabic-Islamic philosophers. Aside from the already mentioned dialectical theology, in which reason, and human reason in particular, played a relevant role in the broader framework of theological notions under development, there emerges, in a direct touch with the taken Greek heritage, an idea of the real philosophy as early as in the beginning of the 9th century. For this philosophy, as a name, there is a borrowed word from the Greek language and in Arabic it obtained the form of *falsafa*, philosophy. This name refers to that branch of the scientific work which by its contents, methods and sources, is beyond the framework of the so-called "Islamic" sciences, although in principle it was not directed against the Islam as a religion, but the spiritual movement related to *falsafa* belongs primarily into the profane domain.¹⁵ Because, whereas dialectical theologians took holy texts of the Islam as a background for their theological-philosophical considerations, Islamic philosophers (*falāsifa*) took non-Islamic Ancient Greek authors to be their starting point.

¹⁴ Walzer, *Greek into Arabic*, p. 3.

¹⁵ Cahen, *Der Islam*, vol. I, pp. 132, 271.

Parallel with translating and deliberating on the Greek works, partially under the influence of theologians, but mainly on the initiative of philosophers themselves, there was an independent thinking and exploration process run both on the inherited and newly emerging problems.¹⁶ As a characteristic of the essence and value of the philosophy of this era, for instance, al-Kindī stated several definitions of philosophy, derived from the Greeks, and these are: love, prudence, accomplishment of moral perfection, thinking about death and end of life, the skill of skills and the science of sciences, human knowledge of himself and, ultimately, philosophy as knowledge of eternal universal things.¹⁷ Although the stress varied on a regional and individual bases, the thinking activity of the Islamic philosophers developed within the frameworks of all these definitions and basic goals.

In the history of the Islamic philosophy, there are mainly two phases, first in the East from 9th through 11th centuries, in which the main representatives were al-Kindī, ar-Rāzī, al-Farābī, and Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna), and the second phase on the West, in the Arabic Spain, from the 11th through the end of the 12th century, whose most famous representatives were Ibn Ṭufayl (Abubacer), Ibn Bāḡḡa (Avempacce), and Ibn Rushd (Averroes). Although all these philosophers cherished and developed the Greek heritage overall, the largest attention was attached mainly to the Aristotle and Plato, and the commentaries of their philosophy by the neo-Platonic circles, and by the other circles who were closer to their original teaching (Alexander the Aphrodisian). Whereas for instance al-Kindī, al-Farābī and Avicenna were predominantly, but not exclusively, under the influence of the neo-Platonism, Averroes made efforts as much as possible to advocate pure Aristotelism. Given the large differences in philosophy between Plato and Aristotle, of course that the Islamic philosophers, just like the neo-Platonists and Beothius previously, made efforts to coordinate their philosophies, because it could not be believed that two such great spirits could be in a real mutual contrariness.¹⁸ This was first tried by al-Kindī in a small tractate,¹⁹ and then particularly al-Farābī, in a larger study titled: *Harmony between Plato and Aristotle*, which has been reissued recently, addressed this problem into more detail. This was maybe more of an attempt to reconcile Aristotle and the neo-Platonism.²⁰

Particularly in the first phase of the Islamic philosophy, the neo-Platonism was and has been a decisive factor in the development of this philosophy and the spiritual culture of the Islam in general. He influenced the development

¹⁶ Walzer, quotation, p. 8.

¹⁷ Weinberg, quotation, p. 102. A. Altman and S. M. Stern, edd. Isaac Israeli (Oxford, 1958), pp. 68-69, where these definitions by al-Kindī are also stated, because they exerted influence on this early Jewish philosopher.

¹⁸ Cahen, *Der Islam*, vol. I, p. 131.

¹⁹ This text by al-Kindī in the English translation was issued by A. Altmann and S. M. Stern, quoted, p. 43.

²⁰ Weinberg, quoted, p. 102.

of mystical philosophy in the Islam, which takes up a special place in the Arabic-Islamic philosophy, thus being present, particularly in the mystical (Sufi) orders, and previously, in other Gnostic and Esoteric movements (Ismā'īliyyas, Faithful Brothers).^{20a}

Under the influence of the neo-Platonism, Aristotle, Plato, and various later schools and variations of the Greek philosophy, with a significant participation also by the Christian interpretation of this philosophy, the Islamic philosophers, even the dialectical theologians, also took over all those philosophical problems from the previous schools, among which particularly falls the issue of relation between the faith and reason, or the announced and natural theology, which, particularly John Philoponus, known with the Arabs as Yaḥyā an-Naḥwī (John the Grammarian) made efforts to resolve in favor of the Christendom, but with big concessions and in favor of the reason, back in the 6th century. This remained a constant problem also with the Islamic philosophers, who made efforts to maintain balance between faith and reason, but it often happened that with serious conflicts and sensitive issues between these two sources of truth the authority of reason is preserved while providing an allegoric interpretation to the holy texts and thus only nominally retain the letter of religion. Al-Farābī gave the philosophy the highest position in the human spiritual pursuits (aspirations), because theology (*kalām*) uses the dialectical method, and metaphysics uses proof.

This difference between the metaphysics and the *kalām* was particularly emphasized later on with Averroes, with an underlying idea of difference between philosophers and ordinary people. Ordinary people can not be expected to understand the philosophical truth and therefore they have to be taught in a concrete and picturesque language. "Colorful, but also an eerie or scary eschatology" (which was variously developed in theology) was believed by many learned Muslims to be not only a figurative language corresponding with uneducated people. This is the view of Ibn 'Arabī (1164-1240), of Ibn

^{20a} This place deliberately separately mentions the mystic (ṣūfi) philosophy, prevalent in various Dervish orders, and the Shiitic esoterism, prevalent in the sects of Ismailites, Septimans, Duodecimans and others, although both were under certain influences of the neo-Platonism, but in various forms and for various purposes. In fact, mysticism (taṣawwuf) and the Shiitic esoterism are mutually exclusive, because while mysticism is a universal phenomenon of the human striving towards the original being until complete integration or melting together into a single reality, and this is the absolute notion of deity (Unio mistica), the Shiitic esoterism is in fact a political ideology serving the Iranian national purposes, in which the deity is incarnated in the imam, the spiritual and political leader of the sect, which is in principle rejected in the Sufism. (See on this briefly with R. A. Nicholson, *The Mystics of Islam*, London, 1914, new edition 1966, pp. 88-89, and in much more detail with E. G. Browne, *Literary History of Persia*, London, 1902, new edition 1956, vol. I, in several places, and particularly on pp. 416-444). This is why in the realized Shiitic state of Persia, as early as in the 16th century, all Sufic orders were prohibited.

Ṭufayl (Abubacer 1100-1184), Ibn Rushd (1126-1198), inherited from the Alexandria's neo-Platonic. Weinberg believes that using this viewpoint in general in the Medieval philosophy, philosophy may have been closest to proving its independence from the announced religion.²¹

The main question of the Islamic philosophy, more or less engaging the attention of all philosophers, was: What connection can there exist between the being (*Sein* in German) in itself, which is the only one capable to exist from itself, and individual beings, who thank for their time reality to this pre-background of any being? Or: the connection of the godly creative spirit and the numerousness of creatures, between the idea of things and their perceivable embodiments? This connection is realized in the degrees of emanation from the absolute being of deity, which enlightens the committed one, if he follows them, towards an ever increasing learnedness of spirit and through whose realization he reaches the realization of him the *Only One*, and thus to the salvation of the soul. Such thoughts will appear later on in the illuminative mystique within the framework of the Islam and will be developed into a philosophical system which was applied for political-religious goals as well.²²

Such thoughts came to expression in the 10th century with the philosophical society *Iḥwān uṣ-ṣafā* (Faithful Friends, and not "Pure Brothers"), which undertook to codify in its tractates the Ancient Greek knowledge, which in the Manichaeism as the "secret religion of the educated" had integrated with the gnostic and hermetically tinted dualism and the Iranian ideology of (godly) laws.²³ Their tractates, the number of which is 51 (50 or 52), constitute an encyclopaedia of all the sciences of that era, based mainly on the Greek heritage in the neo-Platonic spirit.²⁴

Plato's works *State* and *Laws* were the textbooks of the political theory in the school of al-Farābī.²⁵ Based on Plato's ideas and Aristotle's *Politics*, al-Farābī developed the theory of the ideal state with a wise ruler heading it. Like other Islamic philosophers, he stressed that happiness can only be found within the social community and that the intellectual life may be perfected only within the community.²⁶ Underlying this theory is a solid knowledge of the relations in the Abbasside state of the 10th century.²⁷

²¹ Weinberg, quoted, p. 105.

²² Cahen, *Der Islam*, vol. I, p. 272. See note under 20a.

²³ Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur*, Suppl. I, p. 379. The literature on hermetic influences in the Islam was listed with L. Massignon, "Inventaire de la littérature hermetique arabe", the article first published in: A. J. Festugiere, *La Revelation d'Hermès Trismegiste* (Paris, 1944), pp. 384-400, and then in: L. Massignon, *Opera Minora*, vol. I (1963), pp. 650-666.

²⁴ J. Marquet, article "Ikhwan al-safa", In: *Encycl. of Islam*, new edition, vol. III (1971), pp. 1071-1076.

²⁵ Walzer, *Greek into Arabic*, p. 5.

²⁶ Weinberg, quoted, p. 108.

²⁷ Carsten Cople, "Islamische Philosophie", In: *Philosophie (Das Fischer Lexikon*, vol. 11), p. 112 and the like.

As previously in the Age of Antics, thus also the Medieval Islamic philosophy did not make any strict difference between the natural sciences and philosophy. In the domain of exclusively natural sciences, there was close cooperation between the scientists of all confessions: Muslims, Jews, Christians, Sabians, and Zoroastrians, all of whom in order wrote their works in Arabic and thus significantly contributed to the so-called "Arabic" science. The Greek science was supplemented by adding contributions and discoveries of the Ancient Eastern cultures. All the relevant sources were translated into one and single cultural language, Arabic, thus entering into a kind of a large synthesis. True, the scientific development was based on the Antic texts, but everything was compared and critic was implemented in everything, so that this work in many aspects brought a practical progress and new knowledge. In spite of their intellectualism, the Islamic scientists had no abstraction power and depth of the Greeks, but on the other hand they showed a more developed sense for the practical research and experimenting, the significance of which for future development of science was evidently proven.²⁸

The science conveyed and taught on by the "Arabs" was a living segment of their existence and it was only like this that it could live on and survive. One of the major representatives of this science, ar-Rāzī, expressed a belief that there would be and there would have to be a constant progress in science. This is really a great thought in the Medieval world which was largely simply bowed before the exclusive and eternal value of the Antic sagacity.²⁹

The most original contribution of the Islamic philosophy, that is, of the dialectic theology, was the theory of atomism, which was probably associated with Democritus and Epicurus. Pursuant to this theory, not only that matter is made of grain-like indivisible parts, but time also is divided into atoms, and therefore, behind the apparent continuum, movement is performed in a cinematographic fashion. It was also based on this theory that the *'ilm ul-Kalām* received the meaning of scholastic theology of an atomistic type.³⁰

The last phase of the classical Islamic philosophy and science was in Spain, which also constitutes the major accomplishment in the history of the Medieval philosophic thought. At the time, Abubacer (Ibn Ṭufayl), in his philosophical novel titled Ḥayy b. Yaqzān (The Living Son of the Awaken One), developed the philosophical religion of nature ("philosophische Naturreligion"), and Avempacce (Ibn Bāḡḡa) and Averroes (Ibn Rushd) constantly supported

²⁸ Ch. H. Haskins, *The Renaissance of the 12th Century* (Harvard University Press 1927, ninth edition 1964), chapter IX, pp. 278 and further on. Dampier (Whetham), *History of Science*, pp. 71 and further on; Cahen, quoted, p. 273.

²⁹ Cahen, quoted, p. 274.

³⁰ D. B. Macdonald, article "Kalam", in: *Encycl. Of Islam*, first edition, that is, in: *Hadwörterbuch des Islam* (Leiden, 1941), p. 261b. More in detail on atomism in the scholastic philosophy in the Islam: S. Pines, *Beitrage zur islamischen Ato-menlehre*. Berlin, 1936, and: O. Pretzl, "Die Frühislamische Ato-menlehre. Ein Beitrag zur Frage über die Beziehungen der frühislamischen Theologie zur griechischen Philosophie", in: *Der Islam XIX* (1931), pp. 117-130.

the autonomy of philosophical knowledge towards religion and brought the Arabic-Islamic intellectualism of the Aristotelian type to perfection.³¹

Since the very beginning of studies the Greek philosophy, the Islamic orthodox circles had known that many opinions of the Antic thought were not congruent with Islam as a religion, and the orthodox theologians saw in them a danger and constantly pointed to it. However, in broad educated circles, the predominant belief was that each piece of deep knowledge, regardless of its origins being in the pre-Islamic era, nevertheless has something of value and that the knowledge and thoughts of sages from previous times can only come in well in order to deepen one's own faith. Therefore, the dialectical theologians were very eagerly indulged in studying the Antic philosophy.³²

Although there were not only conflicts with philosophers but also some fierce assaults against philosophy and reliance onto reason in general, which now and then were very decisive for the future of philosophy. The most renowned such a systematic assault against philosophy was launched by al-Ġazālī (died in 1111) in his work: *Tahāfut ul-falāsifa* (Destruction of Philosophers). On the one side, he brought in a feeling of mystique into the dry dogma of the Islam, and moreover, he brought into the Kalām the precision of Aristotle's logic,³³ and on the other side, point by point he refuted philosophy, primarily that one by al-Farābī and Avicenna, as unacceptable from the Islamic religious standpoint. He also launched some harsh critics against dialectical theologians too, as people without real religion, but his viewpoints, inasmuch his role in reviving the sensual faith can be permanent, were not accepted as the letter of the law in terms of philosophy. Later on, Averroes (Ibn Rushd), in his famous work *Tahāfut ut-tahāfut*, will refute al-Ġazālī directly and will defend philosophy. It was established that al-Ġazālī, in his extremist assault against philosophers, used the arguments of John Philoponus, a Monophysitic Christian from the 6th century, against the Greek philosophy, particularly against Proclus and Aristotle, in defense of the Christianity. Al-Farābī, who was advocating the theory of eternity of the world through emanation, was the first to write a separate work refuting the viewpoints of Philoponus and defending Aristotle (ar-Radd 'alā Yaḥyā an-Naḥwī fī mā radda bihi 'alā Aristūṭālis). Averroes used this document by al-Farābī in his assault against al-Ġazālī, as well as against Philoponus.³⁴ There was a great similarity noticed otherwise between al-Ġazālī's approach towards philosophy and the approach of the French Occasionalists, and, on the issue of causality, with the English philosopher Hume.³⁵

³¹ Cahen, quoted, p. 312.

³² Ibid., p. 128. More in detail with Gardet-Anawati, Introduction, pp. 74 and further on.

³³ Gardet-Anawati, quoted, p. 72.

³⁴ Walzer, *Greek into Arabic*, pp. 6, 193-4.

³⁵ On al-Ghazali's notion of causality, Renan said: "Hume n'a dit plus". See Weinberg, quoted, p. 122. In more detail, see with: M. Fakhry, *Islamic Occasionalism*, London, 1958.

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What significance and what importance in history does this philosophy has that has been briefly addressed here? Philosophy historians mainly have two approaches when studying this philosophy. Ones see the Islamic philosophy as an exclusive work of the Islamic Arabs, and therefore, they underestimate the importance of the Greek element (share), the presence of which can not be denied. Others focus their attention to the Greek sources and their elaboration in Arabic, without seeing that the Islamic philosophers, although continuing the Greek tradition, rightfully deserve to be understood and evaluated within their own framework and time, and according to their own intentions that can even be different from their Greek predecessors.³⁶

However, it is correct that the Islamic philosophy can not fully be understood or evaluated without knowing the Greek philosophy, and the Greek philosophy both overall and in many details can not be studied without knowing the heritage coming from Greek sources and texts in the Arabic translations and editions.

Let us leave aside the reviewing of significance of the Islamic philosophy within its own framework and times, which was anyway briefly addressed previously, but we will limit ourselves on indicating upon its value in two directions: the importance of the Arabic-Islamic philosophy for studies of Greek philosophy and in the transfer of the Greek philosophical heritage to the West and its important role in forming the scholastic philosophy and awakening the Renaissance in Europe. The tradition of the Greek philosophy was never completely stopped, but whereas in the West and on the territory of the former Roman Empire in general it was very much weakened, if not died down completely, in the Islamic culture it found a new force of life, which was addressed in the text above.

Among the philosophical texts of Greek authors, there are also a number of texts which are otherwise lost in the Greek original but are preserved only in the Arabic translations. So, some of the commentaries of Aristotle's works are known only through the Arabs.³⁷ The Arabs knew about many neo-Platonic works that are unknown in the West even nowadays.³⁸ In addition, the Arabic versions of the Greek works have their separate value in determining the actual transfer of texts from various Greek works.³⁹ A particular value of the Arabic translations is in the methodic work of the translation schools. Namely, since various versions of the Greek originals existed, with many variants and vague senses, the most renowned translator and head of the translator school in the 9th century, Hunayn b. Ishaq, in such cases would first establish the critic text of the Greek work and would only then translate it. Which is also valuable, he even described his philological method, so this can or must be used

³⁶ Cahen, quoted, p. 127. Walzer, quoted, p. 1.

³⁷ Walzer, quoted, p. 5.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

for critics editions of the lost Greek originals.⁴⁰ His son Ishaq was particularly dedicated to the translation of Aristotle's works and it was established that his versions are very reliable and portray a very high degree of actual understanding.⁴¹ The subsequent schools of translators followed the same standard of philological precision and compared all the variants of previous Syrian and Arabic versions, and in addition they also used the best Greek commentaries and this was the basis for the teachings of al-Farābī, Avempace and Averroes. The translators had no Greek dictionaries available, but we are really amazed at their knowledge of all the finesses of the Greek language, which is shown in the proven quality of the performed job whenever a Greek original can be compared with the Arabic translation.⁴²

Let me mention one more example. The critical edition of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* is still desirable. For his issue in 1831, Bekker collated 15 manuscripts, never to be even glanced at by anyone else after that. Christ's edition in 1885 is based on three more manuscripts. In their research, neither Ross nor Jagger examined any other manuscripts. For a future new critical edition of *Metaphysics*, in addition to some 50 existing manuscripts, the majority of which has never been consulted, "the Arabic translations will have a prominent place right next to the ancient commentaries".⁴³

For a long number of centuries, the Christian West was in a real philosophical isolation.⁴⁴ With an exception of Plato's *Timaeus* and a small segment of Aristotle's logic, in the Middle Ages practically nothing was known on the Greek philosophy.⁴⁵ Boethius (died in 524) was hoping to be able to translate into Latin Plato's and Aristotle's overall work, but he only managed to translate only two of the six Aristotle's works in logic and Porphyry's *Introduction into Aristotle's Categories (Isagogs)*. This translation by Boethius was the only segment of Aristotle's works used until the 12th century. This was later called *logica vetus*, the ancient logic, unlike the "new logic" or the "new" Aristotle.⁴⁶

However, even here came about a gradual but deep change caused in the 11th and 12th centuries in Spain and Italy, by intensive translations from the Arabic and Greek languages of the works by Greek and Arabic-Islamic philosophers, which were gradually disseminated among the Latin theolo-

⁴⁰ On the method of translation and critics of texts with Arabs, see sections from the Arabic sources in the following significant work: F. Rosenthal, *Fartleben der Antike im Islam* (Zürich, 1965) particularly pp. 31 and further on. Also: G. Bergsträsser, *Hunain ibn Ishaq und seine Schule*, Leiden, 1913.

⁴¹ Walzer, quoted, p. 7.

⁴² Cahen, quoted, p. 129.

⁴³ H. J. Drossaart-Lulofs in: *Bibliotheca Orientalis* XXII, p. 209.

⁴⁴ R. W. Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (Harvard University Press, 1962), p. 59.

⁴⁵ P. Vignaux, *Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1966), pp. 187-8. M. Grabmann, quoted, p. 49.

⁴⁶ F. B. Artz, *The Mind of the Middle Ages*, pp. 187-8; Grabmann, quoted, p. 49.

gians.⁴⁷ With these translations, including the works of al-Kindī, al-Farābī, Avicenna and Averroes, just like all the Aristotle's works, together with their Arabic-Islamic commentaries, the West was largely for the first time in possession of the Greek philosophical tradition and scientific thought. This breakthrough was not an easy one, but it could not be stopped either. Upon Pope's request, the studying of the "new" Aristotle was forbidden first in 1215, and then again in 1228, but without success. Then first the Dominicans, particularly at the University in Paris, undertook to create a kind of reconciliation between the religious truths and a philosophy the greatness of which they had to recognize.⁴⁸ So, in mid-13th century, the ideas and terminology of the Greek and Arabic-Islamic philosophers entered the Latin theology, "which is by all means the deepest penetration in the successful career of the Arabic-Islamic philosophy".⁴⁹ As expressed by Southern, "the theologians of earlier centuries in the West would have been amazed, if not frightened, if they could see the names of al-Farābī, Avicenna, Algazal (al-Ġazālī), Averroes and other Islamic philosophers and theologians mentioned side by side with the name of St. Augustine, and this is exactly what happened".⁵⁰ The scholastic philosophy in the West can not be understood without knowledge of the sources of this philosophy which as a direct stimulus primarily include the works of the Arabic-Islamic philosophers and Aristotle's works taken over with the Arabic-Islamic commentaries.⁵¹ In the 13th century, Roger Bacon wrote: "Philosophy is a special domain of non-believers (that is, the Arabs) and we received it from them in full."⁵²

It was particularly important for the West once Aristotle, who was otherwise represented through the two of his commentators, Avicenna and Averroes, was completely translated. His works: *Physics*, *Metaphysics*, *Ethics* and *Politics* caused a huge turnover in the history of not only the philosophical thought but also of the public life in general. Philosophy, which thus far was exclusively linked to religion and purely religious issues, was now understood as physics and metaphysics, a doctrine on the world and the God, rationally interrelated. The works of Aristotle and his commentators and followers were

⁴⁷ P. Vignaux, quoted, p. 73. More details on the translations of the Arabic works in the West: E. Bertola, "Le traduzioni delle opere filosofiche arabo-giudaiche nei secoli XII e XIII", in: Studi di filosofia ... in onore di Francesco Olgiati (Milan, 1962), pp. 235-266. Then: J. Jolivet, "La philosophie medievale en Occident", In: *Historie de la Philosophie I* (Encycl. de la Pleiade, Paris, 1969), pp. 135-1357, and "Select Bibliography of Translations of Philosophical Works by al-Kindi, al-Farabi, Avicenna, Ibn Baġġa, and Averroes", in the work, with my cooperation, by Ph. Merlan, *Monopsychism, Mysticism, etc.* (The Hague, 1963), pp. 138-150.

⁴⁸ E. R. Curtius, *Europäische Literatur und lateinisches Mittelalter*, 3rd edition (Bern, 1961), p. 65.

⁴⁹ Southern, quoted, p. 53.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁵¹ Grabmann, quoted, pp. 48 and further on.

⁵² *Maralis Philosophia*, p. 195. Cited according to: Southern, quoted, p. 59.

studied in order to learn from them not only the skill of reasoning, but the nature of things too, and the nature of man became the rule of his behavior. Aristotle's *Nicomah's Ethics*, with a selection from Greek and Arabic-Islamic commentaries, indicated upon what made up the philosophical morality and natural sagacity.⁵³ Thus, it was from Spain and Italy that Aristotle's philosophy and natural science came, as well as those by his Arabic commentators and developers in the form that transformed the European thought.⁵⁴

The works of the Greek philosophy, in addition to Arabic, were also translated directly from Greek too, which was the case in Sicily in particular. However, this issue is not such a simple one after all, because, according to Haskins, "The Latin West could have received its Aristotle, Galen, Ptolemy and Euclides largely through direct translation from Greek; it could have received a lot of the Greek science in this way, it could have, but it didn't. The recognized and widely used language of science of those times was Arabic. (...) The translations from Arabic often preceded those from Greek and took their place in the broad use. These translations also enjoyed a particular prestige due to the accompanying Arabic commentaries and manuals, some of which deeply tinted the European thought. The translations from Arabic simply had a better reception."⁵⁵

The Arabic-Islamic philosophers were instrumental in the building of the complex and clear philosophical terminology and in the introduction of the philosophical style into the Arabic language. This terminology reproduced the terminology not only of Plato and Aristotle, but beyond, that one from the late Greek commentators and neo-Platonic philosophers. Both this style and the terminology of the Islamic philosophy texts would leave their traces in the Scholastic philosophy of the West. First in the Latin translations of the Arabic works (Gerard of Cremona), and then also in the independent works of Scholastic philosophers terms would appear coined after the Arabic that had not existed before, such as: *quidditas*, *haecceitas*, *ipseitas*, *anitas*, and the like, corresponding to the Arabic expressions: ma'niyya, huwiyya, aniyya, etc. These terms were in particular use by Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, Okham and other philosophers of the time.⁵⁶

⁵³ Vignaux, quoted, pp. 74-5.

⁵⁴ Haskins, *The Renaissance*, p. 289.

⁵⁵ Haskins, quoted, pp. 301-2; the same: "Arabic Science in Western Europe", *Isis* VII (1925), pp. 478-485. Dampier (Whetham) states similarly: "In this era" (that is, from the 10th century onwards into the Middle Ages), "Arabic became a recognized classical language of learnedness and all that was written in Arabic had a prestige which in the previous (and in the subsequent again) ages belonged to Greek." Quoted, p. 75. On p. 83, he further wrote: "The recognized language of the scientific literature was Arabic, the translations from Arabic, even those by Greek authors, were highly valued."

⁵⁶ A. M. Goichon, *Lexique de la langue philosophique d'Ibn Sina (Avicenne)*, Paris, 1938, and an addition: *Vocabulaires compares d'Aristote et d'Ibn Sina* (Paris, 1939); M. T. d'Alverny, "Anniyya-Anitas", in: *Melanges E. Gilson* (Paris, 1959), pp. 59-91;

This is how the dedication to profane science was transferred to the West, accompanied with the method too, namely, the rationalist custom of spirit and natural tendency and agility towards scientific experimenting. "These qualities could also be found with the Ancient Greeks, because they were inherent with their works, but they were cherished and kept in life in the Islamic countries, from which they were mainly transferred to the West."⁵⁷

I wish here to indicate upon an unusual case related to the role of the Arabic-Islamic philosophy in history. The work *History of Philosophy* by three Yugoslav philosophers, approved as a textbook for the fourth grade of high school (Belgrade, 1970), addresses much in detail the Greek, early Jewish and Christian, and of course, Scholastic philosophies in the Medieval Europe, but there is no mention whatsoever of at least the intermediary role of the Arabic-Islamic philosophy here. If someone asked how the Greek philosophy, primarily Aristotle, reached the West in the Middle Ages, then this textbook would not provide an exact answer.

The proof of penetration of the Greek philosophy and the Arabic-Islamic commentators of this philosophy, as well as the fights related to this philosophy, also lies in the "Condemnation of the 219 theses" (propositions) from 1277, which, upon the request of the Church, were determined by Etienne Tempier, the Paris bishop, as dangerous and unacceptable. This condemnation was preceded by the previous bans of 1215, 1231 and 1270, pertaining to the same problem, the independent Aristotle's philosophy and its Arabic-Islamic commentators, which was studied at the University in Paris. The theses condemned here pertained to the eternal quality of the world, godly providence, freedom of will, integrity of the intellectual soul, as well as some other issues deriving from Aristotle, al-Farābī, Avicenna and Averroes, but interestingly, among these theses there are 15 or 20 theses reflecting the science of Thomas Aquinas.⁵⁸

In this whole complex of issues related to the Arabic-Islamic philosophy, it is important to have several separate aspects in mind. The philosophical syncretism developed in the Islamic East is considered "a decisive factor in the evolution of the Medieval thought" in general. Aristotle's philosophy, before it reached the West, had passed the Islamic spiritual processing, which was influenced by the neo-platonic ideas and Syrian schools, where the teach-

S. A. Afnan, *Philosophical terminology in Arabic and Persian* (Leiden 1964); Jose Ferrater Mora, article "Quiddidad", in his *Diccionario de Filosofia* 5th edition (Buenos Aires 1965), vol. 2, pp. 513-514, which also takes into account the other terms mentioned here. M. D. Chenu, *Toward Understanding Suint Thomas* (Chicago, 1964), p. 110. Walzer, p. 8.

⁵⁷ Haskins, *The Renaissance*, p. 302. "Introduction of Aristotle (to the West), thanks to the Islam, opened to the Christians a scientific view of the world beyond the religious images of the Bible" (M. D. Chenu, *O. P. Saint Thomas /Aquinas/,* p. 291).

⁵⁸ The full text of the English translation with Ralph Lemer and Muhsin Mahdi, ed., *Medieval Political Philosophy: A Sourcebook* (Toronto, 1963), pp. 337-354. See on this also with E. Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, pp. 387-427.

ers were Christian. This brought about a very complex and strange situation in the West, where the Scholastics had before them "a Greek philosophy with a neo-Platonic spirit and Christian interpretations, received from the Islamic philosophers and theologians."⁵⁹

The modern historians keep discovering more and more signs and traces of the complexity of this situation and the penetration of the Islamic philosophy into Scholastics. Thanks to Renan, the role of the Averroism in late 13th century was very well known of as early as in the 19th century, but an earlier phase was also recently proven in the role of the Latin Avicennism.⁶⁰

Given that Avicenna represented the neo-Platonic Aristotelianism and Averroes represented the pure one, this caused confusion and an unusual problem with the Scholastics. Thus, for instance, Thomas Aquinas, in refuting Avicenna, because some of his doctrines had penetrated among theologians themselves, used the language and the formulas of another Islamic philosopher, Averroes. Therefore, if the delusion came from Avicenna, the language of defense came from Averroes.

Western theologians of varying types of thought from mid-13th century did not hesitate in reviewing the traditional views related to the issue of theological notions in the light of the Islamic philosophy, or in at least re-determining the traditional views in the language of the Islamic philosophers.⁶¹

Such influences of the Islamic philosophy on the Western Scholastics and the revival of the Renaissance are only one aspect of a much broader and deeper penetration. It is for instance now completely certain that an Arabic work, translated into Latin and Old French, presenting Muhammad's visionary trip through the heaven (*mi'rāğ*) and recently issued by E. Cerulli under the title of *Il Libro della Scala etc.*, had a significant influence on the plan of Dante's *Divine Comedy*. When Dante put Islamic philosophers Avicenna and Averroes, even the hero of the Crusade, Saladin (Şalāhuddīn al-Ayyūbī) as the only recent ones, in addition to the sages and heroes from the Antics, not into hell but into the forecourt of hell, "then this is a recognition of the Christian debt of the West towards the Islam, which went far more beyond anything that he (Dante) could express in words".⁶²

However, the biggest permanent credit of the Arabic-Islamic philosophy is nevertheless in that, thanks to it, "Europe was able to rediscover and revive the Antic heritage".⁶³

⁵⁹ P. Vignaux, quoted, pp. 73 and the like.

⁶⁰ Southern, quoted, p. 54.

⁶¹ P. M. de Contenson, "S. Thomas et l'Avicennisme latin", In: *Revue des Sciences philosophique et theologique*, 43 (1959), pp. 3-31; the same: "Avicennisme latin et vision de Dieu au debut du XIII siecle", In: *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et litteraire du Moyen Age*, 34, (1959), pp. 29-97. Southern, quoted, p. 55.

⁶² Dante, *Divina Commedia*, "Inferno", IV, verses 129, 143-144. E. Cerulli, "Dante e Islam", *al-Andalus*, XXI, (1956), pp. 229-53.

⁶³ Cahen, quoted, p. 128. In his significant work *Greek into Arabic*, in many places Walzer indicates upon "the philosophical importance of the Islamic philosophy

Either under the influence of this philosophy or in collision with it, the Renaissance philosophers would open a new epoch in the history of philosophy, in which normally the Arabic-Islamic philosophers have their prominent place too. Because, according to Pico della Mirandola, among the Arabs Averroes is the one in whom there is something solid and unshakable, in Avempacce, as well as in al-Farābī, something serious and deeply deliberate, and in Avicenna something divine and platonic”, and in another place he wonders: “What is the use in studying only the philosophy of Latin authors, such as Alberto, Scotus, Egidius, Thomas, Francisco and Henry, while omitting the Greek and Arabic philosophers”... which is by all means a clear recognition of the role and significance of the Arabic-Islamic philosophy in history.⁶⁴

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for our own era”. Artz emphasizes that Avicenna and Averroes were certainly more than “ordinary commentators”, as labeled by Bertrand Russel, and as the conveyors of the thought towards the West, Islamic philosophers are of prime value (*The Mind of the Middle Ages*, p. 157).

⁶⁴ E. Cassirer, P.O. Kristeller, J. H. Randall, *The Renaissance Philosophy of Man*, pp. 243, 244, and in a special edition: G. Pico della Mirandola, *Oration on the Dignity of Man*, by A. R. Caponigri (Chicago, 1956), pp. 45, 47. It is interesting to state here what the renowned Orientalist D. B. Macdonald, wrote as early as in 1904, namely “that the Medieval Europe historians will need to be either Arabists or will at least have to cooperate with Arabists. I do not hesitate – he says on – to express a strong statement that future efforts of these historians will be to reinterpret the European civilization in the light of the Islamic one”. (*The Problems of Muhammedanism*, 1904, p. 534). He substantiated his thesis with the statement by L. Ranke that that studying the Medieval European history requires the ruling of two languages: Latin and Arabic. See on this: J. J. Waardenburg, *L' Islam dans le miroir de l'Occident* (Paris – La Haye, 1963), p. 195. In his work on Thomas Aquinas, Chenu concluded that in the Middle Ages “the Islam no longer presented itself as a strong military danger, but as a civilization which was dominantly rich”. (*Toward Understanding Saint Thomas*, p. 291).

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ARAPSKO-ISLAMSKA FILOZOFIJA, DEFINICIJA I ZNAČAJ U ISTORIJI

SAŽETAK

Predmetu ove diskusije ne prilazi se iz ugla bilo koje filozofske škole ili teorije, već kao historijskom problemu u pogledu porijekla, značaja i uloge te filozofije, prvenstveno u srednjem vijeku. Naziva se islamskom, jer se razvijala i gajila u području koje je bilo pod utjecajem islama, ili unutar jasno definirane islamske civilizacije, uprkos permanentnom sukobu između vjere i razuma, autoriteta i racija, kao što je bio slučaj sa judaizmom i kršćanstvom. Može se nazvati i arapskom, ali samo zato što su najznačajniji radovi napisani na arapskom jeziku. Za začetak te filozofije posebno je značajno da se islam, i kao vjera i kao kultura, razvijao i pod utjecajem posebnih helenističkih ili helenizirajućih ideja, a inicijalno se zasnivao na poslanju. Bio je to spoj nekoliko tokova različitih izvora i jezika, ali konačno izraženih u jednom jeziku, arapskom, i formiranih u skladu sa idejama i težnjama inspiriranih islamom kao vjerom i slikom svijeta. Stoga se može reći da su izvori islamske filozofije dvostruki: iz islamske tradicije, strogo govoreći, sa svojstvenim problemima, koji se tiču pojedinačne vjere i javne odgovornosti, ljudskog djelovanja i Božije svemoći, kvaliteta i kvantiteta vjere, pitanja savršenstva i pojedinca i društva, kako to postavlja Qur'an kao riječ poslanja, i neumitno diktirano preovladavajućom stvarnošću. Ova istinska islamska filo-

zofija našla je svoj iskaz u skolastičkoj i dijalektičkoj teologiji, *kalāmu*, koju su njegovale različite škole, kao što su škola mu'tazila, džebrija, murđžija, ešarija i mnoge druge, sa širokim rasponom sukobljenih stavova. Ali čak su i ove islamske škole bile pod utjecajem različitih izvora, uglavnom grčke filozofije. Drugi izvor bilo je grčko naslijeđe, koje su muslimani već preuzeli i njegovali, što je rezultiralo brojnim prijevodima i komentarima radova grčkih filozofa, uglavnom Platona i Aristotela, ali i drugih iz neoplatonske škole. To je bila *falsafa*, filozofija, a oni koji su njegovali takvu vrstu znanja zvali su se *falāsifa*, među kojima su al-Kindi, al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Ibn Rušd, al-Gazali, da nabrojimo samo nekoliko, i imali su velikog udjela u prenošenju grčkog naslijeđa kršćanskom zapadu i utjecaju na skolastičku filozofiju, čak i teologiju, Tome Akvinskog, Dunsca Scotusa, Rogera Bacona i cijele srednjevjekovne filozofije.

THE ARABIC-ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY, ITS DEFINITION AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

SUMMARY

The subject under the discussion in this paper is not approached from any particular philosophical school or theory, but, rather, as a historical problem with regard to the origins, meaning and the role of that philosophy, above all, in the Middle Ages. It is called Islamic because it was developed and cultivated in the area under the impact of Islam, or within the clearly defined Islamic civilization, in spite of a permanent conflict between faith and reason, auctoritas and ratio, as was the case also with Judaism and Christianity. It may also be called Arabic, but merely because its main works are written in the Arabic language. Of particular importance for the inception of that philosophy is the fact that Islam, both as religion and a culture, arose as a result of special hellenistic or hellenizing forces, notwithstanding its being based initially on the revelation. It was a meeting ground of several streams from different sources and languages but ultimately expressed, in one language, Arabic, and formed in agreement with ideas and aspirations inspired by Islam as religion and vision of the world. Thus the sources of Islamic philosophy may be said to be twofold: from within the Islamic tradition, strictly speaking, with its intrinsic problems, touching individual faith and public responsibility, human action and divine omnipotence, qualities and quantities of faith, the question of perfection both of the individual and the society, as posed by the Qur'an as a revealed word and inevitably dictated by the all pervading reality. This genuine Islamic philosophy found its facit in the scholastic or dialectical theology, kalam, cultivated by various schools, such as mu'tazila, ġabriyya, murġi'a, ash'ariyya, and many other schools, with a wide range of conflicting views. But even these, Islamic schools were influenced by ideas from vario-

us sources, mainly from Greek philosophy. The second source was the Greek heritage readily taken over and cultivated by the Muslims, resulting in numerous translations and commentaries of Greek philosophical Works, mainly of Plato and Aristotle but also of others of neoplatonic school. This was falsafa, philosophy, and those who cultivated that branch of knowledge were called falasifa, philosophers, in contradistinction to kalam and mutakallimun. Both of these philosophies, as represented by al-Kindi, al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Averroes, al-Ghazali, to name only a few, had a large share in transmitting the Greek heritage to the Christian West and in influencing the scholastic philosophy, and even the theology, of Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, Roger Bacon and the entire philosophy of the Middle Ages.