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REINTERPRETING ARISTOTLE IN THE MUSLIM WORLD: PHILOSOPHICAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOLASTIC THOUGHT

INTRODUCTION

Earlier scholarship on philosophy in the Muslim world tended to portray philosophers from this intellectual tradition merely as intermediaries in the transmission of Aristotle's philosophy to the West during the Middle Ages. In a similar way, other reductionist approaches have argued that their philosophical focus was on specific aspects such as mysticism, political philosophy, or the relationship between religion and philosophy.[1] In contrast, contemporary interpretations go

[1] For earlier interpretations that tended to present philosophy in the Muslim world as philosophically eclectic tradition playing an intermediary role between Greek philosophy and later Latin scholasticism, see De Boer (1967), Copleston (1952), and Gilson (1955). For approaches that emphasize primarily mystical dimension of philosophy in the Muslim world, see Corbin

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beyond reductionist approaches and point out the originality of philosophy in the Muslim world, especially the contributions of *falsafa*. In line with these interpretations, this paper aims to show that the key figures of this philosophical tradition creatively and thoughtfully encountered Greek philosophy, particularly with the most important concepts of Aristotle's thought, and to examine how their reinterpretations influenced the development of scholastic philosophy. Strongly shaped by their own culture and civilization, and unique worldviews, they sought to philosophically enrich, reinterpret and develop the most significant concepts of Greek philosophy, and as such integrate it into their own original philosophical systems and projects.[2] Although most of these philosophers were Muslims, such as al-Fārābī (Alfarabius), Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna), Ibn Rushd (Averroes) or philosophers from other religious traditions who lived and worked in the Muslim world, such as the most famous Jewish philosopher Maimonides, this encounter, especially with Aristotle, was based on the idea that no form of knowledge, including philosophy, was foreign to them. This reflects the idea that it does not matter where one seeks the truth, but rather that the truth is where one finds it (Algazel, *Al-munqidh min al-Ḍalāl*). This enabled the most significant medieval philosophers in the Muslim world to develop a specific approach to dialogue with the philosophical tradition of the ancient Greeks, and particularly with the Christian philosophers and translators who worked within the Islamic religious-cultural circle. The subject of interest of the major medieval philosophers in the Muslim world was not the religious background of the thinkers with whom they engaged in dialogue. Likewise, this dialogue was not exclusively of an intercultural or interfaith nature. Philosophers in the Muslim world were rather inclined to examine the essence of the argumentation of the previous philosophers' main ideas in order to discover and clarify common perspectives on key philosophical issues. It is exactly this approach to the philosophical tradition that became the main characteristic of philosophy in the Muslim world. Later, mainly through the Maimonides and Avicenna, this approach to philosophy would be recognized and developed by Thomas Aquinas. He found interlocutors and part-

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(1993), while for the interpretations focusing mostly on its esoteric and political aspects, see Strauss (1957) and Strauss and Cropsey (1987). About the interpretations that start from the assumption that the relationship between the philosophy and religion represent the central problem of philosophy in the Muslim world, see Leaman (1985). Although Leaman confirms the prevalence of this assumption, in an earlier study reprinted in the same book, he argues that the origins of this misunderstanding of philosophy in the Muslim world can be found in the work of Leo Strauss and his followers (Leaman 1980). For a general and critical overview of these approaches, see Gutas (2002).

[2] For interpretations that go beyond reductionist approaches and point out the originality of philosophy in the Muslim world, see, for example Adamson 2013, 2016; Bertolacci 2001, 2005; Daiber 2008; Gutas 2014.

ners among the philosophers of the Muslim world in the study of questions and themes of a metaphysical and theological nature, without taking into account their different religious background.[3]

Secondly, and equally important for the subject of this paper is the fact that these reinterpretations, which included the acceptance and transformation of Aristotle's philosophy, strongly influenced the development of scholastic thought. Philosophers like Thomas Aquinas, Roger Bacon or Albert Magnus did not become acquainted with Aristotle solely through the translations of his works into Latin. As well, their understanding of Aristotle was shaped by distinctive reinterpretations of his ideas that are systematically developed by the philosophers from the Muslim world, even if they sometimes modified them according to their own intellectual intentions (Fakhry 1997, 2001; Druart 2023). Parallel to the translation of Aristotle's original works into Latin, scholars also translated philosophical treatises written by the most important philosophers from the Muslim world. Scholastic philosophers found incentives for the development of their own ideas in these works, but also laid the foundations for philosophical dialogue that secured their important place in the history of philosophy. In order to better understand the transmission and reinterpretation of Aristotle's philosophy, this paper does not intend to offer a comprehensive analysis of the entire reception and transformation of Aristotle's philosophy in the Muslim world. Rather, it focuses on selected philosophical problems that, in our opinion, most clearly depict this process. Namely, this includes the analysis of the transformation of the specific aspects of the Aristotelian logic and the status of logic within the philosophy in the Muslim world, then the understanding of the relationship between philosophy and religion, insofar as this topic influenced the scholastic philosophy, and also we will more briefly consider the philosophical treatment of the distinction between essence and existence and its importance for Aquinas.

Here we have only outlined the main research direction. Their more detailed analysis will be developed through the two thematic blocks, followed by the concluding part. In the first part of the paper, the focus of the research is directed towards understanding the role of the Mediterranean in the Middle Ages as a cultural background that would enable a kind of intercultural dialogue and historical transfer of knowledge and ideas. We will briefly highlight the main cultural changes in the Muslim world that occurred in the period from the 7th to 10th centuries. These changes enabled the encounter of philosophers from the Muslim world with the major works of Greek philosophers. These developments

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[3] For the influence of Maimonides on Aquinas' reception of philosophy in the Muslim world, see Burrell (1989); on Aquinas' relative indifference to the religious background of his interlocutors, see Burrell (2004).

formed the intellectual context in which this body of knowledge became the cornerstone of the philosophical tradition in the Muslim world. The special importance of these changes is reflected in the fact that they enabled the translation of Greek philosophical texts into Arabic (Gutas 1998), and consequently the later reception of Aristotle's philosophy.

In the second chapter of the paper, we will present the basic characteristics of the nature of Aristotle's influence on the development of philosophy in the Muslim world. Then, using specific examples from the works of key figures of this philosophical tradition, we will explore how Aristotle's philosophy was reinterpreted and integrated into the philosophical systems of these thinkers. The main goal of this chapter is to show that philosophers such as al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Rushd, and Maimonides did not just passively adopt Aristotle's ideas. Rather, they sought to question and develop them, and as such, to integrate them into their philosophical frameworks. There, the Aristotelian legacy would become one of the starting points in forming the worldviews on key philosophical issues.

In order to clearly highlight the contributions and influence of these reinterpretations of Aristotle's philosophy on the development of scholastic thought, further in the second chapter of the paper we will try to identify the main features of their encounter. As we said, scholastic philosophers such as Thomas Aquinas became familiar with Aristotle through the translations of his treatises into Latin. Another source is through the Latin translations of parts of his treatises that were an integral part of the commentaries composed by philosophers from the Muslim world. However, we want to point out here that aforementioned restructured interpretation of Aristotle through the Latin translations of original treatises written by philosophers from the Muslim world played an equally important role in the scholastic understanding of Aristotle, and consequently for the development of scholastic philosophy from the 12th century onwards.

THE LATE ANTIQUE MEDITERRANEAN AS CULTURAL AND INTELLECTUAL BACKGROUND FOR THE TRANSMISSION OF ARISTOTELIAN PHILOSOPHY TO THE MUSLIM WORLD

A complete understanding of the development of philosophy in the Muslim world during the Middle Ages, in addition to knowledge of its sometimes overly complex content, also requires an appreciation of the origins of the Mediterranean culture. Related to this, there is also a comprehensive historical reflection on the cultural background and role of the Mediterranean in Late Antiquity as a unifying principle of culture (Stroumsa 2009). In this context, several important circumstances should be pointed out that ensured this Mediterranean unity, as

well as the continuity of Greek philosophy. Consequently, these circumstances shaped a broader cultural dimension that would enable unhindered transmission of Greek philosophy to the Muslim world. Namely, in Late Antiquity in the Mediterranean, the Greek language was the language of science and philosophy. A strong tradition of commentary still existed, especially in Alexandria, then the unimpeded circulation of books and the mobility of scholars, along with other important features such as the role of Syriac Christian communities in the interpretation and transfer of knowledge and ideas. The Mediterranean of that time can be viewed as a unique cultural space in light of these factors that connected its different areas. Alongside numerous important cultural changes brought about by the emergence of a new religion and civilization, it was precisely such circumstances that created the preconditions for philosophy in the Muslim world to be strongly shaped through encounters with philosophical tradition inherited from the ancient Greek philosophers. As a direct consequence of the unity of the Mediterranean, these prerequisites implied the existence of cultural and educational institutions, the unquestionable authority of Greek philosophy and science, bilingual scholars, and the largely preserved corpus of Aristotle (particularly his writings on logic).

That this is not a case of discontinuity in Greek philosophy is evidenced by the existence of contemporary centres of science and philosophy within the unique cultural space of the Mediterranean, such as Alexandria, Constantinople, and Athens. Of course, one should take into account the turbulent political, and certainly cultural and religious circumstances that would mark the period of Late Antiquity in the Mediterranean area. Nevertheless, these centres played a crucial role in preserving philosophical texts and promoting the Greek philosophical tradition, notably through the development of commentary as a medium for the expression of new philosophical ideas, which later became a common form of writing in the Muslim intellectual tradition (Leaman 2005). All of this contributed to the emergence of new and diverse schools of philosophical thought.

In addition, it is important to highlight two further significant aspects that would later become important features in the development of philosophy in the Muslim world. In Late Antiquity, there was a philosophical pattern that traces its roots back to Philo of Alexandria, and which was later expressed in the works of philosophers such as Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, especially in *The Divine Names* (Pseudo-Dionysius, *De divinis nominibus*). This undertaking was grounded on the premise of the ultimate unity of truth that required a certain harmonization of theological and philosophical discourse, an issue that would pose a challenge for certain philosophers in the Muslim world. In some reflections by philosophers from the Muslim world, particularly in discussions concerning the relationship between religion and philosophy, this Late Antique context was reinterpreted as the idea of two paths to the one and the same truth (Alfarabius,

Kitāb al-Ḥūruf, Kitāb al-Mīllā, *Kitāb al-madina al-fāḍila*; Avicenna, *Kitāb al--išārāt wa-t-tanbīhāt, Liber de philosophia prima*). Ibn Rushd would particularly develop this issue later (Averroes, *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*, *Kitāb faṣl al-maqāl*). Also, these reinterpretations will be explained in detail in the subsequent chapter of this paper. Another important aspect concerns the aforementioned commentarial tradition on Aristotle's philosophy, expressed in the works of Late Antique philosophers, particularly in those of Alexander of Aphrodisiensis, Themistius, Ammonius, Porphyrius, Simplicius, Boethius, and others. In addition to systematizing and producing comprehensive commentaries on Aristotle's major works, these philosophers also reinterpreted key aspects of his philosophy. Naturally, this was done in accordance with the cultural and spiritual circumstances of the time in which they lived, as well with their own intellectual interests. Their perspective on Aristotle became the dominant paradigm for understanding his philosophy in Late Antiquity. At the same time, it would actually become the main philosophical trend of the period, which today would quite correctly be called the philosophy of commentators (Sorabji 2004).

Over time, parts of Aristotle's corpus as well as the ideas related to the tradition of philosophical commentary became a central issue for Syriac--Christian thinkers. They played a particularly important role in ensuring the continuity of Greek philosophy and its later encounter with the Muslim world. Certainly, the most significant, but not the only channel of transmission of ancient philosophy to the Muslim world was from Alexandria to Baghdad. However, recent research shows that it was a far more complex process that involved different regions, cultures and languages (Rudolph 2017, 51–52). Syriac Christian communities played a particularly important role in this transmission of Greek philosophy. This included Jacobite, Nestorian and Maronite authors such as Sergius of Resh'aina, Severus Sebokht, Athanasius II of Balad, Jacob of Edessa, George – Bishop of the Arabs, Theodore bar Konai, Silvanus of Qardu, Enanisho, Theophilius of Edessa, and others (Daiber 2017).

Equally important were their intellectual centres, where the monastery of Qenneshrin, the School of Nisibis, and the School of Edessa should be singled out in terms of their significance for the Syriac speaking world. Translations, commentaries, and adaptations in Syriac clearly represent a strong interest in Aristotle's logic and ontology, particularly in the Organon and Porphyrius' *Isagoge* (Daiber 2017, 77). In addition, in the context of the transmission of Greek ideas and the later development of philosophy in the Muslim world, it is also important to mention several further intellectual characteristics of the broader Syriac intellectual tradition of the time. Namely, this was a bilingual intellectual community that adopted and cultivated the Late Antique model of teaching and engaging in philosophy. Equally important was their perception of their own continuous historical role in preserving the ancient tradition. It reflects a strong

awareness of their mission as bearers of historical knowledge and their task of transmitting and spreading this knowledge further (Brock 1982). It was precisely these elements of the Syriac intellectual heritage, together with the translation activity into Arabic that strongly influenced and shaped the cultural conditions of early Islamic civilization, and therefore the further development of philosophy in the Muslim world.

These changes in the Muslim world primarily enabled philosophers such as al-Kindi, al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā and later Ibn Rushd to come into contact with the writings of Greek philosophers. They then strongly influenced the formation of the main philosophical ideas and problems within philosophy in the Muslim world, as well as the development of perspectives on its various fields and disciplines. Thus, the focus of philosophical reflections was, among other things, the role and significance of logic, the doctrine of the soul and the active intellect, metaphysical problems such as the relationship between essence and existence, the concept of perfection, the relationship between philosophy and religion, various ethical theories, as well as questions in political philosophy, and so on.

Like their Syrian predecessors, from whom they inherited the importance of the perception of unique and own contribution to the development of culture and science, Muslims also strengthened the awareness that their civilization represented a continuation of earlier civilizations. In this regard, it should be noted that Muslims did not yet possess a fully developed intellectual tradition upon which they could draw in fulfilling the prescriptions of the Qur'an (al-'Alaq 96: 1). Therefore, alongside this growing awareness of their own significance, they also developed the idea that all sciences originate from a single universal source (Yuccesoy 2009). This is important for two reasons. First, these assumptions enabled them to more easily accept, justify, and appropriate knowledge produced by other cultures and civilizations. This applies in particular to Greek philosophy. On the other hand, such a context also served as an incentive for the early Muslim community, which took upon itself the mission of seeking out, collecting, and translating into Arabic all the previous knowledge from other civilizations. These processes opened the way for the subsequent development of science and philosophy in the Muslim world.

In this regard, it is important to highlight another significant cultural change that took place during this period, namely the role of the Arabic language as a universal means of communication within the Muslim world (Gutas, 1998, 11–34). Without this change, the comprehensive development of science and philosophy, as well as the cultural exchange and transfer of ideas, particularly from the Greco-Syriac cultural sphere, would have been inconceivable (Gutas 1998, 107–20). In contrast to the spread of Islam, which proceeded gradually and slowly, the acceptance of the Arabic language in the conquered regions was much faster.

Arabic thus became not only the official language of the empire but also the language of science, thus forming the conditions for scholars who were not Muslims or Arabs to begin communicating and writing in Arabic.

Certainly, the greatest cultural change was the emergence of a general interest in ancient knowledge. This intellectual curiosity was closely connected to the belief among the major philosophers in the Muslim world that faith and reason are in harmony, as are science and intellectual tradition of previous civilizations. It was precisely due to this cultural change that the process of translating Greek philosophical texts into Arabic began, which enabled philosophers from the Muslim world to come into contact with the ideas of Greek philosophers, especially with the most important works of Aristotle, which for the majority of philosophers in the Muslim world represented the pinnacle of ancient philosophy. Given the very continuity of the study of philosophy among the philosophers from the Muslim world, there was an imperative to translate, comment on and systematically explain these works. This translation activity thus constituted the first major encounter with Greek philosophy. These works were translated primarily from Syriac into Arabic, with Nestorian and Jacobite scholars as the main agents of this process. As previously noted, many of these texts had already been translated from Greek into Syriac before the rise of Islam (Brock 1982; Rudolph 2017). This earlier phase of translation, which took place from the 4th to the 8th centuries CE was a direct consequence of the assimilation of philosophy that occurred in Syria. It was precisely this rich tradition of translation that laid the foundation for the later Arabic translation activity (D'Ancona 2022). The process of the translation in the Muslim world lasted for about two centuries, and it is therefore possible to distinguish several periods. Cristina D'Ancona (2022) offered a detailed and acceptable periodization: the early translations of Greek literature; the translators associated with al-Kindi and the House of Wisdom; the school of Hunayn ibn Ishaq and Ishaq ibn Hunayn; and the last phase of translation, the Baghdad Aristotelians, whose most prominent representative was Abu Bishr Mātta ibn Yūnus. Apart from the fact that these translations enabled the most important philosophers in the Muslim world to become familiar with the richness of Greek philosophy, they also made it possible to approach Aristotle's philosophy as a systematic whole. As a consequence, the major philosophers in the Muslim world sought to present their own ideas in the form of a coherent philosophical system, at the center of which stood Aristotle and the reinterpretation of his philosophy.

REINTERPRETATIONS OF ARISTOTELIAN PHILOSOPHY IN THE MUSLIM WORLD AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON SCHOLASTIC THOUGHT

The most significant philosophers in the Muslim world begin from the assumption that Aristotle is the highest authority in philosophy. Their engagement with his philosophy is multi-layered and is not always determined by a direct encounter with his original works. Rather, their reinterpretations are shaped by both the Aristotelian corpus itself and its Late Antique transformations, which had to a great extent already systematized and transformed major aspects of his philosophy.[4] Depending on their philosophical interests, these philosophers navigated between these two different levels of engagement with Aristotle, thus becoming deeply aware of the transformed character of Aristotelian thought. Consequently, their philosophical contributions show that they were neither mere transmitters nor blind followers of Aristotle's ideas. On the contrary, they indicate that their genuine aim was the development of their own original philosophical doctrines and projects through a systematic appropriation and further development and transformation of Aristotelian philosophy within a completely new intellectual and cultural framework. Numerous or rather almost all aspects of Aristotle's philosophy were the focus of reflection and reinterpretation undertaken by philosophers in the Muslim world. Naturally, it is impossible to examine here all aspects of this complex engagement. Nor is it our intention to single out the particular importance of any one of these aspects within the broader development of philosophy in the Muslim world. Rather, the present analysis focuses on those themes, aspects, concepts and problems that most effectively illustrate the reinterpretation and transformation of Aristotelian philosophy in the Muslim world. Altogether, these issues are particularly significant insofar as they would subsequently exert a strong influence on the development of scholastic philosophy, especially on its principal representative, Thomas Aquinas.

The development of logic among philosophers in the Muslim world primarily begins with the encounter with Aristotle's logical works, i.e. with the translation of the Organon into Arabic. In the case of logic too, this encounter was not solely determined by the direct reception of Aristotle's doctrines, but was also mediated by the Late Antique commentary tradition which had already, to a great extent, attempted to systematize Aristotle's logic (Ibrulj 2023). al-Fārābī would emerge as a key figure for logic within philosophy in the Muslim world. In addition to the importance of his own logical works, as well as his influential commentaries on Aristotle's logical works, he tried to redefine the function of logic as it was

[4] On the Late Antique reinterpretations of the Aristotelian philosophy and the role of commentary tradition, see Sorabji (2004).

shaped within Aristotelian framework.[5] In the *Enumeration of the Sciences*, his best-known work in the Latin West, al-Fārābī adopts from Aristotle the conception of logic as a tool that enables us to attain truth and to identify possible errors (Alfarabius *De scientiis*, 53). However, he transforms this Aristotelian conception by understanding the laws of logic as the framework of all intelligibles, which suggests that in his system logic can be interpreted as a foundational discipline. Logic does not merely instruct us how to attain reliable knowledge, but also implies that reliable knowledge is possible only on the basis of logic, since it belongs to the very domain of thought and provides the laws that structure thinking itself. Moreover, al-Fārābī clearly situates logic within the context of all scientific disciplines, thereby granting it not only a propedeutic function and the role of a tool for other sciences, but also a foundational status (Alfarabius, *De scientiis*, 53–74). This attempt which elevates logic to the level of a fundamental discipline is also seen in the fact that it considers the relationship of logic to thought and concepts to be analogous to the relationship of grammar to language and words. Grammar in this case is not just a tool for speech but also structures language. So, on the other hand, this suggests that logic is not just a tool to help us to attain the truth but actually provides the structure of thought itself (Alfarabius *De scientiis*, 55). Going beyond the earlier framework, al-Fārābī maintains that the laws of logic are not exclusively related to inference, which serve to guide us toward reliable knowledge in various scientific disciplines. Rather, these are laws by means of which concepts are tested and examined, and consequently, any valid act of thinking must conform to these logical laws. Thus, the laws of logic structure knowledge itself.

This transformed conception of logic is further developed systematically by al-Fārābī in his works such as the *Book of Letters* and the *Book of Religion*, where, within a broader framework, logic connects language, thought and being, and extends its application to religion, particularly in relation to philosophy (Alfarabius, *Kitāb al-Ḥūruf, Kitāb al-Mīllā*). In his *Metaphysics*, especially in sections devoted to explanation of what is the subject of metaphysics and through the parts discussing the necessary being, Ibn Sīnā applies the main logical principles and fully adopts, elaborates and deepens al-Fārābī's use of logic (Avicenna, *Liber de philosophia prima*, I. 1–13, 29–38). Here it is important to highlight two facts regarding the understanding of logic and its status. First, Ibn Sīnā

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[5] Following Aristotle's notion that "when it comes to knowledge and the wisdom that comes from philospohy, being able to discern – or already having to discern – the consequences of either assumption is no small instrument: for it remains to choose one or the other of these rightly" (Aristoteles, *Top.*, VIII. 163b 9–12), the Aristotelians see logic as organon. For notion that logic is an organon, and for disccussion concerning whether logic is a part or an instrument of philosophy see Sorabji (2004, 32–33).

adopts and applies al-Fārābī's insights into logic, but for him it does not have the status of a fundamental discipline as it did for al-Fārābī, i.e. in the sense of structuring knowledge. And second, although it has this role for al-Fārābī, in the context of the classification of sciences, logic does not occupy the highest hierarchical position. For both philosophers, that place is reserved for metaphysics (Alfarabius *De scientiis*, 99–101; *Maqāla fī agrād*, 79; Avicenna, *Liber de philosophia prima*, I. 2, § 16-20). Later, this reinterpretation continues through Maimonides,[6] *The Guide for the Perplexed*[7] and Averroes works on logic.[8] This reinterpreted Aristotelian logic, largely through the Latin translations of the works of these philosophers,[9] would go on to influence scholastic thought and become an integral part of its central philosophical and theological argumentation. This idea of logic is particularly evident in the works of Thomas Aquinas such as his *Commentary on the Posterior Analytics of Aristotle* where logic is conceived as *ars artium* (Thomas Aquinas, *In Post. Anal.*, *Proem.*). Furthermore, starting from al-Fārābī, and then through Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Rushd and Maimonides, logic come to serve as the framework through which science is understand as hierarchically and logically structered demonstrative knowledge. This reinterpreted Aristotelian logic is also evident in Thomas Aquinas when he speaks of the scientific status of sacred doctrine (*STh*, I, q. 1, a. 2) and later when he considers the role of arguments it uses (*STh*, I, q. 1, a. 8). Thus, in Thomas Aquinas, this provides conceptual background according to which it is possible to understand his account about the demonstrative structure of sacred doctrine which is based on the principles of divine revelation. On the other hand, Thomas Aquinas nowhere explicitly states that logic is a foundational discipline and attempts to formally follow Aristotelian tradition in considering logic as a tool while metaphysics occupies the highest place. However, his demonstrations are systematically structured, syllogistic and necessarily connected, which implies that knowledge in this context appears as logically structured. Therefore, logic is not merely an organon by which reliable knowledge is attained, but rather constitutes the structure of demonstration itself. Likewise, the works of Aquinas

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6 Maimonides particularly emphasized the importance of studying al-Fārābī's logical works, as well as their excellence (see Maimonides 1872). In general, about the influence of al-Fārābī on the formation of Maimonides' philosophy see Berman (1974) and Sušić (2017).

7 For a detailed exposition of the importance of logic in the understanding of sturcture and content of *The Guide of the Perplexed*, see Fox (1990, 3–90).

8 On Ibn Rushd works on logic, see Thom (2019, 81–95).

9 A comprehensive overview of the Latin translations of the works of philosophers from the Muslim world is provided in Burnett (2005, 370–404); particularly, see the table at the end of the chapter. On the influence, study and reception of philosophical works from the Muslim world in the Latin West, including their translation into Latin, see Madkur (1987, 107–43). On the same issue, including the translators of the arabic philosophical texts, see Daiber (2008, 127–200).

show that the laws of logic, to which all thinking must conform in order to be valid, provide the framework for knowledge in metaphysics and theology.

Another important example that clearly demonstrates the transformation of Aristotle's philosophy in the Muslim world, as well as its particularly significant influence on scholastic thought, especially on Thomas Aquinas, is Avicenna's distinction between essence and existence. Although Aristotle never explicitly introduced such a distinction in his *Metaphysics*, his reflections on substance, essence, necessity and the First Cause provide the conceptual framework from which Avicenna developed a highly influential doctrine concerning the difference between essence and existence (Aristoteles, *Metaph.*, 1029b–1032a; 1072b). In considering this distinction between essence and existence, Ibn Sina seeks to explain the metaphysical status of these key concepts. Namely, in order to explain this issue, i.e. the relation between essence and existence, he does that by distinguishing between the First, whose being is necessary in itself and is therefore designated as the Necessary Existent, and possible existents. For Ibn Sina: "The essence of the First is nothing other than its existence" (Avicenna, *Liber de philosophia prima*, VIII. 4, § 3). In contrast to that, in the case of possible existents, their essence does not include existence in itself, and therefore, their existence requires a cause external to themselves (Avicenna, *Liber de philosophia prima*, I. 6, § 4–6). It should be pointed out that this Avicenna's distinction between essence and existence will later recieve a new important formulation in the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas. At the same time, this example shows how the reinterpretation of the Aristotelian philosophical tradition in the Muslim world actually became the starting material and background for the further development of Medieval philosophy in the West. Although the influence of Avicenna's distinction between essence and existence on Thomas Aquinas is evident, Aquinas did not accept Avicenna's ideas literally, but systematically adapted them to his own metaphysical intentions. It can be said that the essential diference between the two great philosophers regarding this issue lies in the fact that Aquinas reinterpreted Avicenna's distinction in order to explain the difference between God and created beings and metaphysical structure of the realtion between them. Aquinas will further develop this distinction within his own metaphysical reflections in a way that he interprets esse as the act of being. This position of Thomas Aquinas is particularly evident in his well-known work *De ente et essentia* where, in the context above, he argues that in created beings essence and *esse* are distinct (Thomas Aquinas, *De ente et essentia*, cap. IV), while in God, essence and esse are indentical (Thomas Aquinas, *De ente et essentia*, cap. V. § 26; *STh*, I, q. 3, a. 4).[10]

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[10] This point particularly shows the extent to which Thomas Aquinas drew upon Avicenna's metaphysical reflections on the distinction between essence and existence and reinterpreting them

Apart from logic and distinction between essence and existence, another important topic from the philosophy in the Muslim world that had particular resonance in scholastic thought is the understanding of the relationship between philosophy and religion. This is not a topic taken directly from Aristotle and it is quite clear that Aristotle does not address this issue in his works. However, it is also evident that Aristotle systematically reflects on the concept of truth, emphasizing the importance of its grounding in demonstrative knowledge (Aristoteles, *An. post*. I. 2, 71b9–12). It was in the Late Antiquity that this epistemological dimension of his philosophy was brought into harmony with Neoplatonic metaphysics. Consequently, the well-known harmonisation of Plato and Aristotle began to systematically develop (Sorabji 2004, 2–17, 37–40). The idea of a single truth emerged from this process, i.e. the view that different philosophical doctrines are merely reflections of the same truth or, conversely, just divergent paths leading to it. This reinterpretative framework and understanding of Aristotelian thought is exactly what philosophers in the Muslim world adopt and systematically transform. Within the context of their understanding of this topic, it is possible to identify two points of departure. First, they proceed from the harmonization between Plato and Aristotle in order to demonstrate that there is no contradiction between them: "So I want to embark in this treatise of mine upon a harmonization of the two opinions of both of them and an explanation of what the tenor of their arguments signifies in order to make the agreement between the beliefs of both apparent to remove doubt and suspicion from the hearts of those who look into their books, and to explain the places of uncertainty and the sources of doubt in their treatises" (Alfarabius, '*Kitāb al-Jam' bayn Ra'yay al-Hakīmayn*, 1. 1b).[11] This also implies the assumption that truth is one and that Plato and Aristotle speak about the same philosophy which means for other major philosophers from the Muslim world that there is no disagreement about fundamentals between them: "So let it be clear to you that, in what they presented, their purpose is the same, and that they intended to offer one and the same philosophy" (Alfarabius, *Tahṣil al-sā'dah*, II. 64. 10).[12]

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according to his own metaphysical project: "First, whatever a thing has besides its essence must be caused either by the constituent principles of that essence […] or by some exterior agent, – as heat is caused in water by fire. Therefore, if existence of a thing differes from its essennce, this existence must be caused either by exterior agent or by its essential principles […] Therefore that thing, whose existence differs from its essence, must have its existence caused by another. But this cannot be true of God; because we call God the firs efficent cause. Therefore, it is impossible that in God His existence should differ from His essence" (*STh*, I, q. 3, a. 4).

[11] For more details about the importance of this treatise and al-Fārābī's arguments on the harmonization of the two philosophies, see Najjar (2004, 29–44).

[12] Majid Fakhry argues that al-Fārābī's attempt to harmonize the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle should be viewed against the background of the Neoplatonic tradition, as exemplified in the works of Porphyrius, Simplicius, Syrianus and Damascius, whose interpretations of Aristotle

At another level, they seek to extend this reinterpretative framework by taking into account the importance of revelation. Aristotle represents for them the main authority in philosophy, i.e. the pinnacle of the philosophical path to truth. So, through their philosophical efforts they sought to reconcile Aristotelian philosophy with the fundamental principles of their own religion and the revealed truth.

In terms of this theme, this elevation of harmonization represents a turning point in their reinterpretation, thus demonstrating that religion and philosophy are in harmony insofar as there is a single ontological truth (Averroes, *Kitāb faṣl al-maqāl*, 79), although the paths through which that truth is attained are formally different. Such endeavours could not proceed without certain demands and implications. Primarily, this attempt to show the compatibility of Aristotelian philosophy with the revealed religion required a kind of revision and modification of ancient philosophy, as well as a rational interpretation of religion. With regard to the implications of this reinterpretation of Aristotelian thought, shaped within the framework of Late Antiquity, and in order to fully understand the genesis of the issue concerning the relationship between philosophy and religion, as well as its later influence on scholastic reinterpretations, it is necessary to highlight several important points. First, philosophers in the Muslim world generally did not aim to question the truth of religion in their works, nor did they try to deny its validity, whether in the case of Judaism, Christianity, or Islam. On the other hand, with respect to their views on philosophy, it is evident from their entire intellectual corpus that philosophy should be seen as unified, since the truth towards which it strives is likewise one. According to these premises, philosophers such as al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Rushd and Maimonides maintain that religion, like philosophy, is universal and directed toward the same goal, but in a different manner. From this, it would be incorrect to conclude that religion and philosophy arrive at different and ultimately contradictory truths. Exactly, on the basis of this error, the context of their alleged conflict could be established in the sense of double truth theory.

In addition, the relationship between philosophy and religion, for whatever underlying motives, is by no means the central problem of philosophy in the Muslim world. Rather, these thinkers, within the scope of their philosophical reflections, demonstrate an almost equal interest in all major philosophical problems and disciplines. Therefore, what primarily concerns them is philosophy as such, rather than exclusive focus on uncovering the essence of the relationship between religion and philosophy. This does not mean that this issue is insignificant. On the contrary, there are two levels in which its importance is reflected. The first dimension pertains to the role of prophecy and revelation, which are connected with the attainment of perfection. The significance of this theme is

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sought to remove elements that differed from Plato and that could threaten the unity of Greek philospohy as they understood it, see Fakhry (1965, 471–72).

particularly evident in the most important works of al-Fārābī and Maimonides (Alfarabius, *Kitāb al-madina al-fāḍila*, V, 17, 1–6*;* Maimonides, *Dux neutrorum*, III. 51–54).

The second, and more widely known perspective of understanding this relationship is characteristic of Ibn Rushd. Ibn Rushd devoted special attention to this problem in his most famous work *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut.* This work represents a systematic defence of Aristotle's philosophy in the version in which had been reinterpreted within the framework of the philosophical tradition in the Muslim world. In addition, the main reason for the writing of this work can be found in Ibn Rushd's intention to respond to al-Ġhazālī's critique of the main ideas of *falāsifa* presented in his famous work *Tahāfut al-Falāsifa* (Averroes, *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*; Algazel, *Tahāfut al-Falāsifa). Al-* Ġhazālī's critique is primarily focused on three theses advocated by Peripatetics from the Muslim world. Namely it is about the idea of the eternity of the world, the claim that God knows only universals, and the thesis that deny body resurrection (Algazel, *Tahāfut al-Falāsifa*, discussion 1, 81–122; discussion 13, 229–39; discussion 20, 309–29). In order to defend and justify the role of revelation, divine miracles and prophecy, al- Ġhazālī considered it neccesary to refute the key points of the Aristotelian philosophical heritage as it had been developed by Peripatetics in the Muslim world. Particularly interesting in this context is his critque of the doctrine of the neccesary connection between cause and effect. By rejecting this, al- Ġhazālī manage to establish conceptual framework that is capable to accommodate divine intervention through the miracles and revelation (Algazel, *Tahāfut al-Falāsifa*, discussion 17, 264–76). Although he was a prominent philosopher, Ibn Rushd was at the same time one of the most important jurists in the history of Islam. Therefore, raising the question of whether it is permissible, from the standpoint of the Shariʿa, to practice and engage in philosophy freely (Averroes, *Kitāb faṣl al-maqāl*, 69), he interprets the relationship between religion and philosophy primarily in the context of law. In his considerations, Ibn Rushd concludes that there are no legal obstacles in the practice of philosophy (Averroes, *Kitāb faṣl al-maqāl*, 117–18). These conclusions are derived from his interpretation of legal norms grounded in the Shariʿa.

Owing primarily to the Latin translations of Averroes' commentaries on Aristotle's philosophy, whose works had already become an integral part of the curriculum at the Universities of Paris and Toulouse by 1255, this topic, through its specific reception, came to exert a significant influence on scholastic thought. In fact, the development of the rearticulation of this topic within scholasticism is twofold. On the one hand, its reception is associated with Latin Averroism, i.e. with thinkers such as Siger of Brabant and Boethius of Dacia. Both were lecturers in Paris in the thirteenth century. However, in 1270 a ban and condemnation of Averroists' theses took place, which would be further expanded

seven years later (Gilson 1955, 403–6; Wippel 2002, 65–72). It is precisely within the context of these condemnations that controversial thesis about the double truth will be found. It arises from the view that certain philosophical positions attributed to the Averroists could be considered correct within philosophy, but not in accordance with the truth of faith (Wippel 2002, 68). Following these condemnations from 1270 and 1277, and due to the mention of the name of Siger of Brabant in the condemnation document itself, later interpretations attributed the doctrine of double truth to these thinkers. Nevertheless, recent studies in the history of philosophy largely agree that the aforementioned philosophers did not advocate a doctrine of double truth in their own works and that such a position was actually wrongly ascribed to them as a result of the condemnations itself (Bazán 2002, 228–29), as well as subsequent theological and philosophical debates and interpretations. Rather, it is a misinterpretation of their epistemological approach, which is actually respectful of Christian faith, and in the case of Boethius' notion of human perfection, his position is in fact compatible with Christian belief (Bazán 2002, 229–30; Šadić and Jašić 2019, 49–50).

Furthermore, with the regard to the influence of this topic concerning the relationship between religion and philosophy on scholastic philosophy, Thomas Aquinas emerges in opposition to the Latin Averroists. In this context, Aquinas' doctrine can be understood as a response to their ideas, which strongly refer to the autonomy of philosophy and have therefore, as noted above, been associated with the origin of the theory of double truth. By contrast, Thomas Aquinas adopts an integrative approach, i.e. advocating the unity of truth grounded in a single metaphysical principle: "Whence it follows not only that is truth in Him, but that He is truth itself, and the sovereign and first truth" (*STh*, I, q. 16, a. 5). In this context, Aquinas is closer to the philosophers from the Muslim world, since he shares with them the same position regarding the unity of truth. In another work, he offers a detailed critique of Latin Averroism, in which even Averroes himself is not exempt, particularly in relation to the doctrine of the unity of intellect: "For a long time now there has been spreading among many people an error concerning the intellect, arising from the words of Averroes. He tries to assert that the intellect that Aristotle calls the possible intellect, but he himself calls by the unsuitable name "material" is a substance separate in its being from the body and not united to it in some way as its form, and furthermore that this possible intellect is one for all men" (Thomas Aquinas, *De unit. intel*., c. I). This criticism reflects Aquinas's fundamental preoccupation, which was essentially determined by the cultural and spiritual context of the time. Namely, he sought to critically evaluate and correct, on a purely speculative level, numerous errors of philosophers and theologians from the Muslim world, such as Avicenna, Averroes, Algazel and others, and to rationally articulate the fundamental principles of the Christian faith (Silajdžić 2003, 109).

CONCLUSION

First, it is necessary to view the Mediterranean as a single whole in which there was interconnection and interdependence of different parts. Throughout history, a geographical and cultural area is often perceived primarily as a political space, but the Mediterranean region symbolizes openness in the sense that it should be understood primarily as an area for the exchange of cultural values, and in the context of this work, especially as an area for the existence of various philosophical ideas and doctrines. Unfortunately, today, this perception of the role of the Mediterranean in the Middle Ages is mostly ignored in the historical development of philosophy. Consequently, we can assume that some philosophical ideas or even entire philosophical epochs are considered inherently authentic, and therefore more valuable than other philosophical traditions that are, at best, inauthentic. Given that the human being is a contextual being, it was necessary in this analysis to point out the new cultural and civilizational circumstances that shape it. Accordingly, it is clear that the reinterpretations of the Aristotelian tradition in the works of philosophers of the Muslim world were strongly determined by these demands.

In this analysis we have examined and identified only a few examples of the reinterpretation of philosophical doctrines by thinkers who belonged to different traditions and whose works were shaped by entirely distinct cultural, spiritual and historical factors. Nevertheless, we have shown that they were equally orientated toward the Aristotelian tradition, whose key problems and principles they sought to explain and reinterpret, and in a certain way bring to completion within their own works. What is their relevance? These are philosophers who lived in the Middle Ages. However, their contribution and relevance are reflected through their need to fully comprehend the essence of the main philosophical questions and problems. Such efforts necessarily presupposed the acceptance and appreciation of available philosophical sources, regardless of their cultural and civilizational background. In addition to understanding reinterpretations and their influence on scholastic thought within the framework of topics concerning logic and the relationship between philosophy and religion, it is also important to single out the problem of the relationship between essence and existence as one of the key points of originality of philosophy in the Muslim world.

Finally, it is wrong to conclude that philosophers such as Thomas Aquinas literally took over and took out of context the ideas of his predecessors, and thus transferred them to the Christian world of that time, which was determined by completely different cultural and political circumstances. It can be said that he inherited and systematically responded to the ideas of philosophers from the Muslim world, adhering, what should be again emphasized, to the same approach that these philosophers had in their own encounter with the richness of Greek philosophy. What was the purpose of this? In this way, to a certain extent, if at all

possible, they tried to go beyond their ancient predecessors. The even greater importance of this encounter and dialogue between Thomas Aquinas and his predecessors from the Muslim world is that it created the conditions for the development of the exchange of philosophical and theological ideas between Christians, Jews and Muslims which had particular implications for the development of European cultural history to this day.

REINTERPRETACJA ARYSTOTELESA W ŚWIECIE MUZUŁMAŃSKIM: FILOZOFICZNY WKŁAD W ROZWÓJ MYŚLI SCHOLASTYCZNEJ

Abstrakt

W niniejszym artykule pragniemy wykazać, że filozofowie świata muzułmańskiego w średniowieczu nie byli jedynie pośrednikami w przekazywaniu filozofii Arystotelesa na Zachód, ale aktywnie i twórczo zmagali się z jego ideami. Filozofowie tacy jak al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Ibn Rushd i Majmonides dokonali reinterpretacji Arystotelesa w oparciu o własny kontekst kulturowy i religijny, tworząc w ten sposób nowe systemy filozoficzne. W artykule dowodzimy, że oprócz łacińskich tłumaczeń dzieł Arystotelesa, te reinterpretacje – obejmujące zarówno akceptację, jak i przekształcenie jego filozofii – wywarły silny wpływ na rozwój myśli scholastycznej. Artykuł analizuje również rolę regionu śródziemnomorskiego jako przestrzeni dialogu międzykulturowego, a także proces tłumaczenia traktatów filozoficznych na język arabski. Skupiamy się również na analizie konkretnych przykładów reinterpretacji Arystotelesa w ramach filozofii świata islamskiego. Na koniec pokazujemy, w jaki sposób te reinterpretacje wpłynęły na rozwój myśli scholastycznej, zwłaszcza filozofii św. Tomasza z Akwinu. Artykuł ma również na celu podkreślenie, w jaki sposób świat muzułmański wniósł filozoficzny wkład w rozwój filozofii scholastycznej, a nie pełnił jedynie roli kanału jej przekazywania.

S ł o w a k l u c z o w e: Arystoteles, filozofia w świecie muzułmańskim, filozofia scholastyczna, region śródziemnomorski, Tomasz z Akwinu, Alfarabius, Awicenna, Majmonides, Awerroes.

REINTERPRETING ARISTOTLE IN THE MUSLIM WORLD: PHILOSOPHICAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOLASTIC THOUGHT

Abstract

In this paper, we want to show that philosophers from the Muslim world in the Middle Ages were not only intermediaries in the transfer of Aristotle's philosophy to the West, but were also actively and creatively engaged with his ideas. Philosophers such as al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Rushd and Maimonides reinterpreted Aristotle according to their own cultural

and religious context, thereby developing new philosophical systems. The paper argues that, in addition to Latin translations of Aristotle, these reinterpretations, which included the acceptance and transformation of Aristotle's philosophy, strongly influenced the development of scholastic thought. The paper also explores the role of the Mediterranean as an area of intercultural dialogue, as well as the process of translating philosophical treatises into Arabic. The focus is also on the analysis of concrete examples of the reinterpretation of Aristotle within the framework of philosophy in the Muslim world. Finally, we show how these reinterpretations influenced the development of scholastic thought, especially the philosophy of Saint Thomas Aquinas. Namely, the paper also aims to emphasize how the Muslim world made a philosophically shaped contribution to the development of scholastic philosophy, and did not just serve as its transmission channel.

K e y w o r d s : Aristotle, philosophy in the Muslim world, scholastic philosophy, Mediterranean, Thomas Aquinas, al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, Maimonides, Ibn Rushd.

DIE NEUINTERPRETATION VON ARISTOTELES IN DER MUSLIMISCHEN WELT: PHILOSOPHISCHER BEITRAG ZUR ENTWICKLUNG DES SCHOLASTISCHEN DENKENS

Abstrakt

In diesem Beitrag möchten wir aufzeigen, dass die Philosophen der muslimischen Welt im Mittelalter nicht nur Vermittler bei der Übertragung von Aristoteles' Philosophie in den Westen waren, sondern sich aktiv und kreativ mit seinen Ideen auseinandersetzten. Philosophen wie al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Ibn Rushd und Maimonides interpretierten Aristoteles entsprechend ihrem eigenen kulturellen und religiösen Kontext neu und entwikkelten dadurch neue philosophische Systeme. Der Beitrag argumentiert, dass neben den lateinischen Übersetzungen von Aristoteles diese Neuinterpretationen, die die Aneignung und Umgestaltung von Aristoteles' Philosophie beinhalteten, die Entwicklung des scholastischen Denkens stark beeinflussten. Der Beitrag untersucht zudem die Rolle des Mittelmeerraums als Raum des interkulturellen Dialogs sowie den Prozess der Übersetzung philosophischer Abhandlungen ins Arabische. Ein weiterer Schwerpunkt liegt auf der Analyse konkreter Beispiele für die Neuinterpretation von Aristoteles im Rahmen der Philosophie der islamischen Welt. Schließlich zeigen wir auf, wie diese Neuinterpretationen die Entwicklung des scholastischen Denkens beeinflussten, insbesondere die Philosophie des heiligen Thomas von Aquin. Der Beitrag zielt nämlich auch darauf ab, hervorzuheben, wie die muslimische Welt einen philosophisch geprägten Beitrag zur Entwicklung der scholastischen Philosophie leistete und nicht nur als deren Übertragungskanal diente.

S c h l ü s s e l w ö r t e r : Aristoteles, Philosophie in der muslimischen Welt, scholastische Philosophie, Mittelmeerraum, Thomas von Aquin, Alfarabius, Avicenna, Maimonides, Averroes.

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