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Ibn Rüşd'ün Skolastik Felsefeye ve Rönesans Felsefesine Etkisi

Ibn Rushd's Influence on Scholastic and Renaissance Philosophy

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THE RECEPTION OF IBN RUSHD INTO SCHOLASTIC PHILOSOPHY

There are records since 1255 that in Paris were used some latin translations of Ibn Rushd' Commentaries. About the middle of the XIII Century most of this working translation had been finished. Among the latin translators of Ibn Rusd were outstanding the scottisch scholar Michael Scot, born about 1175, trained in Toledo (Spain) and deceased in Sicily Island approximately on 1235, and Hermann the German, native from central Europe, who died the year 1272 as bishop of Astorga (near the town of León, Spain) . Scot translated Ibn Rushd's Long Commentaries on *De Anima*, *Physics* and *De Coelo*, in addition to the Middle Commentary on *De Generatione et Corruptione* and the Epitome of *Parva Naturalia*. Hermannus Alemanus, on the other hand, translated from arabic into latin the Middle Commentaries on *Nicomachean Ethics*, *Poetics* and *Rhetoric* with the help of some mozarabs.

The latin translation of the *Kulliyat fi't-tibb* began to be spread in the middle of XIII Century under the title of *Colliget*. On the other side, the medieval translations of Ibn Rushd were printed for the first time on the years 1472-1475 in an edition prepared by Lorenzo Canozio. Later, the Junctas published in Venice (Italy) the eleven volumes of *Opera Omnia Aristotelis... cum Averrois Cordubensis Commentaria*, whose latin translations were revised by Jacob Mantino. This standard edition of Aristotle/Averroes was reprinted many times during the XVI Century, representing the bestseller of this age.

From a doctrinal point of view, NeoPlâtonism, prevailing in Western thought since the Christian fathers and that breathed new life with the reception of Ibn Sina, was replaced by Aristotelianism, recovered in the Middle Ages through Ibn Rushd. Although not lacking tensions and ecclesiastical damnations, the reception of Aristotelian naturalism found a way through in Universities among the students' enthusiasm, the intellectual concern of Masters of Arts who struggled for their autonomy and the distrust of theologians, fearful of a «pagan» philosophy that could overshadow their *Weltanschauung*, till then hegemonic.

Christian world only knew two works of Aristotle until the XIII Century, *Categories* and *De Interpretatione*, that belong to the so called *Organon* or the whole of his logical writings. It means that the integral Aristotle that has stood all through with different fluctuations, namely, the author of *Metaphysics*, *Physics*, *On the Soul*, *Organon* (made up of six Logical works), *Nicomachean*

Ethics, Rhetoric, Poetics and some treatises on Biology was assimilated in the West thanks to the Araps, and especially through reading of the excellent Commentaries of Ibn Rushd. Must be added to it what implied certainly a historical change, the fact that Ibn Rushd in interpreting Aristotelian texts does not cloud the issue with dogmatic considerations, nor distorts his naturalism but he purifies it from ideological additions, so much Christians as Islamic, that previous tradition had kept.

The first *receptor* of Ibn Rushd into Scholasticism was the dominican Albert the Great, Master in the Theological Faculty of Paris University, who wrote impressive books on theology and philosophy. The albertian outlook is characteristic of a christian thinker who has assimilated Aristotelianism. That's why he continues Ibn Rushd's teachings in many theoretic questions but criticizes him when he considers that rushdian philosophical position collides with dogma, for example, in the theory of the eternity of the world and in his innovator psychological thesis.

At the request of Pope Alexander IV, Albert the Great wrote about 1256 *De unitate intellectus* that is not directed specifically against Ibn Rushd but against monopsychism in general, and that's why he attacks, among others, al-Farabî, Avicbron, Ibn Bayya and, of course, Ibn Rushd whose Long Commentary *On the Soul* he uses as basic text. The dominican Master rejected the theory of the unity of material or possible intellect attributed to Ibn Rushd although, in a surprising way, he admits the possibility of the human soul's union with a separate intellect, an averroist theory as the Italian scholar Bruno Nardi underlined.

A clear trace of the Aristotle/Averroes naturalism we find in Albert's interest in Biology, something surprising among medieval theologians, and in his consideration of experience as a criterion of truth on contingent objects. Let's recall his comment on the necessary distinction between Philosophy and Theology: "dico quod nihil ad me de Dei miraculis cum ego de naturalibus disseram [I say that, when I discuss on natural questions, God's miracles do not affect me] " *De Generatione et Corruptione*, I, 22.

Even though it is a paradox, the main *receptor* of Ibn Rushd was Thomas Aquinas, also Dominican, Albert's student, Master in the Theological Faculty in Paris and no doubt the most outstanding theologian in the Medieval Christian West. Despite an apparent hostility between him and Ibn Rusd, that is shown in religious iconography and in the following literature, both thinkers stem from a common philosophical source, Aristotelianism, and even they are close in many theological questions, as the Spanish arabist Miguel Asín pointed out many years ago.

A well-known specialist, Salvador Gómez Nogales, summed up the influence of Ibn Rushd on the Italian Dominican in the following points [cfr.

"Saint Thomas, Averroès et l'averroïsme", en *Aquinas and problems of his time*, Lovaina, 1976] :

- In *Logic and Theory of Knowledge* Thomas Aquinas has accepted many ideas that Ibn Rushd had exposed in his Commentaries on Aristotelian works.
- In *Cosmology*, the concept of time and some astronomical theories.
- In *Metaphysics*, occasionalism, the knowledge of individuals, providence and some proofs for the existence of God.
- In *Psychology*, some ideas on the relation between senses and intellect, on the nature of soul and its faculties, in the same way as the theory of the agent intellect internal to man.
- In *Theology*, the method of exegesis, prophccy, the need of revelation and the conception of the relations between reason and faith.
- In *Ethics*, the theory of virtues and the concept of practical reason.

A plentiful presence of Ibn Rushd in Thomas Aquinas' writings is proved by more than 500 contrasted quotations. This influence turned openly polemic only in his later years, coinciding with attacks from the Catholic hierarchy to the Latin Averroism with regard to some psychological, cosmological and ethical thesis. The centre of confrontation lies in the supposed Ibn Rushd's monopsychism. Trying to determine exactly the doctrinal position of Ibn Rushd about unity of intellect that he considered was wrongly interpreted in Scholasticism, Gómez Nogales picked up this wise formula proposed before by H. Kainz: *pluralitas intellectuum, unitas intellecti (plurality of intellects, unity of the intelligible object)*.

The tone strongly polemic of *De unitate intellectus contra averroistas*, written by Thomas Aquinas in 1270, it was no use at all to him. In fact, the bishop of Paris damnation on the 7th of March 1277, three years after his death, had a direct effect on Aquinas' works. A competent researcher has discovered 53 Thomist thesis among the 219 considered heretical and whose theoretic core is summed up in this way: "a whole of thesis, most of them philosophical, that mean the difficulty of reconcile the Christian doctrine with the teachings of pagan philosophers, mainly Aristotle" [R. Hissette en *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales*, 64,1, 1997].

We can talk so of about a moderate Averroism in Thomas Aquinas, through whom rushdian theories were spread throughout Europe. Nobody before him among the Christian theologians dared to think from the Aristotelian-Averroist conceptual world, traditionally labelled as heretical.

THE LATIN AVERROISM

The integral aristotelianism of Ibn Rushd found an advantageous field in the Faculty of Arts of Paris University. Some masters of this Faculty read and commented the writings of the andalusian philosopher with a restrained passion. They are the so called «Latin Averroists», though this label is a matter of controversy among scholars, some of which have even refused the very existence of such philosophical School. Its more foremost members are Siger of Brabant, Boetius of Dacia, John of Dry Town (or Jean de Sécheville), John of Jandun and Marsilius of Padua, who considered themselves «philosophers» in contrast to the «theologians». Their thought can be described as a radical Averroism in a broad outline that recreates with a personal modulation the integral Aristotelianism recovered in West thanks to Ibn Rushd.

The first problem we face when we try to reconstruct the contributions of these averroists philosophers derives from the relentless persecution they suffered after damnation by Catholic Church of their works and the resultant disappearance of most of these writings. In a personal level this ideological hounding entailed withdrawal of their chairs, exile and even death. In this way, John of Dry Town had to come back to England looking for protection; Boetius of Dacia went to Italy after the damnation of 1277; John of Jandun and Marsilius of Padua fled Paris in 1326 and took refuge at the court of Ludwig of Bavaria to be protected from the Curia Romana; and Siger of Brabant was called to appear before the tribunal of the Inquisitor of France, Simon du Val, in 1276, but fled to Italy and later took refuge in the town of Viterbo where he was sentenced to compulsory residence being stabbed to death by a fake secretary, really a hired killer.

Although history had not stopped after damnations, fortunately, and some of the theologians contributed to the development of philosophy, it is undeniable that this ideological repression had negative effects on the philosophical activity at Universities since then. In front of the revisionism of some medievalist who has dared to wonder whether must be considered enlightened bishop Tempier or the Paris Masters of Arts, professor Luca Bianchi has summed up well the matter remembering, for example, how dangerous it was after 1277 to voice freely an opinion about the soul (with regard to Pietro d'Abano) or about nature of the angels (*propter periculum excommunicationis, for danger of excommunication*, according to the very words of theologian Godfrey of Fontaines).

The common feature of Latin Averroists, everyone of whom has his own outline that deserves to be known thoroughly, is their acknowledge of autonomy of philosophy whose method is different from theology. They defended also the eternity of the world, the rushdian theory of intellect and the conception of human happiness as a way of philosophical life. Our French

colleague Alain de Libera has come to the conclusion that it is in contact with this rationalist Arab thought of rushdian origin how in this age, namely, in the XIII Century, takes shape the figure of the Western intellectual.

A topic that is still standing in many handbooks is the attribution to Ibn Rushd of the so-called «double truth theory». But he, as a good philosopher who knew well Aristotelian Logic, could not say it. On a same question can not be two different truths at the same time, along the principle of non-contradiction. Clearly he exposes it in his work *Fasl al-maqāl*: "truth can not contradict truth but to harmonize with it being used as confirmatory evidence".

However, the andalusian philosopher plainly declares that there are *two ways or methods* of approaching to the truth, one of them characteristic of philosophy by means of reason, and the other, characteristic of religion by means of the revealed text; the first one is more difficult and restricted to the wise, while the second one is easier and fitting for the common people.

Where does come from this polemic theory? It is probable from the need of the Masters of the Faculty of Arts to prevent an open confrontation with Masters of the Faculty of Theology and above all with the ecclesiastical hierarchy. The lacks of texts have led some medievalists to deny the «double truth theory» among Latin Averroists. But we must not forget that most Averroists' writings have disappeared due to censorship. On the other hand, as has been recently underlined by some scholars, the theses damned in 1277 were rather fragments of a future philosophical project than doctrines really taught by the Parisian Masters. Anyway, the Latin Averroists struggled for the autonomy of philosophy in a world ruled by bishops and theologians. This trend is clearly reflected in the Political Averroism, whose main figure is Marsilius of Padua.

It is a paradox that thanks to the influence of an Islamic philosopher as Ibn Rushd would take place in the Christian Europe what G. Lagarde has called "the birth of the lay spirit in the Late Middle Ages". To those who at present maintain a permanent prejudice against the Islamic world, it will seem almost impossible. But despite a widespread ignorance on these matters, our cultural history was shaped in this way. And the averroism, first in France and later in the flourishing towns of Italy, brought with itself the germ of a democratic citizenship.

Marsilius of Padua

Born about 1278, Marsilius was pupil of the Averroist Pietro d'Abano, lectured on natural philosophy at Paris University where he was elected Rector in 1313 and later the Pope John XXII damned his chief work *Defensor Pacis* (*The Defender of Peace*) and excommunicated him.

What is the doctrinal contribution of this Averroist philosopher? In a recent study on him we find this conclusion: "Only Marsilius recaptured the

political doctrine from the slavishness to theology and canon law giving a lay basis to law and kingdom. For the first time a Christian author maintains that power is not sacred": B. Bayona Aznar, *Religión y poder. Marsilio de Padua: ¿La primera teoría laica del estado?*, (Madrid, Biblioteca Nueva, 2007, p. 15).

Cruz Hernández has seen the influence of Ibn Rushd Commentary on Plato's *Republic* on *Defensor Pacis* with regard to the immanent condition of human happiness and the conception of the social good as the last end of human actions. I think there is also the influence of Ibn Rushd Commentary on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* which was in fashion in Later Medieval Schools as shows the fact that it is the only work quoted in bishop's Tempier damnations of 1277. Nevertheless, the text most quoted in the first part of *Defensor Pacis*— which has a greater political content, unlike the second one, of religious-political nature, and the third part, which represents an abstract of the book— is Aristotle's *Politics*, a work that Ibn Rushd unfortunately never knew.

So I am led to the conclusion that, starting from a naturalistic philosophy of Averroist origin, Marsilius developed in an autonomous way a political theory whose basis is the conception of state, *civitas*, as a perfect and self-sufficient society. Only in the civil community can be attained the sufficiency of life. Or as Marsilius himself writes: " Finally, the necessary to live and to live well discovered by reason and men's experience, the perfect community called *civitas* (or *state*) reached fullness and was constituted" *Defensor Pacis*, I, 3, § 4.

From that central point, and using the biblical and patristic literature, Marsilius of Padua takes out a series of conclusions shattering to the Papacy and which undermined the pontifical claim to exercise the *plenitudo potestatis* (*absolute power*) as much in spiritual affairs as in temporal. Among these conclusions we can point up the following ones:

§ 6. "The whole body of citizens or its majority alone is the human legislator.

§ 7. Decretals and decrees of the bishop of Rome, or of any other bishops or body of bishops, have no power to coerce anyone by secular penalties or punishments, except by the authorization of the human legislator.

§ 14. No bishop or priest has coercive authority or jurisdiction over any layman or clergyman, even if he is a heretic.

§ 15. The prince who rules by the authority of the legislator has jurisdiction over the persons and possessions of every single mortal of every station, whether lay or clerical, and over every body of laymen or clergy.

§ 25. No bishop or body of bishops may give permission to teach or practice in any profession or occupation, but this right belongs to the legislator or to the one who rules by its authority".

In announcing his death on the 10th April 1343 the Pope Clement VI said that "never has been known any heretic greater than Marsilius". Nevertheless, his intellectual legacy has increased with the passage of time. Right up to now those distant political reflections remain in force for a civil society open and democratic.

Dante Alighieri

Halfway along the middle Ages and the Renaissance, and having equally literary genius and philosophical gift, is the philosopher-poet from Florence Dante Alighieri. Ibn Rushd was held in high esteem in the *Commedia* where he is called the *Commentator* [of Aristotle] par excellence, being placed in a circle reserved to the greatest men of science of the Ancient World, such as Democritus, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Ptolemy, Hippocrates and Galen.

In another work of Dante, *Convivio*, where prevail the philosophical problems, appear clearly some topics of averroist origin. So, for example, when he writes that "knowledge is our last perfection" and that for this reason science can be called «heaven» (II,13,6). In my opinion, we must pay special attention to the treaty *Monarchia*, because in it he advances as a political thinker from the Aristotle who more interested in the Renaissance, the Aristotle of *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics*, in a broad line which can be described as political averroism although without the harsh tone of Marsilius. After asking himself what is the end of human society as a whole, he comes to his answer: "It is, so, evident that the last end of the potency of the whole mankind consists of the intellectual potency or faculty" (I,IV). He finishes this reasoning with an appeal to the argument by authority: "And with this sentence agrees Averroes in his Commentary on *De anima*" (ibid.).

The third book of *Monarchia* is the most polemic and in it he raises the nature and limits of power of the Pope and the Emperor. After explaining that authority of the Emperor does not come from authority of the Pope (III, XIV), Dante introduces an analytic method clearly averroist and which keeps a close parallelism with the «double truth theory». There are, according to him, two ends fixed to men by the providence: *happiness of this life*, which is represented by the *earthly paradise*, and *happiness of the everlasting life*, which is represented by the *celestial paradise*. Both happiness, as different goals, are necessary to reach *with different means*: the first we reach *through the teaching of philosophers*, whereas the second one *through the spiritual teachings* which go beyond the limits of human reason. "That is why man has had the need of a *double guide* according to a *double end*: namely, *of His Holiness the Pope*, for leading mankind to the everlasting life according to the teachings of revelation, and *of the Emperor*, for leading mankind to the temporal happiness according to the philosophical legacy. (...) It is evident that

the authority of the Monarch comes directly from God who is the source of the universal authority" (III, XV, 10-15, italics mine).

Besides the philosophical influences I have referred to, we must not forget Dante's political praxis. He participated in the political struggle inside the party of Gibelins who defended the Empire and the independence of Italian towns against the blacks Guelfes, followers of the Pope. Exiled in 1302 and condemned to death, he was compelled to leave his beloved town of Florence to which he never would return.

Ibn Rushd's Trace in the Italian Renaissance

Against old commonplaces, the Italian Renaissance can not be called a Plâtonic and anti-aristotelian period. The Scholastic Aristotelianism was criticized, but Aristotle went on being taught in the Universities; the averroists made use of the naturalistic gold mine recovered by Ibn Rushd; the Hellenists began to read Greek texts with a new outlook and the Aristotelian ethical thought occupied a foreground.

In any case we must distinguish the Humanists from the Philosophers. Among the first ones were outstanding Francesco Petrarca, Lorenzo Valla, Giovanni Pico Della Mirandola, Giovanni Boccaccio and Leonardo Bruni. Among the second ones, Marsilio Ficino, Tommaso Campanella and Giordano Bruno.

We find a clear opposition to Aristotelianism and Averroism by the Humanists. The position which draws a special attention is that of Petrarca, who contrasts the Classical Antiquity with what he calls the «barbarism» of the Averroists and the «moderns» or nominalists, while he upholds a return to the *antiqui* or ancients. At an ideological level his position is more literary-religious than philosophical, as he himself acknowledges in *De ignorantia* in a polemic with the Averroists.

Marsilio Ficino, on the other hand, places Plato in the summit of philosophy, because he considers that his thought is in harmony with Christianity. Nevertheless, we find also the Averroist influence on Renaissance's Plâtonic philosophers. So it happens, for example, in Giovanni Pico Della Mirandola for whom the highest human happiness would consist in the conjunction or *copulatio* of our intellect with the agent intellect. According to the Italian medievalist Bruno Nardi, from these reflections on Averroes' psychology comes one of his more fruitful humanist's concepts that of *dignitas hominis, man's dignity*.

In the Universities of Padua and Bologna the Aristotelianism recovers strength during the XV and XVI Centuries, occupying a superior place among professors the research, edition and teaching of the philosophical doctrines of Ibn Rushd. In the second half of XIV Century shined Biagio Pelacani of Parma, physician, mathematician and astronomer who taught at the University of Padua, being damned as an atheist in 1396. He was outstanding by the

naturalism of his psychology, his defence of the autonomy of philosophy and the application of the «double truth theory» .

In the fields of edition and teaching were outstanding in Italy these thinkers tied in any or other way to the averroism: Paolo Veneto, Nicoletto Vernia, Agostino Nifo, Alessandro Achillini, Pietro Pomponazzi and Giacomo Zabarella. It seems evident that, in spite of the attacks from clerical and idealistic groups, the averroism occupied a pre-eminent position in the Renaissance academic world.

Let's mention finally the most radical and polemic philosopher of the Renaissance, Giordano Bruno. Here we will point only at some of the topics that connect with the andalusian philosopher, without considering his innovative philosophy of nature, nor his revolutionary cosmology branded (marked) by the theory of the infinite universe.

— Distinction between philosophy and religion

According to Bruno, religion is directed to common people, its diffusion is based on sensitive experience and looks for establish some rules of conduct useful to society. Philosophy, on the other hand, represents a kind of superior knowledge; its activity relies on reason and is directed to a minority of wise men who try to be ruled by the intellect so much at the theoretical level as at the moral level.

— Happiness and intellectual activity

In the practice of philosophy, namely, in the intellectual activity, consists human perfection. Recovering the widespread medieval concept of happiness as *copulatio* or conjunctio with the agent intellect, writes Bruno: "It seems to me that the Peripatetic [Philosophers] (as Averroes explained) mean it when they say that the highest happiness of man consists in the perfection by the theoretical sciences. It is true and they are right" (*Eroici furori*).

— Criticism of Christianity

Bruno criticizes Christianity from a double point of view, theoretical and ethical, being also in opposition to its pretension of become an universal religion and the only way of eternal salvation. As has written Massimo Campanini, starting from the brunian *Spaccio della bestia trionfante*, the Italian philosopher denounces Christianity as enemy of nature, as an ideology that has smashed the harmony of man with nature. — **The man, great wonder**

For Bruno the universe, necessarily infinite in time and space, shows the infinite potence of God. The «perfect man» will be the natural man who through the philosophical contemplation of the universe, joints himself with divinity. Having assimilated the averroist-aristotelian rationalism and after re-laborating the topic of

man's dignity exposed by Marsilio Ficino and Pico della Mirandola, Giordano Bruno proposes a new theory of *man's dignity* "completely apart from any representation of man as microcosm or *copula mundi* and from any salvific mediation of Christ", as has underlined the Spanish scholar Miguel Ángel Granada in his book *El umbral de la modernidad* (Barcelona, Herder, 2000, p. 259).