ALTERNATIVES IN RELIGIOUS AND PHILOSOPHICAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

Andrew Tolstenko[*]

Saint Petersburg State University of Architecture and Civil Engineering, Vtoraja Krasnoarmejskaja ul. 4, St. Petersburg, 190005, Russia

Abstract

This article considers the phenomenon of Arab thinking as a source of scholastic theology of Spain and southern France. The author has undertaken to determine the unique place of these medieval Arab ideas in the context of ontological semantics. Comparative, concrete historical, typological, and systematic textual analytic methods of research were applied to understand and provide a scientific evaluation of Arab philosophical choices in respect to mystic as well as purely intellectual content. As a result, the philosophical categories developed by Eriugena and Arabic thinkers were later used in metaphysics of Cusanus, Mulla Sadra and Spinoza. This article is useful in helping specialists find out how early medieval philosophy was able to anticipate the logical tendency of the late Middle Ages.

Keywords: Arab thinking, Eriugena, medieval, metaphysics, philosophy

1. Introduction - Eriugena's approach

Medieval philosophy is of great interest in contemporary histories of Philosophy. The most significant medieval thinkers are those who made primary revisions to ancient natural philosophy, synthesizing it with the fundamentals of the Christian worldview. One such thinker was John Scottus Eriugena. The numerous interpretations of Eriugena's philosophy reflect the dynamic process of rethinking previous scientific approaches. [1].

In our paper it was mentioned that Eriugena presented the first structuralization of natural and spiritual phenomena [2]. We have noted the dual nature of his theology: it combined speculative pantheism (pan-en-theism) with Christian theism. Moreover, this pantheism, rather than Orthodox Christian principles, was often more pronounced and sincere in his teaching since important questions could then be contemplated in a purely metaphysical context. But the ambivalence in Eriugena's theological and philosophical views, made it very difficult to interpret them. It is the ambivalent nature of Eriugena's

---

[*]E-mail: dasein2014@mail.com, Tel.: +7(921)0943299

theological doctrine that was the object of the author's research, as well as the methodology of the contradictory approaches used to study Eriugena's emergence as an event linked to the development of Neoplatonic ideas in the context of the Christian canons. It was found that, on the one hand, Eriugena was a staunch supporter of Orthodox Christian principles; yet on the other hand, he was a follower and typical representative of Christian Neo-Platonism in the Middle Ages, and he believed in the methodological primacy of Western Metaphysics.

While historically inevitable, Eriugena's approach was not the only one in the development of the Christian method. Before embarking on an overview of alternative developments in metaphysical thought, it should be noted that Eriugena's theoretical structure led to the development of certain ideas on the structure of knowledge, according to which Rhetoric, Grammar and Logic (Dialectic) were the principal disciplines applied when introducing concepts on conditions, definitions and divisions of Nature, i.e., God [3].

2. Analysis of the alternatives in religious and philosophical development in the early Middle Ages

Next is a look at other teachings that could and did fundamentally influence the ensuing Christian worldview, enriching metaphysical inquiry with new directions in thought. As already noted, Eriugena's teaching on the divisions of Nature was the first fully developed religious and philosophical theory of the Middle Ages. Above all, Eriugena relied upon ideas derived from the Corpus areopagiticum, which he had translated into Latin along with commentaries by Maximus the Confessor (†662), Basil the Great (†379) and Gregory of Nyssa (†395). The authority of Augustine (†430) was only of secondary importance to him. A determining factor for Eriugena was his knowledge of Ancient Greek, which had a more developed terminology and semantic structure for reproducing ontological relations than Latin. This gave Eriugena a new perspective and ways to express it. Thus, Eriugena represented the greatest synthesis of Western and Eastern Theology. Without going into details on the continuity of ideas between the Patristics and early medieval Dogmatics (to be discussed below), it is important to emphasize that the transfer of Neo-Platonism to mature scholasticism, the Renaissance humanist teachers, and New European thinkers was, on the whole, carried out by this Irish monk. This is what Gilson says about it: "In the midst of these grammarians and dialecticians lacking in metaphysical ambitions, the so-called Corpus areopagiticum falls as a meteor from another world, and the Irish Scotus Erigena welcomes it with enthusiasm. A neoplatonic fermentation immediately takes place, so active indeed that, five centuries later, John Gerson will deem it still dangerous." [4]. Indeed, only a few holistic metaphysical positions developed by ancient thought and inherited by subsequent epochs prevailed at that time: on the one hand, Eriugena's emanation doctrine, and on the other hand, the Arab and Jewish schools of philosophical rhetoric based on 'grammatism' as abstracting

classification, and committed to definitions and reasoning that would ensure proper consideration of the issues. Therefore, next follows an attempt to analyse the path of Arab medieval thinking, with its profound cognitive content.

2.1. Kalam and falsafah

To begin with, it is important to recall the terminological disputes that occurred in the middle of the eighth century in the Arab East between Mutakallims, Mu'tazilites, and Sufis. The Mutakallims were teachers of the Quran who were looking for arguments to support the dogmas of Islam, gradually drawing up a distinctive religious philosophy combining both the formulas and definitions of improvable dogmas (kalam, scholastic discipline) with Aristotelian categorical tools. Thus Goldziher focuses on the terms sunna and hadith, which, although they express the same sense of rule or law, need further defining in order to be understood correctly. "The terms sunna and hadith must be kept distinct from one another. …The difference which has to be kept in mind is this: hadith means, as has been shown, an oral communication derived from the Prophet, whereas sunna, in the usage prevailing in the old Muslim community, refer. …The distinction between hadith and sunna is also retained in the literature of the subject, the first being a theoretical discipline, the second a compendium of practical rules…" [5] As a result, theologians attributed to sunna and hadith a kind of self-existent being, which was primary in relation to any literary tradition. Faith, paradoxical as it was (at first it bordered on the absurd, but then it was imbued with the pathos of the incomprehensibility of God's deeds), was in need of a defining thought precisely because of its adherence to authoritarianism and coercion. All of the perfect terms and syllogisms prescribed by the orthodox religious authority, including the rhetorical and grammatical methods of acrybia, were meant to teach theologians to argue and persuade.

The Arab Orthodox, including Hasan al-Basri (†728), believed that all things were composed of atoms and therefore could not be the cause of all that was happening. The only active cause is God. God, however, acts contrary to human recommendations on wisdom and justice. That which is wise and benevolent is because God so decides and acts. God could act differently, but that would also be wise and benevolent. Since people cannot resist Divine actions, they must perceive them as inevitable fate. Even when a person writes with a pen, it is by no means the person's action for in fact Allah simultaneously creates all four accidents: the desire to move the pen, the ability to move it, the activity of the hand, and the movement of the pen. In this way Mutakallims adhered to fatalism.

It is significant and symptomatic that Wolfson, an expert on the Arab-Jewish Middle Ages, testified to this amazing syncretism inherent in the Arabic falsafa, within which various types of ancient theories were rethought and differentiated. As Wolfson says about kalam atomism "…a discredited theory which has been rejected by most of the Greek schools of philosophy as well as the Church Fathers, could have found acceptance among the mutakallimun" [6].

Mu'tazilites (Those Who Withdraw, or Stand Apart, from orthodox authorities: Ibn Ata, Ibn Ubayd, al-Allaf, an-Nazzam), tried to find in the word of Revelation (Kalam) something more than a confidence in the existence of God. In a certain sense they took up the task of developing a defining thought and, with that, the practice of deductive rationalism [7].

Aristotle's view that every definition and every science begins with and concerns only the general seems to have played a decisive role in their endeavours to deduce terms, and interpret and apply rhetoric with grammar. According to Bakar, the Islamic ekphrasis, associated with a logical demonstration of the pithiness of Quranic formulas and expressions, firmly fits into the historical and cultural history of the Arab East: "In essential terms, the debate between kalam and falsafah was not a debate between two world views, one Islamic the other un-Islamic or less Islamic. On the contrary, it was a debate between two particular philosophical perspectives which both fulfil the fundamental criteria of Islamicity and which therefore equally qualify to be called Islamic." [8]

Like the Mutakallims, the Mu'tazilites had their own theory of causality and the related question on the meaning of "laws of nature" [9]. The natural world was thought of in categories of substances and accidents. Bakar emphasizes that "Mu'tazilite rationalism was to lead, among other things, to a denial of the reality of Divine Attributes with the consequence that God was viewed more as an abstract philosophical concept than as a Reality who is the fountainhead and basis of revealed religion" [8, p. 78].

In the ninth and tenth centuries, in order to attain knowledge of its perfect purity, 'the people of justice and monotheism', as the Mu'tazilites (al-Jubbai, Abu Hashim, Ibn-Hanbal, al-Ashari, al-Baqillani) called themselves, philosophers who stood in direct contradiction with Quran, relied on the theory of atomism, which commended itself as the antithesis of Aristotelianism. Thus, religious dogmas, as they noted, were to be justified through the 'ready word' of reason, through the metaphysical tradition of searching and hypostasizing common concepts.

From this perspective, the antinomies of dialectic, the paradoxes of rhetoric, the sophisms of grammar were designed not so much to limit human contemplation as to prepare it for the perception of sacred truth, to turn it into spiritual meditation and to endow it with the ability to read, as postulated by Bakar, the "integral philosophy of nature, which issues forth directly from the Islamic Revelation" [8].

The Mu'tazilites were certain that entirely abstract truths were given to our minds in an absolutely clear and distinct manner, and that it was in deduction that all formal proof was complete. It remained only to work out which general principle to apply in a particular occasion.

Interestingly, in order to crystallize the deductive and unchanging structure of knowledge, Mu'tazilites even limited in part the omnipotence of God and denied that His actions were free. Moreover, they counterposed human freedom and God's lack of freedom, who, by virtue of His justice, is forced to

reward people for good deeds and punish them for evil ones. According to this dogmatically structured doctrine, the Creator is obliged, whether He likes it or not, to reward or punish His creatures [10].

At the same time, the Mu'tazilites demanded a clear separation of their positions from the teachings of the Sunni scholar Malik ibn Anas (†795), who defended the legitimacy of anthropomorphic descriptions in the Quran and hadiths (sayings of the prophet Muhammad) and categorically refused to expound on their exact meaning. On the contrary, 'Those Who Withdraw' considered the anthropomorphic phrases in the Quran to be metaphors and idioms (for example, 'eye' is knowledge, 'hand' is power, etc.), and hadiths, excluding allegorical interpretation, should be rejected as inauthentic.

Their discursive theological analysis was structured as follows. The traditional list usually includes the following seven divine attributes: knowledge, power, life, will, sight, hearing, and speech. Of these, only the first three can be considered 'substantial', i.e., inherent and identical with the essence of God. The rest should be recognized as 'created,' in other words, accidents, 'attributes of action and existence'. From this it follows that the eternity of the Quran is wrong. Thus, the self-sufficient and consistent tendency of the Mu'tazilites to operate with the whole sum of categories and doctrinal provisions compelled them to criticize authoritative provisions concerning the Quran's anthropomorphism, including the thesis of its eternity [11].

Based on this interpretation, humans were declared the creators of their actions: their freedom of choice presupposed responsibility; if it did not, then God's reward would be unjust. Subsequently, from a review of all the premises of scholastic thought, the Mu'tazilites unintentionally suggested that the human mind is able to comprehend the essential divine institutions independently of Revelation. Their principle of rational judgment undermined the traditional theory of divine predestination.

Of al-Ashari (†941), who criticized this doctrine, Mutahhari says "…al-Ash'ari sanctioned the use of critical examination, deduction, and logic in the fundamentals of religion. He substantiated his research with evidence from the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah (Prophetic tradition). He wrote a book in this regard entitled, 'A treatise in approving of the embarkation on kalaam (scholastic theology)'." [12]

Attracted by the teachings of the Mutakallims, Al-Ashari attempted to re-define the doctrinal relevance of Mu'tazila attributions and to draw a conclusion about the absolute freedom of God. Hence, he reasoned as follows: occasionionalism implies that any thing and any event in nature are essentially discrete. The world is a sphere of concrete, separate and independent entities. There is no connection between these entities, except Divine Will. If A is connected to B, it is not because they are inherently related in this way, but rather because God wants it. Any observable effect in nature is caused solely by God. Consequently, occasionionalism proves that there is no causality in the world.

Wherever possible, al-Ashari quotes verses from the Quran and hadiths to prove his claim that the conceptually structured discussion of atomism is religiously justified. For him, to demonstrate the existence of God means to achieve by grammatical articulation such 'purity' of words and names so as to guarantee an image of maximum semantic fullness.

In assessing the Islamic synthesis of atomism with specific principles of theology, Fakhry emphasizes that this must have been to "vindicate the absolute power of God and to ascribe to His direct intervention not only the coming of things into being, but also their persistence in being from one instant to another" [13].

Next, it should be noted that grammar as a theology argued and demonstrated the perfect being of the Creator. One of these Mu'tazila 'techniques' is described by Goldziher: "Their responsibility is greater toward the texts which are to be found in the canon, and therefore are recognized by the whole community of true believers as authoritative. On these they used their arts. The following occurs in the influential collection of Malik Ibn Anas: 'Every night our God descends to the lowest Heaven (there are seven), when a third of the night is still left, and says: Who has a request to make of me, that I may grant it; who a wish, that I may fulfil it; who cries to me for forgiveness of sins, that I may forgive them?' This anthropomorphism is now disposed of by a grammatical artifice, which is made possible by the peculiarity of the ancient Arabic consonantal writing in which the vowels are not written. Instead of yanzilu, 'he descends', they read the causative form, yunzilu, 'he causes someone to descend', that is, the angels. Thus they avoid the impression given in the text of God's change of place. It is not God who descends, but he causes angels to descend, and make those appeals in his name." [14]

In the limited human mind, the very presence of the concept of a most perfect being necessarily required attributing to the Creator a fundamental predicate of being, without which no perfection and no completeness is possible. Only in this way could the human intellect, as emphasized by Ibn Sina (in Latin Avicenna, †1037), serve as the cause for the universality of things, and think of their unity and universality (i.e., their semantic and conceptual completeness) as predicable de omnibus, that is, as one of the five Aristotelian classes of predicates, namely genus, species, difference, property, and relation.

In this context, it makes sense to consider what is meant by correct thinking. First of all, it is the ability to use words: it is formalized mental work, or argumentation, that is based on words. To put it another way, the correctness and relevance of reasoning must demonstrate the limitations imposed on human mentality. It was not about restrictions that would prevent the intellect from explaining the causes of all that was happening and cast it into a state of 'sclerosis', but about those that would allow it to be upheld as a perfect divine creation.

So, for example, when al-Ashari sought to put forward arguments in favour of the omnipotence of the Creator, he carefully thought through the correctness of his grammatical abstractions. The Mutazilites taught him that the

power to act must be a power, either to act or obey; that is, the power to act must first precede the action itself; however, al-Ashari considered this division of power and action erroneous. If the omnipotence of the Creator is correctly and seriously perceived, then it is necessary to argue that God creates human actions, and the person 'acquires' them and truly becomes responsible for them. The power to act is the power of action, not the other way around, and it exists only at the moment of action, and neither before nor after. Moreover, it was created by God. From this point of view, humans are not the initiator of their actions, but merely accept as theirs that which God does through them. Because God is omnipotent, He can even be the Creator of evil. But al-Ashari insisted that evil should not be attributed to God in the same way as to a malefactor. God can create evil without being a villain. Undoubtedly, the logic of his approach corresponded to the perception of the world as a divine creation, and was aimed at demonstrating its true meaning.

In addition, such a grammatical and logical analysis was not only possible, but necessary, since it was about the dual presence of the Creator and creation, and about the sacramental words guaranteeing truth and eternal salvation. The limits of the correct use of terms and distinctions coincide with the limits of the Universe, which, like the Holy Quran, was considered a divine creation [15].

2.2. Emanation and irradiation

Yet another direction in thought and verbal creativity was connected with Sufism, which had a fundamental influence on mature scholasticism, and its positions and principles subsequently emerged in the philosophical systems of Spinoza and his followers. In Sufi teachings, formal dialectical problems, derived from Neo-Platonism and the Aristotelian treatises, were strikingly combined with certain types of mysticism, which, although alien to rational constructions, was deeply transformed by them.

Al-Kindi, al-Farabi (who was known to the Arabs as 'the Second Teacher' after Aristotle), Abu Masihi, and Avicenna were determined followers of ascetic practices. Sunni orthodox Malik ibn Anas said of them, "He who practices Sufism (tasawwuf) without learning Sacred Law corrupts his faith (tazandaqa), while he who learns Sacred Law without practicing Sufism corrupts himself (tafassaqa). Only he who combines the two proves true (tahaqqaqa)." [16] This, however, is beyond the scope of this article. Suffice to say that they, as Mashsha'un (Peripatetics, Aristotle's disciples), made extensive commentaries to Aristotle's books, thereby seeking the structural, stable principle of their argumentation.

So, the idea of a universal causal connection, by virtue of which the entire universe, if carefully thought out, is reflected in each thing, as in a mirror, was considered by them to be one of the original deductive dogmas. They said that the mind cannot attain knowledge about anything outside of itself, but attains only itself, that is, its own content. Divine knowledge, as the primary source and

ultimate goal of all being, and the principle of all things, extends to the universal forms and laws of all that is. Losing none of its perfection, God's thinking concerns even separate individuals, but only because they are contained in the universal, their stable basis, they obey the necessary laws of the universe, and thus enter into the circle of divine providence.

Since the Sufis acknowledged that nothing in the world is outside the thought and word of God, then, they believed, the world could be attributed to a certain kind of grammar related to the clarification of the essence of things and to all things created by the mind of God.

Ab uno non est nisi unum means that everything proceeding from Divine intelligence, as a simple and necessary active cause, can only be His emanation, a descending series of emanations, the world soul, and, finally, an active mind – the last link of the intelligible emanation chain, 'flowing' into the greatest multitude of things. Thus, all created beings strive to be in God's likeness and return to Him as their last goal. God, as Avicenna said, is the cause of things not through His will, but only through His comprehensive and perfect knowledge. He exists only by virtue of His essence, including in this the cause of His own existence [17].

The texts of Aristotle are considered by Arab Peripatetics to be a direct expression of the truth of Revelation. Religion speaks of the same things as philosophy, but philosophical truth is perhaps even more perfect due to its syllogistic demonstration, and also because humans are given the freedom to be guided by an extensive list of categories and concepts of intelligence.

2.3. Knowledge of pure truth

Ibn Rushd (in Latin Averroes, †1198), one of the peripatetics not given to mysticism, believed that only through knowledge does a person become like God and attain supreme bliss. In considering the question of causality, Averroes stressed the need to carry out relentless research to penetrate the sanctuary of truth: "To deny the existence of efficient causes which are observed in sensible things is sophistry… For he who denies this can no longer acknowledge that every act must have an agent. The question whether these causes by themselves are sufficient to perform the acts which proceed from them, or need an external cause for the perfection of their act, whether separate or not, is not self-evident and requires much investigation and research." [18] His idea that existence precedes essence was developed later in the seventeenth century in the theosophy of Mulla Sadra (†1640).

In his call to seek the knowledge of pure truth, Averroes reasoned that ordinary people cannot be convinced by philosophical arguments, but the Koran and a well-developed imagination can be used to persuade them that Allah will punish them for their sins, and they will endure eternal torments in hell. This is the demonstrative way to discover truth and interpret scripture. Then again, people who are open to dialectical reasoning try to make sure that what Revelation teaches does not contradict natural reason; through probabilistic

arguments they attempt to understand why one should believe one thing, and not another. Finally, there are philosophers who are not satisfied with anything except metaphysical apodictic proofs. The abstracting activity of the active intellect allows them to go from the necessary, through the necessary, to the necessary. Thus they reach the true conclusion: the world was not created by God out of nothing; the world is eternal. Yet these philosophers understand that for everyone else faith in God is the best substitute for philosophical truth.

If not all people are equally capable of abstracting and exploring the general nature of things, then how is reconciliation of faith and reason possible? As Gilson correctly noted, the principle of 'dual truth' contributes to the resolution of difficulties, according to which contradictory conclusions of faith and reason ultimately correlate with each other. The apodictic conclusions of our intellect are necessary, but not necessarily true. In turn, the teachings of faith are true, but they should not always be binding. Thus, religion suggests in symbolic images that at the highest stage of knowledge human intellect contemplates in absolute purity [4, p. 218].

Nevertheless, despite relative independence, philosophizing here does not constitute a fundamentally free position, since cognition is meaningless if the meditative intellect does not engage in a probabilistic interpretation of a religious text. "According to the Hadith, believers already worried the prophet by pointing out dogmatic contradictions in the Koran." [19]

According to Avicenna, for humans the greatest bliss is in mystic cognition, or irradiation. The latter is considered the highest rank of all proofs, and, at the same time, its initial improvable premise, from which intellectual constructions are derived syllogistically. Compared with definition and classification, the non-rational 'otherness' of illumination recedes into the background. It is more important to talk about its 'identity', about ontological primacy in the hierarchy of the created world: it is a 'receptacle' for perceiving revelations from the active intellect (intellectus agens) – the engine of the lunar sphere.

According to Corbin, in this context deductive metaphysics turns out to be "only a partial symptom of the secret that transcends all rational statements and that tends to express itself in what we may comprehensively term a spirituality, which includes all the phenomena and expressions of the religious consciousness" [20].

2.4. Rejection of philosophy

Another important Arab philosopher was Sufi al-Ghazzali (in Latin Algazel, †1111). He compared the body to the kingdom in which the soul is the queen, feelings are the army, intellect is the prime minister, passion is the tax collector and anger is the police. According to his confessions, he wavered between his unbridled passion, anger and selfishness, and other-worldly appeals. To destroy the attachment of the heart to worldly things and affects (gluttony, lust, ambition and power, pride and vanity, lies and hypocrisy, envy and malice),

he became a recluse for many years, and then joined the practices of Sufism through solitude (halvat), spiritual zeal, inner self-restraint and purification (moudjahadat), performing internal exercises and self-mortification (riyazat). He was long considered, erroneously, a follower of Avicenna, but in fact he was his principal critic.

Algazel came to the conviction that Aristotelianism in its various hypostases does not penetrate to the essence of truth. There must be a more perfect source of knowledge – a direct mystical illumination given by God. In this, the one who searches will be intoxicated with the fullness of the revealed truth. But this cannot be expressed through concepts and distinctions. This is the true essence of Aristotelian eudaimonia, or 'alchemy of happiness'.

Compared to the experience of divine beauty, all sensual pleasures are insignificant. For happiness in the future world – this infinite spiritual joy without sorrow – is many times longer and more valuable than happiness in this world, because the soul is eternal. At the highest stage of ecstasy, the soul will have visions of angels and the spirits of the prophets, then dissolve in God and disappear in the ocean of the divine being in order to attain eternal life.

Paradoxically, in Algazel's rejection of philosophy, there was an amazing deductive logic which showed his wit and confidence in working everything out and finding the stable, structural principle of various philosophical doctrines. It was said that if Islam had disappeared, it could have been restored by relying on the works of Algazel [21].

In the fourteenth century, his many critical passages, including those associated with the theory of the dual truth of Averroes, caused skepticism among Western European scholastics. In any case, al-Ghazzali's influence was contrary to his intentions. His works calling for Arabs to fight against philosophy (for example, Maqasid al-falasifa-The intentions of the philosophers, Tahafut al-Falasifa-Incoherence of the philosophers) were nearly all that Christians knew of it.

3. Discussion

3.1. What is it the 'intellectually revised mysticism'?

The meaning of religious grammar in Arab natural philosophy should again be emphasized. It was the defining and classifying explication of everything connected to God that included the rules for perceiving the world as a divine creation and, necessarily, linked itself to the relics of intellectually revised mysticism. Only when there was a need for improvable presuppositions of everything that needed to be defined, was mystical speculation elevated to a higher rank, and its carrier transformed from sage to miracle-worker. But even direct assimilation of Divine truth turns out to be in the same thesis form, and continues to be the result of abstraction and application of formal logical procedures peculiar to religious and philosophical grammar.

Further, the unchanging identity of language must be confirmed at all times, in all places. This makes it possible to create and apply strict terminology to clarify relevant dogmatic questions: was the Quran 'uncreated' and itself the Speech of God, what was meant when the Quran spoke of God's hand, etc. Although the contrast between the Quran - the embodiment of God's speech - and human words is subject to descriptions employing special grammar and logic, this is only to 'extract' again from the sacred text a series of definitions for consolidating grandiose doctrinal knowledge.

The correct perception of the world, that is, one that can grammatically clarify the 'entities' in their static self-identity, no matter how much it contradicts previous religious authorities, was in contrast to the inconsistent language of ordinary people, i.e., 'folklore', which was created to talk about individual and, therefore, random, perceptions in the sphere of religion.

A particular feature of human knowledge, where the language of the Creator and creation are deeply connected to each other, is not that it exists to prove, but to properly interpret and demonstrate this connection as immaterial substantiality, thereby achieving purely intellectual satisfaction.

Abstracting classification, the commitment to definitions, syncrisis, an axiomatic approach, and the principle of abstract logical conjugation of the original concepts drew paths to the divine, helping to show the sacred mystery and the beyond, including spiritual entities. According to Corbin "no doubt it is impossible to describe, except in symbols, the state to which that of pure Form would correspond experientially, since this is 'to reach the immaterial beyond matter, to feel the fire that burns beyond what is burned by fire, thus to perceive one's own absolute Form and to be that Form'." [20, p. 53]

3.2. Is the synthesis of scholastic theology based on faith?

In the twelfth century, Arab teaching found refuge among the Jews of Spain and southern France. Without going into detail about how medieval Jewish thought embodied the features of an independent and fundamental enquiry into being, a few remarks on the principle of its development should be made. In medieval Judaism, three separate directions had already been formed: Kabalistic, Aristotelian and Neoplatonic. The subsequent success of Aristotelianism testified to the fact that the Jewish scholastics, Avicebron (†1058) and Maimonides (†1204), having mastered the basic tenets of *Aristotelianism* and then of Neoplatonism, began to use them to interpret Jewish dogmas and synthesis of scholastic theology. According to Gilson, "In Avicenna, and especially in Averroes, the Jewish philosophers found a whole technical equipment of concepts borrowed from the Greeks, which it only remained for them to utilize" [4, p. 231].

Thus, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, Christian scholastics received from the Arabs and Jews not only the texts of the Greeks themselves, but also their original, profound interpretation. Various Arab and Jewish ideas

enriched the conceptual tools of professors in the Faculty of Arts at the University of Paris.

The positions of Averroistic Aristotelians and Aristotle himself, which, at first glance, were not particularly compatible with Western scholasticism, were in fact gradually incorporated fully into it, 'propping up' the non-rational constructions of Christian Dogmatics as its improvable premise and a manifestation of the impossibility of an infinite cause-and-effect relationship. All these hopes of medieval theocentrism, formulated in the language of abstractions, for the total unfolding of God (explicatio Dei) were fraught with radical pantheism, paving the way for the development of the New European metaphysics.

In the fifteenth century, Cusanus would say: "God, therefore, envelops all in the sense that all is found in Him; He is the development of all in the sense that He is found in all" [22]. The Universe "is neither finite nor infinite" [22, p. 70]. Further he concludes, "In this way we will be able to understand how God, Who is unity in its infinite simplicity, exists in the Universe as a unity and, as a consequence, in all things through the intermediary of the Universe; how, too, through the Universe as a unity the plurality of things is in God" [22, p. 83].The logic of this conception of the world prefigured the ideas of Copernicus and Bruno, Galileo and Descartes, Spinoza and Shelling, which were developed within anthropocentric thought.

4. Conclusion

Based on the above, the following conclusion can be made. In assessing alternatives in early medieval religious and philosophical development in the Arab East, it should be kept in mind that Muslim thinkers' recognition of the intelligible components of mature ancient philosophy (apodictic knowledge, formal-logical schematism, rhetorical and grammatical discourse, etc.) derived from their original desire for an unparalleled development of non-premise knowledge in order to elevate true philosophy to true religion, paving the way for the development of modern Metaphysics.

References

[1]   M. Brennan, *A guide to Eriugenian studies: a survey of publications 1930–1987*, Éditions Universitaires, Fribourg, 1989.
[2]   A.M. Tolstenko, Eur. J. Sci. Theol., **14(1)** (2018) 1–13.
[3]   A.M. Tolstenko, *Evropejskaja metafizika: ot bytija-kak-prirody k bytiju-kak-istorii (European metaphysics: from being-as-nature to being-as-history)*, Gumanitarnaja Akademija, St. Petersburg, 2011, 194–202.
[4]   E. Gilson, *History of Christian philosophy in the Middle Ages*, Sheed and Ward, London, 1980, 112.
[5]   I. Goldziher, *On the development of the hadith*, in *Muslim Studies (Muhammedanische Studien)*, S.M. Stern (ed.), 2nd edn., Vol. 2, Aldine Publishing Co. & SUNY Press, New York, 1973, 24.

[6] H.A. Wolfson, *The philosophy of the kalam*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, (MA), 1976, 467.

[7] A.N. Nader, *Le système philosophique des Mu'tazila (Premiers penseurs de l'Islam)*, Les Lettres Orientales, Beirut, 1956, 63–74.

[8] O. Bakar, *The history and philosophy of Islamic science*, Islamic Texts Society, Cambridge, 2012, 77.

[9] A. Dhanani, *The physical theory of kalam: atoms, space and void in Basrian Mu'tazili cosmology*, Brill, Leiden, 1994, 6-14.

[10] W.M. Watt, *The formative period of Islamic thought*, 2nd edn., Oneworld, Oxford, 2002, 229.

[11] D. Gimaret, *Théories de l'acte humain en théologie musulmane (Theories of the human act in Muslim theology)*, Etudes musulmanes, vol. 24, J. Vrin, Paris, 1980, 3–4, 19, 341–360.

[12] M. Mutahhari, *Knowing Islamic sciences. Theology (Kalaam)*, English translation, Create Space Independent Publishing Platform, North Charleston (SC), 2014, 25.

[13] M. Fakhry, *A history of Islamic philosophy*, 3rd edn., Columbia University Press, New York, 2004, 54.

[14] I. Goldziher, *Mohammed and Islam*, English translation, Forgotten Books, London, 2016, 132.

[15] R. Guardini, *The essential Guardini: an anthology of the writings of Romano Guardini*, English translation, Liturgy Training Publications, Chicago, 1997, 51, 151, 155–156.

[16] G.F. Haddad, *The four Imams and their schools: Abu Hanifa, Malik, Al-Shafi'i, Ahmad*, Muslim Academic Trust, London, 2007, 180.

[17] Ḥ. Naṣr, *An introduction to Islamic cosmological doctrines: conceptions of nature and methods used for its study by the Ikhwan al-Safa, al-Biruni, and Ibn Sina*, State University of New York Press, Albany (NY), 1993, 213.

[18] Averroes (Ibn Rushd), *Tahafut al Tahafut (The Incoherence of the Incoherence)*, English translation, S. van den Bergh (ed.), Vol. 1, Gibb Memorial Trust, London, 2016, 318.

[19] I. Goldziher, *Vorlesungen über den Islam (Lectures on Islam)*, F.C. Babinger & C.H. Becker (eds.),. Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Darmstadt, 1963, 74.

[20] H. Corbin, *Avicenna and the visionary recital. (Including a translation of the Persian commentary on the 'Recital of Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān)*, English translation, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1960, 16.

[21] F. Griffel, *Al-Ghazali's philosophical theology*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2009, 3-4.

[22] Nicolas Cusanus, *Of learned ignorance*, English translation, D.J.B. Hawkins (ed.), Wipf & Stock, Eugene (OR), 2007, 77.