Averroès, *Grand commentaire* (Tafsīr) *de la* Métaphysique, *livre bêta.* Précédé de : Averroès et les apories de la *Métaphysique* d'Aristote, par Bauloye Laurence

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The present publication is a timely addition to the study of Ibn Rušd, the Andalusian philosopher and jurist. While the recent celebrations of the eighth centenary of his death have seen an avalanche of scholarly small talk on the stance of rational science versus divine law, as a commentator of Aristotle Averroes mostly rests "conspicuous by his absence" in philosophical studies (as stated by Steven Harvey in Endress et al., *Averroes and the Aristotelian Tradition*. Leiden 1999, 22-22). But it was as a commentator that he developed his positions as a philosopher in view of Islamic thought in theology and the rational sciences, from the early epitomes of what he regarded as 'necessary' in the sciences to the Long Commentaries of his last years. Even those texts which have been studied to some extent have not been studied completely and in depth. This is only partly due to the loss of some of the Arabic originals, where only Latin and Hebrew versions have survived, many of them unedited. Even where the Arabic is extant, the lack of philological spade work on the basis of all of the textual witnesses is sorely felt.

Ibn Rušd's *Commentarium Magnum* (Arabic, *tafsīr* or *šarḥ*) on Aristotle's *Metaphysica* is a work of his later years, and his final word on the question of the principles of being, and the First Cause. (The Arabic designation is given mistakenly as *talḫīṣ* in Bauloye's index, p. 27ff., whereas the designation of the early *Epitome* is not *ǧāmiʿ* [ibid.], but *ǧawāmiʿ* [as the *ǧawāmiʿ* of the physical compendia preceding it in many of the manuscripts], though never called so explicitely). Apart from the notorious and much studied *tafsīr* on book *Lambda* of the Metaphysics (made accessible to non-Arabists through annotated translations into English by Charles Genequand and into French (omitting Λ 8) by Aubert Martin), little previous work has been done on the rest of the commentary. An edition of two Hebrew versions of the Middle Commentary (*talḫīṣ*), containing many close parallels with the Long Commentary but also important elaborations on a number of points, is being prepared by Mauro Zonta, but not yet unpublished. The commentaries on books *Bêta* to *Zêta*, putting forward Ibn Rušd's positions on the basic questions of the subject matter, and the methodological and cognitive principles of metaphysics, had not been studied at all until Laurence Bauloye presented a French translation, with copious notes, of *Metaph*. book Zêta, chapters 1 and 2, on the question of οὐσία (1028a10 τὸ ὂν λέγεται πολλαχῶς) : 'Averroès : *Grand Commentaire* de la *Métaphysique* d'Aristote, Z1 et Z2. Traduction et notes', in : *Bulletin d'études orientales*, 49 (Damas : Institut français de Damas, 1997) : 53–73.

The book under review provides a translation of Averroes' commentary, with annotations concerning textual criticism and terminology, preceded by a meticulous presentation of « Averroès et les apories de la *Métaphysique* d'Aristote » (p. 13–181), in ten chapters, on the principal topics of the text : 1. La notion d'aporie, 2. La nature et le rôle des apories de Bêta, 3. Le nombre et l'ordre des apories, 4. Les apories de Bêta : présentation et analyse, 5. L'unité de la métaphysique, 6. La doctrine de la substance, 7. Le genre des substances, 8. Physique et métaphysique, 9. La science des choses séparées, 10. « Science dans l'absolu » et « science recherchée ».

The translation is based on the edition of Maurice Bouyges (*Tafsīr Mā baʿd al-ṭabīʿat,* t. 1, Beyrouth 1938), an edition which has been criticized (as Mme Bauloye points out in her introduction p. 7) for its slavish observance of diplomatic accuracy to the detriment of reasonable emendation, but which certainly is a better basis than the slovenly and incompetent work of the critic in question. It is, however, one of the less reasonable transliterations of Greek names in Arabic letters which the author (like most of her predecessors) insists upon reproducing from Bouyges' 'Notice' : Eustathios (Eustace), the presumable translator of the text, was certainly not called Asṭāt by Arabic speakers, but Usṭāṭ or perhaps Asṭāṭ (where Greek *thêta* is represented by *ṯā'*, and the initial diphtong reduced to a single vowel ευ >e{w} according to late Hellenistic Greek usage). The critical annotation points out variant Greek readings underlying the Arabic, and refers to the Latin version according to the sources adduced by Bouyges, giving the Latin wording explicitely wherever there are differences with a possible bearing on the text. Another set of notes compares the terminology of the lemmata, representing the usage of an early period of Greek-Arabic and Syriac-Arabic translations and philosophical writing, with the terms used by Averroes in his own paraphrase and exposition of the relevant passages. Some of these are also discussed in the introductory sections.

The basic terms of ontology were treated by M^me^ Bauloye in her annotated translation of Z 1–2, in connection with Z 1, 1028a10 τὸ ὂν λέγεται πολλαχῶς, in Arabic : *inna l-huwiyyata tuqālu ʿalā anwāʿin kaṯīratin*, Averroes : *al-huwiyya wa-l-mawǧūd* (*Tafsīr* 752.3 ad Z c.1). "Concerning the terms *al mawǧūd* and *al-huwiyya*, » she explained in her former study (BEO 49 : 55 n. 7, *cf.* p. 58 with n. 27) "l'un et l'autre traduisent indifféremment τὸ ὂν et τὸ εἶναι », and refers to *Tafsīr* 557.5–558.6 *ad* Δ 7 ; « il semble que, dans ce cas-ci, on trouve chez Averroès une volonté de délimiter l'extension sémantique d'un concept philosophique plutôt qu'une figure de style » – indeed, but determined rather by the varying terminology of the translations of *Metaph.* at his hands. « *Huwiyya* est en effet un terme tiré de la particule copulative *huwa* (il est), dont le

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rôle est d'assurer la liasion entre le prédicat et le sujet. » This is the opinion given by al-Fārābi in his masterly analysis of the translators' proocedure for translating the Greek copula (*K. al-Ḥurūf*, ed. Muḥsin Mahdi, p. 112f.), but is not quite true of the actual usage found in the early texts : *huwiyya*, dependent on Syriac *hāwyā*, translates τὸ ὄν, whereas *anniyya*, a calque modelled on Syriac *haw d-ītaw*, corresponds to τὸ (τὶ ἦν) εἶναι. – It is to be regretted that the many useful notes and references concerning the terminology (starting p. 16ff. with a survey of the Arabic equivalents for ἀπορία) have not been opened up through a bilingual – or, including the Latin, trilingual – *index verborum*.

Book *Bêta* introduces the questions to be studied in metaphysics in the form of fifteen aporias (divided and counted somewhat differently by Averroes, *cf.* Bauloye, ch. 2. p. 31–37) : Is there one science studying the causes, and the substances ? Are there non-sensible substances ? Are genera the first principles of things, and in what sense ? Is there a cause apart from matter ? Are 'unity' and 'being'– οὐσία of the being things, or attributes, and what about the 'intermediate' status of mathematicals ? Criticism of the Platonic and Pythagorean doctrines of the principles being separate formes ; but then (here I quote the fundamental study of Edward Booth, *Aristotelian aporetic ontology in Islamic and Christian thinkers*, Cambridge 1983) "the newly declared οὐσία, the individual substance, had as individual substance become unknowable except in universal terms ; and the abstracted essence took on the detached character of the rejected separate forms of Plato" – for Aristotle himself the "most difficult" apory, *Metaph.* B 4, 999a24 : πασῶν χαλεπωτάτη. While in Aristotle, solutions and clear-cut positions are rare, the Arabic Aristotelian regards the doctrine of the First Teacher on the true wisdom– the First Philosophy investigating the first principles and ultimate causes – as a flawless system based on the principles of demonstrative science. The primacy of metaphysics in particular, and the universal competence of the philosophy in general, are dependent on this assumption. Averroes harmonizes Aristotle's known opinions with one another, with the text at his hands, and with his own conclusions drawn from a millenary of commentary and controversy. In the introductory comments, many an interesting discussion is devoted to this struggle of the Arabic Aristotelian with the apparent insconsistency, and the supposed unity of Aristotle's text, as in the third apory (B 2), where the commentator's task is made even more difficult by a lacuna and transposition in the Arabic text (see p. 62).

The question of the third apory – if there is one science for all the substances – is followed by the fourth : if knowledge of the accidents belongs to one or more sciences. Both are settled by Averroes through refences to the epistemology of the *Analytica Posteriora* (I 3 and I 9, see p. 64-67). The question of the interdependence and hierarchy of the sciences, which "help each other" in providing the proof of existence, and cause, was important for the claims of the philosopher *qua* advocate of demonstrative science, and for his endeavour to place metaphysics on the firm ground of physics – which provides the demonstration of being (*cf.* p. 144f. of the present work). This plays a crucial rôle in his discussion with the doctrines of his predecessors on philosophical theology and in mathematical cosmology. This is why in a text regarded as introductory and preliminary, and therefore poor in cross-references both to Aristotle and his commentators, Greek and Arabic, he insists on inferring Aristotle's true doctrine from an undisputable Aristotelian source on this very point.

The author provides a painstaking analysis of Averroes argument, following closely his discussions of words and readings, his stumbling over difficulties of the transmitted and translated text at his diposal, and the internal consistency of his conceptualization of metaphysical discourse. Still, her perspective upon Averroes' text is somewhat single-minded. She mostly confines herself to explaing Averroes' argument and doctrine from the *Tafsīr Mā ba'd al-ṭabī'a* itself. While permitting an assessment of the relevant passages in the rest of the *Tafsīr* throughout her introductory chapters, she seems to see this as a closed system, not regarding any of the *falāsifa* – Averroes' own adversaries on the very matters discussed here – nor even his own attitudes expressed elsewhere in his commentaries on these and related matters. This may seem justified from the restrictive perspective of the reception of Averroes into mediaeval and early Renaissance Europe, but unsatisfactory with regard to the evolution and scope of his thought, if we want to assess his own attitude from the evidence of his earlier works, previous epitomes and commentaries and the Long Commentaries immediately preceding that on the Metaphysics, and the works of predecessors.

Thus on the topic just mentioned, Averroes's dependance on al-Fārābī's epistemology in his treatment of the *Analytica Posteriora*, his struggle with the positions of Avicenna who in Averroes's eyes made philosophy an easy prey to Ġazāli's criticism, and his own position on the foundation of metaphysics might have been elucidated by a reference of his own statements on Aristotle's *An. post.* I 3 and I 9 in his own *Commentarium magnum* (*Šarḥ al-Burhān*, 294ff. Badawi).

Another case of Averroes's dependence on al-Fārābī's foundation of demonstrative science is found in his classification of demonstrative, dialectical and rhetorical arguments. In *Tafsīr* 186.1-5 (see p. 50f.), he opposes dialectic arguments based on 'common opinion' (*al-mašhūr*) and 'what is evident spontaneously' (*fī bādi' al-ra'y*) to demonstration yielding true wisdom through knowledge of the first and final cause, and requiring definition of the οὐσία (cf. *Tafsīr* 191.6-8). "The discourse which will yield this is demonstrative, while the contrary assertions presented by Aristotle before this are dialectical (*ǧadaliyya*)"

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(192.1-5). (*Cf.* Maroun Aouad, 'Les fondements de la *Rhétorique* d'Aristote reconsidérées par Fārābī, ou le concept de point de vue immédiat et commun', in *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy,* 2. 1992 : 133-80). This is developed at length in Averroes' Middle Commentary on the *Rhetorica* (*Talḫīṣ al-Ḫiṭāba*), *v.* M. Aouad, 'Définition par Averroès du concept de "point de vue immédiat" dans le *Commentaire moyen de la Rhétorique*', in *BEO* 48 (1996), 115-130.

One other example of useful cross-referencing : *Tafsīr* 214.10-13 ad 998a4-6 (v.p. 74, *cf.* p. 105ff. on the 15th apory) concerning the ontological status of mathematicals — the sensible phenomena do not have the same nature as the points, lines and movements treated by the geometers and astronomers : "The subject-matter of the mathematical sciences is different from the sensible things", and this is corroborated by the fact "that movements of the heaven and its circles do not correspond to the movements posited by the astronomer (*ṣāḥib 'ilm al-hay'a*, describing the theoretic model of the celestial motion). This is a favorite theme of Averroes, concerning the competence of the philosopher in cosmology, to be taken up in passionate discussions over the aberrations of mathematical astronomy. Why not put this into context, making alive an ongoing discussion by quoting a few lines from the commentaries on the *Meteorologica* (p. 145 ed. ʿAlawi), *De caelo* (*Commentarium magnum*, I, comm. 90), and the final expression of dispair in face of the apparent incompatibility of physical and mathematical science in the *Tafsīr* on *Metaph*. Lambda (comm. 45) ?

The transliteration follows the system adopted by the journal *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy,* rendering *alif al-waṣl* as <*a*> — an eyesore for every arabist. There are also sundry minor mistakes : 62 ult. "ce qui est absurde" *ḏālika šanuʿa* : leg. *wa-ḏālika šaniʿun* ; 66.ult-67.1 *ṣinaʿat al-mūsīqā* leg. *ṣināʿat al-mūsīqī* ; 74.21 *kilāhimā* leg. *kilāhumā ;* 75.12 *mutaḥarrak* leg. *mutaḥarrik* ; 108.-5 *mabādī* leg. *mabamdi'* ; 108.apu. *usṭuqusāt* leg. *usṭuqussāt*.

In the quotations of Greek words, the word-processor has supplied too many *iota subscripta* (viz., with every *alpha* bearing a *spiritus asper* combined with acute accent) and sundry other mirabilia. But all in all, the layout and typography testify to a brave struggle with the scourge of modern scholarship. May we implore the publisher to allow for a slightly larger typeface in the notes, and more liberal margins, in future publications ?

Summing up, we should be grateful for a valuable contribution for the study of one of the principal exponents of mediaeval Aristotelianism, Arabic-Islamic as well as Hebrew-Jewish and Latin-Christian, to be considered in every future discussion of the scope, aim and place of metaphysics in mediaeval society.

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