

Emanation

As noticed by Dörrie, “emanation” is a metaphor whose philosophical use, although attested in various contexts from the Presocratics to the Stoics, becomes prominent only in late Antiquity as a way to describe the causality of the First Principle. This metaphor conveys the idea of a production which does not imply, as workmanship does, the decision to start a process whose output is the thing the craftsman wanted to make. Rather, “emanation” suggests that the effect flows spontaneously from the very nature of the principle, as light and heat from the sun. Plotinus has recourse to this metaphor especially when faced with the riddle of the derivation of the many from the One. In the myth of the Cave, Plato alludes to the derivation of the manifold Forms from the “Idea of Good” which transcends Being in power and dignity. Since for Plotinus in this myth Plato is speaking of the same principle which in the *Parmenides* he defines as the “one”, the problem arises of how to account for the derivation of the manifold Forms from a principle which is stated to be absolutely simple. Should one refuse to admit that the Forms derive from the One, the latter would no longer be the universal principle; should one admit that the Forms derive indeed from the One, this would *prima facie* undermine its perfect simplicity. Even though an account of Plotinus’ solution of this riddle does not fall within the scope of this introduction, it is useful to remark from the outset that the metaphor of “emanation” concerns primarily the production of the first instance of multiplicity: the intelligible Forms, and the divine Intellect intelligising them. The One–Good is conceived of as a principle provided in and by itself with a transitive power. As the power that fire has to heat cannot be removed from it without infringing its definition, so with the One: the transitive power to produce the many belongs to its notion, in so far as the One coincides for Plotinus with the Good, which is self-diffusive by definition. Hence, it remains unaffected, no matter how many things derive from it: “For think of a spring which has no other origin, but gives the whole of itself to rivers, and is not used up by the rivers but remains itself at rest, but the rivers that rise from it, before each of them flows in a different direction, remain for a while all together, though each of them knows, in a way, the direction in which it is going to let its stream flow” (III 8[30], 10.5–10, trans. Armstrong). As shown by this passage, the metaphor paves the way to the properly pantheistic inference that the nature of the principle transfuses itself into the derivatives. However, this undesired consequence is explicitly ruled out by Plotinus: “It is certainly none of the things of which it is origin” (*ibid.*, 28–29, trans. Armstrong).

This doctrine was transmitted to the Arabic-speaking world via Graeco–Arabic translations. In the formative period of Arabic–Islamic philosophy, it was combined with the idea of creation and even seen as the best way to account for it without giving way to the anthropomorphic implications of another metaphor, that of the craftsman. Later on, theologians stated the clash between the two doctrines, as exemplified by al-Ghazālī.

Emanation: the background

Although the main conduit of the doctrine of emanation was the Graeco–Arabic translation of Neoplatonic texts that took place in the 3rd/9th century, other translations had already prepared the ground for its

understanding as part and parcel of a cosmology based on Aristotle. A century before the rise of Islam, at the north-eastern edge of Roman Syria, Sergius of Resh'aynā (d. 536 CE) translated into Syriac, among other works, also the pseudo-Aristotelian *De mundo* and a treatise by Alexander of Aphrodisias (lost in Greek) on the principles of the universe. Both texts were re-translated into Arabic approximately three centuries later, and both combine with the basic Aristotelian picture of the cosmos a new idea, which does not exist as such in Aristotle: that of a divine pervasive power that reaches the sublunar world through the celestial spheres. In the Arabic version of the pseudo-Aristotelian *De mundo*, which was read aloud at the court of the caliph al-Ma'mūn (r. 198–218/813–833), this divine power is ascribed to God, and its outcome is labelled “creation, *khalq*”. The rejection of anthropomorphism is made explicit: “Thus, it is a more suitable, also truer and more precise, conception of God that his power, which resides in heaven and earth, mountains and water, is the cause of the salvation of things and their basic principle, although it is so far removed from here. For it is unseemly to imagine him as diffused, implanted in everything, inasmuch as it would be unseemly and improper that he be compelled to manipulate earthly phenomena by hand. The image of such physical labor is repulsive” (104.9–105.15 Brafman, trans. Brafman, 195). The Arabic version of the pseudo-Aristotelian *De mundo* is embedded in a “Letter of the Golden House” ascribed to Aristotle in his alleged correspondence with Alexander the Great: in the fiction of the text, “Aristotle” sums up and comments upon what the Greek wise men Orpheus, Homer, and Heraclitus thought about God and the cosmos. Thus the rejection of the anthropomorphic description of creation in terms of workmanship was presented as the theological doctrine of Aristotle, whose works in the same years were translated for and imitated by al-Kindī (d. after 256/870), the philosopher at al-Ma'mūn's court.

For al-Kindī Aristotle was “the most distinguished of the Greeks in philosophy” (*On First Philosophy*, 13.11 Rashed-Jolivet, trans. Ivry, 58); overcoming the polytheism of his people, he had championed the *tawḥīd* (unicity of God) with his doctrine of the unique Immobile Mover. But once the inadequacy of anthropomorphism has been taken for granted, where to find a higher model of causality, apt to account for God's action? Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and the *De caelo* were translated in Kindī's milieu; but in these works God's causality is dealt with only under the form of Aristotle's mention of the first principle as the final cause of celestial motion. The Arabic translation of Plotinus and Proclus filled the lacuna. Both the *Enneads* and Proclus' *Elements of theology* were translated within the “circle of al-Kindī” (Endress, Proclus Arabus; The Circle of al-Kindī), and both versions were heavily adapted. In the Arabic versions of Plotinus and Proclus the doctrine of the derivation of the many from the transcendent One is systematically interpreted as God's creation (in most cases *ibdā'*, but also *khalq*). Plotinus' words are amplified, an Aristotelian terminology is added here and there, and the One turns out to be God Almighty, the Creator. The rejection of the anthropomorphic metaphor of the craftsman is now coupled with the Neoplatonic account of a higher mode of causation: “The action of the First Agent is not preceded by volition, because he acts solely by the fact of his being. (...) He makes and originates things all at one go, being fixed and stable in one state, not shifting from state to state. It is thus that the First Agent must be, fixed and motionless in essence, without motion of any kind. If he is so, he originates all originated things” (*Epistle on the Divine Science*, 174.20–175.3 Badawī, Aflūṭīn, taken from Plotinus' *Enn.* V 3[49], 12.34–36,

trans. Lewis, 321). “Creation” means by now the appearance “all at one go (*duf‘atan wāhidatan*)” of the derived realities from a transcendent principle which remains unaltered. The Aristotelian echo of the Immobile Mover resounds through Plotinus’ account of the timeless radiance of the intelligible beings from the One; both Aristotle’s and Plotinus’ theories of the eternal dependence of an eternal universe upon the first cause count, in this reworking, as an explanation of what creation is, and what it is not. “It is impossible for us to say that the Creator first reflected over how to originate things and then after that originated them. (...) We say that when craftsmen wish to fashion a thing they reflect on that thing and copy what they see and contemplate within themselves (...) whereas when the Creator wishes to make something, he does not envisage patterns within himself. (...) We say that there is between him and his creation no intermediate thing on which he reflects and the help of which he seeks, but that he originated things by the mere fact of his being” (pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle*, X, 162.11–163.8 Badawī, Aflūṭīn, taken from Plotinus’ *Enn.* V 8[31], 7.10–11, trans. Lewis 393–5). As the source of this quotation shows, Plotinus’ doctrine is endorsed by a fictitious “Aristotle”. In fact, most of the *Enneads* translated into Arabic has come down to us under the pseudoepigraphic label of a *Theology* by “Aristotle”, and there is scholarly consensus about the fact that this work was put together within the “circle of al-Kindī”. Thus the idea that God created all things “by the mere fact of its being” (ps.-*Theol. Ar.*, X, 163.8 Badawī, Aflūṭīn), became the doctrine of “Aristotle”. In the Prologue of the *Theology*, the latter declares his wish to add to his *Metaphysics* a theological pinnacle, dealing with God’s causality and its emanation through the descending degrees of reality: “Now we have previously completed an explanation of them [i.e. the four causes matter, form, efficient cause and final cause] in our book which is after the *Physics* (...). Now our aim in this book is the discourse on the Divine Sovereignty, and the explanation of it and how it is the first cause, eternity and time being beneath it, and that it is the cause and originator of causes, in a certain way, and how the luminous force steals from it over mind and, through the medium of mind, over the universal celestial soul, and from mind, through the medium of soul, over nature, and from soul, through the medium of nature, over the thing that come to be and pass away. This action arises from it without motion; the motion of all things comes from it and things move towards it by a kind of longing and desire” (ps.-*Theol. Ar.*, Prologue, 5.10–6.12 Badawī, Aflūṭīn, trans. Lewis, 486–7).

The emanation of divine power thus follows the tripartite hierarchy of Plotinus’ universe: from the One, it flows over Intellect and the cosmic Soul. The finishing touch is the Aristotelian doctrine of the Immobile Mover, whose power to impart movement consists in remaining at rest as the final cause of the cosmic movement. A hierarchy of levels of reality is established: the First Cause transcends not only time, but also eternity, meaning the endless circular movement of the outer sphere; above the visible cosmos there are the supra-sensible principles Soul and Intellect, which both derive from the One, the Creator: “You must dismiss from your imagination all coming into existence in time, if you wish to know how the true everlasting noble essences were originated from the first originator, for they were brought into existence from him without time and with no intermediary between their being originated and made, and the originator and maker. How can their coming into existence be in time, when they are the cause and the regulation and the ordering of time and temporal existences? The cause of time is not under time; no, it exists in a higher and loftier manner, like the relation

between the shadow and the object casting the shadow” (ps.–*Theol. Ar.*, VIII, 114.14–17 Badawī, Aflūṭīn, taken from Plotinus’ *Enn.* V 1[10], 6.19–20, trans. Lewis, 275). The same hierarchy, with the suprasensible principles One, Intellect and Soul followed by the celestial spheres and the sublunar world of coming-to-be and passing away, features in the syllabus taken from Proclus’ *Elements of theology*, the so-called *Book by Aristotle on the exposition of the pure Good (Liber de causis)*. A special emphasis is laid in this writing on the omnipervasive power which emanates from the First Cause: “Every primary cause infuses its effect more powerfully than does a universal second cause” (*Liber de causis*, prop. 1, 3.5 Badawī, al-Aflāṭūniyya, trans. Taylor, 5). Since the first cause is the true One and pure Being, its causality “by the mere fact of its being” consists in producing being, something it alone can do: “All things have essence through the first being (...) This is because, if every cause gives something to what it causes, then undoubtedly the first being gives being to everything it causes. (...) Now let us repeat and say that the first being is at rest and the cause of causes. If it gives being to all things, then it gives [it] to them by way of creation” (*Liber de causis*, prop. 17, 19.2–12 Badawī, al-Aflāṭūniyya, trans. Taylor, 111). Creation consists in giving to derivative realities that property that the principle *is* to the highest degree; hence the labels “pure” or “true”, which convey the Platonic meaning of “the property itself”. Since the Neoplatonic One in the Arabic adaptation of both Plotinus and Proclus is not only the pure Good (*al-khayr al-mahḍ*), as it was in the original Neoplatonic texts, but is also transformed into the primary Being (*al-anniyya al-ūlā*), its causality consists in giving being. To do so, that unique first cause which is the true One, the pure Good and the primary Being has nothing to do if not “remaining” what it is: being flows from it by the mere fact of its being.

The terminology for this notion varies, both in the Arabic Plotinus and the Arabic Proclus: *bajasa* VII and *al-inbijās* are used for πρόοδος *salaka* and *al-sulūk* for φθάνειν but also for πρόοδος; *sāla* is used for ἐκρεῖν and ἐγγύειν. The prevailing terminology is that of the overflow: *fāḍa* and *al-fayḍ* are used for προἰέναι, παράγειν, ἐκφραίνειν, πληροῦν, and ἐπιλάμπειν. Through the cosmic hierarchy outlined above, the emanation of divine causality reaches the individual substances of the sublunar world: “(...) everything that comes to be, falling under time in its substance, has a substance that depends on the pure being, which is both the cause of durability and the cause of all things, whether sempiternal or destructible” (*Liber de causis*, prop. 31, 32.3–4 Badawī, al-Aflāṭūniyya, trans. Taylor, 161). Thus, creation is both the dependence of each and every being from the pure Being, and the emanation of a hierarchy of degrees beneath it: Intellect and the separate substances, the cosmic soul, and the visible world in which the individual souls are dwelling. Some of these realities are also principles, i.e. are endowed with a causal power; but they owe it to the first principle and operate within its all-embracing causality: “It is, therefore, now clear and plain that the first remote cause is more comprehensively and more powerfully the cause of a thing than the proximate cause. (...) The first cause aids the second cause in its activity, because the first cause also effects every activity that the second cause effects, although it effects it in another way [which is] higher and more sublime. (...) The effect of the second cause is only through the power of the first cause. This is because, when the second cause makes a thing, the first cause, which is above it, infuses that thing with its power, so that it adheres powerfully to that thing and conserves it” (*Liber de causis*, prop. 1, 4.4–10 Badawī, al-Aflāṭūniyya, trans. Taylor, 6). This

helps understanding why the Muslim philosophers saw no contradiction whatsoever between “emanation” and creation out of nothing, provided that the latter is interpreted as the total derivation of created things from that unique principle which needs neither preconditions nor instruments in order to operate. The *Liber de causis* states the difference between creation and every other kind of causation, be it the universal action of the separate substances, whose causality does not concern individuals but the whole: no matter how powerful they are, the universal secondary causes cannot create. While creation needs no preconditions, every other causality operates “by way of form” (*Liber de causis*, prop. 17, 19.11 Badawī, al-Aflāṭūniyya, trans. Taylor, 111), having as its precondition being, which is the direct effect of the first cause alone. This distinction between the causality “by way of creation” and that “by way of form”, presented in a sentence of the *Liber de causis* which has no antecedent in Proclus, paves the way to the understanding of the (revised) Neoplatonic emanation as the philosophical account for God’s creation.

Emanation: the doctrine in Arabic philosophy and its theological rejection

In his *On first philosophy* al-Kindī borrows from Philoponus’ anti-eternalist polemic, which was known to him through the Arabic translation of at least some parts of the *De aeternitate mundi*, a series of arguments against the actual infinity of body, bodily movement, and time. Implying as it does his allegiance to the doctrine of creation in time, this seems to prevent him from siding with that of emanation. In-depth analysis of this point would exceed the limits of this survey. Leaving aside the question of the inner consistency that al-Kindī was able to reach, it is worth mentioning that he did both reject the possibility of an infinite stretch of time, and espouse the doctrine of causality by emanation in the sense outlined above, which in his view coincides with creation. He says: “the emanation (*fayḍ*) of unity from the True One, the First, is the coming to be of every sensible object and what is attached to the sensible object; and the True One causes every one of them to exist when it causes them to be through its being. Therefore the cause of coming to be is due to the True One, which does not acquire unity from a donor but is rather one through its essence. Moreover, that which is made to be is not eternal, and that which is not eternal is created, i.e., it comes to be from a cause; consequently that which is made to be is created” (*On first philosophy*, 97.8–12 Rashed-Jolivet, trans. Ivry, 113).

In his *Views of the citizens of the best state*, al-Fārābī (d. 339/950) endorses the Neoplatonic emanation as the description of the causality of the first principle: “The genesis of that which comes into existence from it takes place by way of an emanation (*‘alā jihati fayḍin*). (...) Again, by giving existence to something else the First does not attain a perfection which it did not have before (...). Nor is it in need, in order for the existence of something else to emanate from its existence, of anything other than its very essence, neither of a quality which would be in it nor of a motion through which it would acquire a state which it did not have before” (*Views of the citizens of the best state*, 88.15, 90.11, 92. 8–10 Walzer, trans. Walzer, 89, 91, and 93). It is in this work that emanation is shaped for the first time in the arrangement of the ten celestial spheres established by Ptolemy, from that of the Fixed Stars to that of the Moon. According to al-Fārābī, each separate substance with its sphere emanates from the principle which is above it through an act of intellection: this intellection results in the “substantification” (*tajawhur*) of the related celestial sphere. Thus, emanation

implies a knowing act on the part of the emanated reality, which gives rise to a second principle after the First: “From the First emanates the existence of the Second. This Second is, again, an utterly incorporeal substance, and is not in matter. It thinks of (intelligizes) its own essence and thinks the First. (...) As a result of its thinking the First, a third existent follows necessarily from it; and as a result of its substantification in its specific essence, the existence of the First Heaven follows necessarily” (*Views of the citizens of the best state*, 100.11–15 Walzer, trans. Walzer, 101). This pattern is repeated along the ten celestial spheres, from the First Heaven to the sphere of the Moon. Several philosophical and cosmological traditions lie in the background of this doctrine. On the one hand, there are the Greek cosmological ideas: Ptolemy’s cosmological system, and a well established tradition of thought that had long before stated the animation of the heavens, and which is reflected in Alexander of Aphrodisias’ treatise on the principles of the universe, whose Arabic translation has been mentioned above. On the other hand, there is Neoplatonism. The Farabian “Second” is described as a separate Intellect which intelligizes the First, an account which is clearly reminiscent of Plotinus’ doctrine of the “generation” of the Intellect from the One. In the non-temporal procession outlined above, the Intellect arises through a cognitive “return” towards the One, which is accomplished by the first item that emanates directly from the One, i.e. the indeterminate power to give rise to a multiplicity. The relationship of dependence that this indeterminate power has towards the One is expressed by the image of its turning back towards it, and the rise of the intelligible world is presented by Plotinus as the outcome of this process. Plotinus warns the reader against understanding this as a real process, while in reality it is the analysis of the logical steps driving from the absolute simplicity of the One to the living multiplicity of the Intellect and the intelligible forms; but what is important to keep in mind here is that in this procession from the One the decisive step is an act of intellection accomplished by its first offspring, an intellection that has the One itself as its object. This is argued in a number of treatises (esp. V 1[10], V 3[49], and V 4[7]) whose Arabic translation was available to al-Fārābī. However, this is only a part of the story. In the *Elements of theology* (prop. 173) Proclus had maintained that every intellectual substance intelligizes not only itself, but also what is above it and what is below it. This doctrine too was available in Arabic, both in itself and embedded in the *Liber de causis* (prop. 7). In addition, the *Liber de causis* incorporated also prop. 177 of the *Elements of theology*, stating that “Every intelligence is full of forms” (*Liber de causis*, prop. 9, 12.19 Badawī, al-Aflāṭūniyya, trans. Taylor, 74). The Farabian theory of cosmic emanation results from the intermingling of all these different patterns, which combine with one another in a relatively new picture if compared with Neoplatonism, both in itself and in its adaptations of Kindī’s times. Parting company with the Arabic Neoplatonic texts which play such an important role in his metaphysics and cosmology, al-Fārābī grants the first principle a feature, inspired by Aristotle, that the Neoplatonic One does not possess: intellectual activity. This feature deserves attention because it is potentially conflicting with the spontaneous radiance of the derivatives implied in the doctrine of emanation. Although al-Fārābī does not address this question, the move to define the First as “actual Intellect, ‘aql bi-l-fi’” (*Views of the citizens of the best state*, 70.2 Walzer, trans. Walzer, 71) elicits the twin issue of the free will of the First in emanation, and of its knowledge of derivatives. In granting intellection to the First, and more in general in the main picture of “emanation”, the Farabian

assessment is a turning point in Arabic philosophy. Al-Fārābī created out of a variety of sources a new frame, destined to be developed (by the *falāsifa*) or rejected (by the theologians). In the Farabian version of emanatism, the idea ultimately based on Aristotelian cosmology that the celestial spheres consist of immaterial realities moved each by an intellect is combined with the Plotinian account of the non-temporal “generation” of the Intellect from the One. But the doctrine that the first derivative reality arises from an act of intellection does no longer account, as it was in Plotinus, only for the rise of Intellect from the One: for al-Fārābī, who follows in the footsteps of the Arabic Proclus and the *Liber de causis*, this a-temporal process of “generation” through intellection is repeated as many times as there are separate intellectual substances. Once moulded into the shape of Aristotle’s and Ptolemy’s universe, the Neoplatonic theory is transformed into the topic that after the First there are ten separate substances of diminishing power, whose last item produces the sublunar world. The lowest intellectual substance is the same principle which in the treatise *On the Intellect* al-Fārābī identifies with the Agent Intellect of the Peripatetic tradition. However, at variance with Alexander of Aphrodisias who had identified the Agent Intellect with the Immobile Mover, al-Fārābī keeps them carefully distinct from one another. Full of intelligible forms as every separate intellectual substance (*Liber de causis*), the Agent Intellect operates both on the sublunar matter, providing it with the forms of natural things, and on the human potential intellect, allowing the latter to participate in the intelligibles that it contains in itself.

The Farabian synthesis of Aristotelian-Peripatetic metaphysics and Ptolemaic cosmology, combined within the main frame of the Neoplatonic emanation reworked in the pseudo-*Theology of Aristotle* and in the *Liber de causis*, was inherited by Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037). In the metaphysical part of the *Book of the Cure*, the latter sides with creation out of nothing (*ibdāʿ*). The whole (*al-kull*) in relationship with the first cause is said to be a creature, *mubdaʿ*; absolute creation (*al-ibdāʿ al-muṭlāq*) equals absolute existentialisation (*al-taʿyīs al-muṭlāq*). In doing this, the One is indeed the creator of everything (*muḥdith*), but Ibn Sīnā carefully removes any temporality from this relationship of dependence of the created universe from its *muḥdith* (*Kitāb al-Shifāʿ. Ilāhiyyāt*, VIII, 3, 342.15–343.6 Mūsā *et al.*) There is only one principle which has the power for such an existentialisation: the First, the necessary existent (*wājib al-wujūd, necesse esse*), which does not possess a quiddity (*māhiyya*) as distinct from the pure Being, called *anniyya* as in the foundational texts of the Arabic Neoplatonic tradition (*Kitāb al-Shifāʿ. Ilāhiyyāt*, VIII, 4, 344.10 Mūsā *et al.*). This principle, as was the case with al-Fārābī, is the true One (*Kitāb al-Shifāʿ. Ilāhiyyāt*, VIII, 4, 343.10–15 Mūsā *et al.*). Once again, the problem arises of how to account for the production of the many from a principle which is perfectly simple by definition; once again, the solution begins by ruling out the possibility for it to undergo a change, as would be the decision to create: such an innovation in the will (*ḥudūth al-irāda*) would contradict the very definition of the *necesse esse* (*Kitāb al-Shifāʿ. Ilāhiyyāt*, IX, 1, 376.10–17 Mūsā *et al.*). Ibn Sīnā has recourse to the Neoplatonic model outlined above: the power that the principle has to produce its derivatives is included in the definition itself: put otherwise, the good “overflows” from it (*Kitāb al-Shifāʿ. Ilāhiyyāt*, IX, 4, 402.16–403.1 Mūsā *et al.*). Like in the Arabic Plotinus and in al-Fārābī, emanation (*fayḍ*) takes the form of the origination of a primary, most excellent intellectual substance (*Kitāb al-Shifāʿ. Ilāhiyyāt*, IX, 4, 404.4–8 Mūsā

et al.). The axiom that from what is absolutely one, in so far as it is one, only one thing can proceed (*Kitāb al-Shifāʾ. Ilāhiyyāt*, IX, 4, 405.13–14 Mūsā *et al.*) makes explicit the rule of Fārābī’s universe: the more a degree is near the One, the more it is simple and perfect. Conversely, the more a principle is removed from it, the less it is powerful. Hence, the last of the separate intellectual substances is, in purely Farabian vein, the “donor of the forms” both to the sublunar world and to our minds. This principle subdivides into a multiplicity what in the higher intellectual substances is more unitary and simple. In setting the scene of the hierarchy of the degrees after the First, and in granting to the lowest intellectual substance the causality with respect to the sublunar world and the human mind, Ibn Sīnā follows in al-Fārābī’s footsteps. But he addresses two questions which remained implicit in al-Fārābī: that of the free will of the One in giving rise to its derivatives, and that of the knowledge it has of them. Both questions arise from the Farabian move to add to the Neoplatonic One the Aristotelian feature of being an Intellect: Ibn Sīnā frames much of his discussion of the two issues against the backdrop of a Neoplatonic emanation whose starting point is no longer a principle located beyond Being and Intellect, as it was in Plotinus and Proclus: Ibn Sīnā’s first cause is at one and the same time the One, God Almighty, and the divine Mind of Book XII of Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*. Hence the effort Ibn Sīnā makes to disentangle *fayḍ* from necessitarianism, and God’s transcendence from unawareness of its offsprings and their deeds. “The coming to be of the whole from Him is not by way of nature in that the existence of the whole comes to be from Him with neither knowledge nor satisfaction on His part. How can this be true when He is a pure intellect that intellectually apprehends Himself? Hence, He must intellectually apprehend that the existence of the whole is a necessary consequence of Himself, because He apprehends Himself only intellectually, as a pure intellect and a first principle. He only intellectually apprehends the existence of the whole [proceeding] from Him in being its principle. There is in His essence neither an impediment for nor an aversion to the proceeding of the whole from Him. (...) Hence, the First is satisfied with the emanation of the whole from Him.” (*Kitāb al-Shifāʾ. Ilāhiyyāt*, IX, 4, 402.14–403.3 Mūsā *et al.*, trans. Marmura, 327). Accordingly, the knowledge that the First has of the individuals of the sublunar world is that of their intelligible features. Nothing individual escapes it (*fa-lā yaʿzibu ʿanhu shayʿun shakhṣiyyun*), this is Ibn Sīnā’s conviction; however, in the explanation of how this is possible he argues that the First knows individuals in so far as they can be the object of intellection, i.e. insofar as they are universal, *min haythu hiya kulliyyatun* (*Kitāb al-Shifāʾ. Ilāhiyyāt*, VIII, 6, 359.12–360.3 Mūsā *et al.*).

Neither explanation did sound convincing to al-Ghazālī, who listed eternalism and Ibn Sīnā’s account of God’s knowledge of individuals as two of the three examples of the philosophers’ outspoken unbelief: “If someone asks ‘now that you have discussed in detail the teaching of these [philosophers], do you [also] say decisively that they hold unbelief (*kufr*) and that the killing of someone who upholds their convictions is obligatory?’ We answer: pronouncing them unbelievers must be done in three questions. One of them is the question of the world’s pre-eternity and their saying that the substances are pre-eternal. The second is their statement that God’s knowledge does not encompass the temporally created particulars among individual [existents]. (...) Such a position is manifest unbelief, which none of the various groups of Muslim [ever] held” (*Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, 376.2–10 Bouyges, trans. Marmura, 226). In the theological discourse, a different

account of God's causality was deemed necessary for believers, an account which implied the rejection of the philosophical doctrine of emanation. Those believers seeking for the support of *Kalām* (speculative theology) were urged to replace it with the assessment of the unconditioned free will of God as the only rationale behind creation. There is no scholarly consensus on Ghazālī's own cosmological convictions, i.e. whether or not he held an unambiguous occasionalist position, but his rejection of al-Fārābī's and Ibn Sīnā's emanationist metaphysics is widely accepted in scholarship. After the clash between the theological and philosophical accounts of God's creation, emanationism survived in a variety of forms. To the extent in which it was embedded in a number of writings on occult sciences whose most imposing example is the encyclopaedia of the Brethren of Purity, and was combined with Gnostic accounts of various kinds, the doctrine of emanation fuelled the pantheistic background of Islamic mysticism best exemplified by Ibn 'Arabī (d. 638/1240). In the Muslim West, the doctrine of emanation was known through the *Epistles* of the Brethren of Purity, which had some circulation in al-Andalus, and mostly through the works of al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā. Within the main frame of the Aristotelian universe endorsed by Ibn Rushd (d. 595/1198), the Farabian and Avicennian hierarchy of the degrees of supra-sensible reality after the First survived only in the residual form of the Agent Intellect as a separate substance, distinct from and subordinated to the First Principle. There is a scholarly debate about a possible evolution of Ibn Rushd from an initial allegiance to the emanationist model to a rejection of it by the time he completed the *Tahāfut al-tahāfut*, but emanation is rejected in the *Long commentary on the Metaphysics*, admittedly a late work. Replaced in Ibn Rushd's thought by a cosmology which was intended to counter Ghazālī's attack on Ibn Sīnā by being as faithful as possible to Aristotle, emanationism was kept alive in the East of the Muslim world, within the context of post-Avicennian thought. But the doctrine outlined above was also deeply transformed: in the illuminationist school which took issue with Suhrawardī (d. 632/1234), and more in general in the philosophical tradition of Ismā'īlism, emanation provided the metaphysical background to mysticism on the one hand, and to the eschatological expectation of the final theophany, on the other.

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