

NICOLA POLLONI

## Gundissalinus and Avicenna: Some Remarks on an Intricate Philosophical Connection

Dominicus Gundissalinus is a peculiar figure in the twelfth-century cultural landscape. Born in the Iberian Peninsula between 1115 and 1125, he received his philosophical education in Chartres possibly under Thierry of Chartres and William of Conches as many traces in his original productions indicate<sup>1</sup>. At least since 1148, Gundissalinus was archdeacon of Cuéllar, a village not far from Segovia, where supposedly he was resident until 1161<sup>2</sup>. Then, he moved to Toledo, where he was based from 1162. This fact is to be linked to the presence, in the Castilian town, of the Jewish philosopher Abraham ibn Daud. As pointed out by Bertolacci<sup>3</sup>, Ibn Daud's translation of the prologue to Avicenna's *Liber sufficientiae* — i.e., the *Kitāb al-Šifā'* — is to be seen as an invitation to the Toledan archbishop, John II, to sponsor and support a series of translations into Latin of Avicenna's work. As a result, Gundissalinus arrived in Toledo, his presence probably required there by the same archbishop with the purpose of collaborating with Ibn Daud on the 'Avicenna project', the first accomplishment of which was the Latin translation of Avicenna's *De anima*, realized before 1166<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. N. HÄRING, *Thierry of Chartres and Dominicus Gundissalinus*, « Mediaeval Studies », 26, 1964, pp. 271-286; K. M. FREDBORG, *The Latin Rhetorical Commentaries by Thierry of Chartres*, Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Toronto 1988; EAD., *The Dependence of Petrus Helias' Summa super Priscianum on William of Conches' Glosae super Priscianum*, « Cahiers de l'Institut du Moyen Âge grec et latin », 11, 1973, pp. 1-57; A. FIDORA, *Le débat sur la création: Guillaume de Conches, maître de Dominique Gundisalvi?*, in B. OBRIST, I. CAIAZZO eds., *Guillaume de Conches: Philosophie et science au XII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, SISMEL - Edizioni del Galluzzo, Firenze 2011, pp. 271-288; N. POLLONI, *Thierry of Chartres and Gundissalinus on Spiritual Substance: The Problem of Hylomorphic Composition*, « Bulletin de Philosophie Médiévale », 57, 2015, pp. 35-57; and ID., *Elementi per una biografia di Dominicus Gundisalvi*, « Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Âge », 82, 2015, pp. 7-22.

<sup>2</sup> See L. M. VILLAR GARCÍA, *Documentación medieval de la Catedral de Segovia (1115-1300)*, Universidad de Salamanca, Salamanca 1990, p. 109, n. 61.

<sup>3</sup> A. BERTOLACCI, *A Community of Translators. The Latin Medieval Versions of Avicenna's Book of the Cure*, in C. J. MEWS, J. N. CROSSLEY eds., *Communities of Learning. Networks and the Shaping of Intellectual Identity in Europe 1100-1500*, Brepols, Turnhout 2011, pp. 37-54.

<sup>4</sup> The translation of *De anima*, indeed, is accompanied by a dedicatory letter to John II, who died in 1166: for this reason, there is no doubt that the *terminus ante quem* of this translation is to be found in that year and, consequently, that the *De anima* is the first complete translation of a work by Avicenna realised in Toledo by Gundissalinus. See also N. POLLONI, *The Toledan Translation Movement and Gundissalinus: Some Remarks on His Activity and Presence in Castile*, in Y. BEALE-RIVAYA, J. BUSIC eds., *Companion to Medieval Toledo. Shared Common Places (Toledo, 711-1517)*, forthcoming.

Gundissalinus remained in Toledo until 1181, the year in which he supposedly finished his work as translator and left the Castilian town<sup>5</sup>. After that date, indeed, he probably returned to Segovia, where he is attested in 1190 participating at the cathedral chapter, the last witness we have to his life. During the twenty years Gundissalinus spent in Toledo, he worked on the Latin translation of approximately twenty works, made by working in tandem with Ibn Daud and Johannes Hispanus<sup>6</sup>.

The translations were realized in a biphasic process of verbal rendering of the Arabic into Iberian Vernacular and then from Vernacular into written Latin<sup>7</sup>. Naturally Gundissalinus was responsible of the second part of this process, while Ibn Daud and Johannes Hispanus were dedicated to the first part. Some passages of Gundissalinus's original writings, where the author presents calques of excerpts from the Arabic sources different from the Latin translations, seem to indicate that Gundissalinus, at least in a later period of his life, learned Arabic<sup>8</sup>.

The translations realised by Gundissalinus have some peculiarities in comparison to the work by Gerard of Cremona. While the latter worked on an evidently larger number of translations, with a variety of authors and disciplines

<sup>5</sup> M. ALONSO ALONSO, *Notas sobre los traductores toledanos Domingo Gundisalvo y Juan Hispano*, «al-Andalus», 8, 1943 pp. 155-188.

<sup>6</sup> See D. N. HASSE, A. BÜTTNER, *Notes on Anonymous Twelfth-Century Translations of Philosophical Texts from Arabic into Latin on the Iberian Peninsula*, in D. N. HASSE, A. BERTOLACCI eds., *The Arabic, Hebrew, and Latin Reception of Avicenna's Physics and Cosmology*, Berlin - Boston 2017, forthcoming.

<sup>7</sup> See M.-T. D'ALVERNY, *Les traductions à deux interprètes, d'arabe en langue vernaculaire et de langue vernaculaire en latin*, in G. CONTAMINE ed., *Traduction et traducteurs au Moyen Âge. Actes du colloque international du CNRS organisée à Paris, Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes, les 26-28 mai 1986*, Éditions du CNRS, Paris 1989, pp. 193-206; C. BURNETT, *Literal Translation and Intelligent Adaptation amongst the Arabic-Latin Translators of the First Half of the Twelfth Century*, in B. M. SCARCIA AMORETTI ed., *La diffusione delle scienze islamiche nel Medio Evo Europeo*, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, Roma 1987, pp. 9-28; and C. BURNETT, *Translating from Arabic into Latin in the Middle Ages: Theory, Practice, and Criticism*, in S. G. LOFTS, P. W. ROSEMAN eds., *Éditer, traduire, interpreter: essais de méthodologie philosophique*, Peeters, Louvain 1997, pp. 55-78.

<sup>8</sup> This possibility seems to be corroborated by some textual traces suggesting that Gundissalinus used the original Arabic text of Avicenna's *Ilāhiyyāt*. See N. POLLONI, *Aristotle in Toledo: Gundissalinus, the Arabs, and Gerard of Cremona's Translations*, in C. BURNETT, P. MANTAS eds., 'Ex Oriente Lux'. *Translating Words, Scripts and Styles in the Medieval Mediterranean World*, CNERU, Córdoba 2016 (Arabica Veritas, IV), pp. 147-185. This could explain the authorship, attested by the manuscript tradition, of some Latin translations to Gundissalinus alone: and the acquisition of Arabic is a necessary, though not sufficient, condition to state this point. The attributions of the Latin manuscripts, indeed, should not be taken as a proof of Gundissalinus's knowledge of Arabic, since the name of the translating collaborator could have been missed by the tradition. In this way, new examinations of the tradition of every single work translated by Gundissalinus should be made at some point in the future, in order to clarify this point, together with an overall analysis of the different textual versions of the excerpts presented by Gundissalinus in his original production.

(from philosophy to geomancy), Gundissalinus worked only on philosophical texts and those mostly of Arabic authors, both Islamic and Jewish. In this respect, Avicenna plays a key role among the translations produced by Gundissalinus, since he worked on the Latin translation of the *De anima*, *Liber de philosophia prima*, the first three books of the *Physica*, parts of the *Isagoge* and *Posterior Analytics*, excerpts from *Meteora*, the *De medicinis cordialibus*, and the pseudo-Avicennian *Liber celi et mundi*. All of these texts, in interconnection with further Latin and Arabic sources, mainly Ibn Gabirol and al-Fārābī, have a specific textual and doctrinal influence on Gundissalinus's original philosophical production.

Avicenna is the author who, for the number of writings translated and their complexity, would in many respects define Gundissalinus's Toledan work as translator and philosopher. In this connection Abraham ibn Daud's position as a convinced Avicennist, who had first-hand knowledge of Arabic philosophy should be recalled. Ibn Daud supplied, probably, the organisation and made decisions as to what texts were to be translated. Furthermore, and even more importantly, it was he who interpreted the texts in the Arabic-into-Vernacular part of the biphasic translating method adopted in Toledo. The role played by the Jewish philosopher is pivotal, and Ibn Daud influenced also Gundissalinus's original philosophical productions, especially though his criticism of Ibn Gabirol's ontology<sup>9</sup>.

Traditionally, six original writings have been attributed to Gundissalinus: *De unitate et uno*<sup>10</sup>, *De scientiis*<sup>11</sup>, *De immortalitate animae*<sup>12</sup>, *De anima*<sup>13</sup>, *De divisione philosophiae*<sup>14</sup>, and *De processione mundi*<sup>15</sup>. The list of Gundissalinus's works,

<sup>9</sup> Cf. N. POLLONI, *Glimpses of the Invisible: Doctrines and Sources of Dominicus Gundissalinus' Metaphysics*, forthcoming.

<sup>10</sup> GUNDISSALINUS, *De unitate et uno*, ed. P. CORRENS, *Die dem Boethius fälschlich zugeschriebene Abhandlung des Dominicus Gundisalvi De unitate*, «Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters», 1/1, 1891, pp. 3-11; GUNDISSALINUS, *El Liber de unitate et uno*, ed. M. ALONSO ALONSO, «Pensamiento», 12, 1956, pp. 69-77; and GUNDISSALINUS, *De unitate et uno*, ed. M. J. SOTO BRUNA, C. ALONSO DEL REAL, *De unitate et uno de Dominicus Gundissalinus*, EUNSA, Pamplona 2015.

<sup>11</sup> GUNDISSALINUS, *De scientiis*, ed. M. ALONSO ALONSO, Editorial Maestre, Madrid - Granada 1954.

<sup>12</sup> GUNDISSALINUS, *De immortalitate animae*, ed. G. BÜLOW, *Des Dominicus Gundissalinus Schrift Von der Unsterblichkeit der Seele*, «Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters», 2/3, 1897, pp. 1-38.

<sup>13</sup> GUNDISSALINUS, *De anima*, ed. J. T. MUCKLE, *The Treatise De anima of Dominicus Gundissalinus*, «Mediaeval Studies», 2, 1940, pp. 23-103; and GUNDISSALINUS, *De anima*, ed. C. ALONSO DEL REAL, M. J. SOTO BRUNA, *El Tractatv de anima atribuido a Dominicus Gvundif[s]salinvs*, EUNSA, Pamplona 2009.

<sup>14</sup> GUNDISSALINUS, *De divisione philosophiae*, ed. L. BAUR, «Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters», 4/2, 1903, pp. 3-142.

<sup>15</sup> GUNDISSALINUS, *De processione mundi*, ed. G. BÜLOW, *Des Dominicus Gundissalinus Schrift Von dem Hervorgange der Welt*, «Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie und Theologie des Mittelalters», 24/3, 1925, pp. 1-56; and D. GUNDISSALINUS, *De processione mundi*, ed. M. J. SOTO BRUNA, C. ALONSO DEL REAL, *De processione mundi. Estudio y edición crítica del tratado de D. Gundisalvo*, EUNSA, Pamplona 1999.

nevertheless, has undergone a certain degree of reassessment in the last six decades, as a consequence of the problematization of the manuscript tradition. In the first place, at least one further work should be added to the list, that is, the *Liber mahameleth* whose production is directly related to Gundissalinus's circle as pointed out by Charles Burnett and the editor of the text, A. M. Vlasschaert<sup>16</sup>. The *Liber mahameleth* is a peculiar treatise which deals mainly with the practical application of arithmetical and algebraic operation to everyday life, with a specific interest in commerce. Nonetheless, since this writing does not have a philosophical nature, and its author is to have been amongst the members of the 'Gundissalinus's circle' and, perhaps, not Gundissalinus himself, it will not be considered in the present analysis. Another work that is to be linked to Gundissalinus's team is, with all probability, the anonymous treatise *On the Peregrination of the Soul in the Afterlife* discovered by d'Alverny: this work is dependent on Gundissalinus's writings in a very peculiar way, but since the authorship of this writing has not been demonstrated yet, the *Peregrinatio* will not be discussed here either<sup>17</sup>.

The attribution of the *De immortalitate animae* to Gundissalinus has also been called into question. The hypothesis of a different authorship, rather than the Toledan philosopher, is rooted on the twofold manuscript tradition of this treatise, that ascribes the work to both Gundissalinus and William of Auvergne. While the critical editor, Bülow, produced a *stemma codicum* which claims Gundissalinus's authorship, some scholars, particularly, A. Masnovo and B. Allard<sup>18</sup>, have criticised this attribution (and the *stemma codicum*), proposing William as the author of the *De immortalitate animae*. Even though further data seem to oppose this last hypothesis, I shall not consider the treatise as a work by Gundissalinus.

Finally, the specific problems arising from the consideration of Gundissalinus's *De scientiis* should be underlined. In this respect, there is no doubt about the attribution: the author is Gundissalinus. The problem, nonetheless, resides on

<sup>16</sup> See *Le Liber mahameleth*, critical edition by A. M. Vlasschaert, Steiner, Stuttgart 2010; and *Liber mahamelet*, critical edition by J. Sesiano, Springer, Berlin 2014.

<sup>17</sup> M.-T. d'Alverny, *Les pérégrinations de l'âme dans l'autre monde d'après un anonyme de la fin du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, « Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge », 13, 1940-1942, pp. 280-299.

<sup>18</sup> See A. Masnovo, *Da Guglielmo d'Auvergne a san Tommaso d'Aquino*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano 1945-6, pp. 119-123; B. Allard, *Note sur le De immortalitate animae de Guillaume d'Auvergne*, « Bulletin de philosophie médiévale », 18, 1976, pp. 68-72; and Id., *Nouvelles additions et corrections au Répertoire de Glorieux: à propos de Guillaume d'Auvergne*, « Bulletin de philosophie médiévale », 10-12, 1968-70, pp. 79-80.

the stylistic and, consequently, epistemic nature of the *De scientiis*. The work is, essentially, a Latin version of al-Farabi's *Kitāb Ihṣā' al-'Ulūm*. Gerard of Cremona produced a literal and comprehensive Latin translation of this Farabian work<sup>19</sup>. In comparison to Gerard's version, Gundissalinus's *De scientiis* presents a wide degree of textual and doctrinal alteration, for Gundissalinus cuts many passages he did not agree with, modifies other parts of the text, and in general re-shapes the whole writing into something that has a hybrid literary statute, for it is neither a pure translation nor an actual original writing. All the same, the problems regarding the status of the *De scientiis* does not affect the present study since there is no substantial influence of Avicenna in this writing, textual or doctrinal.

A reliable attribution to Gundissalinus's authorship can be stated, therefore, for four philosophical writings: *De unitate et uno*, *De anima*, *De divisione philosophiae* and *De processione mundi*. In these four texts is condensed Gundissalinus's attempt to renovate the Latin discussion on three main topics: psychology, epistemology and metaphysics, and in all these three aspects, Avicenna plays a primary role.

Gundissalinus's *De anima* tries to give an overall account of the soul, from the problem of its origins, to its powers and its knowledge once separated from the body. In doing so, Gundissalinus uses mainly three sources: Qusta ibn Luqa's *Differentia animae et spiritus*, Avicenna's *De anima*, and Ibn Gabirol's *Fons vitae*, which are accompanied by a number of Latin authorities, amongst whom Augustine features. This syncretic tendency to melt together different traditions and perspectives is even stronger in the epistemological treatise *De divisione philosophiae*. This treatise, as the title suggests, is focused on the articulation of knowledge. Gundissalinus's purpose in writing on the overall articulation of knowledge entails the use of a vast number of sources on which a complete epistemological system could, and should, be based.

Furthermore, Gundissalinus dedicates two treatises to metaphysics, the *De unitate et uno* and *De processione mundi*. The *De unitate* is short: Gundissalinus discusses almost exclusively the theme of Oneness, and then, the metaphysical difference between pure Unity and derived unity. The main source, here, is Ibn Gabirol's *Fons vitae*, from which Gundissalinus took, besides the doctrine of universal hylomorphism, Ibn Gabirol's cosmological progression. These features are joined to Boethius's authority stating that «quicquid est, ideo est, quia

<sup>19</sup> See AL-FĀRĀBĪ, *Über die Wissenschaften / De scientiis: Nach der lateinischen Übersetzung Gerhards von Cremona*, ed. F. SCHUPP, Felix Meiner Verlag, Hamburg 2005.

unum est»<sup>20</sup> a kind of thematic refrain in the *De unitate*. In the *De processione mundi*, written after the *De unitate*, Gundissalinus presents his own cosmological synthesis, and tries to resolve some of the most controversial problems discussed in his time by a *Timaeus*-based viewpoint basically using Avicenna's and Ibn Gabirol's ontologies.

#### THE TEXTUAL PRESENCE OF AVICENNA IN GUNDISSALINUS'S WORKS

Gundissalinus makes a wide use of Avicenna's writing, presented through quotations and implicit references to his works. Nonetheless, Gundissalinus pursues a kind of *alteration strategy* while quoting Avicenna and his other Arabic sources<sup>21</sup>. Gundissalinus's relation with his Arabic sources is marked by a peculiar twofold approach. The Toledan philosopher is, at one and the same time, a translator from Arabic into Latin, and *the* translator of many of the sources upon which he bases his own philosophical reflection. From this perspective, the traditional problem of the interpretative freedom of the translator — or better, the hermeneutical stratification to which the translated text is exposed — finds a particular outcome. Gundissalinus interprets the original text while translating it into Latin, and then, he re-interprets the same text when he uses (and quotes) it in his original production. And since Gundissalinus's works are for the most part *collationes* of quotations, whose text only rarely corresponds literally to that of the sources he is quoting, the recognition of this discrepancy offers a thorny problem to the scholarship dealing with Gundissalinus.

In the first place, Gundissalinus's use of his sources is marked by blind quotations. In the *De processione mundi* alone, there are more than one hundred direct quotations of excerpts derived from Arabic and Latin authors, and none of them makes explicit reference to its original source. On the contrary, Gundissalinus inserts on some occasions false references to Aristotle, while quoting other authors, especially Avicenna<sup>22</sup>. For example, in the *De anima*, when Gundissalinus states that:

«Ex his igitur manifestum est quod cum nec vita nec una perfectionum sive bonitatum retenta sit apud primum principium in prima genitura, sicut Aristoteles dixit, tamen non omne corpus est receptibile vitae quia caret aptitudine recipiendi eam»<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>20</sup> GUNDISSALINUS, *De unitate et uno*, ed. CORRENS, p. 3, 8-9

<sup>21</sup> Cf. N. POLLONI, *Gundissalinus on Necessary Being: Textual and Doctrinal Alterations in the Exposition of Avicenna's Metaphysics*, «Arabic Sciences and Philosophy», 26/1, 2016, pp. 129-160.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. POLLONI, *Aristotle in Toledo: Gundissalinus, the Arabs, and Gerard of Cremona's Translations* cit.

<sup>23</sup> GUNDISSALINUS, *De anima*, ed. ALONSO DEL REAL, p. 116, 9-13.



He is actually quoting a passage from Avicenna's *De medicinis cordialibus*, where Gundissalinus could read:

«Nec vita nec ulla perfectionum aut bonitatum est retenta apud primum principium in prima genitura, sed receptibilia quandoque sunt carentia aptitudine recipienti ea ...»<sup>24</sup>.

This is just one example of Gundissalinus's attitude towards the quotations he makes and the references which accompany them. It should be added to this that Gundissalinus's most common stylistic manoeuvre is to isolate sentences from the context of the original source and integrate them in a new context, often composed of a variety of isolated quoted sentences, whose horizon of meaning is sensibly different from the original. On some occasions, the purpose of quoting such short sentences, without displaying any relevant content, is completely unclear. On other occasions, this attitude corresponds to Gundissalinus's attempt to produce a theoretical synthesis between doctrinal cores he perceived as opposite to each other.

Not all the quotations presented by Gundissalinus, though, are short or melded with other textual sources. In some occasions, and basically when using materials from Avicenna's works, Gundissalinus quotes large excerpts, even entire chapters. The length of these excerpts is directly related to the theoretical relevance they have in Gundissalinus's work, that is, the doctrinal role played by Avicenna's quotations in three works: *De processione mundi*, *De anima*, and *De divisione philosophiae*. Leaving aside the *De immortalitate animae*, whose authorship is still dubious, and the *De scientiis*, which is a 'creative translation' of al-Fārābī's *Kitāb Iḥṣā' al-'Ulūm*, one should mention the reasons for the absence of Avicenna from the one treatise left, the *De unitate et uno*, before passing on to analyse his presence in the other three works.

Gundissalinus's *De unitate* is with all probability one of the first works he wrote. It is almost completely dependent on Ibn Gabirol's *Fons vitae*, with little influence from other sources and an even less critical attitude toward the implicit consequences of Ibn Gabirol's cosmological system and ontology. In this rather short treatise, though, there seems to be at least one trace of Avicenna, namely in the following passage, where Gundissalinus discusses the different ways by which one can understand composed unity:

<sup>24</sup> AVICENNA, *De medicine cordialibus*, critical edition by S. VAN RIET, in AVICENNA, *Liber de anima seu sextus de naturalibus*, 2 vols., Peeters - Brill, Louvain - Leiden 1982, vol. II, p. 188, 9-14.

« Alia dicuntur unum aggregatione, ut populus et grex, congeries lapidum vel acervus tritici. Alia dicuntur proportionem unum, ut rector navis et gubernator civitatis dicuntur unum similitudine officii »<sup>25</sup>.

This passage appears to be derived from Avicenna's *Liber de philosophia prima*, also translated by Gundissalinus. In book III, chapter 2, while discussing the same topic, Avicenna states that:

« Unum autem aequalitate est comparatio aliqua, sicut hoc quod comparatio navis ad rectorem et civitatis ad regem una est: hae enim duae comparationes consimiles sunt, nec est earum unio per accidens, sed est unitas quaedam in qua uniuntur per accidens, unitas navis et civitatis, et per illas est unitas per accidens; unitas enim duarum dispositionum non est unitas quam posuimus unitatem per accidens »<sup>26</sup>.

Gundissalinus — if he is dependent on the *Liber de philosophia prima* — sensibly simplifies Avicenna's line of reasoning. Moreover, it is interesting to notice that the two passages display a crucial lexicographical difference: while Avicenna's text refers to *rector* and *rex* as the two beings forming this kind of unity, the *De unitate* uses the terms *rector* and *gubernator*. Now, since the original Arabic text of the *Liber de philosophia prima* reads 'wa-ḥāl al-madīna 'inda l-malik wāḥida', thus the correct Latin rendering should be *rex*. There are many possible explanations for this inconsistency between the two excerpts, and possibly Gundissalinus had a mediated access to this passage (admitting that it is the actual source) thanks to Abraham ibn Daud. For the absence of any further quotations and, especially, of any doctrinal influence of Avicenna on the *De unitate et uno*, it could be supposed that the *Liber de philosophia prima* still had to be translated into Latin. Indeed, the *De processione mundi*, written after the *De unitate*, offers a more profound reception of Avicenna's metaphysics.

As for textual quotations, the *De processione mundi* presents at least two direct quotations of works by Avicenna, extremely different to each other. The first quotation presented by Gundissalinus<sup>27</sup> covers almost entirely chapter 6 and 7 of the first book of the *Liber de philosophia prima*<sup>28</sup>. Through this Gundissalinus expounds Avicenna's demonstrations of the unrelated Oneness of the Necessary Existent, and the very doctrine of necessary and possible being upon which

<sup>25</sup> GUNDISSALINUS, *De unitate et uno*, ed. CORRENS, p. 9, 20-23

<sup>26</sup> AVICENNA, *Liber de philosophia prima*, critical edition by S. VAN RIET, Peeters, Louvain 1977, p. 113, 95-01.

<sup>27</sup> GUNDISSALINUS, *De processione mundi*, ed. BÜLOW, pp. 5, 15 - 16, 22.

<sup>28</sup> AVICENNA, *Liber de philosophia prima*, ed. VAN RIET, pp. 43, 21 - 55, 55.



Gundissalinus's overall ontology is based on the *De processione*. This vast and dense quotation offers also a flavour of Gundissalinus's alteration strategy through which the very quotations are inserted on the newly produced writing<sup>29</sup>. The textual comparison between the two excerpts reveals Gundissalinus's creative spirit, through which he modifies the quoted text in different ways and basically by:

- changing the order of the paragraphs;
- subtly modifying the lexicon used;
- altering Avicenna's line of reasoning on at least one occasion<sup>30</sup>.

It should be supposed that, by changing the quoted text in this manifold way, Gundissalinus is aiming at a specific purpose or purposes. In the first place, Gundissalinus's concern regarding the consistency of the theoretical outcomes of the writing he is working on should be assumed. The insertion of any quoted excerpt must meet some implicit criteria of consistency with the overall writing on which it is presented, and in particular, with the other texts quoted by Gundissalinus. This concern might be the origin of Gundissalinus's change of parts of the quoted passage. Moreover — and this is eminently displayed by Gundissalinus's *De scientiis* — the Toledan philosopher could have disagreed with some passages of the source he is using, and thus could have preferred to cut those passages while quoting the source (or translating it, in the case of the *De scientiis*). Furthermore, Gundissalinus, in this case, is quoting a work he has translated into Latin. Some factors could be in play in such a dynamic. First, Gundissalinus could find his previous translation as not completely satisfactory anymore, and then re-translate the text from the Arabic while quoting. Or probably Gundissalinus is engaged in polishing his previous Latin translation while quoting the text in his original writing.

<sup>29</sup> It is extremely important to stress, here, that the textual comparison between two medieval versions of the same work (or, in this case, two version of the same excerpt) has to be structurally problematized by taking into account the possible corruption of the transmission of the text. That is to say, the simple comparison between critical edited texts is not sufficient for asserting the voluntary modification of lexical or even doctrinal elements. For this reason, while the recognition of some voluntary alterations by Gundissalinus is patent (for example, the change in the order of the paragraphs of the quoted text, or the modification of doctrinal passages in order to make the quoted text consistent with Gundissalinus's writing where it is presented), not every difference between the text of the source and the quoted text should be considered a voluntary alteration. See POLLONI, *Gundissalinus on Necessary Being* cit.

<sup>30</sup> For an overall analysis of these alterations, see POLLONI, *Gundissalinus on Necessary Being* cit. The appendix to the article (pp. 149-160) also presents a textual comparison between the two versions of these passages in Avicenna's *Liber de philosophia prima* and Gundissalinus's *De processione mundi*.

The *De profectione mundi* offers another direct quotation of a work written by Avicenna, this time from the *Physica*. While discussing the doctrine of universal hylomorphism — possibly the most important point of Gundissalinus's ontology — the Toledan philosopher states:

« Ex hoc enim, quod est in potentia receptibilis formarum, vocatur yle, et ex hoc, quod iam in actu est sustinens formam, subiectum vocatur. Sed non sicut in logica subiectum accipitur, cum substantia describitur. Yle enim non est subiectum hoc modo, sed est subiecta formae, et ex hoc, quod est communis omnibus formis, vocatur vel massa vel materia; et ex hoc, quod alia resolvuntur in illam, quoniam ipsa est simplex pars omnis compositi, vocatur elementum, quemadmodum et in aliis. Et ex hoc, quod ab illa incipit compositio, vocatur origo; sed cum incipitur a composito, et pervenitur ad illam, vocatur elementum »<sup>31</sup>.

This passage is a direct quotation of Avicenna's *Physica*, book I, translated by Gundissalinus, and which reads:

« Et haec hyle, secundum hoc quod est in potentia receptibilis formae aut formarum, vocatur hyle et, secundum hoc quod est in actu sustinens formam, vocatur subiectum. Non autem hic accipimus subiectum sicut in logica quando definiebatur substantia, quia hyle non est subiectum ex hoc intellectu ullo modo et, secundum hoc quod est communis omnibus formatis, vocatur materia vel massa et, secundum hoc quod resolvuntur in illa et est ipsa pars simplex receptibilis formae totius compositi, vocatur elementum. Similiter etiam quicquid est sicut illud et secundum hoc quod ab illa incipit compositio, vocatur origo; similiter etiam quicquid est aliud quod est sicut illa: fortasse enim, quando incipitur ab ea, vocatur origo, quando autem incipitur a compositio et pervenitur ad illam, vocatur elementum quia elementum est simplicior pars compositi »<sup>32</sup>.

Gundissalinus's quotation displays a certain degree of simplification of the original text, from both a syntactical and doctrinal point of view. All the same, it should be noticed that the Avicennian excerpt is surrounded, in the receiving writing, by a conspicuous number of direct quotations of Ibn Gabirol's *Fons vitae*, making of this passage from the *Physica* a kind of explanatory addendum of universal hylomorphism.

A similar use of Avicennian materials can be detected in Gundissalinus's epistemological treatise *De divisione philosophiae*. This work, too, presents a wide

<sup>31</sup> GUNDISSALINUS, *De profectione mundi*, ed. BÜLOW, p. 31, 6-16.

<sup>32</sup> AVICENNA, *Liber primus naturalium. Tractatus primus de causis et principiis naturalium*, critical edition by S. VAN RIET, Peeters - Brill, Louvain - Leiden 1992, pp. 21, 60 - 22, 72.

number of blind quotations from many writings of the Arabic and Latin traditions, quotes melded together in a similar fashion to the *De profectione mundi*. The role played by Avicenna in the *De divisione philosophiae* is crucial also, since Gundissalinus's division of the sciences is rooted on the Avicennian theory of subalternation. As for the *De profectione*, the main doctrinal task is pursued by Gundissalinus through the quotation of a large excerpt that, in the economy of the *De divisione*, takes the title *Summa Avicennae de convenientia et differentia subiectorum*<sup>33</sup>, or perhaps from a more accurately philological point of view, as proposed by J. Janssens, *Summa Avicennae de convenientia et differentia scientiarum praedictarum*<sup>34</sup>.

This large quotation presents Avicenna's doctrine of subalternation and its value is pivotal, for this passage grounds, explains, and justifies the overall discussion presented by the Toledan philosopher in the *De divisione*. Another important factor to consider is that the *Summa Avicennae* is a Latin translation of chapter seven of the second part of Avicenna's *Kitāb al-Burhān*, from the *Šifā'*'s book on logic: the only extant Latin translation of this writing. In this case, the remarks made above regarding Gundissalinus's aim at polishing and adapting his previous translation of the quoted text cannot be repeated: it is not known whether the quotation from *Kitāb al-Burhān* was preceded by a non-extant translation of the whole writing by Gundissalinus or not, even though it does not seem to be the case.

Gundissalinus's *De divisione philosophiae* displays further quotations from Avicenna's works, mainly derived from the *Liber de philosophia prima*. A striking example of the textual influence of this writing on the *De divisione* is provided by Gundissalinus's discussion of metaphysics as first philosophy, about which he claims:

« Multis modis haec scientia vocatur. Dicitur enim 'scientia divina' a digniori parte, quia ipsa de Deo inquit, an sit, et probat, quod sit. Dicitur 'philosophia prima', quia ipsa est scientia de prima causa esse. Dicitur etiam 'causa causarum', quia in ea agitur de Deo, qui est causa omnium. Dicitur etiam 'metaphysica', i.e. 'post physicam', quia ipsa est de eo, quod est post naturam. Intelligitur autem hic

<sup>33</sup> GUNDISSALINUS, *De divisione philosophiae*, ed. BAUR, pp. 124, 5 - 133, 24.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. J. JANSSENS, *Le De divisione philosophiae de Gundissalinus: quelques remarques préliminaires à une édition critique*, in E. CODA, C. MARTINI BONADEO eds., *De l'antiquité tardive au Moyen Âge: études de logique aristotélicienne et de philosophie grecque, syriaque, arabe et latine offertes à Henri Hugonnard-Roche*, Vrin, Paris 2014, pp. 559-570. See also H. HUGONNARD ROCHE, *La classification des sciences de Gundissalinus et l'influence d'Avicenne*, in J. JOLIVET, R. RASHED eds., *Études sur Avicenne*, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 1984, pp. 41-75, ivi 42.

natura virtus, quae est principium motus et quietis : immo est virtus et principium universorum accidentium, quae proveniunt ex materia corporali. Unde, quia haec scientia dicitur ‘post naturam’, haec posteritas non est quantum in se, sed quantum ad nos. Primum enim, quod percipimus de eo, quod est, et scimus eius dispositiones, natura est; unde quod meretur vocari haec scientia considerata in se, hoc est, ut dicatur, quod est scientia de eo, quod est ante naturam. Ea enim, de quibus inquiritur in illa, per essentiam et per scientiam sunt ante naturam»<sup>35</sup>.

This passage is textually based on two passages, at least, of the first book of Avicenna’s *Liber de philosophia prima*: Avicenna’s discussion of *philosophia prima* as science of the cause of being<sup>36</sup> (second chapter) of which Gundissalinus cuts any reference to metaphysics as the science of ‘ens inquantum est ens’ — ; and Avicenna’s remarks on the priority or posterity of metaphysics in itself and for us (third chapter)<sup>37</sup>. This influence appears to be even stronger when considering Gundissalinus’s further definitions of metaphysics as ‘scientia de rebus separatis a materia definitione’<sup>38</sup>; ‘philosophia certissima et prima’<sup>39</sup>; ‘sapientia certissima’<sup>40</sup>; and ‘sapientia’<sup>41</sup>.

<sup>35</sup> GUNDISSALINUS, *De divisione philosophiae*, ed. BAUR, p. 38, 7-23.

<sup>36</sup> AVICENNA, *Liber de philosophia prima*, ed. VAN RIET, pp. 15, 86 - 16, 1: « Igitur quaestiones huius scientiae quaedam sunt causae esse, inquantum est esse causatum, et quaedam sunt accidentalia esse, et quaedam sunt principia scientiarum singularum. Et scientia horum quaeritur in hoc magisterio. Et haec est philosophia prima, quia ipsa est scientia de prima causa esse, et haec est prima causa, sed prima causa universitatis est esse et unitas; et est etiam sapientia quae est nobilior scientia qua apprehenditur nobilior scitum: nobilior vero scientia, quia est certitudo veritatis, et nobilior scitum, quia est Deus, et causae quae sunt post eum; et etiam cognitio causarum ultimarum omnis esse, et cognitio Dei, et propterea definitur scientia divina sic quod est scientia de rebus separatis a materia definitione et definitionibus, quia ens, inquantum est ens, et principia eius et accidentalia eius, inquantum sunt, sicut iam patuit, nullum eorum est nisi praecedens materiam nec pendet esse eius ex esse illius. Cum autem inquiritur in hac scientia de eo quod non praecedat materiam, non inquiritur in ea nisi secundum hoc quod eius esse non eget materia ».

<sup>37</sup> AVICENNA, *Liber de philosophia prima*, ed. VAN RIET, pp. 24, 45 - 25, 57: « Nomen vero huius scientiae est quod ipsa est de eo quod est post naturam. Intelligitur autem natura virtus quae est principium motus et quietis, immo et universitatis eorum accidentium quae proveniunt ex materia corporali est virtus. Iam autem dictum est quod natura est corporis naturalis quod habet naturam. Corpus vero naturale est corpus sensibile cum eo quod habet de proprietatibus et accidentibus. Quod vero dicitur post naturam, hoc posteritas est in respectu quantum ad nos: primum enim quod percipimus de eo quod est et scimus eius dispositiones est hoc quod praesentatur nobis de hoc esse naturali. Unde quod meretur vocari haec scientia, considerata in se, hoc est ut dicatur quod est scientia de eo quod est ante naturam: ea enim de quibus inquiritur in hac scientia per essentiam et per scientiam sunt ante naturam ».

<sup>38</sup> GUNDISSALINUS, *De divisione philosophiae*, ed. BAUR, p. 35, 16.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35, 17.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35, 18.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 35, 18 - 36, 8.

A similar attitude toward Avicenna's texts can be seen at work in Gundissalinus's *De anima*, with some differences. This writing is dedicated to the discussion of the soul from its definition to its ontological composition, immortality, and psychological powers. As mentioned above, the main sources on which this work is based are basically three: Qusta Ibn Luqa's *De differentia spiritus et animae*, Ibn Gabirol's *Fons vitae*, and Avicenna's *De anima*, which is also the main and almost exclusive source of the two final chapters, where Gundissalinus finally deals with the psychological powers of the vegetative, sensitive, and intellective soul<sup>42</sup>. Indeed, a close consideration of these two chapters displays that Gundissalinus completely relies on Avicenna's writing: the text of the treatise is developed as a *collatio* of different excerpts from Avicenna's homonymous work, derived mostly from book I and V<sup>43</sup>. Nonetheless, while the presence of Avicenna's *De anima* is wide, many of his further works seems to have influenced Gundissalinus's psychological writing: a fact that can possibly be explained by the relatively early date of composition of Gundissalinus's *De anima*.

The works by Avicenna play, therefore, an enveloping, primary, and unequivocal role in the original writings of the Toledan philosopher. The presence of direct quotations from Avicenna's works is vast and diffusive, and exceeds the exemplar cases discussed here. And through this presence, the doctrines and theories elaborated by Avicenna come to be crucial for Gundissalinus's original speculation.

#### THE DOCTRINAL INFLUENCE OF AVICENNA ON GUNDISSALINUS'S REFLECTIONS

Gundissalinus's speculation is a comprehensive attempt at updating the philosophical debate contemporary to him through the assimilation of the new doctrines and sources derived by the Arabic-into-Latin translation movement. Gundissalinus translates, reads, studies, and sometimes criticises the Arabic sources he uses, and while his reflection is aimed at resolving some crucial problems of the Latin tradition — concerning the soul, the division of sciences, the constitution of reality — the temporal development of his own philosophical reflection is marked by some changes of perspective and doctrinal problematizations. By this point of view, the encounter with Avicenna is pivotal for Gundissalinus, and from the translation of the *De anima* up to that of the *Physica*, the Toledan philosopher shapes his reflections in the shadow of Avicenna.

<sup>42</sup> GUNDISSALINUS, *De anima*, ed. ALONSO DEL REAL, pp. 178, 3 - 288, 14.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. D. N. HASSE, *Avicenna's De anima in the Latin West. The Formation of a Peripatetic Philosophy of the Soul (1160-1300)*, Warburg Institute, London 2000, p. 191.

Gundissalinus's reading of Avicenna's works is rather different from that of later philosophers such as Albert the Great or Thomas Aquinas. Gundissalinus is the first Latin philosopher to deal with Avicenna's speculation, and from a perhaps ingenuous perspective. Gundissalinus is not interested in doctrines that will be the focus of the subsequent reception of Avicenna's writings, such as the discussion of the difference between essence and existence, the perpetration of the species through the individuals, or the theory of the indifference of essences. Other doctrines toward which Gundissalinus displays a certain interest, do not find any real degree of problematization, as if Gundissalinus would not have been able to see the problems arising from the acceptance of these theories. One of the most renowned cases of this attitude is Gundissalinus's acceptance of Avicenna's theory of the separate active intellect<sup>44</sup>.

In all these cases, Avicenna is the main author through whom Gundissalinus tries to give his own account of psychology, epistemology, and metaphysics. Through analysis of Gundissalinus's original production, it is possible to grasp how Avicenna is used to resolve problems arising from Gundissalinus's own adhesion to further Arabic doctrines, as, for example, his acceptance of Ibn Gabirol's perspective in cosmology and ontology.

From the consideration of the sources used, the style presented, and the cross-textual analysis, it can be said that the *De unitate et uno* and the *De scientiis* are the first works to be written by Gundissalinus<sup>45</sup>. The comparison of these two works with Gundissalinus's mature development of the same topics in his *De processione mundi* and *De divisione philosophiae* displays how relevant is the contribution of Avicenna to Gundissalinus's reflections. This aspect is particularly evident regarding the metaphysical works written by the Toledan philosopher.

The theoretical core of the *De unitate* is the discussion of the metaphysical concept of unity and oneness: every single thing can be said to be one through the participation to unity, and thus, by being one, that thing can be said to be<sup>46</sup>. The main and almost exclusive source of Gundissalinus's discussion of this topic is Solomon Ibn Gabirol's *Fons vitae*. The debt to Ibn Gabirol's writing is striking, since Gundissalinus receives and develops from the *Fons vitae* both the doctrine of universal hylomorphism and the cosmological progression of the hypostases.

<sup>44</sup> As we are going to see, it is extremely likely that Gundissalinus felt this doctrine as potentially problematic: but his solution to this arising problem will be only an entangled scheme of references to the traditional doctrine of illumination in order to show the consistency between Avicenna and the Latin tradition.

<sup>45</sup> See POLLONI, *Glimpses of the Invisible* cit.

<sup>46</sup> GUNDISSALINUS, *De unitate et uno*, ed. CORRENS, p. 3, 2-9.



The first problem Gundissalinus has to resolve is the explanation of the modality through which a thing participates of unity, and this entails the problem of the ontological composition of the created being. Being derives from the form ('omne esse ex forma est')<sup>47</sup>, but form can cause being/existence only if and when it has a matter to join. Therefore, being is a consequence of the union of matter and form: it is the very existence of form with matter. In this ontological dynamic, unity is the very causal bond that keeps together matter and form, and thus, unity appears as the fundamental ontological factor of existence. It is unity, and unity only, that makes possible any hylomorphic union in virtue of which a thing is said to exist, and when that bond is removed, the thing is indeed dissolved; it does not exist anymore<sup>48</sup>.

The crucial role played by unity is explained by the consideration of matter. In itself, matter naturally tends to dispersion, its nature is to be multiplied, divided and fractioned. Matter, therefore, is the very contrary of unity, and because of this, unity is necessary in order to establish and maintain every created being, since only unity can hold the matter and keep it united to the form. Unity always accompanies matter in the hylomorphic compound: unity is the very form that is joined to matter, and that's why it is said that being is caused by the form<sup>49</sup>.

Nonetheless, the unity/form immanent to the created being is a derived unity, caused by the first Unity that is God. It is through God's will that any created thing is one thing, and everything tends to be one and to join the One, since everything desire to be and they can be only by being one<sup>50</sup>. At the same time, the derived unity is ontologically 'other' than divine One. Every caused being has to be different from its cause, while the actual Unity is eternal, immutable and alien to any diversity, the derived unity had to suffer multiplicity, diversity, and mutability: the created unity had to be joined to matter, the principle of multiplicity and change.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3, 10-15: « Omne enim esse ex forma est, in creatis scilicet. Sed nullum esse ex forma est, nisi cum forma materiae unita est. Esse igitur est nonnisi ex coniunctione formae cum materia. Unde philosophi sic describunt illud dicentes: esse est existentia formae cum materia. Cum autem forma materiae unitur, ex coniunctione utriusque necessario aliquid unum constituitur ».

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4, 8-11: « Quapropter sicut unitate res ad esse ducitur, sic et unitate in illo esse custoditur. Unde esse et unum inseparabiliter concomitantur se et videntur esse simul natura ».

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5, 10-12: « Ac per hoc unitas per se retinet materiam. Sed quod per se retinet, non potest facere separationem. Forma ergo existens in materia, quae perficit et custodit essentiam cuiusque rei, unitas est descendens a prima unitate, quae creavit eam ».

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4, 12-120: « Quia enim creator vere unus est, ideo rebus, quas condidit in hoc numero, dedit, ut unaquaeque habeat esse una. Ac per hoc, quia ex quo res habet esse, una est: ideo motus omnium substantiarum est ad unum et propter unum; et nihil eorum, quae sunt, appetit esse multa, sed omnia, sicut appetunt esse, sic et unum esse. Quia enim omnia esse naturaliter appetunt, habere autem esse non possunt, nisi sint unum, ideo omnia ad unum tendunt. Unitas enim est, quae unit omnia et retinet omnia diffusa in omnibus, quae sunt ».

Matter, though, is not the same everywhere. In its separation from its cause, that is, from God, matter suffers a kind of thickness and differentiation. Where it is closer to its cause, matter is subtle and simple, and unity can join it in a strong union, as in the celestial beings, that are indivisible in act and perpetual. In other regions of existence, further from its cause, matter is thicker and weaker, and unity can hardly keep its union with matter. By this, the lowest things are weak in existence, and they suffer generation and corruption<sup>51</sup>. Gundissalinus presents this dynamic of ontological degradation through the metaphors of the water that descends from its spring and becomes obscure and thick in the marshes and ponds; and that of the light that is weakened in its separation from the source of light, the latter referred to the progressive weakening of unity in its union with matter<sup>52</sup>.

This ontogonic dynamic explains the cosmological progression of the hypostases through various hylomorphic unions. Gundissalinus presents the same progression expounded by Ibn Gabirol in his *Fons vitae*. The first created being is the Intelligence, whose matter and form are simple and essentially indivisible. This unity is multiplied in the Soul, which suffers a certain degree of change and diversity, and then, through a progressive increase of multiplicity and change, the progression causes the following hypostases, up to the matter sustaining the quantity, the thickest of all matters<sup>53</sup>.

The close connection between Gundissalinus's *De unitate* and Ibn Gabirol's *Fons vitae* is evident: the treatment of the metaphysical value of unity, as well as the overall description of the ontological composition and cosmological derivation, are derived from Ibn Gabirol, to which could be added only a few further sources, with a minor impact on Gundissalinus's discussion. Both Gabirolian theories

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 26 - 7, 6: « Quae quia a prima unitate remotissima est, ideo spissa et corpulenta et constricta est et propter spissitudinem et grossitudinem suam opposita est substantiae superiori, quae est subtilis et simplex, quoniam illa est subiectum principii et initii unitatis, haec vero est subiectum finis et extremitatis unitatis. Finis vero multum distat a principio, quoniam finis non est dictus nisi defectus virtutis et terminus ».

<sup>52</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, p. 7, 6-16.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6, 14-26: « Et ob hoc unitas, quae duxit ad esse materiam intelligentiae, est magis una et simplex, non multiplex nec divisibilis essentialiter; sed si divisibilis est, hoc siquidem accidentaliter est; et ideo haec unitas simplicior et magis una est omnibus unitatibus, quae ducunt ad esse ceteras substantias, eo quod immediate cohaeret primae unitati, quae creavit eam. Sed quia unitas subsistens in materia intelligentiae est unitas simplicitatis, ideo necessario unitas subsistens in materia animae, quia infra eam est, crescit et multiplicatur et accidit ei mutatio et diversitas, et sic paulatim descendendo a superiore per unumquemque gradum materiae inferior unitas augetur et multiplicatur, quousque pervenitur ad materiam, quae sustinet quantitatem, scilicet substantiam huius mundi ».

are assimilated by Gundissalinus in a quite ingenuous, non-problematised way. Universal hylomorphism, the basis of which is that every created being is composed of matter and form, is presented through an apparently quite simple dynamic: every being is derived by the union of matter and form/unity, and through the progressive separation from their cause, matter degenerates and becomes thick, while form/unity becomes weaker in its unitive ontogonic action upon matter. This dynamic, derived by Ibn Gabirol, suffers a certain degree of simplification in the *De unitate*. Nonetheless, Gundissalinus cannot avoid falling into the problematic implications of the hylomorphic theory presented in the *Fons vitae*: the problem of the multiplication of matter, the circularity of matter and form<sup>54</sup>, and the non-intrinsic functional determination of the hylomorphic components implied by the latter<sup>55</sup>. Problematic cores that are developed by both Gundissalinus and Ibn Gabirol through the doctrine of the plurality of substantial forms which accompany the first union of matter and unity, specifying the compound.

At the same time, the *De unitate* offers an early and possibly ingenuous reception of Ibn Gabirol's cosmology, presented through the hypostatical progression

<sup>54</sup> This Gabirolian theory, for which what is form of the upper degree of reality is matter of the lower degree of existence, seems to be accepted by Gundissalinus in the *De unitate*, for the references to a multiplicity of matters (*ibid.*, p. 7, 12-14: «Nam quia aliquid materiae est spirituale et aliquid eius corporale, est aliquid eius purum et lucidum et aliquid eius est spissum et obscurum...») and to Ibn Gabirol's 'matter sustaining quantity' (*ibid.*, p. 6, 23-26: «...et sic paulatim descendendo a superiore per unumquemque gradum materiae inferior unitas augetur et multiplicatur, quousque pervenitur ad materiam, quae sustinet quantitatem, scilicet substantiam huius mundi»), a point directly connected, in the *Fons vitae*, to the aforementioned theory. In his *De anima*, almost certainly written between the *De unitate* and the *De processione*, Gundissalinus accepts and exposes the circularity of matter and form, stating that: «Et notandum quia post primam universalem id quod est materia posteriorum, forma est priorum et quod est manifestius, forma est occulti, quia materia quo propinquior est sensui est similior formae, et ideo fit manifestior propter evidentiam formae et occultationem materiae, quamvis sit materia formae sensibilis» (GUNDISSALINUS, *De anima*, ed. ALONSO DEL REAL, p. 144, 10-4).

<sup>55</sup> Cf. N. POLLONI, *Toledan Ontologies: Gundissalinus, Ibn Daud, and the Problems of Gabirolian Hylomorphism*, in A. FIDORA, N. POLLONI eds., *Appropriation, Interpretation and Criticism: Philosophical and Theological Exchanges Between the Arabic, Hebrew and Latin Intellectual Traditions*, Fidem, Barcelona - Roma 2017, pp. 19-49. The functional circularity of the hylomorphic components entails, by a logical point of view, the non-intrinsic functional determination of matter and form. Indeed, by stating that the form of the upper level is the matter of the lower, Ibn Gabirol implicitly determines both matter and form through the external function they serve and not by an intrinsic logical determination of their being. In this way, one should talk about material and formal functions rather than talk about matter and form, since a being x is said to be matter only when it serves the function of matter, and the very same being x is said to be form when it serves the function of form. And in a strict Gabirolian perspective, these functions are basically the material function of bearing the form, and the formal function of being borne by matter.

from the Intelligence to the Soul, Nature, the matter sustaining quantity and, then, the corporeal bodies. This cosmological description is grounded on Ibn Gabirol's hylomorphic theory and, in particular, on the functional circularity of matter and form he expounds. A progressive problematisation of the latter, then, would entail for the Toledan philosopher a reassessment of his cosmology.

Gundissalinus's perspective in the *De processione mundi* has changed, profoundly. Both the *De unitate* and the *De processione* aim at resolving one crucial problem: that of the ontological difference between Creator and creature, that is, the explanation of how the caused being is similar but substantially different from its cause. Gundissalinus's radical change of perspective is due to his final encounter with Avicenna's metaphysics. With the *De processione*, Gundissalinus displays a profound interest in and knowledge of Avicenna's theories, even though he has no hesitation in passing over in silence many fundamental doctrinal points he does not accept, beginning with Avicenna's 'limited' hylomorphism.

The origins of Gundissalinus's abrupt change in his position should probably be found in the influence his collaborator, Abraham ibn Daud, had on him. Ibn Daud was a learned Jewish philosopher, and his reflection on the issue is extremely close to Avicenna and al-Ġazālī's *Maqāṣid al-Falāsifa*<sup>56</sup>. At the very same time, Ibn Daud is possibly the most strenuous critic of Ibn Gabirol's *Fons vitae* — especially of his universal hylomorphism —, and Ibn Daud attacks him throughout his *ha-Emunah ha-raham*<sup>57</sup>. It would have been quite surprising if

<sup>56</sup> See R. FONTAINE, *In Defense of Judaism: Abraham Ibn Daud. Sources and Structure of ha-Emunah ha-Ramah*, Van Gorcum, Assen- Maastricht 1990; and EAD., *Abraham Ibn Daud: Sources and Structures of ha-Emunah ha-Ramah*, «Zutot», 2, 2002, pp. 156-163.

<sup>57</sup> See, for instance, ABRAHAM IBN DAUD, *ha-Emunah ha-Ramah*, ed. N. M. SAMUELSON, *The Exalted Faith*, by Abraham Ibn Daud, Fairleigh Dickinson, London - Toronto 1986, pp. 40, 4b19 - 41, 5b11: «Also, we understood the treatise of Rabbi Solomon ibn Gabirol, may he be remembered for a blessing, in which he aimed at bestowing benefit from philosophy for the same purpose. And he did not single out the nation [of Israel] alone [for benefit]. Rather, all finds of people are associated together by him in [this] matter [for benefit]. Despite this [notable intention] he introduced many words about one subject, so that [with regards to] his treatise to which we alluded, which is called The Source of Life, perhaps if its content were refined, his words could be included in [a treatise that is] less than one tenth of that treatise. Furthermore, he made use of syllogisms without being meticulous [to discover whether it is the case] that their premises are true. Whereas according to his view imaginary premises in the forms of a true syllogism are satisfactory, certainly their content is doubtful. Since he imagined that he could introduce a demonstration when [demonstrations] could not be introduced, he multiplied demonstrations, thinking that many demonstrations that are not true can stand in the place of one true demonstration. [...] I would not deprecate his words were it not [for the fact] that he spoke [what is] a great perversion against the nation. Whoever understood his treatise knows [this]. All of that treatise shows the weakness of his grade in philosophy, and he gropes in it like groping in the dark».

the opposed views of these two philosophers and collaborators, Ibn Daud and Gundissalinus, did not have any kind of reciprocal influence. It is possible to interpret Gundissalinus's *De processione mundi* as a kind of response to Ibn Daud's criticism against the ontological perspective backed by Gundissalinus in his *De unitate* (and *De anima*)<sup>58</sup>.

The *De processione mundi* is a curious application of the 'metaphysical procedure' presented by Gundissalinus in his *De divisione philosophiae*, and derived from al-Fārābī<sup>59</sup>. For this reason, the treatise has a twofold progression: an ascendant part, demonstrating the existence and ontological characteristics of God, and a descendant part, discussing the ontological composition of the created being and the creation of the world.

The human being has the necessary intellectual powers to know the 'invisible aspects' of God (*invisibilia Dei*) through the examination of the created beings: their composition, disposition, and cause<sup>60</sup>. And indeed, through four proofs considering the opposed properties of the elements and the hylomorphic component – which entail an external composing cause – and examining the phenomena of generation and corruption, and potency and act – which imply an external efficient cause –, one has to admit the existence of a first Cause of the world<sup>61</sup>. God is, then, the efficient cause of everything, the prime mover that, echoing Boethius, «est prima et simplex causa, quae, cum sit immota, cunctis

<sup>58</sup> See POLLONI, *Glimpses of the Invisible* cit.

<sup>59</sup> See N. POLLONI, *Gundissalinus's Application of al-Fārābī's Metaphysical Programme. A Case of Epistemological Transfer*, «Mediterranea. International Journal on the Transfer of Knowledge», 1, 2016, pp. 69-106.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. GUNDISSALINUS, *De processione mundi*, ed. BÜLOW, p. 2, 4-9.

<sup>61</sup> The existence of God as first cause is established through four demonstrations. The first proof of the existence of God is centred on the elements. Every sensible being is composed of elements, but some of them are characterised by their movement downward, others by a movement upwards. Thus, it the existence of a cause composing their contrariety is necessary, and that composer of contrariety is the first cause. The second demonstration is focused on hylomorphic composition. Every corporeal being is composed of matter and form, but these components have opposed properties, contrary to each other. Therefore, an external cause composing them is necessary. The third proof considers generation and corruption: every composed thing is resolved into what composed it, and comes to be through what composed it. Nonetheless, it is impossible that something begins to be by itself: on the contrary, an external cause is always required to produce the existence of what is possible, and the inexistence of what is impossible. Finally, the fourth and final proof is based on the movement through potency and act. Since the passage from potency to act is a kind of movement, one must suppose the existence of a mover which acts as the efficient cause of that being, since nothing can be the efficient cause of itself. Therefore, there must be an external efficient cause and, avoiding a regress to infinite, one must admit the existence of an efficient cause of every caused being. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 3, 11 - 5, 14.

aliis movendi est causa. Unde dicitur stabilis, quia manens dat cuncta moveri »<sup>62</sup>. The immobility, that is, immutability of the first cause implies its perfection, and his complete and perfect actualization. Indeed, Gundissalinus says, if God would move, that movement would be finalized to the reception of a perfection of which he would be lacking, and thus, to the actualisation of a potentiality not actualised in him. This is inadmissible: God is the unmoved cause of movement, constantly identical to itself, and therefore opposed to its effect in which any movement and any distinctions reside<sup>63</sup>.

This consideration of God as self-sufficient leads to the fundamental characterisation of the first cause that Gundissalinus presents in his *De processione mundi*. This is the first pillar upon which Gundissalinus's overall metaphysical reflection is based in this writing, and constitute the crucial point of advance in comparison to his previous positions. This pivotal point is the characterisation of God as necessary Existent, and thus, Gundissalinus's adhesion to Avicenna's modal ontology and its distinction between possible and necessary being. The possible being is what can be but always requires a cause of its existence, for nothing can be the efficient cause of itself. This cause is the necessary being, or necessary Existent, uncaused cause of everything, which resolve the structural ontological ambiguity of the possible being, that can either be and not be, causing its existence. In this way, the possible being becomes a mediated necessary being, a *necesse esse per aliud*, that is, thanks to its cause<sup>64</sup>.

In Avicenna's discussion, the doctrine of necessary and possible being is insolubly bound to the crucial distinction between essence and existence, and the inapplicability of such distinction to the necessary existent. This fundamental theory, which would be crucial for subsequent medieval philosophers, is completely absent from Gundissalinus's discussion, who eagerly accepts the theory of necessary and possible being, but passes over in silence Avicenna's distinction between essence and existence, among many other doctrines exposed in the *Philosophia prima*.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17, 13-15.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 25 - 19, 1: « Restat ergo, quod aliquid sit primum principium, quod nullo modo moveatur; et hoc est id, quod dicitur deus. Unde omnis motus est alienus ab essentia eius. Omnis vero motus est in opere eius, quemadmodum virtus in auctore quidem semper eadem componens et resolvens ».

<sup>64</sup> Among the many studies on Avicenna's ontology, see A. BERTOLACCI, *The Distinction of Essence and Existence in Avicenna's Metaphysics: The Text and Its Context*, in F. OPWIS, D. C. REISMAN eds., *Islamic Philosophy, Science, Culture, and Religion: Studies in Honor of Dimitri Gutas*, Brill, Leiden 2012, pp. 257-288; O. LIZZINI, *Wuḡūd-Mawḡūd/Existence-Existent in Avicenna. A Key Ontological Notion of Arabic Philosophy*, « Quaestio », 3, 2003, pp. 111-138; and R. WISNOVSKY, *Avicenna's Metaphysics in Context*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca 2003.



Gundissalinus presents Avicenna's modal ontology through the quotation from chapters six and seven of the first book of Avicenna's *Liber de philosophia prima* mentioned above. Through this quotation, Gundissalinus expounds the five proofs of the unrelated Uniqueness and Oneness of the necessary Existent. Thanks to these demonstrations, and again, quoting Avicenna, Gundissalinus can finally state the fundamental ontological attributes of God:

«Constat ergo, quod necesse esse neque est relativum, neque est mutabile, nec multiplex, sed solitarium, cum nihil aliud participat in suo esse, quod est ei proprium; et hoc non est nisi solus deus, qui est prima causa et primum principium omnium, quod unum tantum necesse est intelligi, non duo vel plura»<sup>65</sup>.

With the description of God as necessary Existent, Gundissalinus completes the first part of the Farabian metaphysical procedure he is applying. Following this scheme, he now re-descends to the analysis of the created being after having acquired a new perspective through which it will now be possible to analyse the visible creation. What Gundissalinus has gained from the first part of his discussion is quite simple: it is the position of the ontological difference between Creator and creatures in the terms of composed vs. composer; cause vs. caused; and possible vs. necessary being. Besides the very demonstrations of God's unrelated uniqueness, the core of Gundissalinus's exposition is the ontological difference between *possibile esse*, *necesse esse per se*, and *necesse esse per aliud*. And if this is the first pillar upon which Gundissalinus's reflection is based, the second one is certainly the universal hylomorphism.

Gundissalinus dedicates dense pages to the discussion of how matter and form are the ontological constituents of every caused being<sup>66</sup>. Nonetheless, the universal hylomorphism presented in the *De processione mundi* is very different from what Gundissalinus expounds in his *De unitate* and *De anima*. The *De processione*, indeed, offers a polished, problematized, and developed version of universal hylomorphism, possibly not less marked by some implicit problems, but all the same Gundissalinus's desire to improve his ontology is patent. This desire is pursued through the theoretical merging between Avicenna's and Ibn Gabirol's ontologies.

Gundissalinus's line of reasoning is quite simple. In the first place, he claims that the ontological difference between God and creature is primarily expressed

<sup>65</sup> GUNDISSALINUS, *De processione mundi*, ed. BÜLOW, pp. 16, 23 - 17, 1.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 17, 11 - 36, 8.

by the cause-caused and necessary-possible dynamic. Following Avicenna, Gundissalinus states that the possible being is always caused. And since any causative process is always the actualization of a potency, therefore, the possible being is the very being in potency, while the necessary being *per aliud* is the actualisation of that potency, and the necessary being *per se* is the efficient cause, the act without previous potency presented by Thierry of Chartres<sup>67</sup>. At the same time, Gundissalinus could easily find in Avicenna, al-Ġazālī, and Ibn Daud, the assertion by which every possible being is characterised by a structural ontological duality: the duality of essence and existence and, correlated to this, the duality made of its own ontological possibility and the necessity received from its cause. Gundissalinus takes inspiration from this doctrinal point, but chooses to replace this duality with another kind of structure: universal hylomorphism. It is not by chance that Gundissalinus presents God as the composing and efficient cause in the four proofs of God's existence at the beginning of the *De processione mundi*. Indeed, they are two aspects of one causative process: it is by composing matter and form that God causes the actual being, that is, the existence of any single thing. It is through the union of matter and form, both characterised by a potential being, that the two hylomorphic components and their compound receive actual being. For Gundissalinus, matter and form are, indeed, the ontological structure of the possible being, and thanks to their union, the compound is actualised and becomes a mediated necessary being, a *necesse esse per aliud*.

Gundissalinus's approach might easily be criticised as simplistic and ingenuous. His violent appropriation of Avicenna's doctrines and their fusion with Ibn Gabirol's, ignoring Avicenna's denial of any universal hylomorphism might also be remarked upon. Gundissalinus, nonetheless, is trying to resolve a specific question, and in doing this, he probably thought to be consistent with the tradition. On the one hand, Gundissalinus is facing the unsolved problem of the composition of spiritual substances discussed by Thierry of Chartres. On the other hand, he could find in al-Ġazālī's *Summa theoricæ philosophiæ* — translated by Gundissalinus himself — and in Ibn Daud's speculation some support for his theories, or at least recognise that they shared a common ground with him.

In his summary of Avicenna's philosophy, indeed, al-Ġazālī, explicitly bonds the structural duality of the possible being to hylomorphism, stating that its possibility is like matter and its necessity is like form, in a discussion implicitly

<sup>67</sup> See POLLONI, *Thierry of Chartres and Gundissalinus on Spiritual Substance* cit.

based on the comparison between matter and potency, and form and act<sup>68</sup>. This position is very similar to that presented in Ibn Daud's *ha-Emunah ha-raham*, where the Jewish philosopher not only presents the compositions of spiritual substances as analogue to hylomorphism, but he specifically connects this point to the 'mistakes' made by Ibn Gabirol — and, following him, by Gundissalinus<sup>69</sup>.

Gundissalinus tries to resolve the ambiguous status of spiritual substance through the simple admission that matter does not imply any corporeality for the composed being, but only possibility. This de-corporealisation of the effect matter has on hylomorphic being allows him to abandon the position stating a similarity of the structural duality of spiritual substance to matter and form, and claims that that duality is truly made of matter and form. Is this sufficient to resolve the oppositions, tensions, and unanswered problems deriving from the fusion between Avicenna's and Ibn Gabirol's ontologies in the *De processione mundi*? The answer is no: on the contrary, Gundissalinus's treatise is crammed with unexplained points and doctrinal strains, and possibly this is what makes the *De processione mundi* so fascinating in Gundissalinus's curious attempt.

The encounter with Avicenna and his 'commentators' — al-Ġazālī and Ibn Daud —, is significant for Gundissalinus. Indeed, the theory of modal ontology expounded in the *Liber de philosophia prima* gives him a way to improve his interpretation of universal hylomorphism, and a new centre upon which he could ground his

<sup>68</sup> See AL-ĠAZĀLĪ, *Summa theoricarum philosophiarum*, ed. J. T. MUCKLE, *Algazel's Metaphysics. A medieval translation*, Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Toronto 1933, p. 120, 9-23: « Omne vero esse quod non est necesse esse, est accidentale quiditati. Unde opus est quiditate ad hoc ut esse sit ei accidentale. Igitur secundum considerationem quiditatis erit possibile essendi, et secundum considerationem cause, erit necesse essendi eo quod ostensum est quod quicquid possibile est in se, necesse est propter aliud a se; habet igitur duo iudicia scilicet, necessitatem uno modo, et possibilitatem alio modo. Ipsum igitur secundum quod est possibile, est in potencia, et secundum quod est necesse, est in effectu; possibilitas vero est ei ex se, et necessitas ex alio a se; est igitur in eo multitudo unius quidem quod est simile materie et alterius quod est simile forme. Quod autem est simile materie est possibilitas, et quod est simile forme est necessitas, que est ei ex alio a se ».

<sup>69</sup> See ABRAHAM IBN DAUD, *Emunah ramah*, ed. SAMUELSON, p. 174, 152b14-153a9: « Rather, the dependence of the intellect's existence on something else indicates that it does not have in itself what is necessary of existence. Rather, it has what is possible of existence. Thus, in its substance there is what is complex for the intellect and it is like a composite of matter and form. The reason for this is that what it has from its substance is like matter, that is, possibility, and what it has from something else is like form. The thing that it contains is what it is, that is, necessity. Of the many substances that contain this attribute, some are ordered by others of them in order. They are the entities for whom ibn Gabirol, may he be remembered for a blessing, tried to establish the existence of hyle and form in the fifth book of his treatise. He did not explain what they have is something like hyle and something like form. Rather, he ordained that they have matter and form, and when he tried to establish this, he could not [do it] ».

problematization of the ontological difference between God and creation. This 'departure' from Ibn Gabirol and the most problematic points of his ontology previously accepted by Gundissalinus, is further displayed by the abandonment of the cosmological progression presented in the *Fons vitae* and accepted in the *De unitate*. Now, Gundissalinus offers a different description of the cosmic establishment, merging together Hermann of Carinthia, Ibn Gabirol, and Ibn Daud<sup>70</sup>, in a discussion where Avicenna's influence is still pervasive, even though not so evident<sup>71</sup>.

A very similar scenario is offered by the comparison between Gundissalinus's *De scientiis* and *De divisione philosophiae*, even though in this case the stylistic

<sup>70</sup> Gundissalinus's description of the cosmic establishment is quite peculiar, and bound to Avicenna and Ibn Gabirol, on the one hand, and Hermann of Carinthia's description of the cosmogonic causality, on the other hand. The creation of the world corresponds to the very creation of matter and form. Both the ontological constituents are eternally present in God's Wisdom and Essence, but their own potential being is actualised through their union in the first compound. This process is logically divided into two moments: the creation of matter and form, that is, their coming to be, and their union, that is the *primaria compositio* or first composition. While matter is only one in number, there is a plurality of forms joining matter. The first of these forms are the form of unity and that of substantiality, and their union with matter gives a sort of unspecified substance that, in a second logical moment, receives the forms of spirituality and corporeality, that cause the spiritual and corporeal substance. All this process is the *primaria compositio*, and the outcomes of this causal dynamic are three first species of creatures, called *primaria genitura*, that are caused directly by God and, thus, are perpetual: the angelic creatures, the celestial spheres, and the elements. One should notice that the distinction between *creatio* and *primaria compositio* is only (onto-)logical (i.e., 'analytical', as opposed to the 'realist' interpretation of the following degrees of cosmic causation whose description is referred to the existence of actual beings). Indeed, matter and form have an actual being only in the hylomorphic compound, and Gundissalinus clearly claims that the first actual being is the three species of the *primaria genitura*, caused by the dynamic of material information by the first forms called *primaria compositio*. The *primaria genitura* performs the secondary causation in the cosmic establishment. Indeed, the angels move the celestial spheres and daily create new souls. The spheres, through their movement, create the mixtures of which the sublunary bodies are composed. And finally, the elements, or better, the force which orders them, that is, nature, operate the alterations of the corporeal beings. Thanks to this interdependent dynamic, the *primaria genitura* performs the *secundaria compositio* and the *generatio* of all the following beings, characterised by a temporal duration marked by generation and corruption.

<sup>71</sup> Avicenna's cosmology seems to have a direct influence on Gundissalinus. On the one hand, indeed, some textual passages display that Gundissalinus relies in the *Liber de philosophia prima* regarding the causative action performed by the separate substances or intelligences, as one can easily notice in *De processione mundi*, p. 54, 19-24, where Gundissalinus states: « Quia igitur ex prima materiae et formae copula trina suboles progenita est, scilicet intelligentia et caelestia corpora et quattuor elementa, ita prima causa omnia movet, sed diverso modo. Quaedam enim movet per se nullo mediante et quaedam non per se, sed mediantibus aliis. Principaliter enim per se nullo mediante intelligentiam movet ». On the other hand, this causal dynamic is not made explicit by Gundissalinus whom, regarding this point, seems to be unclear. Cf. POLLONI, *Glimpses of the Invisible* cit.

peculiarities of the former make the analysis more complicated<sup>72</sup>. The articulation of sciences proposed by the *De scientiis* can be seen as an update of the traditional Latin articulation of knowledge. The treatise offers the discussion of five groups of disciplines, beginning with grammar<sup>73</sup>, then logic<sup>74</sup>, mathematics<sup>75</sup>, natural philosophy and metaphysics<sup>76</sup>, and finally some disciplines of practical philosophy<sup>77</sup> (politics and juridical science). All these sciences have a sub-articulation in disciplines, regarding which Gundissalinus follows al-Fārābī's discussion. In this way, the Toledan philosopher integrates into the articulation of knowledge some 'new' sciences, as the *scientia de aspectibus*<sup>78</sup>, that is, optics, or the *scientia de ingeniis*<sup>79</sup>, that is, the 'science of ingeniousness' or engineering. Nevertheless, a comprehensive and persuasive scheme of the inter-relations of these sciences and disciplines to each other is missing, and Gundissalinus's explanation is eventually resolved into a list of disciplines rather than into an organic system of knowledge.

This system would be accomplished in the *De divisione philosophiae*. Here, the number of sources used rises noticeably, through references to Avicenna (*Liber de Philosophia prima* and *Logica*), al-Ġazālī (*Metaphysica* and *Logica*), the Brethren of Purity (*Liber introductorius in artem logicae demonstrationis*), Isaac Israeli (*Liber de definitionibus*), al-Kindī (*Liber de quinque essentiis*), as well as Cicero (*De inventione*), Bede (*Ars metrica*), Boethius, Isidore of Seville, Thierry of Chartres, and William of Conches<sup>80</sup>. The number of the sources used by Gundissalinus corresponds to the purpose of the *De divisione philosophiae*: providing the Latin world with a meta-encyclopaedic system that could allow the introduction of the 'new' sciences in the Latin articulation of knowledge, grounding the latter on the new basis provided by Avicenna's doctrine of *subalternatio*.

The system proposed by Gundissalinus is quite complex, especially in comparison to the articulation of knowledge presented in the *De scientiis*. The

<sup>72</sup> As we have seen, the *De scientiis* is basically a 'critical translation' of al-Fārābī's *Kitāb Ihṣā' al-'Ulūm*. Regarding the use of further sources, see the introductory study by Alonso Alonso to his edition of GUNDISSALINUS, *De scientiis*, ed. ALONSO ALONSO, pp. 7-51.

<sup>73</sup> GUNDISSALINUS, *De scientiis*, ed. ALONSO ALONSO, pp. 59, 3 - 65, 2.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 67, 3 - 83, 3.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 85, 3 - 112, 6.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 113, 3 - 131, 15.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 133, 3 - 140, 6.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 93, 9 - 99, 4.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 108, 9 - 112, 6.

<sup>80</sup> On Gundissalinus's sources of the *De divisione philosophiae*, see A. FIDORA, *Die Wissenschaftstheorie des Dominicus Gundissalinus. Voraussetzungen und Konsequenzen des zweiten Anfangs der aristotelischen Philosophie im 12. Jahrhundert*, De Gruyter, Berlin 2003.

first branch of knowledge is eloquence, which correspond to grammar and the civil sciences (*scientiae civiles*), that are poetic and rhetoric. Then, the second branch is the *scientia intermedia*, that is logic or dialectic. Also, logic is structured in several sub-disciplines, corresponding to the Aristotelian writings dedicated to this discipline plus rhetoric and poetics. Finally, the *scientia sapientiae*, that is philosophy, the art of the arts and the discipline of the disciplines (*ars artium et disciplina disciplinarum*). Philosophy is divided in two or better three parts, depending on whether logic is considered a part of philosophy or not: it is the traditional distinction in theoretical and practical philosophy<sup>81</sup>. The latter, that is, practical philosophy is composed of politics, economics, and ethics, following the traditional Aristotelian articulation. Theoretical philosophy is divided in three main sciences, that are physics, mathematics, and metaphysics, distinguished by the corporeality and movement of the objects with which they deal.

While the discussion of mathematics is very close to the corresponding part of Gundissalinus's *De scientiis*<sup>82</sup>, the description of physics and metaphysics — a discipline given this name for the first time in the Latin world<sup>83</sup> — offers some crucial developments. These are due to Gundissalinus's acceptance of Avicenna's theory of subalternation, presented in the *De divisione philosophiae* through the large quotation of the aforementioned *Summa Avicennae de convenientia et differentia scientiarum*. Indeed, thanks to this theory, Gundissalinus can finally bond together all the disciplines into an organic system of knowledge, of which metaphysics or *scientia divina* is the very root. In fact, all the sciences are subordinated to first philosophy, in what is a first approximation to a doctrine that will spread throughout Europe in a few decades.

Furthermore, Gundissalinus receives and develops another doctrinal point of Avicenna's theory, with a very practical purpose: the distinction between parts of a science — i.e., its internal developments — and its subordinate disciplines. Upon this Gundissalinus can indeed integrate into his system of knowledge also border-line disciplines, arrived through the Arabic-into-Latin translation movement, as subordinated disciplines which are based on but are not parts of a given science.

<sup>81</sup> Regarding this point, see HUGONNARD-ROCHE, *La classification des sciences de Gundissalinus* cit.

<sup>82</sup> In the *De divisione*, as in the *De scientiis*, mathematic counts seven sciences, that are: arithmetic, geometry, music, astronomy, which are joined to optics (or *scientia de aspectibus*), the science of weight (*scientia de ponderibus*), and the science of ingeniousness (*scientia de ingenii*).

<sup>83</sup> See A. FIDORA, *Dominicus Gundissalinus and the Introduction of Metaphysics into the Latin West*, «The Review of Metaphysics», 66, 2013, pp. 691-712.



The best example of this theoretical gain is displayed by the consideration of natural philosophy. Natural philosophy deals with the body as it is subject to movement, rest, and mutation. This science is composed of eight parts, each one of them is defined by a book or part of a book of Aristotle (or pseudo-Aristotle): *Liber de naturali auditu*, *Liber caeli et mundi*, *De generatione et corruptione*, the first three books of the *De impressionibus superioribus* (i.e., *Metheora*), the fourth book of the *Metheora*, *De mineralibus*, *De vegetalibus* (or *De plantis*), and finally, as for the eighth part of natural philosophy, it is described in *De animalibus*, *De anima* and the remaining Aristotelian books on physics<sup>84</sup>.

At the same time, while physics is developed in itself through these eight parts, it also contains below itself eight subordinated disciplines, and they are: medicine, the science of signs (*de indiciis*), necromancy, agriculture, science of images (*de imaginibus*), navigation, science of mirrors (*de speculis*) and alchemy<sup>85</sup>. These sciences are not parts of natural philosophy, but are subordinated to physics, that is, their object of study is provided by physics. Unfortunately, Gundissalinus is extremely meagre in presenting these eight subordinated sciences, and some of them are just named and not discussed, as it is the case of the science of signs, the science of images, and necromancy. As for alchemy, which appears here for the first time as a recognised scientific discipline, Gundissalinus simply states that it is the science of the conversion of things into other species (*'scientia de conversione rerum in alias species'*)<sup>86</sup>.

What is crucial to notice is how these sciences, and peculiar disciplines such as necromancy, alchemy, astrology, or the 'science of signs', can be counted among the natural disciplines *without* being part of natural philosophy itself. In this way, any question regarding their lawfulness or rightfulness becomes secondary: Gundissalinus, here, is not trying to justify these disciplines as parts of physics. He is opening an 'epistemological space' on which these new disciplines, derived from the translation movement, could be inserted

<sup>84</sup> GUNDISSALINUS, *De divisione philosophiae*, ed. BAUR, pp. 20, 20 - 23, 15.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20, 11-19: « Sed quia scientiarum aliae sunt universales, aliae particulares, universales autem dicuntur, sub quibus multae aliae scientiae continentur, tunc scientia naturalis universalis est, quia octo scientiae sub ea continentur: scilicet scientia de medicina, scientia de iudiciis, scientia de nigromantia secundum physicam, scientia de imaginibus, scientia de agricultura, scientia de navigatione, scientia de speculis, scientia de alquimia, quae est scientia de conversione rerum in alias species; et haec octo sunt species naturalis scientiae ». See, in particular, C. BURNETT, *A New Source for Dominicus Gundissalinus's Account of the Science of the Stars?*, « *Annals of Science* », 47, 1990, pp. 361-374.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20, 18.

and grounded<sup>87</sup>. But this 'epistemological space' would have been impossible to create without Avicenna's theory of subalternation, thanks to which these border-line disciplines can be connected to physics without being themselves parts of physics, with all the epistemological consequences this eventuality would have.

Avicenna's role is both key and pivotal also regarding Gundissalinus's psychological reflection<sup>88</sup>. Gundissalinus's *De anima* deals with the overall discussion on the soul, particularly answering the questions on its existence, ontological status, immortality, and psychological powers: a discussion posited by the Latin tradition of studies on the soul by authors such as Cassiodorus, Alcuin, and pseudo-Augustine<sup>89</sup>. The main difference with the tradition resides in the vast number of new sources upon which Gundissalinus's treatise is based: Qusta ibn Luqa's *De differentia spiritus et animae*, Ibn Gabirol's *Fons vitae*, Avicenna's *De anima*, together with some Latin authors such as Boethius, Macrobius, Cicero, and Augustine, authors that, nonetheless, play a secondary role in the economy of Gundissalinus's text.

By a thematic and comparative point of view, the *De anima* can be divided into two different parts of similar length. The first one, composed of chapters 1-8<sup>90</sup>, is an analysis of the definition, composition, origin, and immortality of the soul, based mainly (but not exclusively) on Ibn Luqa, Avicenna, and Ibn Gabirol. The second part (chapters 9 and 10<sup>91</sup>) is centred on the examination of the psychological powers, and relies almost exclusively on Avicenna's *De anima*, while the final pages present a digression on the 'psychology of light'<sup>92</sup>.

In the first place, Gundissalinus demonstrates the existence of the soul through the examination of its relation with the body. The soul is indeed the

<sup>87</sup> This 'epistemological space' will be closed quite soon, and the fate of many of these sciences will be unhappy: apart from some extremely peculiar thinkers, like Roger Bacon, alchemy and astrology found little or no space in scholastic philosophy, and Bacon himself will be condemned by the Franciscan order in 1278, and his image as a wizard, even furnished with a 'brazen head', will last until Robert Greene and beyond.

<sup>88</sup> The influence of Avicenna's *De anima* on Gundissalinus's psychology has been analysed by HASSE, *Avicenna's De anima in the Latin West* cit.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. GUNDISSALINUS, *De divisione philosophiae*, ed. BAUR, p. 15.

<sup>90</sup> GUNDISSALINUS, *De anima*, ed. ALONSO DEL REAL, pp. 68, 3 - 176, 4.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 178, 3 - 318, 11.

<sup>92</sup> See M. J. SOTO BRUNA, *La lux intelligentiae agentis en el pensamiento de Domingo Gundisalvo*, «Revista española de filosofía medieval», 10, 2003, pp. 335-343.

mover of the body, which moves it while staying put<sup>93</sup>. As for its definition, the soul is an incorporeal substance moving the body and the perfection of the physical, organic, and potentially living body, as stated by Plato (the former) and Aristotle (the latter).

The soul is an incorporeal simple substance, and nonetheless, it is a compound of matter and form. Every created being is made of the two hylomorphic compounds, including the angelic creatures and the souls, as Gundissalinus demonstrates through the quotation of many of Ibn Gabirol's proofs from the third book of the *Fons vitae*<sup>94</sup>. Nonetheless, even if the soul is composed of matter and form, this does not entail its complexity. Indeed, the soul can be said to be simple in comparison to what follow it in the causative progression of the world<sup>95</sup>.

The souls are created *cotidie*: if they had been created at the beginning of time, the souls would have been useless without a body to which be joined<sup>96</sup>. On the contrary, the souls are created daily, *ex nihilo*, and in causative process of many souls that do not derive from a single, original soul (against traducianism). Nevertheless, the souls are not created directly by God: it is a mediate creation, performed by the angelic creatures<sup>97</sup>. Even though there are three kind of souls — vegetative, sensitive, and rational — there is one soul only in every living being: indeed, the superior always acts upon the inferior<sup>98</sup>.

Furthermore, the soul is immortal. The body is not the efficient cause of the soul, on the contrary, the body is its accidental cause, and thus, when the body dies, its corruption does not affect the soul in any way<sup>99</sup>. The soul does not depend on body — nor the body depends on the soul — and, for this reason, since 'esse enim animae pendet ex aliis principiis quae non permutantur neque

<sup>93</sup> GUNDISSALINUS, *De anima*, ed. ALONSO DEL REAL, pp. 68, 1 - 82, 14.

<sup>94</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 142, 1 - 164, 22.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 162, 20 - 164, 1: «Non sunt ergo simplices substantiae immunes ab omni compositione; ac per hoc non dicuntur simplices esse quod omni compositione careant, sed quia respectu inferiorum de compositione minus habent, quoniam adhaerentes aeternitati et affixae desiderio uni et eidem creatoris voluntati incommutabili, nulli permutationi subiacent, affectionem non variant, in eodem statu semper permanent».

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 124, 3 - 128, 16.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132, 14-18: «Idem ad recipiendum aliquid ab aliquo, nihil est dignius eo quod illud recipit nullo medi ante. Si igitur anima recipit esse a primo factore nullo mediante, tunc nihil est dignius ea ad recipiendum illud ab illo; sed substantia intelligentiae dignior est ad hoc; ergo anima non recipit esse a primo factore nullo mediante».

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 108, 1 - 122, 4.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 168, 3 - 170, 7.

destruuntur... anima non moritur in morte corporis'<sup>100</sup>. Finally, since there is no possible way by which the soul can be destroyed, one has to admit that the soul is immortal<sup>101</sup>.

There is no need to stress how crucial is the role played by Avicenna's *De anima* in the first part of Gundissalinus's homonymous writing. It will be sufficient to recall that the resolution of the problem of the internal multiplicity or unity of the vegetative, sensitive, and rational soul<sup>102</sup> (joined to Ibn Gabirol's Neoplatonic causal doctrine)<sup>103</sup>; the demonstration of the difference between soul and body through the argument of the 'flying man'<sup>104</sup>; the discussion of the kind of movements of the soul<sup>105</sup>; the answer to the problem of the creation of the soul *ab initio mundi* or *cotidie*<sup>106</sup>; and the overall discussion on the immortality of the soul<sup>107</sup>, are all grounded on Avicenna's discussion presented in his *De anima*. In Gundissalinus's psychological treatise, too, one can see at work the theoretical merging between Avicenna's and Ibn Gabirol's perspective: an unlikely doctrinal fusion that is one of the most characteristic feature of Gundissalinus's reflection.

The role played by Avicenna in Gundissalinus's *De anima* is even more central in the second part of the treatise. In these closing chapters, Gundissalinus expounds the articulation of the vegetative soul<sup>108</sup>, and that of the sensitive faculties into *vis motiva* and *vis apprehensiva*, the latter articulated into the external and internal faculties, that are, on the one hand, the five senses<sup>109</sup> and, on the other hand, the five *vires*: *phantasia*, *imaginatio*, *imaginativa/cogitativa*, *aestimativa*, and *memoria*, discussed addressing a series of problems derived, again, from Avicenna's homonymous work<sup>110</sup>.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 172, 2-4.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 172, 5 - 176, 4. One should notice that the structure of this argument is mirrored by (or mirrors) the *De immortalitate animae*. This is not the place where one can discuss the many problems regarding the authorship of this treatise. Nonetheless, the question about who did write the *De immortalitate* needs to be reassessed considering the new data on Gundissalinus and its sources recently made available.

<sup>102</sup> AVICENNA, *Liber de anima*, ed. VAN RIET, V, pp. 105-112.

<sup>103</sup> IBN GABIROL, *Fons vitae*, ed. BAUMKER, p. 186, 19-23.

<sup>104</sup> GUNDISSALINUS, *De anima*, ed. ALONSO DEL REAL, p. 86, 1-17. See also AVICENNA, *Liber de anima*, I, ed.

VAN RIET, pp. 36-37.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, I, pp. 45-46.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, V, pp. 115-116.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, V, pp. 117-124.

<sup>108</sup> GUNDISSALINUS, *De anima*, ed. ALONSO DEL REAL, pp. 186, 12 - 190, 12.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 192, 21 - 202, 10.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 202, 12 - 246, 24.

Then, Gundissalinus passes to the examination of the intellective process offered by Avicenna's *De anima*. The focus, then, is on the psychological faculties proper to man, 'agere actiones electione deliberationis et advenire artes meditando et comprehendere universalia'<sup>111</sup>. The intellectual faculties are two: the *virtus activa*<sup>112</sup> and the *virtus contemplativa*<sup>113</sup>. These two kinds of intellect are directed downwards and upwards and, thus, they produce two different kinds of knowledge correlated to each other: «sed ex eo quod est infra eam — scilicet intellectu activo — generatur mores et scientiae, et ex eo quod est supra eam — scilicet intellectu contemplativo — acquiruntur sapientiae»<sup>114</sup>.

Gundissalinus's attention is centred on the examination of the progressive actualization of the contemplative intellect through its states of *intellectus materialis*, *in habitu*, and *intellectus adeptus ab alio*<sup>115</sup>. The Toledan philosopher, in this way, is the first Latin philosopher in presenting and discussing Avicenna's theory of the separate active intellect, from which the *intellectus adeptus* receives its actualisation:

«Qui ideo vocatur intellectus adeptus ab alio quoniam intellectus in potentia non exit ad effectum nisi per intellectum qui semper est in effectum. Aliquid igitur est per quod animae nostrae in rebus intelligibilibus exeunt de potentia ad effectum. Id autem non est nisi intelligentia in effectum, penes quam sunt principia formarum intelligibilium abstractarum. Unde cum intellectus qui est in potentia coniungitur cum illo intellectu qui est in actu aliquo modo coniunctionis, imprimitur in eo aliqua species formarum quae est adepta ab extrinsecus»<sup>116</sup>.

It is through this intellect *qui semper est in effectum* that the *intellectus adeptus* can receive the principles of the abstract intellective forms, and it joins the intellect still in potency impressing upon it the intelligible forms from the consideration of what is inferior<sup>117</sup>. Gundissalinus also accepts the separateness of the active

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 248, 5-6.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 250, 7-11: «Sed virtus activa sive intellectus activus est principium movens corpus hominis ad singulas actiones quas praecipue sibi eligit secundum quod intendit. Sed hoc facit aliquando per virtutem animalem appetitivam sive desiderativam, aliquando per imaginativam sive aestimativam, aliquando per se ipsam».

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 252, 1-2: «virtus autem contemplativa sive intellectus contemplativus est qui solet informari a forma universalis nudata a materia».

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 258, 1-3.

<sup>115</sup> Regarding the use Gundissalinus makes of Avicenna on this point, see HASSE, *Avicenna's De anima in the Latin West* cit., p. 191.

<sup>116</sup> GUNDISSALINUS, *De anima*, ed. ALONSO DEL REAL, p. 262, 1-9.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 288, 7-11: «Quae forma est intellectus adeptus verissime et haec virtus est intellectus in effectum secundum quod est perfectio. Formatio vero imaginabilium est respectio animae ad thesauros sensibilibus. Sed primum est inspicere quod est superius; hoc autem est inspicere quod est inferius».

intellect, and this is made clear by the textual analysis of the *De anima*, where the Toledan philosopher states that:

« Cum autem anima liberabitur a corpore et ab accidentibus corporis, tunc poterit coniungi intelligentiae agenti et tunc inveniet in ea pulchritudinem intelligibilem et delectationem perennem sicut dicemus suo loco »<sup>118</sup>.

Following Avicenna, this separate intelligence is an angelic creature, as Gundissalinus claims a few pages earlier:

« Sicut ergo corpus humanum non recipit actionem aliquam animae rationalis nisi mediante spiritu, sic et anima rationalis non recipit actionem factoris primi nisi mediante intelligentia, scilicet angelica creatura »<sup>119</sup>.

The central role played by Avicenna in the overall discussion of Gundissalinus's *De anima*, thus, is striking. Gundissalinus builds his thematisation of the soul on Avicenna's work, shortening, simplifying, and sometimes amending the original discussion of the original *De anima*. Nonetheless, the final pages of Gundissalinus's writing<sup>120</sup> display a peculiar attitude of the Toledan philosopher. The closing part of the *De anima*, indeed, is marked by the disappearance of any Arabic source, replaced by a constant reference to the Biblical authority. In just a few pages he makes eighteen explicit references to the Bible, in a total of twenty-one references presented throughout the whole text of the *De anima*. The focus is here centred on the discussion of the metaphor of light, in accordance with Augustine's theory of intellectual illumination.

One of the outcomes of this attitude is that, in these pages, Gundissalinus becomes inconsistent in referring to the human intellect<sup>121</sup>. The term *intelligentia* is now used in a rather different sense than the active intelligence: it is the highest faculty of the human being, through which one has *sapientia* — and therefore an immanent faculty rather than a separate principle. For instance, Gundissalinus states that:

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 288, 11-14.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136, 9-12.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 302, 6 - 318, 11.

<sup>121</sup> On the introduction of this and further terms related to the intellective process into the Latin philosophical tradition, see J. JOLIVET, *Intellect et intelligence. Note sur la tradition arabo-latine des XII<sup>e</sup> et XIII<sup>e</sup> siècles*, in S. HOSSEIN NASR ed., *Mélanges offerts à Henry Corbin*, McGill University - Institute of Islamic Studies, Tehran 1977, pp. 221-237.



«Cum enim hic oculus animae qui est intelligentia in contemplationem creatoris intendit, quoniam Deus lux est, ipsa intelligentia tanta claritate divini luminis perfunditur ut in ipsa intelligentia sic irradiata lux inaccessibilis tamquam forma in speculo resultare videatur»<sup>122</sup>.

Gundissalinus refers with the same term to two different things, an immanent faculty and a transcendent being. And, at the very same time, the final pages of the *De anima* appear to be in contradiction with what Gundissalinus claimed in his previous discussion, for the explicit references to Augustine's theories and the overall change of perspective presented.

Nonetheless, the reason of this change of attitude can be explained perhaps by a simple consideration. Until the final pages of his *De anima*, Gundissalinus has claimed at least three main doctrines in clear disagreement with the Latin Christian tradition: psychological hylomorphism, the angelic creation of the soul, and the existence of a separate medium of human intellection. With the passage to the discussion of what the soul knows after the death of the body, Gundissalinus possibly felt a need to ease the border-line positions he has taken. By this point of view, the references to Augustine seem to be aimed at stating the implicit consistency between what Gundissalinus has claimed following Avicenna, and the Latin tradition: a feature characteristic of Gundissalinus's approach, as underlined by Alexander Fidora regarding Boethius's and Isidore's role in the *De divisione philosophiae*<sup>123</sup>.

#### SOME CONCLUSIONS

Avicenna plays a central role in Gundissalinus's philosophical production, as well in his activity as translator. Gundissalinus probably moved to Toledo to participate to the very translation of the Avicennian *corpus* proposed by Ibn Daud. In the following decades, while translating these texts, he would gradually discover Avicenna's doctrines, and this encounter was to be pivotal for his own philosophical reflections.

While pervasive, Avicenna's influence on Gundissalinus's original writings is not balanced or equal. On the contrary, the analysis of Gundissalinus's

<sup>122</sup> GUNDISSALINUS, *De anima*, ed. ALONSO DEL REAL, p. 304, 1-4.

<sup>123</sup> See A. FIDORA, *La recepción de San Isidoro de Sevilla por Domingo Gundisalvo (ca. 1110-1181): Astronomía, Astrología y Medicina en la Edad Media*, «Estudios eclesiásticos», 75, 2000, pp. 663-677; Id., *La metodología de las ciencias según Boecio: su recepción en las obras y traducciones de Domingo Gundisalvo*, «Revista española de filosofía medieval», 7, 2000, pp. 127-136; and Id., *Domingo Gundisalvo y la Sagrada Escritura*, «Estudios eclesiásticos», 76, 2001, pp. 243-258.

philosophical production displays a clear progression on his adhesion to Avicenna, whose doctrines appear to play a secondary role in the *De unitate et uno* and, in a different way, in the *De scientiis*. The second phase of Gundissalinus's speculative activity is then marked by a diffusive presence of Avicenna — both his texts and doctrines — with a crucial role in the *De anima*, *De divisione philosophiae*, and *De processione mundi*.

Avicenna is the answer to the problems arising from Gundissalinus's precocious adhesion to Ibn Gabirol's ontology and cosmology. Possibly through Ibn Daud's criticism, Gundissalinus gradually understands that some doctrines derived by the *Fons vitae* entail problematic outcomes that needed to be resolved. The solution Gundissalinus provides to these doctrinal problems is the assimilation of Avicenna's modal ontology, and the attempt he makes at merging this theory with universal hylomorphism.

A similar scenario is offered by the consideration of the *De divisione philosophiae* and *De anima*. In his epistemological work, Gundissalinus uses Avicenna to substantiate an organic and consistent system of knowledge grounded on the theory of *subalternatio*. Gundissalinus's system is an articulation of sciences in which the new disciplines derived by the translation movement could be finally inserted, with a substantial change of perspective in comparison, for instance, with Hugh of St Victor's *Didascalicon*. In a similar fashion, the *De anima* offers a discussion of the soul, and especially of its powers, that, derived by Avicenna, would have a crucial history of the effects in the thirteenth-century debate and whose first Latin reception was made by Gundissalinus.

Since the impact of Avicenna on Gundissalinus's speculation is so profound and wide, should we refer to the Toledan philosopher as an Avicennist thinker? This is what Albert the Great does in his *De homine*, regarding Gundissalinus's (and al-Ġazālī's) positions<sup>124</sup>. Many decades have passed since the controversy between Étienne Gilson and Roland De Vaux on the supposed *augustinisme avicennisant* or Latin Avicennism of Gundissalinus<sup>125</sup>. While Gilson's position has

<sup>124</sup> ALBERTUS MAGNUS, *De homine*, ed. H. ANZULEWICZ, Aschendorff, Münster 2008 (Alberti Magni Opera Omnia, XXVII/2), p. 410, 25-27.

<sup>125</sup> See É. GILSON, *Pourquoi saint-Thomas a critiqué saint-Augustin*, « Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge », 1, 1926-1927, pp. 5-129; ID., *Avicenne en Occident au Moyen Âge*, « Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge », 44, 1969, pp. 89-121; ID., *Les sources gréco-arabes de l'augustinisme avicennisant*, « Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Âge », 5, 1930, pp. 1-107; and R. DE VAUX, *Notes et texte sur l'avicennisme latin aux confins des XII-XIII siècles*, Vrin, Paris 1934.

been rejected by many scholars with eminent arguments based on the very text of Gundissalinus's *De anima*<sup>126</sup>, and De Vaux's reading of the first Latin reception of Avicenna suffered a precocious criticism<sup>127</sup>, it is undeniable that Gundissalinus, being the very first Latin philosopher in accepting and developing Avicenna's doctrines, is the initiator of a tendency that would be felt strongly throughout the thirteenth century and beyond.

At the same time, though, there are at least three further considerations that have to be done in order to understand the relation between Gundissalinus and Avicenna. In the first place, it should be recalled that Avicenna was read by Gundissalinus (and Ibn Daud) in explicit consistency with Aristotle. This fact is made clear by Gundissalinus's direct references to Aristotle in his philosophical production, under whose name he often quotes excerpts extracted by Avicenna<sup>128</sup>. This attitude — shared by other thinkers in different traditions, such as Maimonides<sup>129</sup> — is also explicitly presented by Ibn Daud in the dedicatory letter of the Latin translation of Avicenna's *De anima*, and it would have a discreet success in the following decades of the Latin philosophical speculation, when Avicenna was used as interpretative mediation for a correct understanding of Aristotle's writings, up to the translations of Averroes's works<sup>130</sup>.

A second, fundamental aspect to consider is that Gundissalinus's progressive acceptance of Avicenna's theories does not imply for him a complete abandonment of Ibn Gabirol's ontology, but only its reassessment. Gundissalinus's adhesion to doctrines completely unacceptable from an Avicennian point of view, as displayed by Ibn Daud's criticism, makes it hard to claim that Gundissalinus was a convinced Avicennist, as was certainly the case for Ibn Daud.

This point is directly linked to a third point. Gundissalinus's reception of Avicenna is partial: he enacts a sort of 'cherry-picking' upon the Avicennian

<sup>126</sup> See, in particular, J. JOLIVET, *The Arabic Inheritance*, in P. DRONKE ed., *A History of Twelfth-Century Western Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1988, pp. 113-148.

<sup>127</sup> See E. BERTOLA, *È esistito un avicennismo latino nel Medioevo?*, « Sophia », 35, 1967, pp. 318-334, and 39, 1971, pp. 278-320.

<sup>128</sup> See POLLONI, *Aristotle in Toledo: Gundissalinus, the Arabs, and Gerard of Cremona's Translations* cit.

<sup>129</sup> See J. STERN, *The Matter and Form of Maimonides' Guide*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge - London 2013.

<sup>130</sup> See A. BERTOLACCI, *On the Latin Reception of Avicenna's Metaphysics before Albertus Magnus: An Attempt at Periodization*, in A. BERTOLACCI, D. N. HASSE eds., *The Arabic, Hebrew and Latin Reception of Avicenna's Metaphysics*, De Gruyter, Berlin 2012, pp. 197-223. See also A. BERTOLACCI, *The Reception of Avicenna in Latin Medieval Culture*, in P. ADAMSON ed., *Interpreting Avicenna. Critical Essays*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2013, pp. 242-269.

writings he had at his disposal, choosing only those theories that he felt as relevant and leaving apart a vast amount of correlated doctrinal points he did not perceive as important or, perhaps, he did not even understand. A clear example of this is the silence under which Avicenna's distinction between essence and existence is passed by Gundissalinus. However, it is also of the utmost importance to note the 'hermeneutical violence' that characterises Gundissalinus's attitude toward Avicenna's hylomorphism, completely rejected without presenting, in his original writings, any moment of actual confrontation with Avicenna's positions. This is possibly the most relevant aspect regarding the supposed Avicennism of Gundissalinus. The complete lack of any *dialogue* with Avicenna, also in his later writings, seems to mark Gundissalinus's use of Avicenna as still immature and even ingenuous, especially in comparison to the subsequent Latin reception of Avicenna.

Despite this, Avicenna plays a central, crucial role for Gundissalinus. Even if he is quoted by name only in a quite few occasions, the overall reflection of the Toledan philosopher is grounded on Avicenna's texts, and insolubly bound to them. From this perspective, Avicenna's founding presence is quite symmetrical to the influence his writings have on two further anonymous works written in the same decades as Gundissalinus's: the *De peregrinationibus animae apud inferos*<sup>131</sup>, or 'Anonymous d'Alverny', and the *Liber de causis primis et secundis*<sup>132</sup>. A. Bertolacci referred to Gundissalinus and these two writings as witnesses of this first stage of the Latin reception of Avicenna, called '*Philosophia prima without Metaphysica*', stressing the autonomy the references to Avicenna have as regards to Aristotle's *Metaphysics*<sup>133</sup>.

These writings share a common purpose: they are aimed at facilitating the insertion of new ideas, new authors, and new doctrinal perspectives into a philosophical debate that was still based on the framework furnished by Plato's *Timaeus*, Chartrean natural philosophy and Parisian dialectic. They try to justify the new doctrines from 'the Arabs' displaying their consistency with the Latin tradition, as it is in place with Gundissalinus's use of Boethius, Augustine, and the Chartrean speculation; the *De causis primis et secundis* attempting a synthesis between Avicenna

<sup>131</sup> AN., *De peregrinationibus animae apud inferos*, ed. M.-T. D'ALVERNY, *Les pérégrinations de l'âme dans l'autre monde d'après un anonyme de la fin du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, « Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Âge », 13, 1940-1942, pp. 280-299.

<sup>132</sup> AN., *Liber de causis primis et secundis*, ed. DE VAUX, *Notes et teste sur l'avicennisme latin aux confins des XII-XIII siècles* cit., pp. 83-140.

<sup>133</sup> BERTOLACCI, *On the Latin Reception of Avicenna's Metaphysics before Albertus Magnus: An Attempt at Periodization* cit.

and Scotus Eriugena; and the *Peregrinatio*, where the author inserts many Arabic doctrines in a Christian eschatological description of the afterlife.

It is exactly in this pioneering role they are playing that these treatises and authors display their fundamental relevance. Indeed, their perhaps ingenuous approach is caused by their lack of that process of progressive absorption and critical elaboration of the Arabic sources, and they lack all this exactly for they are the pioneers of this philosophical process that would lead, in a few decades, to the mature confrontations with Avicenna of thinkers such as Thomas Aquinas, Albert the Great, or Roger Bacon. It is this that makes of Gundissalinus one of the pivotal figures in the history of Western philosophy, since his curiosity, syncretism and eagerness, contributed crucially to the road that led, philosophically, Avicenna to Paris, where his thought will be duly problematized, developed, and criticised.

## ABSTRACT

*Gundissalinus and Avicenna : Some Remarks on an Intricate Philosophical Connection*

This article analyses the peculiarities of Dominicus Gundissalinus's reading and use of Avicenna's writings in his original works. Gundissalinus (1120ca - post 1190) is indeed the Latin translator of Avicenna's *De anima* and *Liber de philosophia prima*, but also an original philosopher whose writings are precious witnesses of the very first reception of Avicennian philosophy in the Latin West. The article points out the structural bond with the Persian philosopher upon which Gundissalinus grounds his own speculation. This contribution stresses, in particular, the important role played by Avicenna's psychology, epistemology, and metaphysics in order to provide Gundissalinus with a different set of answers to at least two main questions. On the one hand, the problem of creatural existence and cosmological causation, concerning which Gundissalinus tends to doctrinally merge Avicenna with Ibn Gabirol. On the other hand, Avicenna's influence is crucial for Gundissalinus's attempt at elaborating a new system of knowledge, which was supposed to be able to include the new sciences made available by the translation movement, but that also needed to be internally organised through firm epistemological principles. Beside his crucial contribution as translator, Gundissalinus's first philosophical encounter with the Avicenna paved the road for the subsequent reception of the Persian philosopher's works, opening a hermeneutical perspective which would be pivotal for the thirteenth-century discussions on soul, knowledge, and being.

NICOLA POLLONI, Durham University  
nicola.polloni@durham.ac.uk