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## Three Scotist Arguments Against Averroes. Antonius Andreas on the Subject Matter of Metaphysics\*

### 1. INTRODUCTION: AVERROES, SCOTUS, AND ANTONIUS ANDREAS

When Aristotle established the science that became known as metaphysics, he left his successors with a conundrum: What does this science study? What is the scope, the proper subject matter, the purpose of metaphysics? Aristotle, famously, gives several seemingly contradictory answers to this question: He describes the science in question as universal, as responsible for studying being itself in its most general sense, being insofar as it is being<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand, Aristotle assigns to metaphysics the study of a special part of the existing world: it investigates the substances that are eternal and separate from matter<sup>2</sup>. There is an undeniable tension between these two statements<sup>3</sup>.

In the long history of the reception of the *Metaphysics*, philosophers have suggested numerous ways of dealing with this systematic problem. The great Arabic philosopher Averroes (Ibn Rušd, 1126-98) gives a detailed and elaborate answer to this question in his *Long Commentary on the Metaphysics*. In a nutshell, Averroes states that it is the intention of metaphysics to investigate the nature of God, the first cause. But in order to be able to do so, the science

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<sup>1</sup> ARISTOTLE, *Met.*, book I, 2, 982a20-1; IV, 1, 1003a20-6.

<sup>2</sup> ARISTOTLE, *Met.*, book I, 2, 983a5-11; VI, 1, 1026a10-23, XII, 1, 1069a30-b2.

<sup>3</sup> This problem is still widely debated among scholars. See, for instance, E. BERTI, *What is Aristotle's Metaphysics?*, in D. SFENDONI-MENTZOU ed., *Aristotle - Contemporary Perspectives on his Thought*, De Gruyter, Berlin 2018, pp. 245-255; J. G. DEFILIPPO, *First Philosophy and the Kinds of Substance*, «Journal of the History of Philosophy», 36/1, 1998, pp. 1-28; S. DUARTE, *Aristotle's Theology and its Relation to the Science of Being qua Being*, «Apeiron», 40/3, 2007, pp. 267-318; M. FREDE, *The Unity of General and Special Metaphysics: Aristotle's Conception of Metaphysics*, in M. FREDE, *Essays in Ancient Philosophy*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 1987, pp. 81-95; G. PATZIG, *Theology and Ontology in Aristotle's Metaphysics*, in J. BARNES, M. SCHOFIELD, R. SORABJI eds., *Articles on Aristotle - 3. Metaphysics*, Duckworth, London 1979, pp. 33-49.

studies being insofar as it is being, and substance insofar as it is substance<sup>4</sup>. After the Latin translation of this work, Averroes' theory and arguments became highly influential in the Latin Middle Ages. They were taken over, discussed, and modified by many Christian Latin authors<sup>5</sup>. But Averroes was also criticized for his solution to the problem, particularly by thinkers belonging to the Scotist school of thought<sup>6</sup>.

Duns Scotus himself wrote two commentaries on the *Metaphysics*. His *Notabilia super Metaphysicam* seem to have been virtually unknown among his contemporaries and followers<sup>7</sup>. The *Quaestiones super Aristotelis Metaphysicam*,

<sup>4</sup> AVERROES, *Tafsīr mā ba 'd at-ṭabī'at*, ed. M. BOUYGES, 3 vols., Impr. Catholique, Beirut 1938-48, book I, c. 4, p. 13, lin. 11 - p. 15, lin. 18; book III, c. 3, p. 190, lin. 4-18; book VII, c. 39, p. 935, lin. 4-15; book XII, c. 5, p. 1425, lin. 6-8 [AVERROES, *Ibn Rushd's Metaphysics: A Translation with Introduction of Ibn Rushd's Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics, Book Lām*, ed. and transl. C. GENEQUAND, Brill, Leiden 1986, p. 75]; book XII, c. 12, p. 1453, lin. 2-9 [GENEQUAND, *Book Lām*, p. 88]. See A. BERTOLACCI, *Avicenna and Averroes on the Proof of God's Existence and the Subject-Matter of Metaphysics*, « *Medioevo* », 32, 2007, pp. 61-97.

<sup>5</sup> While there is no study comparing the Latin positions on the subject matter of metaphysics with regard to their reception of Averroes' position, there is the seminal work on the topic by Zimmermann (first published in 1965; a new revised edition appeared as A. ZIMMERMANN, *Ontologie oder Metaphysik? Die Diskussion über den Gegenstand der Metaphysik im 13. und 14. Jahrhundert*, Peeters, Leuven 1998), a short overview by M. FORLIVESI, *Approaching the Debate on the Subject of Metaphysics from the Later Middle Ages to the Early Modern Age: The Ancient and Medieval Antecedents*, « *Medioevo* », 34, 2009, pp. 9-59, as well as numerous scholarly works investigating the topic in the writings of one or several individual Latin philosophers, such as the contributions by S. Ebbesen, F. Amerini, F. Kok, and P. Bakker in F. AMERINI, G. GALLUZZO eds., *A Companion to the Latin Commentaries on Aristotle's Metaphysics*, Brill, Leiden 2014; J. F. WIPPEL, *Thomas Aquinas, Siger of Brabant, and Their Use of Avicenna in Clarifying the Subject of Metaphysics*, in T. ROCKMORE ed., *The Proceedings of the Twentieth World Congress of Philosophy, vol. 2: Metaphysics*, Philosophy Documentation Center Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, OH 1999, pp. 15-26; T. B. NOONE, *Albert the Great on the Subject of Metaphysics and Demonstrating the Existence of God*, « *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* », 2, 1992, pp. 1-16; M. FORLIVESI, *In Search of the Roots of Suárez's Conception of Metaphysics: Aquinas, Bonino, Hervaeus Natalis, Orbellis, Trombetta*, in L. NOVÁK ed., *Suárez's Metaphysics in Its Historical and Systematic Context*, De Gruyter, Berlin 2014, pp. 13-37; S. FOLGER-FONFARA, *Das "Super"-Transzendente und die Spaltung der Metaphysik: Der Entwurf des Franziskus von Marchia*, Brill, Leiden 2008; M. FORLIVESI, « *Quae in hac quaestione tradit Doctor videntur humanum ingenium superare* »: Scotus, Andrés, Bonet, Zerbi, and Trombetta *Confronting the Nature of Metaphysics*, « *Quaestio* », 8, 2008, pp. 219-277; I. MANDRELLA, *Metaphysik als Supertranszendentalwissenschaft? Zum scotistischen Metaphysikentwurf des Nicolaus Bonetus*, « *Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales* », 75, 2008, pp. 161-193; P. PORRO, *Immateriality and Separation in Avicenna and Thomas Aquinas*, in D. N. HASSE, A. BERTOLACCI eds., *The Arabic, Hebrew and Latin Reception of Avicenna's Metaphysics*, De Gruyter, Berlin 2011, pp. 275-307; A. P. MONAHAN, *The Subject of Metaphysics for Peter of Auvergne*, « *Mediaeval Studies* », 16, 1954, pp. 118-130.

<sup>6</sup> For instance by ANTONIO TROMBETTA, *Opus in Metaphysicam Aristotelis Padue in Thomistas discussum*, [Jacobus Pentius], Venice 1504, book XII, q. 2, foll. 82va-84ra.

<sup>7</sup> G. PINI, *Notabilia Scoti super Metaphysicam: una testimonianza ritrovata dell'insegnamento di Scoto sulla Metafisica*, « *Archivum Franciscanum Historicum* », 89, 1996, pp. 137-180; G. PINI,

however, were considered one of his central works. He drafted and reworked them over the course of several decades, introducing numerous additions and corrections. This commentary in question format contains passages which contradict positions Scotus adopts elsewhere; indeed, it sometimes contradicts itself, and often leaves Scotus' own position unclear. Therefore, the work has been described as a 'philosophical laboratory' of metaphysical thinking rather than a text outlining Scotus' definite position<sup>8</sup>.

As a consequence, a commentary on the *Metaphysics* by Scotus' student Antonius Andreas (ca. 1280 - ca. 1333)<sup>9</sup> was much more widely read than Scotus' own commentary. Hence, this article will present Antonius' answer to the systematic problem of the scope and subject matter of metaphysics, and analyze his account and criticism of Averroes.

Antonius Andreas' metaphysical works were very influential among later Franciscan thinkers. His account of metaphysical themes, the way in which he relates and interprets Scotus' thinking, represents the form in which the Scotist philosophers received these theories and arguments. The Scotist commentator Antonio Trombetta appreciates this role and praises Antonius as the « faithful interpreter of Scotus » (*Scoti fidelis interpres*)<sup>10</sup>. But in particular Antonius' position on the subject matter of metaphysics, his interpretation of Averroes, as well as his arguments against him were also met with criticism. The late medieval philosopher Agostino Nifo, for instance, explicitly

*Duns Scotus' Literal Commentary on the Metaphysics and the Notabilia Scoti super Metaphysicam* (Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, C 62 SUP., FF.51R-98R), « Bulletin de Philosophie médiévale », 38, 1996, pp. 141-142.

<sup>8</sup> G. PINI, *The Questions on the Metaphysics by John Duns Scotus*, in AMERINI, GALLUZZO eds., *A Companion to the Latin Commentaries on Aristotle's Metaphysics* cit., pp. 359-384, esp. pp. 359-361 (quotation on p. 361); see also A. VOS, *The Philosophy of John Duns Scotus*, EUP, Edinburgh 2006, pp. 130-133; T. WILLIAMS, *Introduction: The Life and Works of John Duns the Scot*, in T. WILLIAMS ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Duns Scotus*, CUP, Cambridge 2003, pp. 1-14, esp. pp. 8-9.

<sup>9</sup> Antonius was born in Aragon around 1280. He joined the Franciscan order and claimed to have attended Scotus' lectures, presumably in Paris. Antonius spent much of his life in Catalonia and died in or shortly before 1333. See O. WEIJERS, *Le travail intellectuel à la Faculté des arts de Paris: textes et maîtres (ca. 1200-1500). I. Répertoire des noms commençant par A-B*, Brepols, Turnhout 1994, pp. 65-66; M. GENSLER, *Antonius Andreae: Scotism's Best Supporting auctor*, « Anuari de la Societat Catalana de Filosofia », 8, 1996, pp. 57-79, esp. pp. 57-60; J. MENSA I VALLS, *Antoni Andreu, mestre escotista: balanç d'un segle d'estudis primera edició*, Institut d'Estudis Catalans, Barcelona 2017, pp. 65-70; M. CABRÉ DURAN, *Antonius Andreas and the Concept of Science in his Commentary on Metaphysics. Transcription of Book VI, q. 1-6* (Oxford, Oriol College, Ms. 65), « Bulletin de philosophie médiévale », 62, 2020, pp. 91-168, esp. pp. 91-93; C. H. LOHR, *Medieval Latin Aristotle Commentaries: Authors A-F*, « Traditio », 23, 1967, pp. 313-413, here pp. 363-365.

<sup>10</sup> TROMBETTA, *Opus in Metaphysicam Aristotelis*, book I, q. 9, ad oppositum, fol. 9ra; see FORLIVESI, *Confronting the Nature of Metaphysics* cit., p. 266.

recounts Antonius' arguments, points out problems in his reasoning, and defends Averroes<sup>11</sup>.

Originally, Antonius wrote one commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* which included a literal commentary as well as additional questions. It was subsequently split into the literal commentary, the *Expositio*, and the *Questiones*, which were circulated separately with the latter being more popular than the former. These *Questiones super duodecim libros Metaphysice* became very influential in their own right, and were used as a sort of textbook of Scotist metaphysics. This article will thus focus on this commentary in question format<sup>12</sup>.

Even though Antonius Andreas occasionally puts forth distinct positions which differ from Scotus<sup>13</sup>, he generally stays close to Scotus' thought. The *quaestio* I will analyze here utilizes material taken from Scotus, but adds to it and structures it in a new way<sup>14</sup>. It provides a concise systematization which allows for a precise analysis of one possible answer to the philosophical problem at hand. Antonius explicitly dedicates himself to the problem of the sub-

<sup>11</sup> AGOSTINO NIFO, *Metaphysicarum disputationum dilucidarium*, Sigismund Mayr, Naples 1511, book I, disp. 1, ch. 3, fol. 10r-v.

<sup>12</sup> Antonius' commentary on the *Ars vetus* can be dated to 1312 and contains a reference to the commentary on the *Metaphysics*, so we know that the latter commentary was finished before 1312. See PINI, *The Questions on the Metaphysics* cit., p. 360; G. PINI, *Scotistic Aristotelianism: Antonius Andreas' Expositio and Quaestiones on the Metaphysics*, in L. SILEO ed., *Via Scoti: Methodologica ad mentem Joannis Duns Scoti*, vol. 1, Edizioni Antonianum, Rome 1995, pp. 375-389, esp. 378-380; G. PINI, *Sulla fortuna delle Quaestiones super Metaphysicam di Duns Scoto. Le Quaestiones super Metaphysicam di Antonio Andrea*, « Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale », 6, 1995, pp. 281-361, esp. pp. 281-287; W. O. DUBA, *Three Franciscan Metaphysicians after Scotus: Antonius Andreae, Francis of Marchia, and Nicolaus Bonet*, in AMERINI, GALLUZZO eds., *A Companion to the Latin Commentaries on Aristotle's Metaphysics* cit., pp. 413-493, esp. pp. 414-418; GENSLER, *Antonius Andreae* cit., pp. 60-61 and 65-66; CABRÉ DURAN, *Antonius Andreas and the Concept of Science* cit., pp. 95-100.

<sup>13</sup> See S. D. DUMONT, *Transcendental Being: Scotus and Scotists*, « Topoi », 11, 1992, pp. 135-148, esp. pp. 140-142; CABRÉ DURAN, *Antonius Andreas and the Concept of Science* cit., pp. 101-102, 112-113.

<sup>14</sup> See PINI, *Sulla fortuna* cit., pp. 287-301, 353-355, who notes that this question is among those in which Antonius notably deviates from the corresponding passage in Scotus' commentary on the *Metaphysics* and presents a complete and coherent theory which is not present in this form in Scotus. Scotus' remarks on this topic can mostly be found in JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis*, ed. R. ANDREWS ET AL., 2 vols., Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure, NY 1997, book I, q. 1; see VOS, *The Philosophy of John Duns Scotus* cit., pp. 266-7; FORLIVESI, *Confronting the Nature* cit., pp. 223-241; L. HONNEFELDER, *Ens in quantum ens: Der Begriff des Seienden als solchen als Gegenstand der Metaphysik nach der Lehre des Johannes Duns Scotus*, Aschendorff, Münster 1989, pp. 99-118; A. SANTOGROSSI, *La science divine du divin et du non-divin chez Duns Scot*, in O. BOULNOIS ET AL. eds., *Le contemplateur et les idées: Modèles de la science divine du Néoplatonisme au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Vrin, Paris 2002, pp. 107-127.

ject matter of metaphysics and has a clear position towards, and reply to, Averroes. He picks, collects, and modifies theories and claims which Scotus puts forth in different parts of his *Quaestiones super Metaphysicam* and elsewhere, and streamlines them.

If we are interested in a philosophical understanding of the systematic Scotist answer to the problem of the subject matter of metaphysics and the Scotist reaction to Averroes' theory, we will not find a straightforward answer in Scotus' own commentary on the *Metaphysics*. Antonius Andreas, however, presents such a theory in a form which allows for this type of analysis. This will help us to get a clearer picture of the reception of Averroes' thought in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century.

I will first outline Antonius' own response to the problem of the subject matter of metaphysics; then I will present the position which Antonius ascribes to Averroes, and which he vehemently criticizes. I will compare the three claims which Antonius ascribes to Averroes against Averroes' own words, and analyze and evaluate Antonius' arguments against them. I will thus show that the differences between the two thinkers in their theories of the subject matter of metaphysics are rooted in their fundamentally different theories of science and their different assumptions about the nature of God and being.

## 2. TWO SOLUTIONS

Antonius' own position on the question of the subject matter of metaphysics is this: The first subject matter of metaphysics, in the proper sense, is being insofar as it is being. The relevant criterion for such a subject matter, which only being insofar as it is being can meet, is primacy of adequacy.

According to Antonius, there are two types of primacy for any science: primacy of perfection (*primitas perfectionis*) and primacy of adequacy (*primitas adequationis*).

The latter reflects the exact correspondence between a subject matter and its science. This adequacy ensures that a science neither goes beyond the scope of its subject matter, nor disregards parts of it. If something is studied in any sense within a science, it needs to fall under the formal definition or notion (*ratio formalis*) of the subject matter. And vice versa: if something falls under the formal definition of the subject matter, it needs to be studied within the science.

This is exactly the case for metaphysics and being insofar as it is being: everything metaphysics studies, it studies as being (*sub ratione entis*). And whatever is part of being, or participates in the notion of being, is studied in

metaphysics.<sup>15</sup> Since being is adequate to the science of metaphysics in this regard, it is its subject matter, and primary in this sense<sup>16</sup>.

The primacy of perfection in a science, on the other hand, refers to the rank or level of existence of the things covered by the science. In other words, what is primary in this sense is that which is the noblest of all beings belonging to the science. In metaphysics, God is the noblest being (*nobilius ens*). Divine existence occupies a higher level than the other things covered in metaphysics. So Antonius admits that God, or perhaps rather the study of God, plays a special part within the science, simply insofar as God is the highest being<sup>17</sup>.

Antonius recounts Averroes' answer to this problem, and introduces it as an opinion differing from his own (*quamdam opinionem quam non teneo*). He discusses it in some detail, adducing three arguments from the point of view of Averroes, but eventually he condenses Averroes' theory into three claims:

« But this opinion establishes three [statements] as is clear to the examiner: The first statement (a) is that no science proves the existence of its subject matter; the second (b) is that first philosophy cannot prove the existence of God, but only physics; the third (c) is that the genus of the separate beings is the first subject matter of first philosophy »<sup>18</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> « Sed primitas sive prioritas adequationis notat equalitatem precisam subiecti ad scientias quando scilicet scientia non excedit subiectum nec e converso. Sed quicquid cadit aliquo modo sub considerationem scientie, cadit sub ratione formali subiecti et e converso quicquid participat rationem formalem subiecti cadit sub considerationem illius scientie. Verbi gratia si ens in quantum ens ponitur subiectum primum metaphysice tali primitate, quicquid participat rationem entis ut sic cadit sub considerationem metaphysice, et quicquid metaphysice considerat sub ratione entis considerat », ANTONIUS ANDREAS, *Questiones super duodecim libros Metaphysice*, Lucas de Subereto, Venice 1495, book I, q. 1, resp., part 1, fol. [2va] (Due to its popularity there are several early prints of the text available. The folio-numbers refer to the Venice 1495-edition which I have primarily used, comparing those from Vicenza, 1477 and Venice, 1514. All English translations are my own). See FORLIVESI, *Confronting the Nature* cit., pp. 242-243; ZIMMERMANN, *Ontologie oder Metaphysik?* cit., pp. 330-331.

<sup>16</sup> This distinction and the argument which is derived from it, and which confirms being insofar as it is being as the subject matter of metaphysics, are also used, for instance, by Antonio Trombetta and John of Jandun. See JOHN OF JANDUN, *Quaestiones in duodecim libros Metaphysice iuxta Aristotelis et magni Commentatoris intentionem ab eodem exactissime disputate*, Octavianus Scotus, Venice 1525, book I, q. 3, c.a., fol. 3rb-va, and TROMBETTA, *Opus in Metaphysicam Aristotelis*, book I, q. 9, resp., a. 2, concl. 1-3, foll. 9vb-10rb.

<sup>17</sup> ANTONIUS ANDREAS, *Questiones super duodecim libros Metaphysice*, book I, q. 1, resp., fol. [2va]. See CABRÉ DURAN, *Antonius Andreas and the Concept of Science* cit., pp. 106-108.

<sup>18</sup> « Hec autem opinio tria ponit ut patet intuenti. Primum dictum est quod nulla scientia probat suum subiectum esse, secundum est primam philosophiam non posse probare deum esse sed tantum naturalem, tertium est quod genus entium separatorum est prime philosophie subiectum primum », ANTONIUS ANDREAS, *Questiones super duodecim libros Metaphysice*, book I, q. 1, resp., part 2, fol. [2vb]. See ZIMMERMANN, *Ontologie oder Metaphysik?* cit., p. 332.

With this, Antonius clearly and succinctly identifies three key features of Averroes' theory: Separate being is the subject matter of metaphysics; metaphysics does not provide a proof of the existence of God; and, according to Averroes, the existence of the subject matter of a science can never be proved by the science itself. Instead, it is either self-evident (*manifestum per se*), or it is proved in another science<sup>19</sup>.

### 3. ANTONIUS AGAINST AVERROES

Antonius intends to disprove Averroes' position by arguing individually against each of the three statements he has identified. I will go through these statements, assess whether they reflect Averroes' genuine opinion, and analyze Antonius' arguments against them. For systematic reasons I will present them in reverse order, starting with the most particular statement which directly answers the central question of the subject matter of metaphysics, then moving on to the related problem of the proof of the existence of God, and ending with the most universal statement concerning the sciences and their demonstrations in general.

#### 3.1. *The subject matter of metaphysics*

Antonius ascribes to Averroes the claim that the separate beings are the first subject matter of metaphysics. While Averroes uses the term 'subject matter' (*subiectum* in the Latin, *mawḍū'* in the original Arabic) in a rather loose sense and not always as a strictly defined technical term, it is true that he clearly writes in his *Long Commentary on the Metaphysics* that the separate beings, or the divine things, are the subject matter of metaphysics<sup>20</sup>.

Against this, Antonius states:

« One science has one subject matter, [as we know] from book I of the *Posterior Analytics*. So if God and the intelligences are the subject matter here, it is necessary to assign to them something common and univocal from which this science has its unity. This is either being or substance. [...]

If this common [instance] were being, I would have the proposition [i.e., the position defended by Antonius Andreas himself], because being will be the

<sup>19</sup> ANTONIUS ANDREAS, *Questiones super duodecim libros Metaphysice*, book I, q. 1, resp., part 2, fol. [2va-b].

<sup>20</sup> AVERROES, *Tafsīr*, book VI, c. 2, p. 712, lin. 11-15 [AVERROES, *Aristotelis Metaphysicorum libri XIII: Cum Averrois Cordubensis in eosdem commentariis*, Apud Junctas, Venice 1562, reprint Minerva, Frankfurt 1962, fol. 146va]. Averroes also explicitly states this in a second passage in the *Long Commentary* which, however, was not translated into Latin, so Antonius could not have had access to it, see book VII, c. 39, p. 935, lin. 11-13 [Giunta, fol. 192ra].

subject matter here, and, consequently, not only the immaterial substances, but indeed the material [substances]. And in general all being falls under the consideration of this science as the subject matter, since common being abstracts from the material substances just as much as [from] the immaterial [substances]. But if this common [instance] were substance, multiple things could be objected, because then God would fall under a genus Himself and, consequently, would be definable. Furthermore, because thus metaphysics will not be more about the immaterial substances than about the material [substances], since substance abstracts equally from both of them.

This is confirmed, because the common science is not more about one species than about another. But it is clear from what has been said that there is no special [aspect] in which God and the separate substances are said univocally, rather than God and the corporeal substances »<sup>21</sup>.

Every science has *one* subject matter. If the genus of separate being were the subject matter of metaphysics, we would have to be able to find one concept which is common to, or predicated of all separate beings, i.e., both God and the heavenly intelligences, and *only* of separate beings. This one concept would have to be shared by both in a univocal way (*commune et univocum*) and could thus guarantee the unity of metaphysics. The possible candidates for this shared property or concept are being and substance, according to Antonius.

For him, as well as for Scotus, univocal being is the most simple and irreducible concept. If it is predicated univocally of both God and the heavenly intelligences, it has to be predicated in the very same meaning of material substance as well. Metaphysics will then study all being, i.e., being in the sense in which it is predicated of material and immaterial substance equally and univocally. This is precisely the solution which Antonius himself has put forth: the subject matter of metaphysics is being itself.

<sup>21</sup> « Unius scientie est unum subiectum, ex primo Posteriorum. Si ergo deus et intelligentie sunt hic subiectum oportet assignare illis aliquod commune et univocum a quo habet ista scientia unitatem. Illud vel est ens vel substantia. [...] Si illud commune sit ens, ergo habeo propositum quia ens erit hic subiectum, et per consequens non tantum substantie immateriales immo materiales. Et generaliter omne ens subijcitur [sic] considerationi scientie huius ut subiectum. Ens enim commune non magis abstrahit a substantiis materialibus quam immaterialibus. Si autem illud commune sit substantia, contra multipliciter. Tum quia deus caderet in genere per se, et per consequens esset diffinibilis. Tum quia ut sic metaphisica non magis erit de substantiis immaterialibus quam materialibus cum substantia equaliter abstrahat ab utrisque. Confirmatur quia scientia communis non magis est de una specie quam de alia. Patet autem ex dictis quod in nullo speciali magis univocatur deus et substantie separate quam deus et substantie corporee », ANTONIUS ANDREAS, *Questiones super duodecim libros Metaphysice*, book I, q. 1, resp., part 2, fol. [3ra], see ZIMMERMANN, *Ontologie oder Metaphysik?* cit., p. 333. See JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis*, book I, q. 1, nn. 34, 125-126.

The attempt to justify considering the separate substances as one unified subject matter by utilizing their shared being fails. Instead, because being is univocal to all beings, not just the immaterial beings, reference to being as a common feature can only serve to defend absolute being as a subject matter.

According to Antonius, substance cannot provide the necessary logical and ontological unity between the separate substances either. The first argument for this is the same as for being: substance, like being, is abstracted from material and immaterial substance alike. It is univocally predicated of all substances, so there is no reason why this science should not also study the material substances.

But there is another argument against substance as the relevant univocal concept, and this explains why, for Antonius, metaphysics is the science of all being, but not the science of all substance: If both God and the intelligences were substances, according to the same meaning of the word, this would imply that God is part of a genus, which would make God definable in a formal definition<sup>22</sup>. This problem does not arise in the case of being, since being is — according to Aristotle — no genus<sup>23</sup>. The medieval tradition firmly argues that being cannot be a genus, because otherwise God would be part of a genus, and thus there would be composition and multiplicity in God<sup>24</sup>.

Antonius then concludes that there can be no concept univocally uniting only God and the immaterial intelligences, rather than God and material being, or God and all created being.

In short, the argument against Averroes is this: Being is univocal to all existing things; there is nothing — neither being nor substance — that is common to only God and the intelligences; therefore, God and the intelligences cannot be the subject matter of metaphysics, because they cannot establish the unity of the science.

This argument seems to be the point at which Antonius' Scotism comes to the fore most clearly. Scotus famously defends the univocity of being: being needs to be one concept with one meaning, whether predicated of God or of creation. For Scotus, however, it is important to note that while being applies univocally to God and all created beings, they have nothing real in common. The same concept of being is predicated of them but that does not

<sup>22</sup> ANTONIUS ANDREAS, *Questiones super duodecim libros Metaphysice*, book I, q. 1, resp., part 2, fol. [3ra]. See JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Ordinatio* I, dist. 8, part 1, q. 3, nn. 95-99, 133-135, in *Opera Omnia* IV, pp. 198-199, 220, ed. K. BALIĆ, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, Vatican City 1956.

<sup>23</sup> ARISTOTLE, *Met.*, III, 3, 998b22-27.

<sup>24</sup> See for instance THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa contra gentiles*, Marietti, Rome 1961, book I, ch. 25.

mean that there is no existential difference between the divine being and everything else<sup>25</sup>.

Antonius Andreas, however, as Dumont has pointed out, argues that being is univocal not only in a logical, but also in a metaphysical sense, meaning that there is one real concept which is common to God and creature, and which our intellect can abstract from all beings (*aliquem unum conceptum realem abstrahabilem ab omnibus entibus/ ens est predicabile de omni ente univoce et realiter*)<sup>26</sup>. The fact that Antonius defends a stronger version of univocity than Scotus himself explains why he does not hesitate to talk about being as if it were a real property common to God as well as material and immaterial substances alike.

Averroes himself would certainly reject the first premise of the argument: always the Aristotelian, Averroes emphasizes the *pros hen* structure of being<sup>27</sup>. For him, being is said in an analogous way of all beings, according to priority and posteriority. He describes concepts like this as neither equivocal nor univocal, but as intermediates (*media*, in the Arabic *wasaf*) between the

<sup>25</sup> See for instance JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Ordinatio I*, dist. 3, q. 1-2, nn. 20-57, in *Opera Omnia III*, p. 1, ed. K. BALIĆ, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, Vatican City 1954. Central studies on the topic include A. B. WOLTER, *The Transcendentals and Their Function in the Metaphysics of Duns Scotus*, Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure, NY 1946; É. GILSON, *Jean Duns Scot: Introduction à ses positions fondamentales*, Vrin, Paris 1952, esp. pp. 84-115; the introduction and commentaries by Boulnois in JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Sur la connaissance de Dieu et l'univocité de l'étant: Ordinatio I, Distinction 3, 1<sup>re</sup> partie; Ordinatio I, Distinction 8, 1<sup>re</sup> partie; Collatio 24*, ed. and transl. O. BOULNOIS, Presses universitaires de France, Paris 1988; HONNEFELDER, *Ens in quantum ens cit.*, pp. 268-312; S. D. DUMONT, *Scotus's Doctrine of Univocity and the Medieval Traditions of Metaphysics*, in J. A. AERTSEN, A. SPEER eds., *Was ist Metaphysik? Miscellanea Medievalia 26*, De Gruyter, Berlin 1998, pp. 193-212; J. A. AERTSEN, *Medieval Philosophy as Transcendental Thought. From Philip the Chancellor (ca. 1225) to Francisco Suárez*, Brill, Leiden 2012, pp. 393-432; L. A. DE BONI, *Duns Scotus and the Univocity of the Concept of Being*, in R. H. PICH ed., *New Essays on Metaphysics as scientia transcendens: Proceedings of the Second International Conference of Medieval Philosophy, held at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul (PUCRS), Porto Alegre / Brazil, 15-18 August 2006*, Fédération Internationale des Instituts d'Etudes Médiévales, Louvain-la-Neuve 2007, pp. 91-113; A. W. HALL, *Confused Univocity?*, « Proceedings of the Society for Medieval Logic and Metaphysics », 7, 2007, pp. 18-31. — It should be noted that the position on univocity Scotus defends in his *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis*, book IV, q. 1, is less clear. See S. P. MARRONE, *The Notion of Univocity in Duns Scotus's Early Works*, « Franciscan Studies », 43, 1983, pp. 347-395, esp. pp. 385-391; G. PINI, *Univocity in Scotus's Quaestiones super Metaphysicam: The Solution to a Riddle*, « Medioevo », 30, 2005, pp. 69-110; PINI, *Sulla fortuna cit.*, pp. 301-303. Antonius adheres more closely to the position put forth by Scotus elsewhere than to the position in the commentary on the *Metaphysics*.

<sup>26</sup> ANTONIUS ANDREAS, *Quaestiones super duodecim libros Metaphysice*, book IV, q. 1, resp., part 2, foll. [16va-17ra]. See DUMONT, *Transcendental Being: Scotus and Scotists cit.*, pp. 140-142, PINI, *Sulla fortuna cit.*, p. 303.

<sup>27</sup> ARISTOTLE, *Met.*, IV, 1, 1003a33-b22.

two<sup>28</sup>. The first being constitutes the end or perfection of being, or (to use the term coined by modern scholarship) the focal meaning of being. It has priority in being compared to all other existing things which only exist through their relation to this first being. As a result, in Averroes' ontological framework, it makes sense to assume that, according to the way in which being is predicated of them, the separate substances are closer to God than the material substances.

Averroes also would have disagreed with Antonius' second premise: Averroes does not think that the unity of a science is dependent on the unity of its subject matter in the sense that this subject matter has to be a univocal genus. He does not assume that one concept or property has to be univocally predicated of the things which form the subject matter of a science. Averroes admits that, usually, a science possesses unity, i.e., is *one* science, if it has *one* subject matter (*subiectum/ mawḍūʿ*) and if the things the science studies belong together by being part of a univocal genus or species. But, in principle, things which are said according to any of the different ways of relation, i.e., things which are ontologically related in one of several possible ways, can be studied by the same science. He states:

«for the things which have one science are not those whose subject matter is one only through the species or genus which is said univocally, but also the things whose being is related to one end, or one agent, or one substrate»<sup>29</sup>.

For Averroes, a class of things which are connected by being related to one thing, to one shared final or efficient cause, can belong to one science. What is related in this way can even be described as a kind of genus — just like univocal things which belong to the same genus, but unlike equivocal things. The decisive factor is that both for things which are connected through their shared *pros hen* relation, and for things which univocally belong to one genus, there are essential predicates (*predicabilia essentialia / al-mahmūlāt al-ḍātiyya*), shared by all members of these sets<sup>30</sup>.

<sup>28</sup> AVERROES, *Tafsīr*, book IV, c. 2, p. 302, lin. 13 - p. 303, lin. 3. In the Latin translation, the passage is slightly shortened and the examples are changed, but it is still clearly intelligible, see Giunta, fol. 65rb. See E. J. ASHWORTH, *Medieval Theories of Analogy*, in E. N. ZALTA ed., *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2017 Edition), URL = <<https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2017/entries/analogy-medieval/>>, ch. 3 and 5.

<sup>29</sup> AVERROES, *Tafsīr*, book IV, c. 2, p. 307, lin. 8-11. The translation is made from the Arabic. The Latin is extremely close and reads: «res enim, que habent unam scientiam, non tantum sunt, quarum subiectum est unum genere, aut specie dicto univoce, sed quarum esse attribuitur uni fini, aut uni agenti, aut uni subiecto», Giunta, foll. 65vb-66ra.

<sup>30</sup> AVERROES, *Tafsīr*, book IV, c. 2, p. 307, lin. 4 - p. 308, lin. 7. One passage within this para-

Averroes makes this point in order to explain how and why all of being can belong to one science. But since he does not think of being as predicated of all beings in the exact same sense, Averroes also conceives of the separate substances, one of the three types of substance<sup>31</sup>, as a distinct ontological set. God and the heavenly intelligences possess priority in being compared to the other substances. So Averroes clearly does think that they belong, in a certain sense, to the same category of beings, i.e., the separate substances, and that their way of existence, as independent from matter, establishes enough unity between them to make them the subject matter of one and the same science.

Averroes' requirements for the unity of a science are less strict than those employed by Antonius. Metaphysics can be one science — even if its subject matter is not one in a univocal sense.

### 3.2. *The proof of the existence of God*

Antonius identifies the claim (b) that physics — not metaphysics — proves the existence of God, as a core part of Averroes' theory. And indeed, Averroes defends the physical proof from motion, as presented for instance by Aristotle in *Physics* VIII, as the only possible proof of the existence of the first mover, or God. He argues against any possibility of a genuinely metaphysical proof of the existence of God<sup>32</sup>.

Antonius rejects this claim and provides three arguments against it. The first (1) which I will call the two-properties-argument is the following:

« I argue first (1) that both, first philosophy as well as physics, can prove the existence of God in this way: Every property which is considered in an effect, for which it is impossible to inhere in it if the cause does not also exist, concludes the existence of the cause through *quia* demonstration. But neither the property considered in the metaphysical science, nor [the property considered] in the physical science with regard to an effect can inhere in it, if the

graph (p. 307, lin. 17 - p. 308, lin. 1) has been shortened in the Latin translation, but the relevant information has been preserved, see Giunta, foll. 65vb-66ra.

<sup>31</sup> AVERROES, *Tafsīr*, book XII, c. 5, p. 1420, lin. 2-5 [Giunta, fol. 292va; GENEQUAND, *Book Lām*, p. 72].

<sup>32</sup> AVERROES, *Tafsīr*, book XII, c. 5, p. 1422, lin. 5-9; p. 1424, lin. 10 - p. 1425, lin. 1 [Giunta, fol. 293ra-b; GENEQUAND, *Book Lām*, pp. 73-75]. See P. ADAMSON, *Averroes on Divine Causation*, in P. ADAMSON, M. DI GIOVANNI eds., *Interpreting Averroes: Critical Essays*, CUP, Cambridge 2018, pp. 198-217, esp. pp. 207-208; BERTOLACCI, *Avicenna and Averroes* cit., pp. 86-88; D. TWETTEN, *Averroes' Prime Mover Argument*, in J.-B. BRENET ed., *Averroes et les Averroïsmes juif et latin*, Brepols, Turnhout 2007, pp. 9-75; D. TWETTEN, *Averroes on the Prime Mover Proved in the Physics*, « Viator », 26, 1995, pp. 107-134.

first mover and the first being does not exist. Therefore, both sciences can prove its existence through *quia* demonstration »<sup>33</sup>.

This argument defends the claim that both physics and metaphysics can prove the existence of God. Antonius argues: Assume that there is a property of a thing, which can only be in this thing if there is also a cause of which this thing is an effect. All such properties automatically and necessarily provide a demonstration (more specifically, a *demonstratio quia*) of this cause of the effect in which they inhere. In other words, a property P<sup>x</sup> of X can only exist, if Y, the cause of X, exists. Thus, we can conclude the existence of Y from P<sup>x</sup>.

Both sciences, metaphysics and physics, consider certain properties of an effect. This effect is the created world, caused by the first cause. These properties are, presumably, movement in the case of physics and the general properties of being in the case of metaphysics, which could not exist if the first cause did not exist. Thus, both sciences prove that the cause of movement and being, i.e., the first mover and first being, must exist<sup>34</sup>.

Antonius also claims — as a second point (2) against Averroes' statement (b), which I will call the superior-property-argument — that metaphysics demonstrates the existence of God better than physics and that it can provide a better understanding of the first cause. A science which considers those conditions of an effect which lead to a more excellent understanding (*in cognitionem excellentiorem*) of the cause, is more apt to demonstrate (*magis potest demonstrare*) the cause. Metaphysics studies the general properties of being which lead in a stronger and better way to an understanding of the first being than do the more specific properties studied in physics. The existence of God as a first mover which is proved in physics is proved from a less excellent property than the existence of God as the first absolute being (*primum ens simpliciter*) in metaphysics.

Finally, Antonius adds the following argument (3) which I will call the subordination-argument:

<sup>33</sup> « Arguo primo quod utraque tamen philosophia prima quam etiam naturalis potest probare deum esse sic. Omnis proprietas considerata in effectu quam impossibile est sibi inesse nisi etiam causa sit, concludit causam esse demonstratione quia. Sed tam proprietas considerata in scientia metaphisicali, quam etiam in naturali de effectu non potest sibi inesse nisi primum movens et primum ens sit. Ergo utraque scientia potest ipsum probare esse demonstratione quia », ANTONIUS ANDREAS, *Questiones super duodecim libros Metaphysice*, book I, q. 1, resp., part 2, fol. [2vb]. See JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis*, book I, q. 1, n. 113.

<sup>34</sup> ZIMMERMANN, *Ontologie oder Metaphysik?* cit., p. 331.

« Third (3), it is argued that physics cannot prove the existence of God in this way, because if [it can prove it] in this way, then physics is thus absolutely prior to metaphysics. The consequent is evidently false, therefore also the antecedent. [...] Since, in that case, that which is absolutely a conclusion in physics, namely the existence of God, would here be a first, absolutely indemonstrable proposition. Physics would, therefore, be prior to metaphysics »<sup>35</sup>.

If physics could prove the existence of God, this would mean that physics is prior to metaphysics. Metaphysics would have to accept the existence of God from physics and treat it as a premise without itself providing any proof for it, while this same knowledge, the existence of God, would belong to the science of physics as a conclusion, i.e., as something which is proved within that science. These are unacceptable consequences for Antonius.

The scenario that is being disproved here is a case in which only physics proves the existence of God and metaphysics does not. In fact, the argument presupposes that the existence of God is an 'indemonstrable proposition' in metaphysics.

Antonius further explains the reason for the resulting subordination of metaphysics: God is that which is known first (*primum cognitum et primum notum*) in metaphysics. Averroes' position implies that God is known prior (*praecognitum*), i.e., in a manner prior to the metaphysical knowledge of God, through a physical middle term (*ex aliquo medio naturali*). The thing which is known best in metaphysics, the thing with regard to which metaphysics provides its first and best insights, would be taken over from another science (*presuppositum*) and simply accepted in metaphysics<sup>36</sup>. Antonius argues that this subordination would at least apply to the conclusion that God exists (*saltem quantum ad istam conclusionem deum esse*), even though not necessarily to the whole science.

This subordination, he states, is evidently false, and with this the claim that physics proves the existence of God is disproved. That leads to the conclusion that only metaphysics can prove the existence of God, although An-

<sup>35</sup> « Tertio arguitur quod phisica non potest probare deum esse sic. Quia si sic, ergo phisica sic est simpliciter prior metaphisica. Consequens est evidenter falsum, ergo et antecedens. [...] Quia tunc illa que est simpliciter conclusio in phisica, scilicet deum esse, esset hic prima propositio simpliciter indemonstrabilis. Et ita phisica esset prior metaphisica », ANTONIUS ANDREAS, *Questiones super duodecim libros Metaphysice*, book I, q. 1, resp., part 2, fol. [2vb]. See JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis*, book I, q. 1, n. 113.

<sup>36</sup> ANTONIUS ANDREAS, *Questiones super duodecim libros Metaphysice*, book I, q. 1, resp., part 2, foll. [2vb-3ra]. See JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis*, book I, q. 1, n. 22.

tonius does not draw it explicitly. He also does not provide any arguments for why physics cannot be prior to metaphysics, but we can assume that he perceives of priority as an indispensable essential attribute of metaphysics, the first and noblest science<sup>37</sup>.

Now, what is the relation between these three arguments against statement (b)? Antonius claims that his subordination-argument (3) shows that physics cannot prove the existence of God (*phistica non potest probare deum esse*). As such, this conclusion is in contradiction to the earlier arguments. With these, he had aimed to show — through the two-properties-argument (1) — that both sciences can prove the existence of God, even though — according to the superior-property-argument (2) — metaphysics can do so better than physics. A possible explanation for this might be that the three arguments are not intended to be coherent. Rather, each of them argues for a different thesis. While the first two arguments are introduced with « I argue firstly that [...], moreover, secondly that [...] » (*arguo primo quod [...] Praeterea secundo quod [...]*), the third argument is introduced with « Thirdly, it is argued that » (*Tertio arguitur quod*). So it might be that Antonius himself is committed to the first two, whilst simply reporting the subordination-argument (3).

While the claims defended by the two-properties-argument (1) and the superior-property-argument (2) are compatible, the latter makes a stronger claim than the former. Hence, the three arguments may be designed to mount an attack of increasing intensity against Averroes, first claiming that metaphysics, as well as physics, can prove the existence of God, then arguing that metaphysics can provide a better proof than physics, and finally, concluding that only metaphysics can provide this proof.

Another reason may be Antonius' close adherence to Scotus. Even though Antonius rephrases and expands them, the arguments closely resemble a passage in Scotus' commentary on the *Metaphysics*<sup>38</sup>. Scotus argues in this passage simultaneously against Averroes' claim that only physics proves the existence of God, and against Avicenna's claim that only metaphysics proves it. Thus, for Scotus, it makes sense to disprove both claims at once by arguing that both sciences can provide a proof for the existence of God, even though he ultimately concludes from his argumentation (which he does not structure as three distinct arguments) that Averroes is more wrong than Avicenna. The fact that Antonius forges this passage into three arguments leveled against Averroes means that the aspects of the arguments which were aimed against Avicenna (i.e., the claim implied in the two-properties- (1) and the superior-

<sup>37</sup> See ARISTOTLE, *Met.*, VI, 1, 1026a19-31.

<sup>38</sup> JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis*, book I, q. 1, n. 113.

property-argument (2) that physics can prove the existence of God, too) now create a tension with argument (3). They even imply a certain adherence to, or at least leniency towards Averroes' position.

However, the subordination-argument (3) is problematic on its own, and it could be questioned whether the argument actually achieves what it seems to aim at, i.e., to prove that physics cannot prove the existence of God, with the implied result that *only* metaphysics can provide such a proof.

By ruling out the case that physics proves the existence of God while metaphysics does not, the argument demonstrates that metaphysics *has to* be able to prove the existence of God itself. But in order to prevent the absurd outcome that physics is prior to metaphysics, it is enough to show that metaphysics does not take over the fact that God exists as a result from physics. If metaphysics itself were able to prove the existence of God through a metaphysical middle term, there would be no danger of it being subordinate to another science. In this case, physics could still prove the existence of God as well, and it might even do so just as successfully as metaphysics.

Thus, I think this third argument only supports the earlier, weaker point established in the two-properties-argument (1) and the superior-property-argument (2), namely that physics and metaphysics both have to be able to prove the existence of God, not just physics alone. In that case, the subordination-argument itself is not at odds with the two other arguments, it is only Antonius' conclusion from it, namely that physics cannot prove the existence of God, which contradicts the earlier claims.

Given all this we can conclude that Antonius argues for the existence and validity of a metaphysical proof of the existence of God, but his argumentation does not disprove, and he himself possibly does not even reject the claim that physics proves the existence of God. But statement (b) as well as Averroes' actual philosophical position is stronger. Averroes does not only state that physics proves the existence of God, but also defends the claim that there cannot be any metaphysical proof of the existence of God. As I mentioned, for Averroes the proof from movement in physics is indeed the only viable proof.

Would Antonius' arguments which demonstrate that metaphysics proves God as well have convinced Averroes? Averroes' own arguments against any such proof were primarily aimed at Avicenna, whose great innovation was a proof of the existence of the first being which was designed as a purely metaphysical proof, not relying on any physical concepts, or on sense perception. It demonstrates the existence of a necessary being in itself which is unlike all other beings whose existence is only possible in itself, and which receive their necessity from an external cause. Averroes ardently criticizes this proof

not only because he judges it to be un-Aristotelian, but also because he finds the concept of necessity and possibility used in the proof to be philosophically faulty<sup>39</sup>.

Averroes also thinks that there is no metaphysical proof of the existence of God because this is not part of the task of metaphysics. For him, metaphysics takes over the result of this proof, the existence of a first cause, from physics. Metaphysics itself is only responsible for investigating the nature of this first cause. On this basis we could speculate that Averroes, although he agrees that metaphysics studies the accidents of being, i.e., an effect of the first cause, would not have been convinced by Antonius' two-properties-argument (1) and superior-property-argument (2) which argue that the metaphysical consideration of a property of the created world amounts to a metaphysical proof of the existence of the first cause.

Averroes would also object to the subordination-argument (3). He does not agree that the absence of a metaphysical proof undermines the very concept of metaphysics as the first science. He does in fact think that, in a sense, metaphysics is posterior to physics – namely in the order of studying and learning the sciences<sup>40</sup>. But it is nonetheless prior in itself, according to its nature: That which metaphysics studies and covers is prior and more noble

<sup>39</sup> AVERROES, *Tahāfut at-Tahāfut*, ed. M. BOUYGES, 3rd ed., Dār al-Mashriq, Beirut 1992, discussion IV, p. 275, lin. 11 - p. 277, lin. 11 [Averroes, *Tahāfut at-Tahāfut: The Incoherence of the Incoherence*, ed. and transl. S. VAN DEN BERGH, Luzac, London 1954, reprint E. J. W. Gibb Memorial, Cambridge 1987, pp. 163-164]; discussion VII, p. 385, lin. 11 - p. 386, lin. 12 [VAN DEN BERGH, *Incoherence*, pp. 232-233]; discussion X, p. 416, lin. 8 - p. 423, lin. 5 [VAN DEN BERGH, *Incoherence*, pp. 251-255]; AVERROES, *De separatione principii*, in C. STEEL, G. GULDENTOPS, *An Unknown Treatise of Averroes Against the Avicennians on the First Cause: Edition and Translation*, « Recherches de Théologie et Philosophie médiévales », 64, 1997, pp. 86-135, here pp. 96/97-98/99 [=fol. 190rb-va]; AVERROES, *Questions in Physics: From the unpublished Sêfer ha-derûšim ha-tib'iyim*, ed. and transl. H. T. GOLDSTEIN, Kluwer, Dordrecht 1991, q. 9, pp. 33-36; AVERROES, *Aristotelis De physico auditu libri octo: Cum Averrois Cordubensis variis in eosdem commentariis*, Apud Junctas, Venice 1562, reprint Minerva, Frankfurt 1962, book VIII, c. 3, fol. 340E-F. See, for instance, H. A. WOLFSON, *Avicenna, Algazali, and Averroes on Divine Attributes*, in I. TWERSKY, G. H. WILLIAMS eds., *Studies in the History of Philosophy and Religion*, vol. 1, HUP, Cambridge, MA 1973, pp. 143-169, esp. pp. 158-159; H. A. DAVIDSON, *Proofs for Eternity, Creation and the Existence of God in Medieval Islamic and Jewish Philosophy*, OUP, New York - Oxford 1987, pp. 311-335; R. C. TAYLOR, *Averroes: Religious Dialectic and Aristotelian Philosophical Thought*, in P. ADAMSON, R. C. TAYLOR eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, CUP, Cambridge 2005, pp. 180-200, esp. p. 196. I am not going to elaborate on this any further since the topic is well known and studied already, and because the success of Averroes' arguments against the necessary-existent-proof does not necessarily exclude the possibility of any other metaphysical proof.

<sup>40</sup> The terminology which became common for this theory in the Latin tradition, namely, to say that a type of knowledge is first for us (*quoad nos*) is not used by Averroes, or in the Latin translation of his work. Averroes does not say that this science is last for us, but that it is last in the order of teaching (see the quotations in the following fn.).

than the objects treated in physics; and the subject matter of metaphysics, the first causes and separate beings, serve as principles for the movable beings treated in physics<sup>41</sup>. For Averroes, there is no real danger of subordination for metaphysics, even though it takes over the result of physical reasoning.

To conclude, both Averroes and Antonius would probably agree that there is a physical proof of the existence of God. Their disagreement lies more in their claims about the necessity or impossibility of a metaphysical proof. And in this regard, their positions hinge on the respective strictness of their definitions of priority or subordination among the sciences, i.e., whether they think the acceptance of a conclusion from another science establishes subordination or not. Averroes employs a looser criterion of priority of a science than Antonius.

### 3.3. *The principle from the Posterior Analytics*

The final statement (a) Antonius ascribes to Averroes is a version of a methodological principle which was introduced by Aristotle in *Posterior Analytics*, book I: Aristotle claims that every science has to presuppose the existence of the genus of things it studies. No science can prove the existence of its own proper subject matter or its own principles<sup>42</sup>.

It was the Arabic philosophers who linked this passage to the question of the subject matter of the science of metaphysics. It seems to give us a clear criterion to determine whether something can be the subject matter of a

<sup>41</sup> In the Latin translation of the *Long Commentary*, which is complete and correct here, Averroes states: « [E]t manifestum est quod, si aliqua substantia immobilis est, quod ista substantia est prima, et quod scientia istius est scientia universalis, et Philosophia prima. Et dixit in esse, quia ordo addiscendi istam scientiam est posterius, et ideo discimus eam post Physicam », AVERROES, *Tafsīr*, book VI, c. 3, p. 714, lin. 9-13 [Giunta, fol. 147ra]. See BERTOLACCI, *Avicenna and Averroes* cit., pp. 92-93. There is a second passage, however, which was severely distorted in the Latin translation. The original Arabic reads, in English translation: « And he said about natural philosophy that it is second with regard to first philosophy, and that it operates (*amila*) for it, because the separate things (*al-umūr al-mufāriqa*) which are the proper subject matter (*al-mawḍūʿ al-khāṣṣ*) of first philosophy are the principles of the subject matter of natural science. And natural science is second compared to it in rank, and its subject matter, too, is one of the acts (*a māl*) of the subject matter of first philosophy, which are the divine things; and therefore it is called metaphysics, according to its rank in teaching (*taʿlim*), not in being (*lā fi l-wuḡūd*) », AVERROES, *Tafsīr*, book VII, c. 39, p. 935, lin. 10-15. This passage was shortened in the Latin translation and the negation was shifted which clearly changes the sense of the passage: « Et dixit ipsam esse secundam in respectu prime Philosophie, que dicitur Metaphysica, non secundum ordinem doctrine, sed esse [sic] », Giunta, fol. 192ra.

<sup>42</sup> ARISTOTLE, *Post. Anal.*, I, 9-10, 76a8-b22, esp. I, 10, 76b3-6. See ZIMMERMANN, *Ontologie oder Metaphysik?* cit., pp. 131-132; BERTOLACCI, *Avicenna and Averroes* cit., pp. 65-68.

given science: if its existence is proved by a science, it cannot be that science's subject matter<sup>43</sup>.

Consequently, the introduction of this doctrine into the discussion is the reason why the question of which science proves the existence of God or of the separate substances is relevant here. If metaphysics did prove the existence of the separate substances, they could not be the science's subject matter. According to Antonius' presentation of Averroes' position, this principle is the premise which makes statement (b) — which includes the claim that metaphysics does not prove the existence of the separate substances — a necessary condition for (c) — i.e., that the separate substances are the subject matter of metaphysics.

Antonius is right that Averroes accepts the principle from the *Posterior Analytics*. But Averroes does not defend it in the version which Antonius attributes to him here. Instead, Averroes introduces a modification to the principle by making use of a distinction between two types of demonstration which goes back to Aristotle<sup>44</sup>. In the Latin tradition, these were referred to as *demonstratio propter quid* and *demonstratio quia*<sup>45</sup>, Averroes himself uses the terms 'absolute demonstration' (*burhān muṭlaq/ demonstratio simplex*) and 'sign' (*dalil/ signum*).

The first, *demonstratio propter quid*, is the demonstration of why something is the case, an apodictic demonstration. It provides the cause of something and in this way proves its existence. *Demonstratio quia* is a lower form of demonstration which only shows that something is the case without stating its cause. That means: The existence of something is proved from its effect, i.e., from something posterior to the thing itself. The existence of the cause is concluded from the existence of an effect of that cause.

Averroes argues that sciences can indeed prove the existence of the principle, or cause, of their subject matter from its effect. No science, however, can demonstrate the existence of its subject matter *propter quid* or from that which is prior. Hence, Averroes rejects the claim of universal validity for the principle from the *Posterior Analytics*.

For Averroes to be able to rebut Avicenna's attempt at a metaphysical proof of the existence of God, it is sufficient to exclude the possibility of a *demonstratio propter quid* of the existence of the subject matter within the science it-

<sup>43</sup> See, for instance, AVICENNA, *The Metaphysics of The Healing*, ed. and transl. M. E. MARMURA, BYUP, Provo, Utah 2005, book I.1, p. 3, lin. 16 - p. 4, lin. 9 [AVICENNA, *Liber de philosophia prima sive scientia divina, I-IV*, ed. S. VAN RIET, Peeters, Louvain 1977, pp. 4-5].

<sup>44</sup> ARISTOTLE, *Post. Anal.*, I, 13, 78b32-79a16.

<sup>45</sup> See, for instance, THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa theologiae*, ed. Commissio Leonina, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, Vatican City 1888-1906, vol. 4, Ia, q. 2, a. 2, c.a., p. 30.

self, since Avicenna's proof is supposed to be an *a priori* demonstration and does not argue from posterior things. Systematically, Averroes needs the mitigation he introduces to the principle to save the possibility of a proof of motion within the science of physics<sup>46</sup>. According to him, physics, whose subject matter is the material and movable, proves the existence of motion and a first mover. The principle in its original form would exclude this possibility. But in the modified form, the principle poses no problem for the physical proof of the existence of the first mover because the proof in question is a *demonstratio quia*, not a *demonstratio propter quid*. For Averroes, the first cause can only be proved from posterior things, i.e., from its effects. There can be no *demonstratio propter quid* of its existence at all.

But by adopting this mitigation of the principle from the *Posterior Analytics*, Averroes makes himself vulnerable to a possible attack from someone defending a metaphysical proof of the existence of God: Even if God is, or is part of, the subject matter of metaphysics, why should there not be a *demonstratio quia* of the existence of God within metaphysics?

As I mentioned before, Averroes would agree that metaphysics studies effects of the first cause, the properties of being, and even more than that: Metaphysics investigates the nature of the first cause by providing knowledge of the final and formal causality of the first mover; and metaphysics

<sup>46</sup> « Therefore, the practitioner of the lower science cannot study (*yanzura*) the first [things] (*awā'il*) of its genus through the method of absolute demonstration (*'alā tariq al-burhān al-muṭlaq*). As for [studying them] through the method of going from the posterior to the prior (*'alā tariq al-masīr mina l-muta'akhkhirāt ilā l-mutaqaddimāt*) – and this is what is called indications (*dalā'il*) –, this is possible for [the practitioner of the lower science]. And because the first [things] of the subject matter of physics have no first [things], it is not possible to demonstrate (*yubarhina*) the existence of the first [things] of the subject matter of physics, except through posterior things in physics. Therefore, there is no way to demonstrate (*tabyīn*) the existence of separate substance except from motion », AVERROES, *Tafsīr*, book XII, c. 5, p. 1423, lin. 6-11 [GENEQUAND, *Book Lām*, pp. 73-74]. The passage is slightly shortened in the Latin translation, but the key content regarding the principle from the *Posterior Analytic* is preserved: « Et immo facultas inferior non habet considerare principia sui generis secundum simplicem demonstrationem, secundum autem demonstrationes, que vocantur signa, possibile est. Et immo principia subiecti Naturalis non demonstrantur nisi per res posteriores in scientia Naturali. Et ideo impossibile est declarare aliquid abstractum esse, nisi ex motu », Giunta, fol. 293ra. Averroes makes the same point in his *Long Commentary on the Posterior Analytics*, see *Sharḥ al-burhān li-Aristū wa-talkhiṣ al-burhān: Grand commentaire et paraphrase des Seconds Analytiques d'Aristote*, ed. 'A. BADAŪI, al-Mağlis al-waṭanī li-th-thaqāfa wa-l-funūn wa-l-ādāb, Kuwait 1984, book I, c. 70, p. 298, lin. 3-7 [AVERROES, *Aristotelis Posteriorum resolutionum libri duo: Cum Averrois Cordubensis magnis commentariis*, Apud Iunctas, Venice 1562, reprint Minerva, Frankfurt 1962, fol. 154B-C]. See BERTOLACCI, *Avicenna and Averroes cit.*, pp. 85-95; Ö. M. ALPER, *Avicenna's Conception of the Scope of Metaphysics: Did he Really Misunderstand Aristotle?* « İstanbul Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi », 16, 2007, esp. pp. 85-103, esp. pp. 90-91.

does investigate being as being and its properties in order to understand the being of the first cause<sup>47</sup>. But Averroes assumes a strict division of labor between physics and metaphysics, with physics providing the existence of the first cause, and metaphysics clarifying its nature and its true ontological and cosmological role. In his view, arguments or proofs of the existence of separate substance which are used in a metaphysical context are either taken over from physics and simply repeated, or they rest on ultimately physical premises, or they are only dialectical proofs, which may be adduced in a metaphysical discussion for educational or motivational purposes<sup>48</sup>.

Unlike in the cases of statements (b) and (c), Antonius gives an erroneous account of Averroes' position on his statement (a). He ascribes to Averroes the principle from the *Posterior Analytics* in its original, stricter form which categorically excludes all types of proofs of the existence of a subject matter within the science itself: no science proves the existence of its subject matter.

In his response to what he presents as Averroes' theory, Antonius claims:

« Thus it is shown that evidently each *quia* science demonstrates the existence of its subject matter, because from the effect something is demonstrated of the cause, namely existence, since from the fact that the effect cannot exist without such a condition in the cause [it is demonstrated that] the effect cannot exist without the existence of the cause, so if the effect exists, the cause exists. [...] It needs to be noted, however, that no science demonstrates the existence of its subject matter through *propter quid* demonstration and from something prior, because the same subject matter is known first according to priority of nature. [The science] can still demonstrate the existence of its subject matter through *quia* demonstration »<sup>49</sup>.

<sup>47</sup> See AVERROES, *Tafsīr*, book III, c. 3, p. 190, lin. 4-18 [Giunta, fol. 41va-b]; book IV, c. 5, p. 326, lin. 16 - p. 327, lin. 5 [Giunta, fol. 70rb]; book XII, c. 5, p. 1425, lin. 6-8 [Giunta, fol. 293va; GENEQUAND, *Book Lām*, p. 75].

<sup>48</sup> AVERROES, *Tafsīr*, book I, c. 6, p. 22, lin. 2-11 [Giunta, fol. 31rb]; book II, c. 15, p. 91, lin. 16 - p. 92, lin. 9 [Giunta, fol. 13va]; book XII, c. 5, p. 1423, lin. 11-14 [this last passage is corrupted in the Latin translation, Giunta, fol. 293ra-b; GENEQUAND, *Book Lām*, pp. 73-74]; AVERROES, *Compendio de Metafísica: Texto árabe con traducción y notas*, ed. and transl. C. QUIRÓS RODRÍGUEZ, Real Academia de Ciencias Morales y Políticas, Madrid 1919, ch. 4, pp. 126-128 [AVERROES, *On Aristotle's 'Metaphysics': An Annotated Translation of the So-Called 'Epitome'*, ed. and transl. R. ARNZEN, De Gruyter, Berlin 2010, pp. 139-141]; AVERROES, *Kitāb al-kashf*, in *Faith and Reason in Islam: Averroes' Exposition of Religious Arguments*, transl. I. NAJJAR, Oneworld, Oxford 2001, pp. 37-38. See ADAMSON, *Averroes on Divine Causation* cit., pp. 199-200; DAVIDSON, *Proofs for Eternity* cit., pp. 315-316; T. KUKKONEN, *Averroes and the Teleological Argument*, « *Religious Studies* », 38/4, 2002, pp. 405-428, esp. pp. 412-418 and 421-424.

<sup>49</sup> « Ostenditur sic, quod scilicet omnis scientia quia demonstrat suum subiectum esse, quia per effectum demonstratur aliquid de causa, scilicet esse, ex hoc enim quod effectus non potest esse sine tali conditione in causa, effectus non potest esse sine esse cause, ergo si effectus est,

Antonius rejects the original version of the principle from the *Posterior Analytics* and states instead that a science can in fact demonstrate the existence of its subject matter from posterior things (*ex posteriore*), through *demonstratio quia*. The subject matter is — in itself, although not necessarily for us — known prior (*primo cognitum*) to the other things investigated within a science. Therefore, it cannot be demonstrated through anything else prior to it.

This means that Antonius actually agrees with Averroes — although only with Averroes' actual position, not with the claim he himself ascribes to Averroes, i.e., statement (a). Both of them think that the principle only applies to *propter quid* proofs, meaning that it only excludes the possibility of demonstrations of the existence of the subject matter from prior things, or causes. By other means, i.e., from posterior things, or from its effects, the existence of a subject matter can very well be proved within a science. So in the case of statement (a) we have the curious case that Antonius misrepresents Averroes' position. He portrays him as a defender of the principle that sciences cannot prove the existence of their subject matter in its strict form, referring to all types of proofs. But in his argument against this statement he actually defends Averroes' own point himself. He argues against the principle by putting forth Averroes' own modification of it.

The fact that Antonius does not ascribe the modification to Averroes and instead defends it himself is doubly curious because Antonius' own theory is consistent with the principle from the *Posterior Analytics* in its original form. He supports a metaphysical proof of the existence of separate being while denying that it is the subject matter of metaphysics. But he still attacks the original version — presumably in order to show that metaphysics could prove the existence of God through a *demonstratio quia*, even if God were the subject matter of metaphysics (as Averroes thinks).

We can only speculate about the reasons for this reversal of positions. Arguably, the Latin translations of Averroes are clear enough in this regard and Antonius seems to have been familiar with Averroes' commentary. Moreover, Scotus, who was one of the first Latin authors to mention and discuss the modified version of the principle, presents it in his commentary on the *Metaphysics* as one of the arguments supporting Averroes' position on the subject matter of metaphysics<sup>50</sup>. So it seems likely that Antonius was

causa est. [...] Advertendum tamen quod nulla scientia demonstrat suum subiectum esse demonstratione propter quid et a priori, quia ipsum subiectum est primo cognitum prioritate nature. Potest tamen demonstrare suum subiectum esse demonstratione quia », ANTONIUS ANDREAS, *Questiones super duodecim libros Metaphysice*, book I, q. 1, resp., part 2, fol. [2vb], see ZIMMERMANN, *Ontologie oder Metaphysik?* cit., pp. 331-332.

<sup>50</sup> « Tertio modo responderi potest ad istas duas probationes quod bene potest aliqua scientia demonstrare suum subiectum esse, et hoc a posteriori [...] Tamen nulla scientia demon-

aware that Averroes defended a modified version of the principle and, in fact, that Averroes himself, as the first to suggest an application of the principle from the *Posterior Analytics* to *propter quid* demonstration only, was the source of this doctrine.

However, there is a passage in Scotus' commentary on the *Metaphysics*, which was added later and in which Scotus presents a different take on the principle from the *Posterior Analytics*. In this addition, Scotus seems to defend the view that God is, in a certain sense, the subject matter of metaphysics<sup>51</sup>. Hence, since he wants to allow for a *quia* demonstration of the existence of God in metaphysics, he cannot accept the principle in its original form and instead turns to Averroes' modification. He defends the mitigation of the principle himself, while claiming — just as Antonius does — that Averroes adhered to the original, stricter version of the principle<sup>52</sup>.

Antonius may have adopted the version of the principle from the *Posterior Analytics* which Scotus puts forth in the later addition, together with the associated portrayal of Averroes. But as we have seen he does not adopt the take on the subject matter of metaphysics which Scotus puts forth in this addition and which made the modification of the principle systematically necessary for Scotus.

In any case, Averroes would have wholeheartedly agreed with Antonius' argumentation against statement (a) since it is his very own. Both thinkers are in agreement about the proper application of the principle from the *Posterior Analytics*, even if Antonius does not acknowledge it.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

With the exception of his misrepresentation of Averroes' view on the principle from the *Posterior Analytics*, Antonius represents Averroes' position on the subject matter of metaphysics and the proof of the existence of God accurately. He seems to have considered Averroes' argumentation strong enough to warrant the careful systematization of his position as well as the avalanche of arguments he employs against each of the different aspects of Averroes' theory.

strat suum subiectum esse demonstratione propter quid et a priori », JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis*, book I, q. 1, n. 21.

<sup>51</sup> JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis*, book I, q. 1, nn. 130-136. See ZIMMERMANN, *Ontologie oder Metaphysik?* cit., pp. 307-312; PINI, *Sulla fortuna* cit., pp. 299-301.

<sup>52</sup> « *Avicenna et Averroes habent hanc propositionem communem: 'nulla scientia probat suum subiectum esse' [...] Contra primum istorum arguitur sic: scientia quia demonstrat suum subiectum esse, quia per effectum demonstratur aliquid de causa* », JOHN DUNS SCOTUS, *Quaestiones super libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis*, book I, q. 1, nn. 111-112.

I hope to have successfully identified the exact systematic differences and similarities between the two thinkers' solutions to the problem of the subject matter of metaphysics, and pointed out the origins of their differing views in their respective doctrines. Averroes and Antonius Andreas have such different systems of ontology and science that they could only disagree on the subject matter of metaphysics.

In the case of statement (c), one defends the univocity and the other the analogy of being, and one thinks that the subject matter of a science needs to be a univocal genus in order to guarantee the science's unity while the other thinks that any type of interrelatedness between the members of the group which constitutes the subject matter is enough. These premises mean that they had to arrive at different answers to the question of whether the separate substances could be the subject matter of a science.

Regarding the proof of the existence of God, Averroes believes that it cannot possibly be provided within metaphysics, while Antonius — who stresses that any analysis of the properties of an effect of the first cause constitutes a proof of its existence — claims that such a proof necessarily has to be given in metaphysics. If the conclusion of this proof, the existence of God, were accepted from another science, this would make metaphysics subordinate to that science in that respect, according to Antonius. Averroes, on the other hand, has no problem with metaphysics being last in the order of teaching the sciences, insisting that a physical proof, the result of which is accepted in metaphysics, does not endanger the supreme position of metaphysics as the first and noblest science according to its nature.

Only in their favoring of the mitigation of the principle from the *Posterior Analytics* the two thinkers are in agreement, even though Antonius does not make this obvious to his readers.

Antonius had to disagree so vehemently with Averroes because in a certain sense, their conflicting conceptions of metaphysics as a science are simply an offshoot of the general differences in ontology, theory of science, and the ideas about the nature of God and God's relation to the created world between Averroes and the Scotist thinkers.

But although he worked from fundamentally different assumptions, it is clear that Antonius did consider Averroes to be a highly important thinker. He found his theories important and effective enough to devote such an elaborate rejection to them. This certainly is a testament to the immense influence of Averroes' thinking on the Latin commentary tradition.

## ABSTRACT

*Three Scotist Arguments Against Averroes. Antonius Andreas on the Subject Matter of Metaphysics*

The influential Scotist thinker Antonius Andreas (d. ca. 1333) ardently criticizes Averroes' theory of the subject matter of metaphysics. In his *Questions on the Metaphysics* Antonius systematizes Averroes' position and condenses it into three distinct statements, against each of which he argues. This paper presents Antonius' own take on the subject matter of metaphysics, evaluates the success of his interpretation of Averroes, and analyzes his arguments against the Commentator. The disagreement between Antonius and Averroes is ultimately rooted in their vastly different theory of science and ontology. Averroes would have disagreed with many premises of Antonius' arguments, whether regarding the conditions for unity or for priority of a science, or the univocity or analogy of being. Surprisingly, however, the two thinkers agree on one central aspect, namely in their belief that sciences can provide certain demonstrations of the existence of their subject matter.

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